



# PEGS Community Report 2020





# Our Philosophy

Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School is associated with the Uniting Church and is dedicated to the provision of an academic curriculum and a broad co-curricular programme which encourages in each student the development of intellectual curiosity, respect for the traditions of scholarship, the realisation of his or her artistic and recreational potential and the practice of Christian values.

## Our Objectives

The school is committed to a curriculum that encourages excellence through the nurture of intelligence, creativity, independence and perseverance. It promotes the view that a student's academic achievement is enhanced by her or his enjoyment of school and engagement in school life.

Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School encourages all students to participate in Australian life as proud and responsible citizens. It is committed to create an environment of mutual respect and support amongst the staff and students.

The objectives of the School are:

- To create an environment where students are safe and where teachers and students can work in harmony

- To foster a love of learning

- To develop in all students a critical awareness of their own experiences

- To assist students in their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social and physical development

- To nurture an appreciation of the intrinsic value of education and knowledge

- To encourage in students the traits of self-confidence, independence and perseverance

- To encourage each student to achieve his or her potential in all activities

- To engender a sense of responsibility and respect for other people

- To ensure a high level of literacy and numeracy

- To develop an aesthetic and creative sense and to foster an appreciation of cultural and artistic endeavours

- To provide a community in which students may choose to embrace Christian values and attitudes

- To provide students with a knowledge and understanding of their history and the Australian experience

- To develop an appreciation of leisure time and the capacity to use it productively

- To provide a range of activities so that all students have the opportunity to discover their talents and their worth

- To prepare students for their transition to tertiary study or work through personal development and vocational guidance

- To encourage in all students an appreciation of their natural environment.



# Board of Management

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## Chairman's Message

The Community Report allows you to gain insight into what it means to have a PEGS education and to be part of the PEGS community. 2020 was a year without precedent and we were constantly reminded how important this community is as we have worked together to support students and to encourage them to embrace challenge and opportunity, and the outcomes should make all of us proud to be associated with the School.

We knew 2020 would be a year of transition for Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School. Initially, when we were thinking about this change, at the forefront of our mind, was the legacy of Mr Tony Larkin, and the transition to our new Principal, Ms Kate Dullard. While Ms Dullard was new to the role of Principal, her time at the school and her experience as a member of our community, offered us stability.

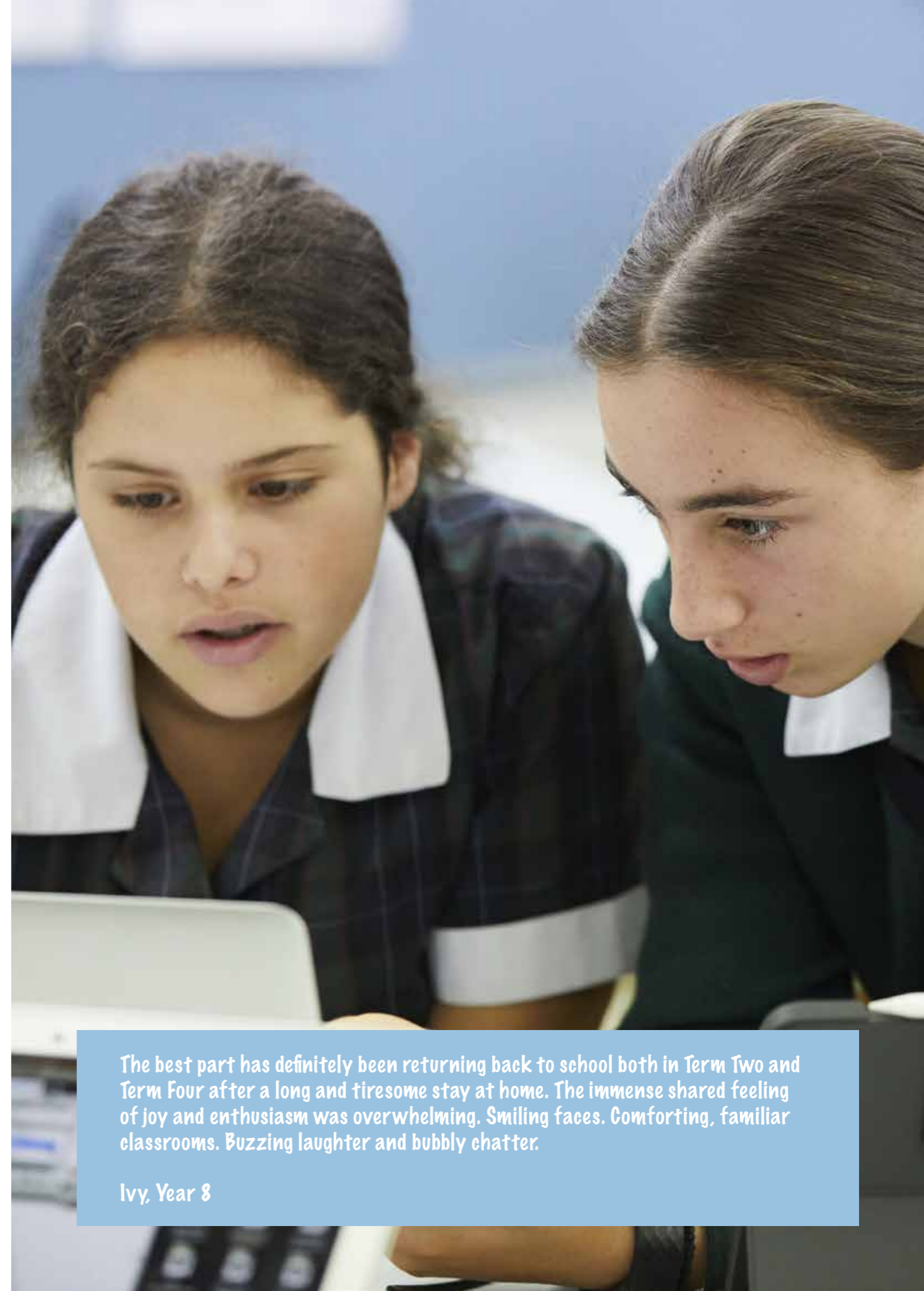
Early in the school year the COVID-19 pandemic that swept the globe instigated a shift in our focus. The focus was now ensuring we were able to adapt to the rapidly changing needs of our community and the community at large, and providing the stability and continuity of learning for our students, which is expected from a PEGS education. I am immensely proud of the work of our staff, students and parents, who demonstrated great resilience, innovation and adaptability in the face of adversity.

In the face of challenge, we also were able to make great progress on some of the major capital expenditure projects that were underway prior to the pandemic. Works on the new gymnasium at Keilor East continued, with very good progress being made despite some delays related to the pandemic. The Music House at Junior School (boys) is now complete and is a striking addition to the Essendon campus. It is a truly beautiful building with thirteen music rooms of varying sizes and a classroom which can double as a performance space. The boys were very excited to be able to use this facility in 2020. While 2020 did not allow us to make use of the Keilor Park sports campus as much as we would have liked, new changerooms, and new, elite-standard hockey fields awaited the return of our students to competitive sport, and are also now in use.

All of these projects have been undertaken with a view to providing our students with an exceptional educational experience, both inside the classroom and beyond. We well understand that our programmes in sport, music, drama, dance, social justice and at camp, in partnership with a rigorous academic programme, create well-rounded individuals, who exemplify our pillars of Care and Wellbeing and the Culture of Thinking.

I present to you the 2020 Community Report both in celebration of our community engagement and achievements and the incredible opportunities presented to our students through challenge and change.

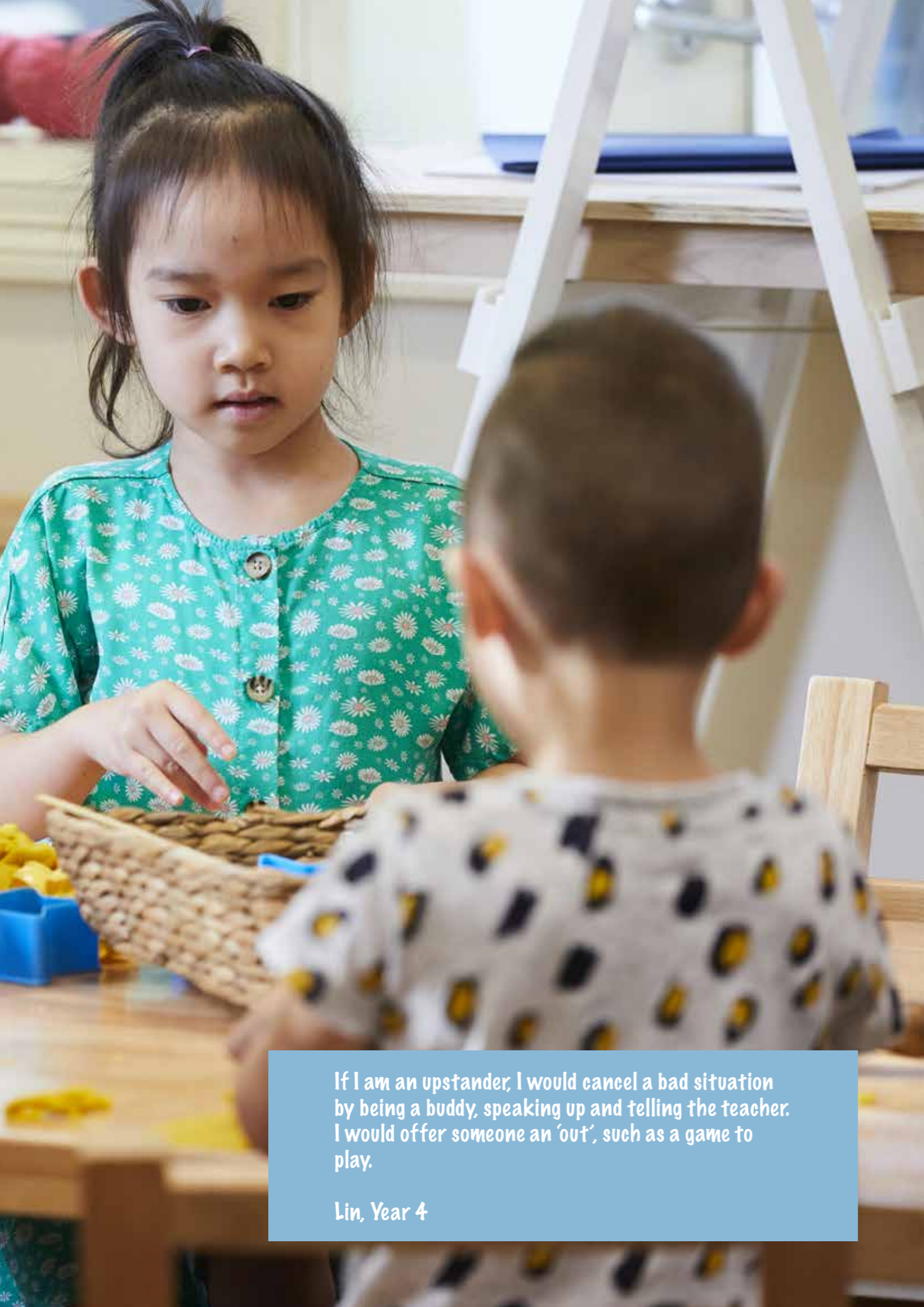
**Bruce Henderson**  
Chairman



The best part has definitely been returning back to school both in Term Two and Term Four after a long and tiresome stay at home. The immense shared feeling of joy and enthusiasm was overwhelming. Smiling faces. Comforting, familiar classrooms. Buzzy laughter and bubbly chatter.

Ivy, Year 8





If I am an upstander, I would cancel a bad situation by being a buddy, speaking up and telling the teacher. I would offer someone an 'out', such as a game to play.

Lin, Year 4

## The PEGS experience: 2020

With an enrolment of more than 2800 students at campuses situated in Essendon, Keilor East and Moonee Ponds, PEGS offers a rigorous academic programme, encouraging a love and respect for the challenges of learning whilst remaining sensitive to individual abilities and circumstances. A framework of cultural, spiritual and sporting activities promotes student engagement and supports our aspirations for the development of mature, socialised and discerning young adults.

PEGS has been associated with the Uniting Church in Australia since 1977 and offers the fundamentals of a Christian education to all students. Religious Education classes are an intrinsic component of the curriculum for all students from Prep to Year Nine. Students at every level attend services of worship at Commencement, Easter and Mid-year, with Year Twelve students also attending a Valedictory Service. As a consequence of community health protocols in 2020, most services took place online and the annual end of year Carol Service was not celebrated.

The twin pillars at the heart of our school's strategic plan- Culture of Thinking and Care and Wellbeing provided a firm structure underpinning staff and student response to the crisis presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. By encouraging a growth mindset which views challenges as learning opportunities and champions the value of thinking, our teaching and learning was able to pivot to online classrooms where teachers engaged students in a full timetable of activities, discussions and collaborative learning, albeit remotely. Teaching staff was supported by the eLearning team to gain confidence with new technology, develop a variety of online classroom strategies and strengthen communication. Many of these strategies have also proven valuable with the return to onsite learning.

Students' wellbeing was supported during the extended period of community lockdown by the strong structure of Year level Coordinators and class teachers. Daily Home Room sessions included a variety of challenges, sharing special skills and opportunities for students to connect. The co-curricular programme was not neglected: online activities included instrumental concerts, rehearsals for music ensembles, actors and dancers, Google Meet debates and a drama production filmed remotely and edited for a YouTube audience.

The ability of our staff to support students' remote learning in an inclusive and productive manner owes much to ICT services which had continued with expansion to address the essential role of digital media for communication with students and parents and opportunities for online learning.

The school's building programme continued with the completion of the extended and refurbished Music House project at the Essendon Campus, new change rooms and hockey pitches at Keilor Park sports complex and major extension of sports facilities at the Keilor East Campus with a doubling of gymnasium capacity and additional classroom, sports and fitness facilities.

Recognizing and responding to the different strengths and learning styles of boys and girls across stages in their development, PEGS considers the arrangement of single-gender classes in the Junior and Middle Schools and co-educational education in Senior years is paramount to maintaining the exceptional educational opportunities that our students enjoy. In 2020 the school was granted an exemption to the Equal Opportunity Act in order to support this structure, including maintenance of separate waiting lists for boys and girls.



# The PEGS experience: students in focus

## Curriculum and academic achievement

The school encourages excellence through the nurture of intelligence, creativity, independence and perseverance. It offers its students a range of learning activities suitable to their developmental levels and a breadth of subjects appropriate to their needs and abilities.

## VCE results

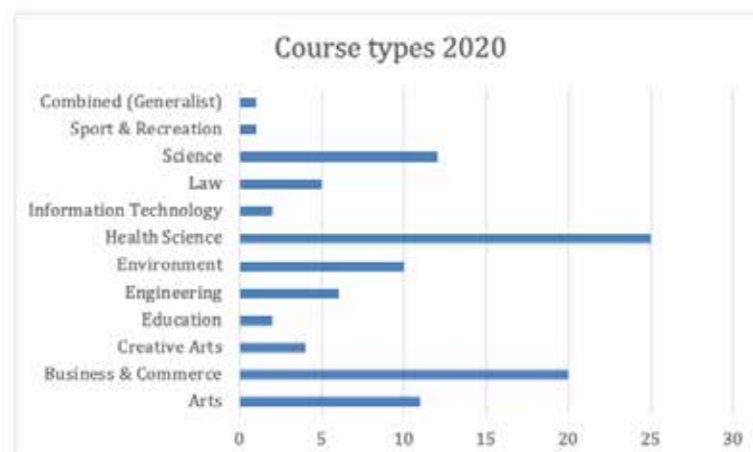
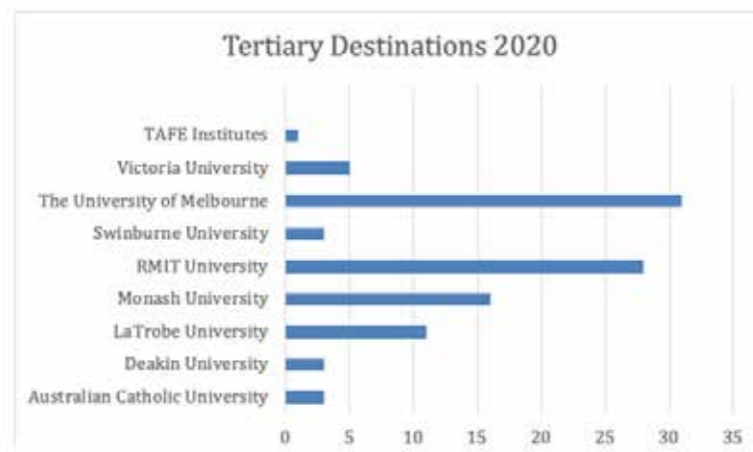
All candidates successfully completed the VCE.

Two students achieved the highest possible ATAR score of 99.95 with a further two students scoring 99.90 and two scoring 99.85. A total of 17 (or 7 per cent of our students) were placed in the top one per cent of students in the state, with ATAR scores of 99 or above. The median ATAR score at PEGS was 88.45, placing 50 per cent of our students in the top 12 per cent of the state.

All VCE subjects are scored out of 50 and, in each subject, less than 8 per cent of candidates statewide obtain a score of 40 or above. At PEGS 23 per cent of all study scores were at or above 40. The median study score was 35 out of the possible score of 50. This result matched that of 2019. Perfect scores of 50 were recorded on twelve occasions and in the following six subjects: Australian and Global Politics, Biology, English, Further Mathematics, Mathematical Methods and Physical Education.

The University of Melbourne remains the most popular tertiary destination, attracting 31 per cent of our students, with RMIT close behind at 28 percent. Health Science was the most popular tertiary course, followed by Commerce/Business, Science and Arts in that order. 93 per cent received an offer for their first or second tertiary course preference.

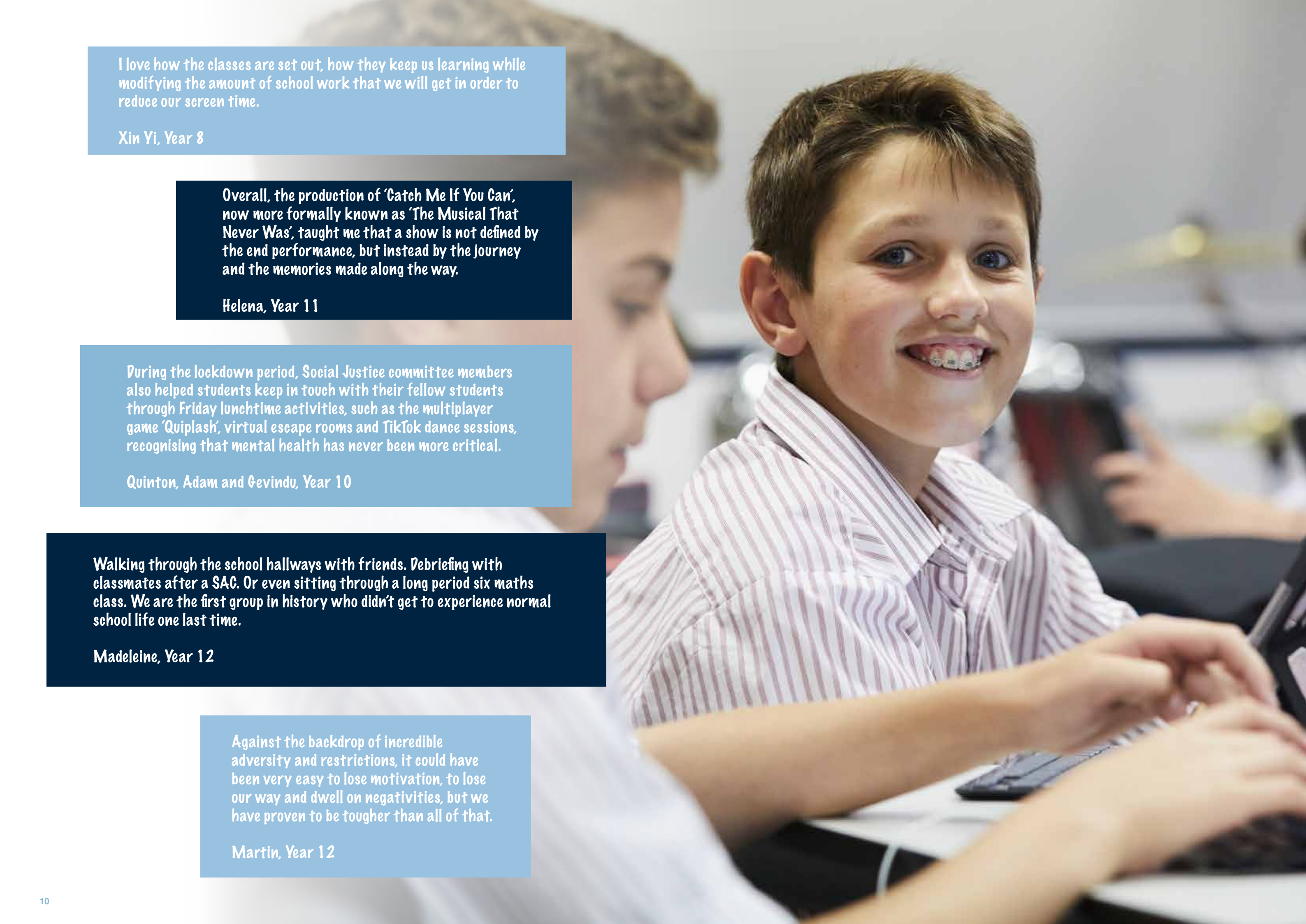
Destinations of students completing VCE in 2020 are summarised below:



For the five of us, the School Maths Olympiad was one of the few events still running this year which allowed us to enjoy the thrill of competition and our passion for mathematics.

Nicholas, Year 12





I love how the classes are set out, how they keep us learning while modifying the amount of school work that we will get in order to reduce our screen time.

Xin Yi, Year 8

Overall, the production of 'Catch Me If You Can', now more formally known as 'The Musical That Never Was', taught me that a show is not defined by the end performance, but instead by the journey and the memories made along the way.

Helena, Year 11

During the lockdown period, Social Justice committee members also helped students keep in touch with their fellow students through Friday lunchtime activities, such as the multiplayer game 'Quiplash', virtual escape rooms and TikTok dance sessions, recognising that mental health has never been more critical.

Quinton, Adam and Gevindu, Year 10

Walking through the school hallways with friends. Debriefing with classmates after a SAC. Or even sitting through a long period six maths class. We are the first group in history who didn't get to experience normal school life one last time.

Madeleine, Year 12

Against the backdrop of incredible adversity and restrictions, it could have been very easy to lose motivation, to lose our way and dwell on negativities, but we have proven to be tougher than all of that.

Martin, Year 12



## Literacy and numeracy benchmarks

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the annual National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests were not conducted in 2020.

## Standardised tests and competitions

Participation in standardised tests, national competitions and forums was restricted but the following achievements were recorded.

### In Mathematics

Enrichment activities continued online throughout the year at the Middle Schools and the Larkin Centre.

National Mathematics Summer School (online) - 4 participants

Computational and Algorithmic Thinking (online) –1 High Distinction, 3 Distinctions

Australian Mathematics Competition (online by invitation): 1 Prize, 3 High Distinctions, 2 Distinctions

The University of Melbourne Open Day School Maths Olympics (online)- 5 competitors

### In Science

National Youth Science Forum – 2 students selected to attend

Chemistry Olympiad – 2 Distinctions, 1 Credit

### In Languages

Chinese: CLTAV Chinese Speaking and Performance Competition – cancelled

French: Alliance Française Competition - 7 Prizes

German: Goethe Poetry Competition – 2 Prizes, 5 finalists

Indonesian: Indonesian Language Teachers Association Oral Competition – 2 Prizes, 11 finalists

Latin: National Latin Examination – 16 gold medals

Linguistics: Australian Computational and Linguistics Olympiad (OZCLO) – 4 gold medals

## Co-curricular participation

The busy co-curricular calendar enhances student enjoyment of school and engagement in school life. Students have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of co-curricular activities including music, drama, dance and sport. In the secondary school they participate in up to two seasons of sport – a summer sport and a winter sport.

Highlights of 2020 included:

### In the Performing Arts

**Music:** Although the planned series of concerts could not be presented due to health restrictions, online rehearsals for ensembles continued throughout the year. In addition, instrumental concerts were conducted online, with families sharing the experience as a virtual audience.

**Drama:** Portraying the final instalment of a trilogy that had commenced two decades ago, the drama production planned for 2020, *The Final Adventures of Charlie Ace Private Eye* transitioned from a stage production to a short film during the rehearsal period. Circumstances offered students the exciting opportunity to work with a green screen and the final production was shared with a virtual audience via YouTube.

**Dance:** The Dance Company began the year with regular workshops onsite and transitioned to an online studio format in Term 2.

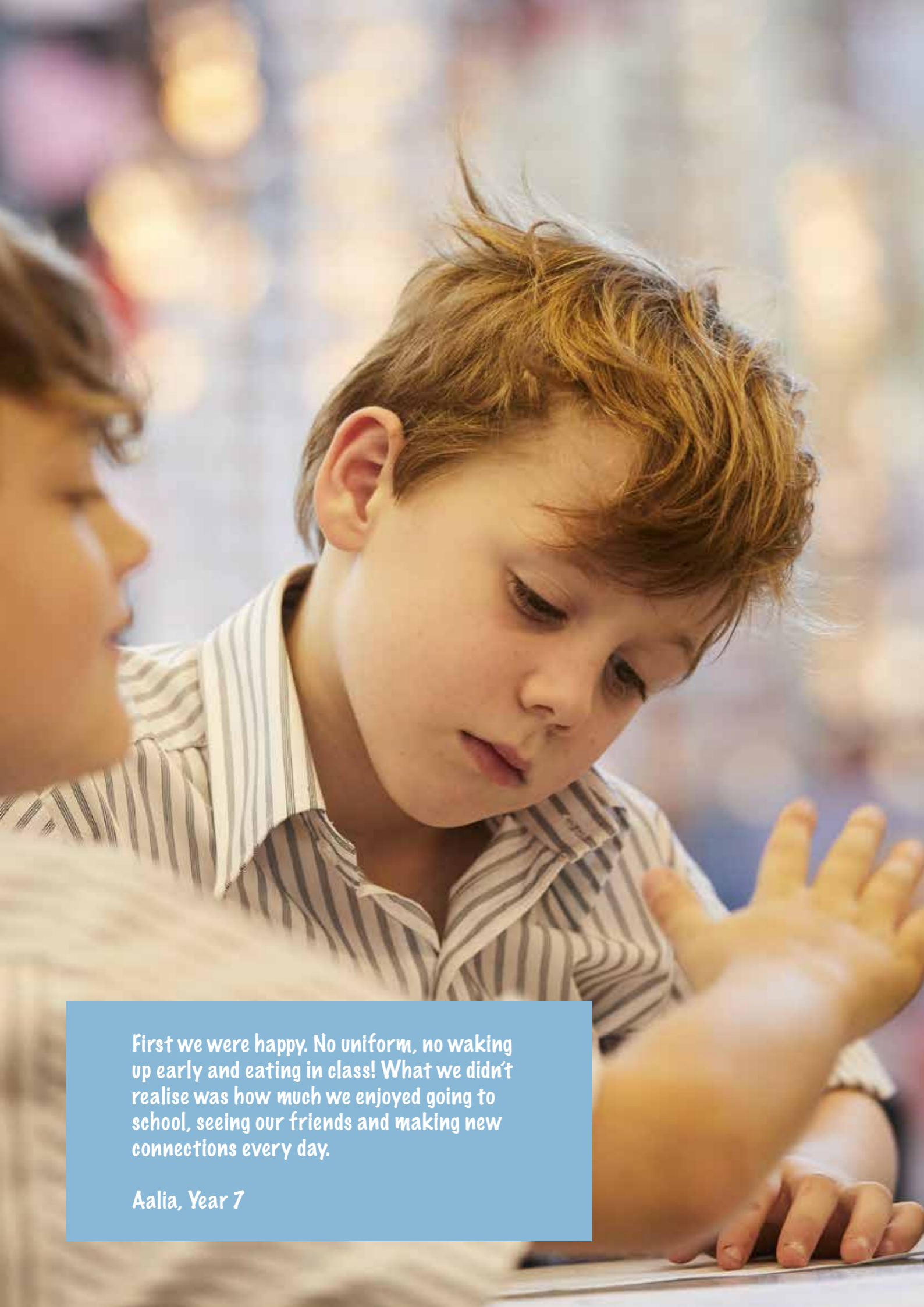
**The Musical:** Production of *Catch Me If You Can* was planned for Term 3, with rehearsals continuing under COVID safe arrangements into Term 2. Unfortunately extended lockdown arrangements ordained that performance could not go ahead.



While being captain of the Junior Strings has not been as I expected, I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet the other students to share music together through our online meetings. Rehearsals have been a good way to stay in touch with our friends and to share our experiences.

Joanna, Year 6





First we were happy. No uniform, no waking up early and eating in class! What we didn't realise was how much we enjoyed going to school, seeing our friends and making new connections every day.

Aalia, Year 7

### In Sport

The AGSV and AGSV/APS summer sport season was completed in Term One and with considerable success for PEGS students. Highlights included premierships for the First Cricket XI in the centenary AGSV year and First Tennis team for girls in the AGSV/APS competition. First Table Tennis for boys and First Badminton for girls both finished the season in third place.

Triathlon: School Series - Second place

The winter sport season did not proceed.

### In Public Speaking

In a season where the DAV schools' competition went online, teams were entered at every level from Year 9 to Year 12

DAV Monash Asian Studies debating competition- 6 participants

UN Youth Voice – national finalist

City of Melbourne - Junior Lord Mayor

British Youth Parliament - 1 representative

Plain English Speaking Awards - 2 representatives

Lions Youth of the Year - division finalist

## Student surveys

The biennial survey of students planned for 2020 will now be conducted in 2021 and will investigate Student Satisfaction and Quality of Teaching in all Sections. The exit survey of graduating students will also return in 2021.

## Attendance and retention

The enrolment from Prep to Year Twelve in Term 4 2020 was 2,803.

Electronic monitoring of student attendance occurs at all levels with attendance checked twice daily at all levels except in Years Eleven and Twelve where attendance is monitored in each teaching period.

Attendance was monitored across the school in each class period for the duration of online instruction in 2020. The average attendance rate was stable at 95 per cent and remained relatively steady across all Sections of the school as summarised in Table 3.

Table 1: **Average attendance rate per year level**

Primary	Percentage attendance	Secondary	Percentage attendance
Prep	94	Year 7	95
Year 1	94	Year 8	95
Year 2	95	Year 9	95
Year 3	94	Year 10	96
Year 4	95	Year 11	97
Year 5	96	Year 12	98
Year 6	95		

From a total of 236 students enrolled in Year Nine in 2017, 217 remained at PEGS in 2020, a retention rate of 92 per cent.



# The PEGS experience: staff in focus

In 2020 the school employed 296 teachers in 279.7 full time equivalent positions and 169 non-teaching staff in 135.9 full time equivalent positions. All teachers were suitably qualified and registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. All classroom teachers hold a teaching degree or higher qualification and 25 per cent of teachers held a Masters degree or higher qualification. The teacher retention rate was 94.6 per cent and non-teaching staff was 92.3 per cent. The staff attendance rate was 97.1 per cent.

## Professional Learning

Professional learning activities were available to all staff including teaching and non-teaching staff and all staff are required to complete a professional learning plan annually.

Professional learning was somewhat affected by the circumstances of COVID-19 in 2020; however in total, staff completed 11692.27 hours of professional learning in 2020. On average, each full-time equivalent staff member completed 3.7 days of training. In addition, staff practised and developed skills in digital literacy and in delivering remote learning and these hours were not included in the logged hours.

Approximately 0.92% of total remuneration was invested in professional learning.

The professional learning programme continued with a strong focus on developing and embedding a Culture of Thinking, with 3,686 hours of training completed in total. Forty-one teachers participated in Harvard Graduate Programmes in Visible Thinking, Creating Cultures of Thinking and Teaching for Understanding. Primary and Middle School teachers continued to work with Terri Campbell on enhancing their practices in teaching literacy, with staff completing a total of 376 hours in face to face and remote learning.

In-house and online remote professional learning sessions were also held regularly and teachers were encouraged to attend targeted external professional learning activities to address specific learning priorities and all teachers completed training to support students with individual needs.

Section based professional learning addressed learning and development needs and faculty based professional learning improved curriculum knowledge and teaching practices. Staff members were actively encouraged to attend targeted, external faculty association and educational sector conferences and seminars.

In 2020 staff members completed 1854 hours of First Aid training, including CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis and Perform CPR refresher training. All staff completed COVID-19 Infection Control Training, with 247 hours completed.

E Learning facilitators provided in-house training to improve teacher digital literacy, with 896.50 formal hours of training completed in addition to in-class support provided throughout the year to build teacher capacity. E Learning facilitators greatly supported teachers in delivering effective remote learning.

Four staff members undertook tertiary studies supported financially with a study assistance payment and logged 1930 hours.

New staff completed 110 hours of induction training, including safety and compliance training units.

## Staff Feedback

Staff members had the opportunity to engage with and provide feedback to the school leadership through individual discussions, staff meetings and various consultative processes including, but not limited to the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Staff Wellbeing Committee, and Teaching and Learning Committee.

Staff feedback was also sought through annual Professional Learning planning and reviews, new staff satisfaction surveys and staff exit surveys.



It's impossible to perfectly replicate the dynamics of a classroom on a video call. But, with the help of an engaging teacher and an engaged class, we can manage to get somewhat close.

Christian, Year 9





The one lesson I have learned in the time of COVID-19, is that when everything seems bad there is always a positive.

Stanley, Year 4

New staff members reported high levels of satisfaction in their new roles and reported feeling very well supported by their colleagues and managers, in what was a challenging year with some staff commencing during periods of remote learning.

The majority of staff members leaving PEGS reported in exit surveys that their experience had been either positive or very positive on all measures, including work conditions, OHS, staff wellbeing, professional development, leadership, teamwork, feedback and support.

The biennial LEAD staff survey was postponed in 2020 and will be conducted in 2021.

## The PEGS experience: **finance**

PEGS ensures that its finances are managed effectively and efficiently so that educational goals are achieved. The annual income for 2020 was \$73.5 million and included \$44 million from student fees, \$20.2 million from government recurrent funding. Expenditure of \$67.6 million included salary and teaching expenses of \$54.7 million and administrative expenses, general, maintenance, provisions and depreciation of \$12.9 million. The surplus of the School was used to finance its capital and IT infrastructure projects including the Keilor East Gymnasium, the Essendon Campus Music House and the new Keilor Park hockey pitches.

## The PEGS experience: **families in focus**

History and tradition are important at PEGS, with a number of students representing the third and fourth generation of family associations with the school.

A Camp Open Day was held early in March, with more than 350 family and friends enjoying the opportunity to view recent improvements to the site as well as canoeing, archery and barge rides on Lake Eildon.

Activities arranged by the Friends of PEGS offer opportunities for social interaction for school families and their fund-raising contribute substantially to student amenities. A family friendly Movie Night and a Meet 'n Greet for parents of Year Seven students were well attended in Term One but further events were not able to proceed.

To combine the efforts of two groups working to support the PEGS community, in 2020, the decision was made to merge the Former Students' Association and the PEGS Business Network. The new group consists of existing members of both committees and will continue to provide social and business opportunities to members of the PEGS community.

The new PEGS Former Students' Association and Business Network continues to facilitate Class Reunions although the formal round of Class Reunions was delayed and will return in 2021. It also provides business, networking, industry insights and opportunities for former students, current students and their families, PEGS Business Network Jobs Board links job seekers with opportunities within the PEGS Business Network and community and PEGS Business Directory is also shared online with the school community. PEGSHUB, a new online destination was introduced in 2020 to bring together the PEGS community. PEGSHUB offers:

- a platform for parents and former students involved in business to make their products and services available to the school community
- the place to find and directly contact former students
- a new 'hub' for job and career opportunities
- links to PEGS sporting community of cricket, football, hockey, soccer and tennis clubs.

The annual series of Thinking Seminars continues to offer students and the wider community access to the ideas of outstanding thinkers representing a diverse range of interests. Science communicator Dr Karl Kruszelnicki AM proved to be a timely guest in early March 2020 and the series is continuing in 2021.

The biennial survey of parents planned for 2020 will now be conducted in 2021.





PENLEIGH AND ESSENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL