aitken
COLLEGE
In Mind and Spirit

ANNUAL REPORT

2011

1010 Mickleham Road, Greenvale Vic 3059
www.aitkencollege.edu.au

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Overview

Aitken College is a co-educational, independent Uniting Church school catering for students of all faiths and religious denominations in the northwest region of Melbourne.

Students are encouraged to develop a love of learning and we make every effort to ensure that they possess the skills, resources and motivation which will lead to a lifetime of learning. We endeavour to embrace a broad curriculum which is academically rigorous, which fosters personal, moral and spiritual awareness and understanding and which develops a breadth of life skills, as well as balancing essential knowledge with a choice of pathways in the final years of schooling, including VCE, VCAL and VET studies.

We particularly encourage students to develop a sense of service to others, especially to those less fortunate in the community. For this reason they are encouraged to develop community relationships where individuals will interact in such a way that it will lead to a deeper understanding of human need and a desire to actively engage in meeting that need.

All students are encouraged to examine the faith and teaching of the Christian Church in the light of their own belief system, and those of others, in order that they develop spiritual understanding of themselves and others. In particular they are encouraged to develop a set of values and code of ethics which is Christian based so that they will make valued contributions in the community in which they live.

The Vision, Mission and Aims statements of the College underpin the School's philosophy and core principles.

Vision

The vision for Aitken College is to develop and support a learning community of students, staff and their families in a faith partnership with the Uniting Church in Australia.

Mission

Building on a foundation of Christian values, the mission of Aitken College is to enable students to become informed and compassionate members of the wider community by inspiring academic achievement and creativity, nurturing self worth, encouraging environmental responsibility and committing to service with and for others.

Aims

Aitken College will aim to:

- Make the Christian faith relevant through an understanding of its major teachings and by encouraging a personal faith journey.
- Inspire and challenge students to realise their intellectual potential and equip them for life-long learning.
- Promote and develop creativity and self expression.
- Enable each student to realise their self worth in a safe, healthy and happy environment that responds to personal and community needs.
- Encourage individuals and the community to take responsibility for the environment and to act accordingly.
- Instil in students a sense of service and concern for the needs of others.

Governance

Aitken College Board

Chair:	Rev Clem Dickinson
Deputy Chair:	Rev Jason Kioa
Treasurer:	Mr Doug Whan
Principal:	Mrs Josie Crisara
Members:	Ms Heather Ackland
	Mrs Helen Adams
	Mr Craig Brown
	Mr Steve Craven
	Dr Leonie Richards
	Mr Chris Ward
In attendance also:	
Finance Manager:	Mr Petar Gajic
Board Minute Secretary:	Mrs Pauline Weaver

The Aitken College Board determines the Policy by which the College will operate. It identifies strategic needs and puts in place the framework to achieve the most desirable outcomes. Six Board Meetings and the Annual General Meeting were held during 2011.

Regular reviews ensure that issues of risk are well managed, financial accountabilities are met and legal obligations are fulfilled. A wide range of skills, which facilitate attention to the various responsibilities of a Board, are found in the dedicated membership of the Aitken Board.

Various responsibilities are delegated to sub-committees who undertake detailed examination of their particular area and report back to the Board. Progress reports enable the Board to be informed of each important phase. Two major sub-committees include the Planning Committee and the Finance and Risk Management Committee. All Committee recommendations are brought to the Board for ratification and implementation. This standard applies to each aspect of risk management principles and policies, strategies, processes and controls. The Board is the peak authority in each of these matters.

AITKEN COLLEGE STAFF

Teaching Staff

Principal:	**Crisara (Mrs)**	Josie	BSc, Grad Cert Maths, Grad Dip Ed, MSL, Grad Cert Workplace Training & Assessment
Deputy Principal:	**Forward (Mr)**	Kim	B Sc (Hons), Grad Dip Ed, M Ed Stud
Head of Senior School:	**Murphy (Mr)**	David	B Sc, Dip Ed
Head of Lower Secondary School:	**Bond (Mr)**	Shelton	BA (Hons), B Ed
Head of Middle School:	**Weaver (Mrs)**	Sheridyn	B Ed
Head of Junior School:	**Wyatt (Miss)**	Barbara	B Ed (Early Childhood), Dip T, Dip Photo Journ.
Head of Preparatory School:	**Neophytou (Ms)**	Kerrie	Dip Ed, B Ed, Grad Cert Early Childhd Teach, Post Grad Ed Stud, M Ed.

Adams (Mrs)	Anne	BA, AMusA,GradDipEd,GradDipMusTh
Adams (Mr)	Simon	BA,GradDipEd, GradDipIR/HRMngt
Aiyappan (Mr)	Vincent	BA, GradDipT, PostGradCertSecT
Arthur (Mr)	Mike	BA, DipDes, DipEd, DipDesign
Batch (Ms)	Kerri	BEd, MEd
Beale (Rev)	Jeanne	BA, BTheol, AssDipComDev(Social Sciences)
Bernes (Mr)	Luciano	BEd, PostGradStudWel
Brewer (Mr)	Stephen	BEd
Brown (Miss)	Julie	BApp Sci, GradDipEd
Calder (Ms)	Debra	BEd, GradCertEd, MEd(Special Ed Needs)
Camilleri (Mrs)	Linda	BEd *(on leave)*
Capraro (Ms)	Laura	BEd, GradDipInfoMan
Carta (Ms)	Graziella	BSc, GradDipEd(Sec) *(on leave)*
Clifton (Mr)	Grant	BSc(Ed)
Conn (Mr)	Gary	CertTechT, DipT(Technology)
Connelly (Dr)	Teresa	BA, DipEd, PhD
Cooper (Mr)	Michael	BEd, DipT
Craven (Mrs)	Lynne	HigherDipT(Sec), PostGradDipEdStud
Craven (Mr)	Steve	BSc, DipEd, MEd
Cronk (Mrs)	Lydia	DipT
Danger (Mr)	Lance	BSc, GradDipMin, GradDipArts, GradDipEd
Dennis (Miss)	Sarah	BAgSci, PostGradDipEd(Sec)
Di Paola (Mrs)	Michaela	BEd *(on leave)*
Di Sipio (Ms)	Linda	BSc, Dip Ed, PGrad Cert in Religion, MRE
Dixon (Mr)	Luke	BA, GradDipEd
Dowling (Mrs)	Emma	Bed (Hons), BT (EarlyChildhoodEd)
Dridan (Mrs)	Dianne	BA, GradDipEd
Eckersley (Mrs)	Vivienne	BSc, DipEd (to December 2011)
Edmonds (Mrs)	Rhonda	BBus, BA, ThDip, GradDipEd
Eldridge (Miss)	Annette	BTeach, BMus *(Terms 1 and 2)*
Ellis (Mrs)	Fiona	BA, Grad DipEd(Sec) *(Term 4)*

Fieldew (Mrs)	Judy	BEd, BNurs
Flynn (Mrs)	Caron	BEd
Forde (Miss)	Jacinta	BA, Post GradDipTeach(Sec), MTeach
Gomes (Mrs)	Pamela	BA (Hons), BEd
Grbac (Miss)	Carla	BVA (Media Arts), DipVisArts, DipEd, GradDipEd, Dip Studio Textiles & Design
Hamilton (Mr)	Nigel	BA(Hons), GradDipEd, GradDipCareers, MEd
Harris (Ms)	Katie	BDesign (Industrial), GradDipEd(Sec)
Harsan (Mrs)	Mona	BAgSc, DipEd
Harwood (Mr)	Tim	BA, GradDipInfoMan, GradDipEd
Hatty (Ms)	Kate	BAppSc, GradDipEd
Hawkins (Ms)	Monet	BMusPerf(Hons), GradDipEd
Heasly (Miss)	Jane	DipT
Hester (Ms)	Julie	BEd(SecArt/Craft)
Hewes (Ms)	Alicia	BSc(Hons), GradDipEd, MEd
Hilar (Mr)	Kopong	BAg, BA, GradDipSecEd
Hill (Miss)	Laura	BA, Dip Sec Ed
Ioannidis (Miss)	Nicole	BA, BTeach(Prim)
Ira (Mrs)	Cinzia	BEd, CertTESOL
Jarvis-Dymond (Mrs)	Belinda	BA, GradDipEd (on leave)
Jirik (Mrs)	Sue-Ellen	BSci, GradDipEd(Sec), PostGradDipEdSt, MEd
Keegan (Mr)	Nigel	BEd
Kerr (Mrs)	Mardy	BEd(Lib)
Koukoullides (Miss)	Christalla	BA, DipEd
Koullas (Ms)	Maria	BTeach, BA
Kufner (Miss)	Natalie	BAppSc
Lal (Mr)	Titus	BSc, PGCE, STTC
Liepins (Ms)	Indra	BA, GradDipEd(Sec), GradDip (Social Science)
Lilley (Mrs)	Jenny	BA, DipEd, Cert IIIBus
Lok (Mr)	Ron	GradDipEd
Lutton (Miss)	Megan	B Biomedical Sci, BSc(Hons), MTeach
Mackrell (Mr)	Jason	B Applied Science (PE)

Marcucci (Ms)	Gracie	DipT *(Term 1)*
Mazzarotta (Ms)	Carmen	BA, DipIntDes, GradCert RE, GradDipEd, P/GradStudent Welfare
McGregor (Mr)	Cameron	BAppSc, BTeach, MSc
McKay (Mr)	Joel	BSc(Ed), MA
McKay (Mrs)	Michelle	BEd
McPhie (Mr)	Ross	BEd
Meszaros (Mrs)	Annamaria	BEd, PostGradCertLib
Miotello (Mrs)	Lucy	BBus, GradDipEd, PostGradCompEd, MEd(IT) *(on leave)*
Mollica (Mrs)	Wendy	BASocialSciences, GradDipEd, PostGradCompEd
Monos (Mrs)	Chris	BA, DipEd
Motti (Mrs)	Josephine	BA, Dip Ed, Master Criminology
Moulder (Mr)	Peter	BSc (Hons), GradDipEd
Page (Rev)	Cynthia	BTheol, DipEd, GradDip SpiritualDir. *(Term 2)*
Paniagua (Mrs)	Rita	BA, GradDipEd
Patchell (Mr)	Michael	BA (Hons)
Perri (Mr)	Vince	BEd, GradDipEdAd, GradCert RE
Pocervina (Mrs)	Christine	BEd
Politini (Mr)	Anthony	BA (Hons), BTeach(Hons)
Prendergast (Ms)	Sandra	BCom, BA, GradDipAcc, DipEd
Prentice (Mr)	Ben	BEd
Radley (Mrs)	Natasha	BTeach, BA
Rees (Mr)	Ron	BEd, DipT, GradDipComp
Rogers (Mr)	Steve	BA, GradDipEd, BEd
Rumble (Ms)	Glenda	B Ed *(Term 2)*
Ryan (Ms)	Ainslie	BBus, BTeach
Sadler (Mr)	Duncan	BEd(Science)
Sadler (Mrs)	Sherry	BEd(Science)
Scuderi (Mrs)	Francis	BA, Dip Ed
Searle (Mr)	Aaron	BMus, GradDipEd, MMusEd, LMusA
Seivers (Ms)	Brigitte	BAppSc, GradDipEd
Settle (Mr)	John	BA (Hons), DipEd, BEd St, MEd *(Term 4)*

Sinclair (Mr)	Peter	BA, DipEd
Slee (Mr)	Michael	BSc, DipEd
Smith (Mr)	John	BA, DipEd, DipT, MA(Hons)
Snowden (Ms)	Sally	BSc, DipEd, Grad Dip Maths Science, MEd, Cert Hums
Spaleta (Ms)	Juliana	BSc, BT (November to December 2011)
Spyrou (Mrs)	Georgina	DipT
Stafford (Mrs)	Jasmina	BA, DipEd, PostGradDipArch, MA(Archaeology), GradCertLang(Indo)
Stipic (Miss)	Claire	BSc, BTeach(Hons) *(on leave Terms 3 and 4) (resigned September 2011)*
Tabone (Mrs)	Joyce	BBus, GradDipSecEd, Grad Dip Languages
Taylor (Mr)	Peter	BScEd
Thomas (Miss)	Rejeena	BSci, Dip Ed *(Terms 3 and 4) to December 2011*
Thomson (Ms)	Beth	BA, GradDipEd, GradCertBus(App Bus), Cert 1V Workplace Train & Assess
Thorneycroft (Mrs)	Andrea	BEd, DipEd (Prim) , MEd(Special Ed Needs)
Tsalapataris (Mrs)	Elsa	BAppSc, DipEd, GradDipMaSc
Van Beek (Mr)	Tony	BSc(Ed)
Vlahopoulos (Mrs)	Elpis	BA, GradDipEd
Ward (Mr)	Chris	BSc, GradDipAppSc, GradDipEd, GradDipMentalHlth
Zanic (Mr)	Damien	DipT
Zanko (Ms)	Vera	BEd

NON TEACHING STAFF

Borg (Mrs)	Clare	BA(Hons), DipCareersEd&Couns, GradCertCareersCouns, MSocSci
Brooks (Mr)	Craig	
Browning (Mrs)	Raelene	
Bruzzaniti (Mr)	Pat	CertIVInfoTech, DipIT
Buch (Mrs)	Jane	First Aid Level 11
Buhagiar (Mrs)	Helen	
Burgu (Mr)	Kevin	BCompApp, MCSE, MInfoTech
Caceres (Ms)	Silvia	BA, DipLib&InfoServices
Callard (Mrs)	Angela	*(On leave Term 4)*
Cohn (Miss)	Diana	

Cornish (Ms)	Dianne	BCom, DipEd, GradCertCareers Ed, GradDipICTEd *(Term 3 only)*
Ferlan (Mrs)	Mary	*From August 2011 (Parental Leave replacement position)*
Forward (Mrs)	Jillian	BSc
Gajic (Mr)	Petar	BCom
Gibbs (Ms)	Rae	BEd, GradDipCareers, MSS, GradCertEd&Tng, GradCertCareersEd
Hunter (Mrs)	Mary-Ann	CertIII EdSupport
Johnson (Ms)	Jillian	BHSc, CertSchHealth, GradDipCouns
McFarlane (Ms)	Kristin	BA, GradDipArts, MA
Manariti (Miss)	Cathy	
Mazzone (Mrs)	Sarina	
Meletis (Mr)	Nick	
Nickson (Mrs)	Tayana	*(Term 1) resigned 24/3/2011*
Paten (Ms)	Anne	BA, DipPE, DipEd, GradCertCareersEd *(Term 3 only)*
Pedersen (Mr)	Daniel	CertIVAudEng
Pennington (Mrs)	Cora	AssDipLib
Perilli (Mrs)	Jacinta	
Perryman (Miss)	Sherry	Cert 1V Teach and Assess
Shepherd (Mr)	Tim	
Sims (Mrs)	Gail	First Aid Cert 111 , Cert IV Workplace Assessment Training
Starbuck (Mrs)	Wendy	
Thill (Mrs)	Jillian	
Tinker (Mr)	Darren	Dip Conservation and Land Management, Dip Sustainability
Tountsios (Mr)	Perry	
Tyler (Mr)	Matthew	
Weaver (Mrs)	Pauline	
Webb (Ms)	Maureen	BBus
Whittaker (Mrs)	Anne	BSc

Staff Workforce Composition, Attendance and Retention

The Staff Workforce Composition is 39% male and 61% female teaching staff and 39% male and 61% female non teaching staff. There are no indigenous staff members. Staff attendance and retention is high.

Teaching Staff Attendance (FTE)

2008	2009	2010	2011
97.9%	96.7%	94.5%	96.1%

Teaching Staff Retention

2008	2009	2010	2011
91%	97%	92%	94%

Teacher satisfaction

Senior Management staff were involved in the Quality Leadership Program for Schools where 360° surveys were completed. The survey enabled objective feedback to be given with benchmarking against national standards. It assessed staff motivation and involvement, strategic and operational management, service focus and community outreach, academic leadership and strategic, relational and personal capability. Each staff member had an opportunity to discuss their survey results with a 'coach' from the organisation that administered the survey and the Principal.

A summary of staff perceptions/satisfaction include; engagement is positive, passion for school objectives, positive support for senior management, connectedness amongst staff.

Areas of improvement included communication in relation to decision making with staff – notes of meetings such as Heads of Faculty, Curriculum, and Staff to be included on staff intranet. Inclusion of more feedback on performance (Staff Professional Enrichment Program was implemented).

Staff professional learning

During 2011, 1037 Professional Development activities were undertaken by 141 of the College's staff members. A significant number of these were activities provided at the school by College staff members on topics of particular expertise. A total of $94,000 was spent on Professional Development, at an average of $667 for each person who worked at the College during the year. On average, staff members accrued 29.5 hours of accredited professional development time. The Victorian Institute of Teaching requires teachers to average a minimum of 20 hours of professional learning each year in order to maintain their teacher registration. These figures suggest that employees at Aitken College are, typically, exceeding the minimum requirements.

A sample of professional learning topics undertaken by staff includes:

- First Aid (Level 2 Certificate, CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma management)
- THRASS training
- Leadership training and assessment
- Student counselling and wellbeing topics

- Subject-specific curriculum content updates
- VCE Study Design changes & VCAA requirements
- Ongoing training in eWorkSpace software
- Professional Learning Teams and associated research projects
- Educational Support for students with learning difficulties
- Classroom management

Effective Professional Learning is a core component of the quality of education offered by a school. At Aitken College all staff members are encouraged and empowered to undertake professional learning activities which take into account each individual's particular skills, job requirements and areas of interest. Sharing of new skills and information is encouraged on a range of levels: at faculty and department meetings, through year level teams and Professional Learning Teams, and at College meetings.

Teaching and Learning

The four most significant developments in the Teaching and Learning focus of the College in 2011 were:

- the continued growth of the Professional Learning Team program;
- a focus on ICT skill development for teachers to increase the use of ICT as a teaching and administrative resource;
- the establishment of the role of E-Learning Co-ordinator;
- the establishment of Professional Enrichment Planning for teachers.

In 2011 four Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) were established. Each of them had 7 team members who met regularly (either fortnightly or weekly) for one or two semesters to focus on a particular aspect of teaching practice. Topics included "Using ICT to enhance learning", "Assessment for improved learning", "Classroom management for better learning" and "Middle primary learning outcomes". Each team read academic articles on recent educational research findings, reflected on Aitken and individual teacher classroom practice, gathered data about their teaching to indicate which areas could benefit from further improvement, developed and carried out an action research plan, and presented research findings to the College teaching staff. Discussions in team meetings were animated and robust. Participants reported at the conclusion of the PLT cycle that they had made significant changes to their teaching styles as a result of their involvement in a PLT and could demonstrate through the data gathered that the changes had led directly to the improved learning of students. Planning for continuing and expanding the PLT program in 2012 was set in motion during the year, to identify topics of interest to staff members and to select PLT members.

The introduction of the eWorkSpace portal and the supply of laptop computers to all teaching staff members required that a major PD focus for the year was ICT skill development. Initial PD provided staff members with information on how to use the new hardware and software, but this quickly moved on to incorporate a wide range of topics – often using the existing skills of staff members to mentor and train their colleagues – to improve and increase the use of ICT as a teaching tool. Use of wikis, blogs and other web 2.0 applications proliferated. The increased number of data projectors and other hardware around the College also enabled classes to use technology in a more integrated way than had been possible in previous years.

Hand in hand with the College's ICT developments was the establishment of the role of E-Learning Co-ordinator. This 0.5 position provided teachers with support, mentoring and modelling on how to best use ICT in their classes. The E-Learning Co-ordinator was available to team-teach with other staff, to coach them in one-to-one learning sessions and to provide PD to groups of staff on topics requested by staff members. The E-Learning Co-ordinator also created an ICT blog, which gave step-by-step instructions on a number of ICT issues relevant to the College's particular network configuration and software packages.

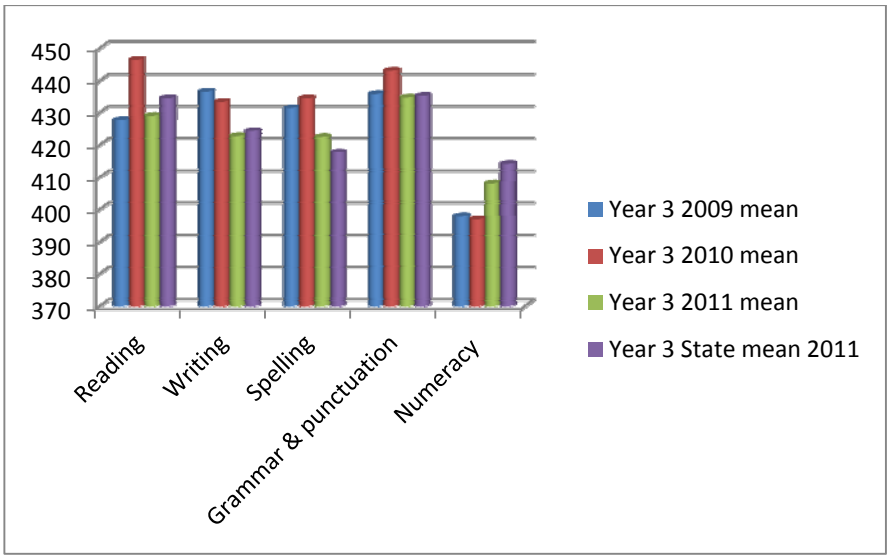
"Professional Enrichment Planning" (PEP) began in 2011 for one third of the College's teachers. It provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice in a structured and supportive environment, led by a trained facilitator. Through a series of meetings with a facilitator during the year, participants assessed their relative strengths and weaknesses as teachers, developed an individual research focus and committed to engaging in targeted professional development which helped them to meet their current needs and continue to develop their teaching practice. Participants and facilitators reported that the process had been useful and informative.

NAPLAN results

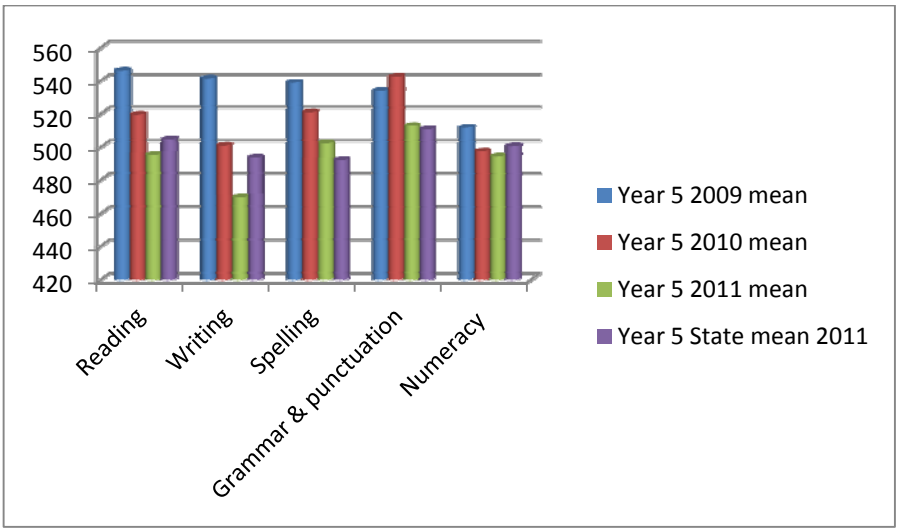
Below and over the page are comparison graphs showing Aitken College NAPLAN mean scores for 2009, 2010 and 2011, and the Victorian mean for 2011. Some points to consider in relation to these graphs:

- School student cohort results are expected to vary slightly from year to year due to differences in student composition – because the number of student results included is relatively small, only a handful of particularly "stronger" or "weaker" students in a year level can have a significant impact on the mean results, particularly in Years 3 and 5 where only 60 students have been tested;
- The NAPLAN test questions change from year to year so comparisons between scores from year to year can be useful in identifying general trends only;
- The format of the Writing test changed in 2011 to a Persuasive Writing task, making all comparisons between 2011 results and earlier results for Writing Task scores invalid;
- Because test questions change from year to year, the state mean also varies slightly from year to year. Consequently, in the graphs provided, the 2011 state mean is only significant when compared to the 2011 school mean;
- Although national mean results have not been provided, it is important to note that Victorian mean scores were higher than the national mean on every test category and year level;
- NAPLAN data is very useful in identifying school trends over time, but as the NAPLAN tests in their current form have been conducted for only 4 years, it is still very early to be making conclusions about trends in school scores – particularly in light of the expected differences in cohort results from year to year;
- The results shown are only a small part of the total NAPLAN data picture – there are many other useful facets to the data. For instance, the 2011 results indicate that students in the bottom 10% of the school cohort are performing considerably better than students in the bottom 10% of the state in almost every area;
- Perhaps most importantly, NAPLAN data is only one form of information about student achievement levels. Teacher observations, class and school-based assessments and other forms of standardised testing are equally valuable in identifying student learning needs and rates of progress.
- There has been a proliferation of NAPLAN preparation material made available since the publication of individual school NAPLAN results on the MySchool website. International experience over many decades shows that schools who "teach to the test" on high-stakes tests may increase their test scores on standardised tests such as NAPLAN, but that these increases are often made at the expense of a broad and rigorous curriculum. In particular, it has been demonstrated that when the format of a test changes, schools who have "taught to the test" often experience a significant decrease in test scores, demonstrating that the education of students has been too focused on questions of the type used in the standardised tests. Aitken College is committed to the delivery of a rigorous, broad and engaging curriculum, and is hence resisting the move towards having students spend weeks on completing "practice NAPLAN tests" in order to inflate our test scores.

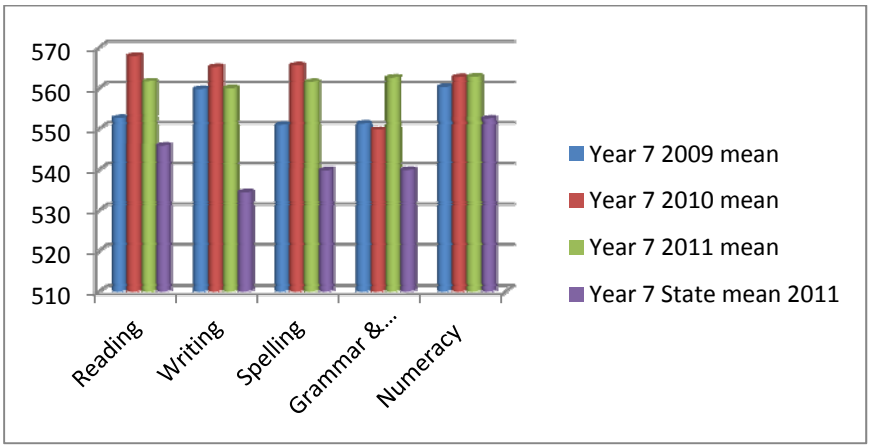
Year 3:



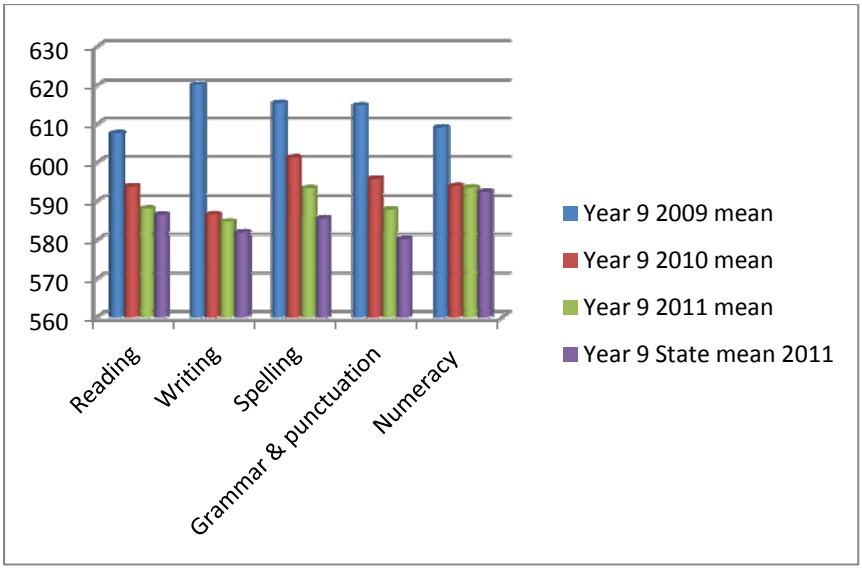
Year 5:



Year 7:



Year 9:



Observations to be made from the 2011 NAPLAN data:

- In 2011, as in previous years, Aitken College student mean results were higher than the state mean in every category in Years 7 and 9, and at all year levels in Spelling.
- All school means were higher than the national mean, including Numeracy at all levels.
- The trend is that the gap between the school Numeracy mean score and the state mean for a particular student cohort closes over time – suggesting that students are making gains in Numeracy at a faster rate than is typical across the state in these year levels.
- In many areas the school mean was markedly higher that the state mean, suggesting that many of our teaching practices and curriculum priorities are very effective.

VCE

Aitken College prides itself on providing each student an opportunity to complete secondary studies in both VCE and VCAL. The success of a school is in providing a quality and full educational experience for young people in the academic, cultural, House, sporting and service area and it is with great pride that students are rewarded for their achievement with School, College and House colours.

Our students have done themselves proud with their academic achievements in 2011. The results are a reflection of the dedication and hard work of the Class of 2011. These results reinforce the College's reputation for excellence across the academic field for those undertaking the VCE.

As a snapshot, 10% of our students scored an ATAR of 90 and above (placing them in the top 10% of students in the state), 26% scored an ATAR of 80 and above, 67% of all students scored 60 and above. Finally 86% of all students scored 50 and above. The College's median ATAR was 66.6, which is a very strong result.

55 study scores of 40 or greater were achieved, placing these students in the top 8% of students in that subject.

Top Ten ATAR Scores:

2011	2010	2009
98.65	97.2	99.7
98.6	97.0	99.05
97.85	96.75	97.4
97.6	96.2	96.9
97.55	94.7	96.7
97.1	94.35	94.85
96.85	94.35	94.75
96.15	93.8	94.6
95.5	93.35	93.85
93.4	92.8	92.35

Number of Study Scores of 40 or greater:

2011	**55**
2010	**47**
2009	**43**

VCAL

The annual enrolment and number of VCAL certificates (Year 11 and 12) issued is shown below.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total certificates issued	18	14	10	13
Total number of students enrolled	19	17	12	13
No. of students who left during the year to pursue other pathways (work, apprenticeships)	1	3	2	0

Of the students enrolled in the VCAL program who were eligible to obtain a VCAL certificate, all achieved this at the conclusion of 2011. Some students decided to remain at the College to complete another VCAL certificate; others chose to pursue full time TAFE courses, begin working, start apprenticeships or complete pre-apprenticeship courses at TAFE.

Students were interested in the following career pathways: plumbing, electrical, building, construction and carpentry, aviation, automotive, animal studies, IT, media, health industry and hairdressing. Some students undertook a school based apprenticeship as part of their VCAL program, thus beginning their work as an apprentice in their chosen field part time.

All students completed tasks in the broad curriculum strands in VCAL which cover: Literacy and Numeracy Skills; Work Related Skills; Personal Development Skills and Industry Specific Skills. Much of this work provided students with skills, knowledge and attitudes valued within the community and work environments, as a preparation for employment. Students were provided with opportunities to make informed choices about pathways for work as well as further education and how skills in these areas apply in the working world.

The assessment tasks are project based and rely on student initiative. Projects that students worked on included: using interior designing skills to transform and decorate the VCAL classroom; in Term One, visiting fortnightly two local Aged Care facilities as part of community service work; organising a doughnut drive to raise money for charity; skillfully organising staff and students to donate blood with the Red Cross Blood Bank at the College; valuable excursions to visit a range of work places and participate in Industry Tours, including an incursion with the 'Lollie Lab' company - a workshop designed to show students how to make traditional handmade lollies from scratch while being exposed to numerous practical skills of a real life business; weekly fitness training with a qualified personal trainer; participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme which included a 'Survivor Camp' at Queenscliff, involving a fishing trip and finding out about sea life in Port Phillip Bay as well as a second 'Survivor' Camp at Lerderderg State Park; an RSPCA visit to attend an educational seminar on animal welfare; organising and running the VCAL Information Night for students and parents; planning and arranging a fete for the primary school children; the Year 12's organisation of the 'Race around Melbourne' challenge for the Year 11 students which involved the Year 11's finding a series of key locations to visit in the city within a certain time; developing a farming project involving the purchase of chickens and the development of an appropriate chicken enclosure and maintaining their habitat; supporting charities like the RSPCA by organising community based events, as well as analysing and debating social issues and studying short stories and analysing films.

All VCAL students undertake two VET (Vocational Education and Training) courses during their two year program. VET Business continues to be offered at Aitken College and this year some of the outside VET courses the students are undertaking include Building and Construction; Automotive; Aviation; Animal Studies; Hospitality; Hair and Beauty and Child Care.

Throughout the year the VCAL students also spent fifteen days completing their Structured Workplace Learning in a variety of interesting placement experiences, which included placements at a hair salon, a pet warehouse, a childcare centre, healthcare centre, a restaurant, a bakery and an electronics business. Students have studied units such as Occupational Health and Safety to help prepare them for employment as well as essential job interview skills.

This year two Year 12 students were also presented with the internationally recognised Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award after faithfully, and with much perseverance, completing all the required components. A Year 11 student also won the Northern Melbourne VCAL Award for Excellence, recognised for outstanding achievements and dedication in VCAL this year.

Selling donuts to raise money for charity

Queenscliff Duke of Edinburgh Camp

The 'Lollie Lab' Incursion – making lollies

Primary School Fete

Setting up the tents, Lerderderg State Park

Elaine Moscatelli receiving the Northern Melbourne VCAL Award

Sean Byers and Daniel Melideo with their Duke of Edinburgh Awards

VET Report

2011 was another active year in the area of Vocational Education and Training (VET) at Aitken College that saw a wider range of courses on offer to students studying for their VCE and VCAL and a larger number of students undertaking VET courses at external TAFE institutions.

All VET courses completed at Aitken College offer VCE students the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised VET qualification and scored assessment that contributes to their ATAR score. Students within the VCAL program complete VET Business at Aitken College and undertake an additional VET course at an external institution, furthering their knowledge and practical skills within their field of interest.

Over twenty-five students completed studies in the VET Certificate II and III in Business across Years 11 and 12, gaining certification in this field and ATAR contributions. Throughout this two year course, students learn about the business and commercial world and the application of a diverse set of technological and real world skills in a practical environment. Thirteen students from Year 11 completed a week of Structured Workplace Learning during the Term Three holidays, where they were able to apply their learning in a real working environment. Experiences like these are extremely valuable for each student and facilitate a more seamless movement from their studies to employment.

2011 saw the introduction of VCE VET Music - Certificate III in Technical Production and it proved to be a popular addition to VET choices at Aitken College. Thirteen Year 11 students learnt about the area of music in a new light, gaining vocational experience, such as operating professional audio equipment and assisting with sound recordings. This course offers a more practical approach than traditional VCE studies, giving musically-minded students the opportunity to gain appropriate experience for their future career options. This course will continue to be offered as a Year 11 subject choice in the coming years, offering the next group of future sound technicians and studio engineers the chance to take a step closer to their dream job.

A wider range of VET courses was on offer to Year 10 students in 2011 as part of their VCE subject selection. VCE VET Sport and Recreation will be a new course undertaken by nearly twenty Year 11 students in 2012. This course has been restructured for 2012 and offers a fresh approach for students to gain practical knowledge of the sports and leisure industry.

Aitken College remained an active member of the Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and the Hume Cluster in 2011. These clusters are a network of neighbouring schools who offer places in the VET courses that they run for other schools and their students. They provide Aitken College students the opportunity to study an array of VET courses locally and within a more familiar school setting that they are used to. These clusters also provide valuable knowledge, training and networking for coordinators and facilitators of VET courses here at Aitken College.

In 2011, students within the VCE and VCAL framework took an active role in undertaking VET courses at TAFE institutions, such as Kangan, Victoria University and William Angliss Institute. Studying in another environment away from Aitken College offers students the opportunity to become more independent, mature and responsible learners whilst creating a clearer and stronger future career pathway. Over twenty students took up this opportunity in 2011 and a number of Year 12 students used these courses as a platform to further their learning at TAFEs and universities in 2012.

VET continues to provide students with successful learning outcomes and clearer career pathways and it will only persist in gaining more strength and prominence within Aitken College and the community into the future.

Careers Education

CAREER VOYAGE

It is generally in Term 2 of Year 10 that Careers staff first meet this cohort of students. The Term 2 Lifeskills program is a unit of work which is Careers based and is delivered jointly by the PE and the Careers staff. This program encourages students to learn more about themselves in terms of their interests, abilities, values and strengths and to explore course and career options which they may be interested in pursuing in the future. The aim is to provide the students with the resources and skills they require to be able to carry out their career research, both in Year 10, and well into the future, so they are able to make wise career choices. Students are provided with a booklet which takes them through a variety of activities to help them learn more about themselves and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. As part of this unit Careers staff deliver the Career Voyage program. This is a software package which asks the students a series of questions about jobs they may enjoy, their abilities, values and interests. Each student then receives a printed report which provides them with a list of job suggestions based on the answers they provided when they completed the program. As a follow up to completing the program, students are able to undertake further research into the jobs which appeal to them. This is the start of a career exploration process which for many will be life-long. The aim is to teach the students the strategies they need to conduct career research at any stage of their working life and to discover and review their choices and decisions at critical points in their future.

YEAR 10 CAREERS PANEL

Early in Term 3 former Aitken College students return to speak to the Year 10 students about their pathways since leaving Aitken. The event is timed to coincide with the VCE / VCAL subject selection process and to assist the Year 10s with their career research. These students provide the Year 10s with useful tips and strategies about making course and career decisions and planning for the future. The speakers are from a range of backgrounds and each has a unique and interesting pathway and perspective to share with our Year 10 students.

YEAR 10 INTERVIEWS

At the beginning of Term 3 Information Evenings about the VCE and about VCAL are held for Year 10 students and their parents. Following on from these evenings each Year 10 student has an interview with a senior member of staff followed by a 30 minute one on one interview with a member of the Careers team. This is to assist them to clarify their pathway for Years 11 and 12 – the VCE or VCAL – and to help the students choose subjects or programs relevant to that pathway. Interviews are again held for a small group of Year 10 students late in Term 4 once exam results are known and the timetable blocking is available, in case any adjustments need to be made to the program they have chosen for the following year.

TRANSITION SEMINAR

The Year 12 Transition Seminar was held towards the end of Term 1. Students had the opportunity to listen to the post secondary school experiences of nine past students who talked about their journey upon completing secondary school. They shared some observations and advice with the Year 12s, such as the pitfalls to avoid during your final year of secondary schooling, hints for success in Year 12 and in tertiary study, and what I wish I had known when I was in Year 12. This event usually has the positive effect of starting the Year 12s thinking about their futures post Aitken and bringing home to them that this is the year that they will be making some very big decisions which are potentially life changing.

YEAR 12 EXCURSION TO LA TROBE UNIVERSITY FOR THE TERTIARY INFORMATION SERVICE (TIS) EVENT

This excursion takes place early in Term 2 and is the next step in the process of encouraging the Year 12 students to think beyond their classrooms and beyond Aitken. The event is organised by the Victorian Universities and TAFEs who work together to provide students with vital information about pre-requisite subjects and extra requirements, VTAC application procedures, choosing courses, selection processes and

the timeline starting with the production of the VTAC Guide and putting in preferences for tertiary courses for the following year to receiving an offer and enrolling. The students also have the opportunity to explore the La Trobe Bundoora campus and to gain an insight to university life. In addition, they are able to talk to representatives from most of the Victorian universities and TAFEs and some private providers about the courses they offer. This excursion always generates a lot of lively discussion as students talk about their aspirations for the future and the different pathways they are thinking of pursuing.

VTAC INFORMATION EVENING

This evening takes place in Term 3 for Year 12 students and their parents and aims to demystify the VTAC process. Choosing courses, conducting career research, online applications, prerequisite subjects, extra requirements, costs, timelines, offers and where to seek help, are all discussed. Students are reminded that their copy of the current VTAC Guide is a book they should read thoroughly and get to know intimately as part of the process of sorting out their pathway post secondary school. The evening is a precursor to the individual interviews each Year 12 student then has with a member of the Careers team. At these interviews it is determined whether a VTAC application will be made. If the student is keen to submit a VTAC application a member of the Careers team will sit with them and help them lodge their application. If the student has a different pathway in mind, opportunities and strategies are discussed to assist them to determine what their next steps need to be. Some students will return for a second, or even third interview if they need a little more help, if they are applying for Special Consideration (SEAS) or if they are applying for interstate courses or scholarships. Careers staff are always hopeful students will be able to follow their dreams, and indeed support them to have ambition, but are always mindful that some options may not be immediately, if ever, possible and therefore are most forthright to the students about the necessity of having a “Plan B” or a safety net in case those dreams are not immediately attainable. We always find Term 3 fascinating as we learn about the wide variety of pathways our students are keen to follow when they leave the College.

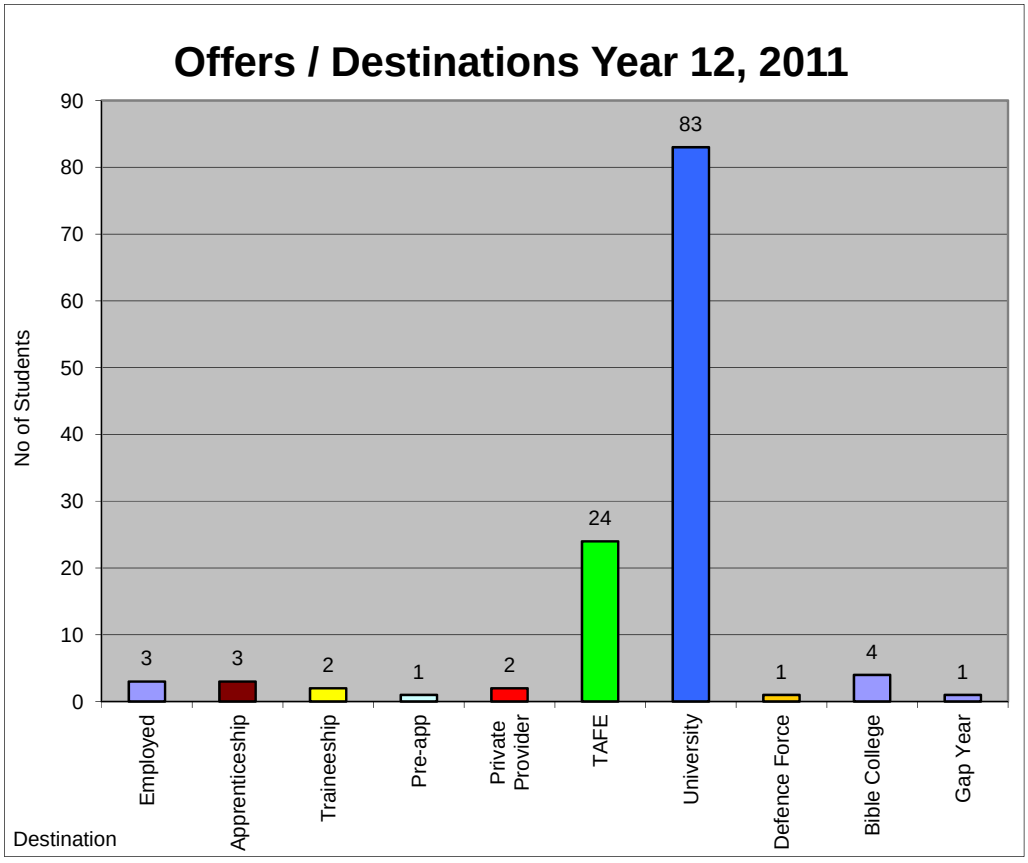
TRY A TRADE

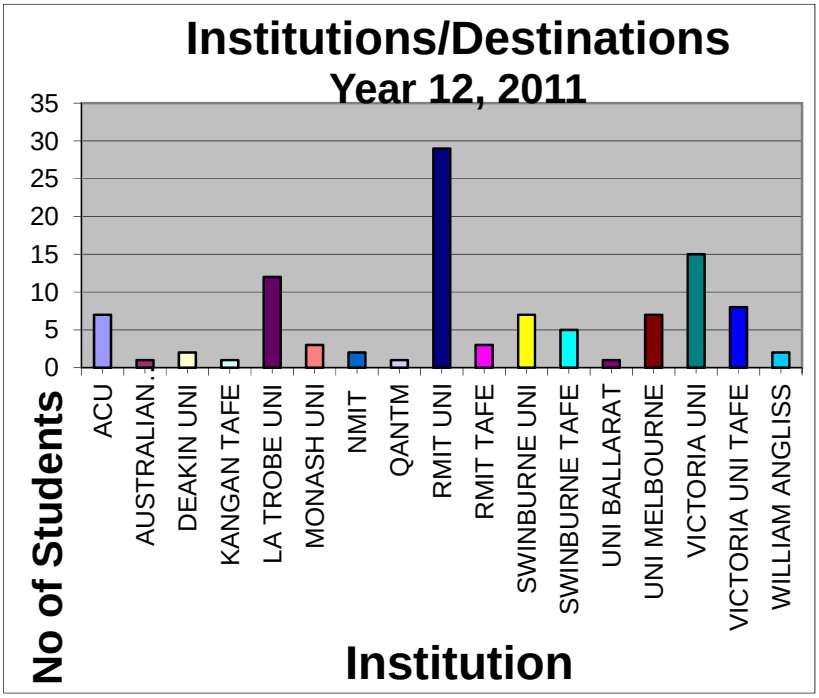
This is an event held at the Broadmeadows Town Hall across two days for students in Years 7 – 12 to learn more about particular trades and to take part in hands on activities set up by the various presenters. Each year a variety of trades is showcased and this year students were able to find out about the electrical, beauty, hairdressing, locksmithing, building and construction, health services, furnishing, hospitality, fashion, printing, tiling, engineering and bricklaying industries. The comments by the students after the event were very positive and they felt they had learned a lot about some of the options which might be available to them in the future.

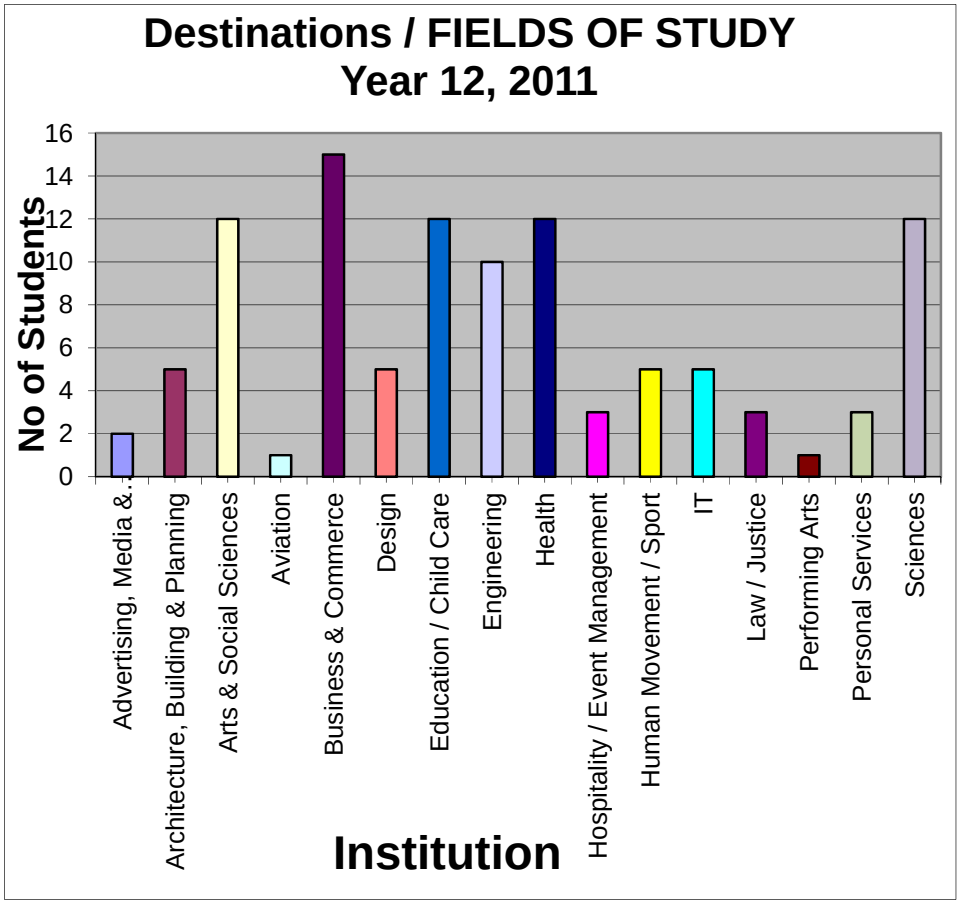
TERM 3 STAFFING

We are very fortunate to have the strong support of the senior management of the College for our Careers program. This allows us to spend significant amounts of one on one time with the students, especially the Year 10s and 12s in Term 3 when they are making their vital decisions. We are very appreciative of this support. In addition, during the very busy Term 3, we are able to employ the services of additional careers staff to assist with our interviewing process. This ensures that every student in Years 10 and 12 is interviewed at least once and those in Year 11 who seek help are also able to be accommodated.

Post Secondary Destinations






Destinations / FIELDS OF STUDY
Year 12, 2011
No of Students
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
Advertising, Media &...
Architecture, Building & Planning
Arts & Social Sciences
Aviation
Business & Commerce
Design
Education / Child Care
Engineering
Health
Hospitality / Event Management
Human Movement / Sport
IT
Law / Justice
Performing Arts
Personal Services
Sciences
Institution

Learning Centre

A range of services are offered through the Learning Centre to cater for the individual needs of Aitken College students. The ISV provided $26,400 through Commonwealth funding for the employment of Integration Aides to assist students who meet the criteria for disability support. State funding, totaling $3,200, enabled the College to employ a Speech Therapist (1/2 day per fortnight) to work with students who have diagnosed language disorders. The Speech Therapist was also available to assist students on a private basis if they did not meet the criteria for Government funding. Australian Government Targeted Program grants totaling $38,450 were used to employ a part time Special Education Teacher to focus on small group Literacy and Numeracy support. Australian Government funding was also utilised for the installation of interactive whiteboards in the Learning Centre.

Learning disabled students, who do not meet the criteria for funding, were assisted by Learning Centre staff, either on an individual basis or through in class teacher support. These students had access to modified programs which supported the class curriculum. Funded and non-funded students were supported through the provision of regular Program Support Group meetings.

Gifted students had access to acceleration and extension programs designed to meet their individual needs. Extra-curricular activities were offered throughout the college to meet the needs of students who show talent in specific areas.

Student Composition, Attendance and Retention

The total student enrolment was 1275. 50.7% of our student cohort are females and 49.3% are males. 0.2% of the student cohort are indigenous students and 41% students have a language background other than English.

Parents are required to contact the College if a student is to be absent from school. If notification regarding student absence has not been received the parents are contacted by phone.

Student Attendance 2011

Year Level	Male	Female
1	94.7%	95.6%
2	92.5%	95.0%
3	95.6%	93.0%
4	96.6%	97.1%
5	96.4%	97.4%
6	94.7%	95.2%
7	94.2%	95.3%
8	95.9%	95.7%
9	96.5%	93.9%
10	94.7%	91.6%

Student attendance was high. For male students the average was 95.2%; for female students the average was 95.0%.

The student retention rate from the Year 9 cohort was 94.4%.

Student Wellbeing and Student Satisfaction

The Wellbeing Project

The Wellbeing Project, and the position of Student Well Being Coordinator, was established late in 2008 in response to a school-wide 'School Safety Survey'. The Well Being team comprises a wide range of teachers from our small community, as well as a professional consultant, Vivienne Archdall, who is the Victorian Project Officer for *MindMatters.* Our aim is to develop ongoing wellbeing initiatives, for both students and staff alike, in a real and meaningful way. The work is both practical and skill-based.

National Recognition of *MindMatters* Schools

Aitken College was one of 17 schools Australia-wide awarded National *MindMatters* Recognition in 2011. The Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, made the presentation to the College in Adelaide in December.

MindMatters is a national mental health initiative for secondary schools funded by the Federal Government. It promotes a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing and targets areas such as resiliency,

bullying and harassment, loss and grief and understanding mental illness. It also provides a wealth of resources, training and professional development for teaching staff.

The *MindMatters* recognition process is designed to acknowledge schools and school leaders who are working in focused and strategic ways to improve student mental health and learning outcomes. To achieve recognition, schools must have undertaken and evaluated a whole school approach to mental health and well being over an extended period of time.

Cybersafety continues to be an important and evolving issue. The Life Skills curriculum has been updated to include current age-appropriate cybersafety issues using the best resources currently available. The Australian Commmunications and Media Authority (ACMA) presented engaging seminars for students from Years 6 to 10 in November and then to all teachers at the start of 2012. The ICT Student Acceptable Use Agreement has been included in student diaries for 2012; this addresses use of the College network, personal electronic devices and online behaviour as a member of the College community. The Cybersafety Committee continues to oversee and review this area of student wellbeing.

***'In Mind and Spirit'* Student Anthology**

There is a rich vein of creativity running through the hearts and minds of Aitken College students; their imaginations are vivid and their opinions are strong. '*In Mind and Spirit'*, an anthology of Aitken College writing, Prep-12, from 1999 to 2011, will be published during 2012 to celebrate our budding authors and preserve their writing. Student and staff artwork and photography will complement the student writing. Aitken College students do have a lot to say; '*In Mind and Spirit'* will give them a voice.

Wellbeing Week (Mental Health Week)

We ran our third Wellbeing Week early in Term 4 to promote the Mental Health Foundation of Victoria's Mental Health Week. Activities extended across all Year levels once again and included: Fairview's Wellbeing Day, Dunhelen's Homeroom healthy lunch, Glenarthur Writing Exhibition, library activities, drama and musical performances, dancing, the mobile Blood Bank and relaxation classes. All teaching and non-teaching staff were given the opportunity to have a free massage and were provided with fresh fruit and a special (and popular) ice-cream lunch. We are hoping to develop the range of activities and continue to make this an annual event.

SCHOOL LIFE

Aitken College is divided into five “Schools” each with a Head of School. The Schools are named Fairview, Cumberland, Dunhelen, Glenarthur and Brookhill.

Fairview (Preparatory School - Prep to Year 2)

Fairview is always a busy place with programs supporting the children and their families. The children enter Prep with school readiness skills and leave Year 2 with independent skills in all areas. The journey the children undertake is not one they take on their own; it is the hard work of their dedicated teachers and parents who guide them.

These early years provide the children with a strong base for their learning; it shapes them into young people. It also encourages them to understand and appreciate a diverse community with many cultural facets. They are able to engage in many learning experiences, not only academic, but ones that develop their social, emotional and physical needs

Community Spirit

The community spirit which develops within Fairview is a commitment to each other and the Christian faith. The children base their peer interaction on *“treat others as you wish to be treated.”* A key focus of the week is Chapel and how it is intertwined in our Religion and Values Education program and classroom practice. The interaction the Fairview children have within the wider school community also provides them with the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills and experience a variety of educational programs.

Our Chapel services and Assemblies welcome our parent community and their extended families. This provides the children with an understanding that our services are respected by the entire College community and are an integral component of our community.

Buddies and Peer Support

The Prep and Year 6 Buddies and Peer Support are an educational program committed to improving the quality of life for young school students through positive peer group interaction and influence.

The program at Aitken College aims to help students adjust easily to a new school and Year level. Lifeskills, responsibility and self-confidence are developed in supporting ways in which children relate positively to each other and contribute to a spirit of community. The children gain an understanding of the importance of values which relate to their daily lives.

The program is designed to provide support between groups of Prep students and trained Year 6 leaders. By applying the student-help-student principle, it taps the energies of the most valuable resource a school has — the students. The empowerment of young people in this way encourages them to grow in confidence and responsibility.

The Partnership

The home-school partnership works collaboratively to ensure that children's needs are met and supported. It is based on the expectation set by the College and how the parents support the home program e.g. home reading program. Parent participation within the school setting is active in each year level. It is a rewarding experience for all involved. It provides parents and grandparents with the opportunity to assist the teacher within the classroom whilst spending time with their children in the school environment. The helpers' nurturing role has an extremely positive impact on the teachers and children. Even though the duties are outlined by the teacher, it also provides the children with a different model of interaction. It is a very important role that the school community supports and appreciates.

Parents also attend and actively participate in Fairview Information sessions, which provide them with knowledge and skills on specific programs e.g. February Parent sessions, THRASS workshops (Teaching handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills), School Preparation session and Prep Orientation programs.

Excursions and In-school Activities

The children's overall physical development is always a priority. Swimming and Gymnastics are annual programs which reinforce and support the children's gross motor skills. The Life Education program also focuses on the necessary lifeskills which children develop as they mature: including nutrition, healthy habits, resiliency, confidence, bullying and drug education.

Excursions, community and parent visitors have provided the children with wonderful experiences. It has broadened their educational program and provided them with hands-on activities to support their learning. These experiences support the Integrated Studies units, literacy and numeracy program e.g. visits to Fairy Park and the Traffic School. Accessing our immediate environment has greatly supported the children's educational program; visits to the wetlands, farm house and understanding our sustainable water system, bring a priceless resource to our educational program. School visitors also have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences, which enhances the children's understanding.

The Fairview Concert is a time the children and teachers showcase their performing arts skills. It not only involves the performing arts, but also visual arts, physical education, literacy and numeracy skills. It is a time where the children integrate all of their skills and share their love for learning.

Cumberland (Junior School – Year 3-5)

In 2011 Junior School children participated in a range of activities covering academic, sporting and creative pursuits.

The year began with the selection of our student leadership team; two School Captains and eight House Captains. These children were joined by Primary Performing Arts Captains, Library Captain and Class Captains. An exciting event organised by the School Captains was having the NED Show perform in Assembly.

To extend and compliment their knowledge, children visited a variety of establishments such as the Melbourne Museum, CERES, Scienceworks, Dromkeen and the Heidi Gallery. The Year 4s continued their relationship with the Yarraville Trugo Club. They also enjoyed their Lifeskills camp held at Camp Weekaway.

In the area of Performing Arts, tuition in cello, violin or viola is offered to all Year 3 students. The Cumberland Concert, *From Stage to Screen* was one of the highlights of the year. Both the concert and the House Performing Arts Competition were hosted by the Primary Performing Arts Captains.

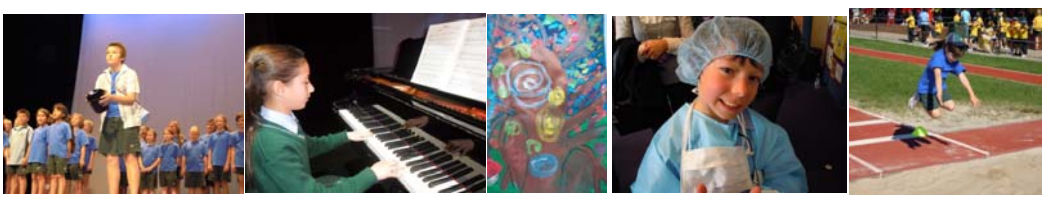
Other House competitions were held in sport (swimming, athletics, cross country, orienteering and lunch time sport), Spelling, Literacy and Maths.

Maths Week is a big event on the Cumberland calendar as it combines literacy and numeracy. The children wrote and performed plays with a mathematical flavour. They competed in the Great Snakes and Ladders Challenge, Maths Orienteering and estimation and automatic response activities. Maths Week culminates with a special day of rotational activities that includes the World of Maths Travelling Show. Maths stalls are also held during the week with money raised going to social service.

In 2011, money raised from the Maths stalls went to Operation Christmas Child. The children also donated goods to fill boxes to send overseas through the same charity. At the beginning of the year the children were moved by the floods that ravaged Brisbane and decided to hold a downball competition. The proceeds were sent to Rocklea State School to purchase teacher resources. Another social service activity was the purchase of Christmas presents to go under the College Christmas tree. The money came from the sale of the Aitken Book of Records. This was the seventh time Cumberland students have tried to break various records with the results published in the book.

Again students have written their own picture story book with shortlisted books being announced during Book Week.

Our relationship with Huamin Primary School in Singapore continued. We were invited to participate in their Art Symposium and Year 4 art work was sent over. One of our staff members spent a week teaching at Huamin and we look forward to one of their staff members coming to visit us next year.



Dunhelen (Middle School - Years 6-7)

Throughout 2011, Dunhelen students have taken part in a varied range of activities and experiences. In February, Year 7 students settled into secondary school life at an Orientation Camp at Phillip Island Adventure Resort. Camp is designed to ease students into secondary school, teach them what it means to be part of the Aitken College community and most importantly help students make new friends.

While the Year 7s were scaling the High Ropes course and dangling from the Giant Swing at camp, the Year 6 students were keenly writing their applications to become primary Peer Support leaders. At the beginning of March, twenty-four Year 6s were trained to become Peer Support leaders for small groups of Prep students. They learned how to manage a group of excited Preps, how to help the Preps settle into school, and how to help the new Preps get along well with each other.

Simultaneously, Year 7 students were involved in their own Peer Support program during Life Skills lessons. It was here where the Year 7s had the opportunity to work alongside some enthusiastic and responsible Year 11 Peer Support leaders. This program culminated in July's Peer Support Picnic at Brimbank Park.

Next, it came time for our Year 7s to try out for the Galway Association sporting teams and for the Year 6s to begin Interschool Sport. Both of these events continued to run for the remainder of the school year, with students competing in Summer and Winter sports.

It was also around this time that Dunhelen students began nominating themselves for the College's leadership program. Students from both Year 6 and Year 7 nominated for the roles of School Captain, House Captain and Class Captain. These newly-elected Captains then did a wonderful job escorting prospective parents around the college on our annual Open Day.

Throughout the year, Dunhelen classrooms were judged and critiqued in the regular 'Classiest Classroom' competition, which aims to encourage Year 6 and 7 students to take ownership of the cleanliness and condition of their homeroom.

In 2011, Dunhelen students also got the opportunity to attend some wonderful excursions to cement the learning they had undertaken at school. The Year 7s attended a combined Humanities and Indonesian excursion to the Melbourne Zoo, where they learned about endangered species and took a closer look at the impressive South-East Asia exhibit. Year 6 students were treated to a trip to the ever-popular Sovereign Hill. All of Dunhelen learned about the importance of cyber safety when Class Act Theatre came to Aitken College to perform.

Dunhelen students got into the House spirit on numerous occasions throughout the year when competing in the House swimming and athletics carnivals as well as House orienteering. Dunhelen also hosted two school socials. The profits of these popular events were donated to two very important charities: Heart Kids Victoria and The Cancer Council. Many Dunhelen students also showed the compassion they feel for those less fortunate than themselves when they participated in the 40-hour Famine for World Vision.

Glenarthur (Lower Secondary School – Year 8-9)

In these middle years of a child's schooling, what is tried and true is the need for children to experience and understand an immediate connection between themselves and their world – socially and educationally. There is nothing new in the idea that "children should learn through activity and through things", a "self-activity" academic approach which has been a common foundation of schooling.

This day-to-day connectedness with community occurs in myriad ways, encouraged and directed by the staff who teach in Years 8 and 9. Other accounts in this annual report commend the efforts of Aitken students. Here in Glenarthur we guide students to use their abilities both for themselves and for others – again, a common belief in the education to be your own person, but within a society of inter-dependence. Students contribute to College life in a range of areas [as seen in the sample photographs]. Understanding through doing is necessary for an adolescent and provides purpose and reassurance. This sense of work ethic is seen in the students' contributions to and involvement in various events and activities, some of which are: environmental programs; the traditional Australian and Commonwealth events such as Anzac and Remembrance Day, which are run by Glenarthur students, but include the whole College community; fundraisers for reputable charitable organizations, and representation of the College at extra-curricula functions. Underpinning these areas is the firm and fixed foundation of the student's schooldays – be diligent in study and effort.

Of particular note for 2011 is the extension in our curriculum of practical lessons in commercial and business areas relating to the everyday dealings of adolescents with consumer laws – such as mobile-phone plans and sensible personal financial planning. This Lifeskills subject has recently been publicized by government educational agencies as deserving of more time in schools. Aitken is fortunate to have been selected to trial pilot programs run by major banks, whose staff [as well as speakers from the Department of Justice] conducted commerce seminars in 2011 for Year 9 students. The lessons [as in many subjects] guide and support children to arrive at their own answers after due consideration, rather than be supplied with ready-made answers bereft of personal thought. Another major focus has been the teaching of cyber-safety skills relating to not merely personal dignity, but also community responsibility. This 'subject' works closely with the Restorative Practices and Wellbeing programs which are interleaved with the general curriculum.

We are blessed in Glenarthur to enjoy a dedicated and supportive team of Homeroom teachers who monitor and guide the progress of these young students. Our motto has been mentioned in previous reports: "Give Grow Gain".

Brookhill (Senior School -Year 10-12).

Senior School at Aitken College aims to help all students develop into outstanding citizens. This is done by fostering their interests and encouraging excellence academically and in the co-curricular areas. In addition to striving for their personal best in the classroom, students are encouraged to become involved in the College and wider community through cultural, sporting and community service activities.

The core focus of life in Brookhill remains the work done by teachers and students in the classroom. The main reason for most families choosing Aitken College is the excellent learning environment and academic focus. Senior School staff all work to create a culture which enjoys and respects learning and knows how to study. High standards of student behaviour are expected and enforced, with a focus on orderly and cooperative classrooms.

Research has shown that, after direct teacher instruction, one of the biggest effects on student academic outcomes is students' study skills. Senior School has teamed up with external provider Elevate Education to develop a comprehensive and integrated study skills program, Students across Years 10 to 12 take part in seminars conducted by Elevate Education presenters. The seminars are targeted at improving students' abilities in the areas of time management, goal setting, efficient study techniques and examination preparation. Material from the seminars is followed up in Life skills classes.

Driver education and road safety education is an important part of the extra-curricular program in Senior School. In 2011, Aitken College and corporate partner, DECA developed a state of the art pre-driver education program. Students had a half day theory instruction from DECA professional driver education instructors and a full day of practical driver safety activities at the DECA facility in Altona.

The Presentation Ball was held on 3 September at the Moonee Valley Racecourse.

Performing Arts

In 2011, around 1050 students participated in Primary Performing Arts, Drama, Music and Media classes. When you add to this weekly ensemble groups, four major productions, fifteen after-school concerts, numerous in-school performances and the annual Festival of the Arts, Performing Arts contributed significantly to the cultural life of the College.

The first of our major productions was a new event to the calendar. Eager to encourage more students onto the stage, the newly formed student Drama Committee worked with some dedicated senior students and staff and presented the inaugural Middle School Play, "Sally Spry Super Spy". A large cast of students was involved in presenting the play with 284 people attending. The production which was directed by a Year 11 student also utilised many senior students in key production roles.

This year's VCE Theatre Studies Play was "Ruby Moon" by Matt Cameron. A cast of two and support crew of five presented this slightly dark play which explored the aftermath of a family tragedy. A total audience of 194 people were left with more questions than answers and discussion about what really happened continued for many days afterwards.

This year's College Musical utilised the well-known stories of Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr Seuss. In the most successful musical presented in the College, 1620 people enjoyed the colour and poetry of The Cat In The Hat, Horton the Elephant and all of the whimsical characters brought to life on stage. "Seussical, The Musical" (Flaherty and Ahrens) was presented by an energetic cast of nearly sixty students.

Once again, the musical provided opportunities for a number of first time performers, some of them in lead roles and was very well supported by a large band of staff from outside of Performing Arts taking responsibility for various elements of the production.

The College Drama Production "Stories In The Dark" by Debra Oswald took the 166 audience members who attended on a journey through a fantasy world of ogres, kings and dragons. Well done to the many staff and students who were involved in presenting this engaging production.

With so much newly landscaped grounds to work with, the outdoor stage for this year's ***Festival of the Arts*** was moved to the front of the College and provided audience members with room to stretch out on the artificial turf. A great deal of talent was unearthed and showcased during lunchtime and after school performances and involving students from all Year levels. Work undertaken in Media, Primary Performing Arts, Music and Drama was highlighted. The Festival concluded with the ***Director's Choice Gala Concert*** which brought together highlighted performances from throughout the year as well as featuring past students and parents. Almost 200 people were treated to some outstanding performances.

Two concerts were presented by each of Fairview and Cumberland Schools. Ably supported by the Primary Performance Arts Coordinator much of the ideas and preparation came from the class teachers themselves.

The remaining after school performances consisted of two Year 3 Strings Concerts, two Year 7 and 8 Band Concerts, VCE Music and Theatre Studies Performance Evenings, Winter Music Soiree and Performing Arts Captains' Concert.

Once again, we opened the auditorium to a number of external events including the Australian Irish Dancing Association State Championships, Cabaret Shows and a number of dance schools end of year concerts.

Visual Arts

From the beginning of time humans have used forms of art to express their ideas and passions ranging from religious beliefs to documenting history. Inspired by the Sistine Chapel, and the idea to create our own images on the ceiling of a roof like that of the Renaissance artist Michelangelo, Mrs Alison Hurry (Artist in Residence) worked with art students to paint a number of panels. A large number of students both primary and secondary painted a series of images inspired by the art of Mirka Mora, Renaissance artists, and Australian Pop artist Howard Arkley. Each year students look forward to the Artist in Residence Program now in its ninth year. Under Mrs Hurry's guidance students learnt traditional and modern painting techniques and experienced being part of the collaborative process with the artist. These stunning artworks were displayed around the school and finally installed on the ceiling of class rooms in the art area.

Each year students attend excursions to various exhibitions. The Year 3 students went to the NGV to complete a workshop inspired by the collection. A small group of Year 9 students attended the Galway Art Workshop at Mowbray College to create graffiti and stencil art. Year 10 Photography students attended Heidi Museum of Modern Art for their photo shoot of the grounds and artwork. Years 10, 11 and 12 visited *Top Arts* and the *Vienna, Art and Design* exhibition and Year 12 Studio Arts students visited a range of Commercial Galleries in Melbourne. This was the second year of the Fairview Art Club. This has become a very popular after school activity where children apply for a position in the group. Students are given interesting tasks to do that are not linked to the school curriculum.

To celebrate Environment Week the Year 9 Art students worked as team leaders to make large chalk drawings of endangered animals they researched and felt passionate about. Many other students joined in to help and to create their own drawings. The aim was for the Year 9 students to raise awareness and to teach other students about these animals and ways to protect them.

The most important art work is done at school by students and the best is displayed in the annual Art and Design Exhibition in November during the Festival of The Arts. The work, as always, was brilliant in its diversity and standard.

The curriculum is constantly reviewed by the Art staff and there are always minor changes to breathe new life into the courses and to make the tasks interesting to students. The department has excellent facilities with purpose built rooms, two with computers and specialist equipment ranging from a printing press, digital cameras and an electric kiln for firing ceramic models.

Sport

2011 has been a very exciting year for Sport. Students have used every opportunity given to them to compete at School, Regional and State level. Our new Sports facilities enable students to better their performances in interschool sports.

GALWAY Interschool Sports continued to provide our students with many opportunities in sports. Aitken College did particularly well in 2011 with many outstanding wins. Students were also selected for Cross Country, Swimming, Athletics and Orienteering teams. Students once again were also given the opportunity to participate in the Victorian Basketball championships and Hooptime Junior Basketball where our Year 3/4 mixed team reached the State finals.

Our swim team continued to dominate with many junior students reaching State finals. This was greatly strengthened with morning swim trainings that were held at Craigieburn Leisure Centre.

Our Junior Interschool Sports program continued to be more competitive. Students in Year 3 to 6 were also given the opportunity to compete in Interschool Athletics, Cross Country, Orienteering, Milo Cricket and AFL football.

Our annual AFL senior Football challenge against Melbourne High School and Mac.Robertson Girls' High School allowed our senior students to compete at a higher level. Students showed great enthusiasm and dedication.

Aitken College had another successful year in 2011. This success is supported by our dedicated sports coaches and students who put in endless hours of training.

Languages Faculty

2011 has been an exciting year within the Languages faculty. We celebrated many achievements and changes within our faculty. We also welcomed the addition of six new primary languages.

The Languages Faculty continued to review and develop topics and approaches to teaching Languages. We developed topics which made greater use of ICT resources and also more active and tactile activities. As a faculty we are continually looking at ways to bring culture into the classroom. We meet fortnightly in an allotted time to develop new resources and activities and discuss ways to help bring Indonesian language and culture alive in the classroom.

During the year the students participated in a variety of events which added context to their language learning. Year 7 went to the Parkville Zoo to learn about South East Asian animals and use their language to complete a number of simple tasks. They also learnt about deforestation in Indonesia and the impact that the palm oil industry is having on the habitat of orangutans, elephants and tigers. Year 8 attended a performance by the renowned Indonesian Master Shadow Puppeteer, Pak Sumardi. A selected group of Year 9 students successfully defended our title in the *Olympiade Sekolah* which was held in November at Overnewton College. The *Olympiade Sekolah* is an inter-school competition in which groups of students complete a series of tasks which test their adeptness at *Bahasa Indonesia*. The main task this year is for the students to create a 4 minute television commercial for baby formula or headache tablets.

Once again students from Aitken College had the opportunity to compete against other schools through our participation in the *Sayembara Lisan* – Indonesian Language Competition. The eleven students who participated in the competition gave up many of their lunchtimes in order to practise with Indonesian staff in preparation for the regional competition. They acquitted themselves very well in what was a talented cohort of students from schools across the metropolitan area.

The Indonesian staff are constantly reviewing and developing our curriculum and teaching strategies with a view to increasing interest in learning the language and improving retention rates in the non-compulsory years. We have sought to develop a range of teaching approaches and tools such as inter class competitions and the innovative use of ICT. The Year 9s were particularly excited by our acquisition of a set of iPods for use in class through a variety of language based apps, games and movie making functions. Year 9 students also had the opportunity to compete in small groups in a school based competition which was held in regular class time.

In 2011 we celebrated Indonesian Independence Day with a popular lunchtime activity, Masterchef Indonesia. Students participating were put into teams and given a recipe for *nasi goreng* (fried rice) or spicy *mei goreng ayam* (fried noodles with chicken). They had approximately 40 minutes to cook and eat their meals and the general verdict was *enak sekali*, very delicious.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was the Indonesian faculty's trip to Malaysia. Malaysia has a similar language and culture to Indonesia so is an ideal location for an overseas trip. The 18 students who participated got to experience life in a Borneo longhouse, walk through the tropical rainforest and learn bushcraft from a now retired (luckily for us) Iban headhunter. Throughout the trip students got a firsthand

experience of Malay culture and the opportunity to practise their *Bahasa* skills. It was pleasing to see the students using their Indonesian skills to converse with boat-taxi captains, tour guides and through bargaining with stall holders in Kuala Lumpur's night markets. Students also got to see Probiscus monkeys and orangutans wild in the Sarawak's national parks and go on several short treks through Borneo jungles. A highlight for the students was feeding and riding elephants at the Kuala Gandah Elephant Conservation Centre.

Students in Years 3 to 5 now learn a new language each semester. In 2011 the Year 3s learnt Italian and Hungarian, the Year 4s, Romanian and Greek and the Year 5s, Vietnamese and Hindi. Thank you to the staff for the tremendous amount of work they put into establishing and implementing their courses. The enthusiasm of the students undertaking their subjects is a testament to the value of the program. While learning the basics of their new languages students were encouraged by their teachers to experience some of the cultural background in and out of the class room.

Towards the end of 2011 we began setting up and creating resources for our Languages laboratory which will begin operation in 2012. This room is an exciting new development in the faculty and is set up to enable students to rotate through a variety of ICT, iPod, listening and games based activities over two classes per cycle. The intention of the laboratory is to provide a fun learning environment where the students can work in small groups on interactive activities. We hope this development will further encourage our students' engagement in Languages.

PARENTS

Parents and Friends Association

The Parents and Friends Association involves an active group of supportive parents who worked tirelessly during 2011; they held a Car Boot Sale, arranged a major raffle and tea towel fundraiser with funds raised contributing towards the purchase of a mid-stage curtain for our theatre. Anyone from the school community is welcome to join the group which supports projects nominated by the Principal.

Friends of the Arts Association

Our sincere thanks to our incredibly supportive Friend of the Arts as well as the other parents they organise to assist us on events. The time commitment offered by many other people, whether it is simply running students to performances and rehearsals, working in the canteen, building sets, making costumes or fundraising, is what really keeps the department alive. They have assisted this year with the external events and again provided opportunities for students through Friends of Arts Scholarships. Recipients are able to utilise funds to assist them in taking short courses further deepening their knowledge of their chosen field.

Parent satisfaction

Parents continue to have opportunity to provide feedback to the College through information evenings, Parent Teacher interviews, Parent Morning Teas and via email or interview. Much feedback is positive and continues to focus on areas such as sense of community, academic achievement, extra-curricula opportunities, dedication of staff and a willingness to promote the College to family and friends. Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns with senior management staff. Their comments provide specific areas to investigate further and this is useful as sometimes comments arise because of misinformation. The comments highlighted the need to assess benchmark families and also provide information regarding current and future programs. In 2012 a parent portal will be introduced that will allow improved communication and information between school and families.

Community Engagement

Interact Club

Interact is a Rotary International service club for young people ages 12 to 18. Interact clubs are sponsored by individual Rotary clubs, which provide support and guidance, but they are self-governing and self-supporting.

Interactors develop a network of friendships with local and overseas clubs and learn the importance of:

- Developing leadership skills and personal integrity
- Demonstrating helpfulness and respect for others
- Understanding the value of individual responsibility and hard work
- Advancing international understanding and goodwill

The Interact Club of Aitken College can be very proud of all it has achieved in its first two years. With the support of the Rotary Club of Tullamarine the Interact Club of Aitken College has grown into a vibrant, active and influential part of the community, both within and outside Aitken College.

Local Project: assisting victims of the floods

As part of a project of The Interact Club to support victims of the Australian Floods, an excursion took place to visit the flood affected town of Rochester and take part in community service work.

The town of Rochester, which is approximately 50km north of Bendigo, was badly affected by the recent floods. Local Rotarians, who are involved in ongoing Community Service work, invited The Interact Club of Aitken College to assist with this work. Students divided into two groups and spend several hours working very hard to clear flood debris from fence lines.

Rotary Tullamarine President, Des Malcolm with Interact President, Cassie Lo Giudice and David Murphy at Rochester

Interact students are also engaged in a series of fund raising events to support flood victims.

Interactors raising funds for Flood Relief

College Principal and Rotarian, Josie Crisara, with Interact Club President, Cassie Lo Giudice and Interact member, Daniel Melideo

Interact for Vanuatu Week

The Interact Club of Aitken College is continuing their support of the NTCU school in Vanuatu in 2011. Following on from the highly successful book and equipment drive last year, the Club raised funds for the school this year. Funds raised will be used directly to provide places in the school for children who, otherwise, would not be able to attend school.

Interact students, along with some Aitken staff and parents ran a fundraising BBQ at the opening of the Brimbank Vet Clinic. The Interact Club is grateful to the Rotary Club of Essendon for the use of their BBQ trailer.

From this and other events over $1,000 raised will be used to support a student place at the NTCU.

Students at the NTCU in Vanuatu using equipment donated by the Aitken College Community.

Alumni

A five year reunion was held for the 2006 Alumni group in December and this provided them with the opportunity to tour the school, see the many changes and also to share their memories and hear their stories since leaving school.

Sustainability and Environment

Aitken College was in the first 3 Victorian schools to be re-accredited with their 5th Star in the AuSSI program and was awarded the title of Resource Smart School of the Year 2011 by Sustainability Victoria.

We continued discussion with the College architect on the design of the Environment Centre, adding to the previous requirements the need for a “teaching kitchen”.

Students were chosen to present at the Melbourne Water Conference in June 2011 and the International River Conference in Adelaide in October 2011.

Aitken hosted the secondary AuSSI Intensive Professional Development session (June), and presented Environmental workshops at a number of primary schools.

An Environmental Conference was run at Aitken College, during Green Week, where local schools could attend and participate in our events.

Other activities included planting of 300 trees on Aitken Community property in Wildwood and student led protests on animal welfare to gain media attention. Working Bees for staff, students and parents strengthened ties with the local indigenous community by helping prepare Weeroona Cemetery for the burial of Aboriginal remains, returned from overseas. Students participated in “Clean Up Australia Schools Day” at Williamstown Beach.

We completed the irrigation system in the greenhouse; plant propagation has been effective. We continued collecting seed from our indigenous species for their propagation, and over 600 indigenous plants were planted in the established native gardens bordering Brodies Creek.

We continued providing and uploading all our billing information to the online “Schools Environmental Tracking System” SETS.

Staff, students and parents belong to the following clubs; Environment Committee (group which meets regularly to discuss initiatives and give direction to environment programs), Green Team (students who meet weekly to catch up on environmental initiatives being run in the school), Aitken Adventurers (students, staff and parents who attend environmentally themed excursions once per term, on the weekend) and Litter Exterminators (volunteer students who collect litter from worst littered parts of the school).

Faith Development

All Aitken students attend a weekly age-appropriate half hour service presented by the College Chaplain or the Director of Chaplaincy. Faith issues and Christian values are recommended to the community via state of the art audiovisual presentations, guest speakers or others trained in this field. Faith Development is linked to the wider Religious Education and Life Skills programs and students are encouraged to look beyond themselves to the needs of others, and the claims of God as revealed through Christian revelation.

The Religion and Values Education program complements the weekly Chapel presentations. This program runs all years Prep to 10, and is age appropriate. Whilst a main focus in on teaching the core precepts of the Christian faith, students are introduced to other Faiths and world views. Comparisons are encouraged so that students are able to make sensible decision based on a sound understanding of issues to with Religious experience and Faith.

The *Reach Out Community* (ROC) run by the Chaplaincy team meets on Wednesday evenings and is always trying new ideas to encourage and build up those who come to explore issues of faith. Monthly *Kid's ROC* evenings are very popular with younger students and their parents. ROC supports a range of activities within the College community. A community choir commenced in late 2011 and is quickly growing in popularity. ROC also hosts student evenings such as *Aitken's got Talent* and *Aitken can Dance*, modelled on modern popular reality shows. These allow some students to explore their gifts and be affirmed in the process. ROC runs an annual Grief and Loss service which addresses specific needs within the community. Links with local community groups and Uniting church congregations is always been strengthened where possible.

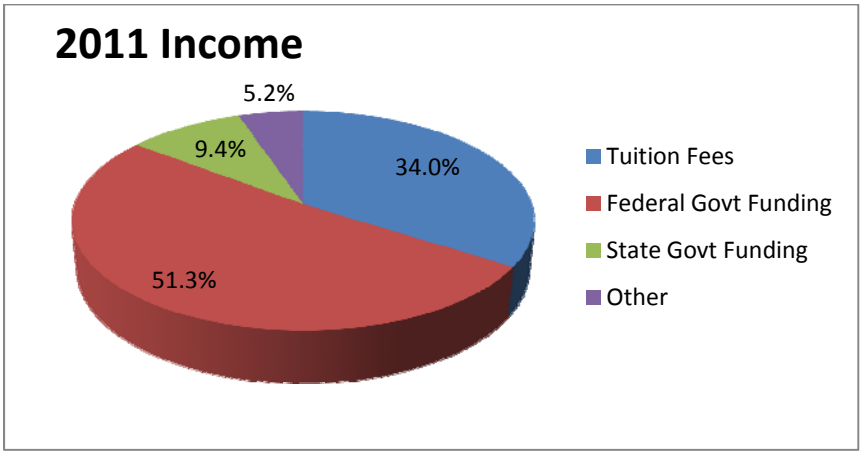
The definition of a Faith Community includes the idea of a group of people with a commitment to a faith (in this case of Aitken College, the Christian Faith), who seek to support each other, share their faith, and develop links between the faith and others within the community. Reach Out Community forms a central part of this idea at Aitken College. Now in its ninth year it continues to remain faithful to the concept given above. Participation is invited from the Aitken Community and those affiliated with the Uniting Church in the wider community.

Links with local Uniting Churches have grown over the years and this allows the annual Baptism and Confirmation services to be offered, opening up opportunities within the student body for this important faith commitment. Staff, students and parents are encouraged to participate in chapel services and the annual Easter and Carols services which are important parts of the College Year in terms of religious observances.

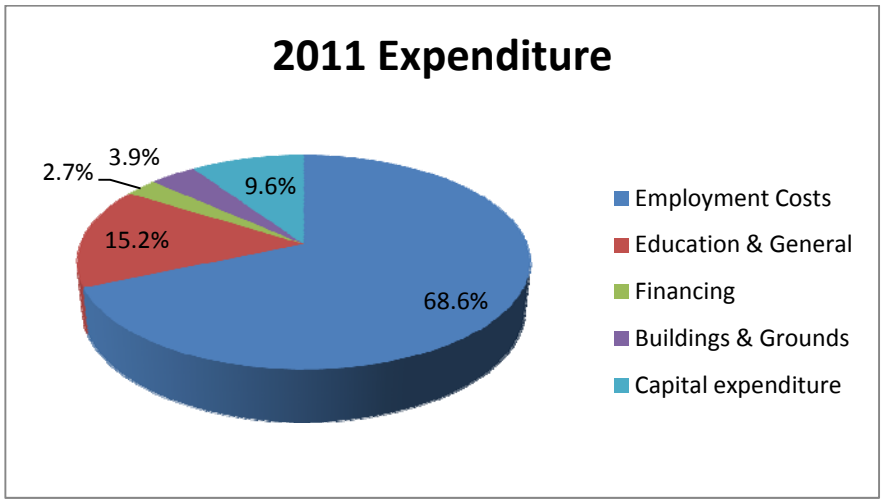
The Student Services Team seeks to address the many needs presented by our large student, and indeed wider parent community. The four trained counsellors see an ever-changing list of students who struggle with a wide range of life issues. The support work which the counselling team undertakes is vital in relieving pressure on class teachers and enabling some members of the Aitken community to be assisted in difficult times. For students this often means the difference between coping and thriving, or being lost unseen in a large community which by necessity presses on with its goals despite those members who struggle for a range of reasons. Counselling is also offered for staff and families. The work the counselling team undertakes is by nature generally unseen and not widely discussed.

The Chaplaincy and Student Services Team run programs from time to time which address issues such as Anger Management and Parenting skills. The latter has covered such topics as Bullying, Mental Health, Body Image, and Living with Teenagers. The Chaplaincy team is regularly called upon to meet the immediate needs of the Aitken community in regard of suffering and loss, via counselling, visitation and practical support.

Finance



Major sources of income for the College are government funding (State and Federal) and tuition fees. Other sources include the Aitken College Foundation contributions each year.



Year	Income	Year	Expenditure
2011	$16,921,534	2011	$16,210,417

A significant proportion of expenditure is spent on employment costs (68.6%). Education and general covers faculty and administration costs. Capital expenditure represents 9.6% of expenditure.

Information & Communications Technology

2011 saw the completion of the acquisition and implementation of computers purchased through the Federal Government's Digital Education Revolution program. Apart from some extra desktop computers in various locations, classes will in 2012 have access to mobile trolleys with netbooks and iPads. These will be utilised by accessing the new school-wide wireless network.

College and DER funds were also used for continuing upgrading of the network; cabling, switches, power back-up, servers and internet access have all been updated to accommodate the increasing demands of a large school.

Desktop computers are gradually being replaced by very efficient and quiet "ice cube" machines that are noticeably faster, whisper quiet and emit very little heat. The change is very obvious when you walk into a computer laboratory.

Capital Works Projects and Property Management Report

There have been many capital projects completed at Aitken College over the last couple of years but none more important than the concreting of our gravel paths. We managed, under some very extreme weather conditions, to complete almost 80 percent of our project. This was only achieved by the extraordinary work ethic of our concreting contractor who worked 7 days a week through the months of December and January. The construction of the concrete paths enabled us to landscape the newly formed garden bed areas. These new garden beds have received a programmable irrigation system and have also been fully planted and mulched.

A number of classrooms in the Dunhelen and Cumberland areas received split system air conditioners. The new air conditioners were installed in place of the less economical room air conditioners. This has provided a much quieter and comfortable educational environment for both staff and students.

As part of a safety audit on traffic management the College received a recommendation from its OH&S committee that it construct a fixed barrier between students and traffic and also provide several fixed pedestrian crossing points. The College followed the recommendation and constructed a new fence along the eastern side of the college and two new crossing points. This fence and pedestrian crossings have vastly improved the safety of students and parents during drop off and pick up times.

Other College funded capital projects undertaken included;

- Construction of a new kitchen in the Learning centre
- Extension to the maintenance shed to increase indoor storage capacity and provide change room and kitchen
- Replacement of furniture to classrooms in the Dunhelen area
- Installation of kick rails to the CPA gantry
- Lockable glass notice boards in several locations across the college
- Joinery items in the science building
- Re carpeting to VCE 1 common areas and Glenarthur classrooms
- Installation of 24 new slatted seats
- Installation of synthetic chess board, hop scotch and down ball court

The Property Department has in place a cyclical maintenance program which includes the inspection of all essential services such as fire safety equipment, air-conditioning, emergency lighting, exit lighting, paths of travel and exit doors.

Other areas that are considered an important part of cyclical maintenance include the testing and tagging of all electrical appliances, thermal scanning of all switchboards, testing of fume cupboards, chemical waste disposal and annual inspections of trees by qualified arborists.

Our maintenance program also extends to the preventative maintenance of buildings and college grounds which include regular inspections of external timber work, decking, water tanks, playgrounds, irrigation systems and other minor internal items.

Major maintenance work for the year included;

- Replacement of the sewer transfer tank
- Installation of recessed lighting in the gym male and female change rooms
- Installation of new exit devices to CPA foyer doors
- Resurfacing outside F6 to create a safer pathway
- Basketball tower board replacement
- 250 sq metres of asphalt repairs to the entrance road opposite the electrical kiosk

A Uniting Church School