



## **ROSSBOURNE ANNUAL REPORT 2017**

This year will certainly be remembered as a year of celebration. The 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary is a significant milestone in the school's history. At the commencement of this year of celebration, approximately 150 past students and family members met in the school grounds to launch a past student alumni aptly named "Rossbourne Connect". I can think of no better time for this new arm of the school to come into existence. There has been much excitement as registrations to join Rossbourne Connect have continued to grow throughout this year. The mission to reunite and invite past students and parents to connect with the Rossbourne Community has been met overwhelmingly. A wonderful 50<sup>th</sup> birthday dinner for Rossbourne was held at the Box Hill Golf Club in June attended by 150 guests. This occasion was an opportunity for past students, families and staff to reminisce and share memories of their time as part of the Rossbourne School Community. It was a special night where the Rossbourne spirit was very evident as the 50<sup>th</sup> year was acknowledged and celebrated.

Most recently on the 12<sup>th</sup> November our major 50<sup>th</sup> year event was held in the school grounds. Over 500 guests attended the afternoon occasion. Mr John Pesutto MP, Member for Hawthorn / Shadow Attorney General, who supports Rossbourne each year attended and congratulated the school community on the role that Rossbourne plays in Special Education. The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Member for Kooyong / Minister for the Environment and Energy, was unable to attend, however, penned a note that was read to all in attendance. Mr Frydenberg values the work undertaken and the opportunities provided at Rossbourne and has always been an interested and strong supporter of the school. Throughout the afternoon past students and in many cases parents were able to share their news and update us as to what they are currently doing. Most pleasingly, many past students are in full time employment, some having achieved 20 – 30 years' service in one job, others successfully maintaining part time work and living independently. A number of past students have married and are now parents, which is absolutely wonderful.

The co-curricular activities provided throughout the year have once again been enthusiastically embraced by the student population. This year's school musical production "The Addams Family" was enjoyed by the school community. My congratulations to all involved in presenting a wonderful production. Other annual events on our school calendar are the Athletics Day, Swimming Carnival, Inter School Cross Country, Inter School Athletics and Inter School Swimming. Basketball teams continue to offer students and many past students an opportunity to belong to a team and play competitively, in addition to the many social and friendship benefits associated with team sports.

This year's Student Representative Council (SRC) have made significant and positive contributions to school life. The Reps are to be congratulated on the manner in which they have undertaken their responsibilities. It is a real opportunity for each of the Student Representative to further develop their leadership and organisational skills.

Throughout this year I have met many prospective parents and visitors to the school. It is always a pleasure to be able to share with visitors the key ingredients that make Rossbourne the very special school that it is. First and foremost we are entrusted to work in this special area of education with students that can genuinely be described as a wonderful group of students to work with. Complementing the student body is a team of teachers and specialist staff who are passionate, enthusiastic, and dedicated professionals. They are all committed to a school purpose of continued development in academic, social and independent life skills, so very necessary for our students to take their place in the community. It is a privilege and a joy to work with such a talented staff and I congratulate and thank them for their individual and collective achievements.

As you read this report, you will discover a great deal about the day to day life and activities that makes Rossbourne the very special setting that we have come to know.

### **Aims, Guiding Principles and Values Statement**

The school aims to contribute to the full academic, social, emotional, physical development of each student to prepare them for self-independence and participation in the workforce and society. The guiding principles of the Council and Staff at Rossbourne are:-

- to provide an Individual Education Programme designed to suit the needs of each student;
- to develop each individual to his / her full potential and to equip students for meaningful participation in the community, i.e. further education (TAFE), employment, while extending their social networking;
- to cater for the students' individual strengths, needs and rates of development;
- to provide opportunities for students who can benefit from a smaller student teacher ratio;
- to give preference to those students who can achieve some measure of independence and display satisfactory peer interaction;
- to provide a partnership with families for the ongoing development of each student;
- to provide an environment that promotes respect for the individual, self-confidence and an interest in learning;
- to maintain a level of enrolment which is optimal for the physical and financial resources of the school.

### **Data / Assessment**

Increasingly, data from a range of assessments enables staff to consider the progress being made by students. Rossbourne mid-year and end of year student appraisals provided valuable information on individual development and learning outcomes for families. These written appraisals were supplemented with two opportunities for formal Parent / Teacher interviews. Rossbourne operates on an open door policy and parents are encouraged to make personal contact with staff members if required, at any time throughout the year.

Classroom teachers administer diagnostic tests each year in both Numeracy and Literacy. The Numeracy test employed is ACER PATMaths Third Edition. This test is used to help teachers with information about the level of achievement attained by their students in the skills and understanding of mathematics. There are 8 tests in PATMaths 3<sup>rd</sup> edition and this allows teachers flexibility to choose the appropriate test for each individual student. Scores can then be used to compare students within the school or against the larger Australian representative sample.

The Literacy tests employed are the Neale Analysis of Reading ability, the Woodcock Reading Mastering Tests and the York Assessment (YARC).

The purpose of the Neale Test is to measure the accuracy, comprehension and rate of reading, monitor reading progress and obtain diagnostic observations of reading behaviour. The diagnosis provides specific reading needs and assists teachers to implement appropriate teaching strategies.

The Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests help to identify specific student strengths and weaknesses in their reading profile. The tests also ascertain students' major difficulties, their root causes, so that teachers can plan targeted remedial strategies.

The York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC) assesses the reading and comprehension of students aged 5 – 18 years. Administered by Speech Pathologists, Psychologists and teachers provides invaluable information.

## **Parent Survey - 2017**

Feedback from families has and will continue to be through parent information evenings, interview evenings, Parent Association functions, parent seminars, Senior School Graduation Dinner and through individual contact. Staff encourage families to contact them promptly and directly if students experience any type of difficulty.

In addition to the above feedback forums, Rossbourne School once again contracted Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) to conduct a Parent Satisfaction Survey to evaluate parents' satisfaction levels with important aspects of schooling. The survey's purpose is to understand parent perceptions regarding the quality of their child's educational experience at Rossbourne and subsequently form recommendations for improving the quality of education.

The survey as in 2016 comprised 55 generic questions utilised across ISV surveys. A total of 98 families of a possible 124 participated in the survey.

The survey results were very positive and was highlighted with a 9.58 (2016: 9.56) out of 10 result from parents to the question "Overall I am satisfied with my decision to send my child to Rossbourne". Overall from the fifteen Headline indicators, twelve indicators increased in the survey and three had minor decreases. Headline indicators can be viewed in Appendix A – Headline Indicators of this report.

To view the complete survey report, please visit:

<https://www.rossbourne.vic.edu.au/assets/Uploads/Rossbourne-School-Parent-Survey-2017.pdf>

## **Educational Psychological / Speech Pathology Assessments**

Rossbourne has determined that its own utilisation of individualised psychometric testing (WISC – V and CELF) is superior to group testing of students, based on the following technical advantages:-

- Results are significantly more robust, valid and realistic on all statistical measures.
- There is greater opportunity to increase rapport, co-operation, maintain interest and overcome interfering conditions of examinees (anxiety and fatigue).
- Disabled populations have exhibited increased performances.
- Identifying causes of atypical performances can be observed.
- Increase test item flexibility and ability to adjust to item coverage, based on the examinees ability.

## **Capital Expenditure & Maintenance**

Capital expenditure in 2017 totalled \$61,467 which was utilised to introduce Apple Mac desktops into the school. With the introduction of the Apple Mac's students are now able to learn on multiple platforms. The Apple Mac's also interface with student iPads enabling the transfer of files between students and teachers to be more efficient.

## **Overview Middle School 2017**

Middle School is an amazing, dynamic and passionate space where we see young people enter our school community and flourish. Our year level came to life this year with 38 new students and families all welcomed by our second year students. Middle School has enthusiastically embraced all aspects of the Rossbourne School Programme academically and socially. Students have been spirited participants in both the Sport and Swim Carnivals, have engaged passionately in the school play 'All Shock Up', and in 'Get Your Act Together'; they have creatively entered writing and art competitions and actively engaged in lunchtime ICT and Library spaces. It has been wonderful to observe Middle School students pursuing new interests and opportunities with such enthusiasm.

The Middle School Wellbeing Programme works consistently across the whole year at embedding key concepts that support each student in their emotional and social journey. We

have such passionate students who have worked hard at recognising their strengths and understanding themselves as young adults. Our greatest joy is observing the social journey that all our students make as they travel across the year. Students have consistently built skills, knowledge and independence around regulating their emotions and their social interactions. As we near the end of the year it is easy to observe how each students' individual confidence and self-esteem has flourished.

These new strengths were so evident on school camp, which was held this year at Phillip Island. Students extended their social, emotional and independence skills with laughter and courage. Highlights of the camp included catching our own rainbow trout even if it was slimy, watching seals close up on a wildlife cruise, getting all rugged up to watch the fairy penguins and being clipped into a harness to climb the Sky Trail. The highlight for me was the last night's campfire. To sit back and watch and listen as the whole year level came together in song and to cook marshmallows. Students were consistently challenged and it is wonderful to observe the empathy, joy and passion that they brought with them to camp.

We have such infinitely curious students who have explored through creative programming different ways of thinking and working. Students have extended their literacy and numeracy skills, acquired strategies that support their own learning and the functional use of their skills within the community. Middle School have participated in numerous excursions and incursions including visits to the Arts Centre to see Mr Stinky, creating their own movie at ACMI, listening to Opera, traveling to the Fitzroy Gardens for team building skills and eating communally at Sofia's. Students are also blessed with amazing subject teachers that have motivated and engaged students to extend their understanding of themselves musically, creatively, physically, technologically and as an independent person. These skilled teachers also weave the Middle School Wellbeing Programme into the curriculum so that each student is supported socially and emotionally across all their learning.

The end of the year sees all our students excited about the next stage of their Rossbourne journey. For those moving into Transition School, we will continue to watch you develop and grow into the amazing young adults you are becoming. For those moving into a second year of Middle we look forward to your support in welcoming our new Rossbourne students and families next year.

### **Overview Transition School - 2017**

Transition School 2017 was a year level that was energetic, self-motivated, hard-working, as well as lots of fun. One of the highlights of the year was none other than the school camp to Queenscliff. It was such a great success with students participating in a range of activities that included surfing, paddle boarding, tours and problem solving and initiative based games.

Over the year many of our programmes have had a solid focus on further developing skills and independent learning. The Transition School curriculum revolves around, teamwork, completing challenging social and academic tasks that have pushed students out of their comfort zone but with vast benefits. All students are to be congratulated with their efforts in trying their very best. The support and encouragement the students have offered each other over the year has been a very rewarding experience for teachers to see. The way that they cared for each other and offered help where need be, demonstrates the wonderful and positive attitude our students have towards one another in a firmly integrated community such as Rossbourne. These qualities ensured that camp as well as our entire year has been very productive.

Over the year, we have trialed and established some new programmes, which will be reinforced in the 2018 curriculum. Our volunteer programme was a great success, with each and every student developing their own Fundraising store to raise money for their chosen charities. The students learnt on a practical level what it's like to demonstrate empathy and how we can take that next step in helping those in need. Another successful unit of the year was our Projects or Challenge Based Learning sessions. This enabled students to choose topic areas that they wanted to explore further and present their work through using the TechThink model. This model really helped students understand the vital steps involved in

creating and presenting a polished project. We are also very lucky to have had the Duke of Ed introduced in Transition School this year. The programme has offered so many benefits for the students involved and has no doubt helped them grow in maturity and learn more about community involvement through a range of activities.

Sports and excursions have also played a very important part in Transition School. Over the year, we have been on many adventures outside of school, assisting our SOSE and Integrated Studies units. Places visited include, The Melbourne Museum, Hidden Secrets Melbourne Tour and Sea Shepherd in Williamstown. On the sports front, Friday night basketball has provided a wonderful experience for students and the swimming and athletics carnivals also reveal just how far most students have come in the development of both gross and fine motor skills, as well as the big smiles they have on their face when participating in events and winning ribbons.

Transition School students are now looking forward to the next step in their journey, moving on to Senior School.

### **Overview Senior School - 2017**

It is not just our classroom that provides learning opportunities, but it is the 'extra' things that make the difference. The year started early on with our biannual trip to Sydney for our school camp. To suggest that this is a 'camp' is slightly deceptive. It really is a tourist trip to see the sights. Students got to surf at Bondi Beach, eat at Darling Harbour, catch the ferry to Manly, go on the 'Skyway' 100 metres above the Blue Mountains amongst many things. Whilst staying at the YHA at The Rocks, students get to feel what it is like being a tourist, mingling with other tourists and planning their way around the city. Students were able to choose the activities they wanted to be involved in, and had to navigate through the city to find their own way there. We were greeted by sunny and warm weather, with many students remarking that this was their 'best camp ever!'

Senior School provides the last 2 years of schooling for our students. Students in their teenage years have a need to be challenged, and to see the purpose of the learning, and our curriculum reflects this. As well as the 'core' curriculum subjects of Literacy and Numeracy, a number of subjects have been developed and created by us, to cater for the diverse needs of our students. Subject areas such as Financial Literacy, Community Awareness, Travel and Driver Safety, Group projects and Work Skills all allow the students to gain greater independence with their learning and life in general.

24 students got to drive in a car before they were legally allowed, by participating in the METEC Driver Education programme. Many parents and students took this opportunity to get behind a wheel maybe for the first and only time, or perhaps as a lead in activity on the way to students getting their Learners Driving Licence. Either way, students got to drive a dual controlled vehicle and learn about the skills involved.

With Politics and coffee playing an increasing role in our lives, Senior students learnt about both. The Passport to Democracy Unit required each class to prepare a campaign to gain votes from the entire school community. Whilst the winning class lobbied on the platform of addressing cruelty to animals, other class topics of reducing domestic violence, addressing homelessness and others, were no less important. Sixteen students learnt how to make 8 different types of coffee during their Introduction to Espresso making course which they undertook over 3 days. We discovered however, that making them and drinking them were 2 different skills and whilst many still didn't enjoy the taste of coffee, they certainly enjoyed the chocolate that is sprinkled on top of a cappuccino.

If you are ever going to require first aid, 24 Rossbourne students will be able to assist you after completing a Basic Certificate in First Aid which included a CPR component.

The team of Senior Staff all work towards the common goal of making our students more independent and prepared for the future. We are confident that with our current curriculum, work experience and pathways opportunities that our students leave Rossbourne well equipped for the future, and with the best chance of success.

## **Programmes**

**Learning & Teaching** - All too often we hear about how Australian students are failing when compared to their international peers. There are plenty of studies which are published that look at what students need from schools, what parents want from schools and what demands there are on teachers to provide a 21<sup>st</sup> century education which is going to place our young people ready for a rapidly changing world.

What is it we expect our schools to teach?

- To many parents and educators, increasing automation and the unprecedented pace of technological changes mean young people today need more than just academic skills to succeed. They need confidence and motivation to tackle problems, interpersonal skills to work with others and the resilience to stay on task when things fall apart.
- The ability to show flexibility, creativity, and teamwork are increasingly becoming just as valuable, if not more valuable, than academic knowledge and technical skills.
- A joint study between researchers at Monash University and the Australian Scholarships Group released in October this year found 69% of parents across the public and independent sector believe schools should be teaching more social skills.
- One of the key findings of the report was the line between what children learn at home and in the classroom is being blurred as Australian parents increasingly ask schools to help socialise their children.
- Many parents believe that socialisation is becoming a more prevalent focus because of the nature of the activities children are undertaking.
- But, the fact remains that every single time we ask schools to add something to the curriculum, there is less room for the existing material.
- We want schools to teach students to think critically, to ask questions and to challenge conventional thinking as they find their place in the world.
- So what difference does all this make to us, the teachers at Rossbourne and the parents of the students?

We've got to make the conversation between parents and teachers a far more powerful one. From that first day in Middle School to the last in Senior School parents and teachers need to be in constant contact and conversation ... it's incredibly important that parents work with teachers to strike the right balance between what's taught in the home and what's taught at school and how each party can support each other.

So what students need is an individual programme that caters to their unique needs. One that can be adjusted from one year, one semester or one term to the next. This programme may well share ingredients with other students but, in consultation with parents, needs to focus specifically at what students needs are during their Rossbourne years.

**Living Skills** - The Living Skills Programme aims to offer students the opportunity to a wide and diverse range of experiences across all school year levels. The student's success and positive outcomes is a result of their positive energy and enthusiasm for the projects they undertake. The Living Skills House and its grounds provide an amazing real educational setting where students are involved in actual work activities associated with independent living. During the year students have made significant progress on a number of projects for the House, both internally and externally. Some have been completed while many are still ongoing.

At Middle School, students have been introduced to many day to day tasks within the House which are important for independent living. These include washing and ironing, cleaning, vacuuming and recycling. Students work outside in the garden as well, working on tasks such as mowing of lawns, washing cars, weeding, planting, watering, pruning and edging to mention a few. The Living Skills House provides an outstanding "real life" setting for the students to work. The House environment offers incredible capacity to ensure all Rossbourne students are challenged and are able to work at a level consistent with their progression.

The Transition Programme offers the flexibility to further develop basic skills for some students and offer new extended projects for others. Further to this some students have been involved in an Independent Functional Living Unit. This programme focuses on developing skills, knowledge and confidence in areas central to independent functional living. There is focus on money, shopping and banking, plus personal responsibility and self-management. Students undertake activities both at school and in the broader community. This includes experiences at supermarkets, banks, gymnasiums, specific destination stores, plus key service providers. An awareness of the various goods and services options, plus potential price differences is central to the activities. The programme encourages students to adopt an informed, proactive lifestyle approach to their day to day living.

At Senior School we offered two electives and an extension programme. The electives, Introduction to Home Renovation and Introduction to Landscape Gardening are very popular and offer students the chance to explore two trade based activities. Projects can be quite significant as well as small maintenance or improvement tasks. For example, this year we have renovated the vegetable garden by pulling down the old gate and fence and built a timber gate and fence. Student's renovated inside by building shelving for different areas of the house and painted the bathroom. The extension programme is a garden maintenance group that operates as a semi-professional activity with students completing regular work on the Living Skills House and school properties. Our focus here can be basic gardening including mowing, edging and weeding or more advanced work including pruning, hedging and plant care, depending on the property and the group.

The Living Skills concept, plus the availability of the House makes the programme incredibly unique. During the year many positive comments are made from parents and visitors to the school with regard to the overall concept of a Living Skills Programme. As a staff we accept the responsibility to work hard to provide the students with an appropriate and challenging programme. In reality however, it is the students who ensure that the various programmes are a success. Senior students lead the projects and have handled the pressure of being placed under greater expectation through their ability to research, plan, initiate the project and overcome the difficulties they faced to produce amazing results.

**Information Technology** - Information and Communications Technology continues to enhance and alter the way we do things. ICT enables us to live, work and think in new ways. Technology has an increasingly significant impact and such broad implications in everyday life. Digital Technologies Literacy underpinned sessions and emphasised a way of thinking that is important to creating solutions. At Rossbourne, ICT capabilities do not stand alone, but are infused within core courses and programmes. Integrated and Elective ICT sessions throughout the school provided further opportunities for students to create technology and learn about digital systems. In Skills Sessions, students had opportunities to apply and extend ICT tools in effective, ethical, and safe ways.

There were many highlights in **ICT** sessions through the year - too many to include, but here is a list of the more notable activities:

- *Senior ICT Sessions*

Students applied skills and processes when comparing computer games; planning a function; completing and creating GPS driven scavenger hunts and commenting on current news topics. Students carried out detailed investigations; they refined skills in judging the accuracy, authenticity and bias of information sourced online. The format, purpose and content of a range of websites were examined. Revisiting Microsoft Office applications as well as online collaborative spaces was a focus. Visits to the local computer store and to Swinburne Advanced Technologies Centre were also a highlight.

- *Transition ICT Sessions*

This year, the weekly ICT sessions integrated skills taught in previous years and also introduced students to emerging technologies. Extending MS Office proficiency and working with the school's secure network was also addressed, as was the planning and development of blogs. Students developed the skills to access a range of virtual learning tools enabling them to interact and learn with others. They organised ideas and information and shared

these with known people in safe online environments. Virtual learning opened doors to new learning opportunities beyond the classroom. In addition, the use of coding and authoring software that develop sequencing and higher order thinking skills continued to be a focus. Students created and edited code within gaming environments and App development sessions.

- *Middle ICT Sessions*

In ICT skills sessions, students integrated MS Office applications and Web 2.0 tools to organise and present information. MS Excel and data handling was revisited as were journey planning scenarios to the camp site at Phillip Island. Email etiquette and safety was addressed through reviewing the school's 'Student Internet Usage' agreement. Students searched for recipients via address books, created personal signatures and gained expertise in using an organisational email service. They also explored how the content of messages and posts on networking sites can impact on their safety and privacy. Opportunities were provided for 1:1 targeted skill development as required. Assistive and curriculum specific software, as well as, coding and design platforms on the desktop, iPads and other portable devices, were explored.

- *Lunch time ICT Sessions*

Lunch time sessions this year, have been a very collaborative experience for students. Favourite Internet sites were explored and online gaming strategies were exchanged. Heated discussions have also occurred over the best computer games and the latest technologies. Lunch times in the ICT room is a very valuable time for me as I am able to observe and monitor how students use and share technologies outside of the structured ICT classes.

**Performing Arts** - 2017 has been an active and rewarding year for the Performing Arts. Across the different sections of school this year, students have enthusiastically participated in a range of activities.

- *Transition / Senior Drama*

**Musical Theatre** as a dramatic art form continues to be a very popular area for many of our students. The task of working towards performing an entire show at the end of the semester is both daunting and exciting. Elective classes provided students with an opportunity to explore and analyse in more detail the songs, themes and ideas featured in the script of 'All Shook Up'. Students are very affirming of each others' efforts and endeavours and the weekly sessions provided a chance to offer guidance and feedback to students on acting and singing techniques. Transition students were fortunate to visit Hamer Hall in June to be inspired by University students from the VCA (Victorian College of the Arts) as they performed famous songs from a range of "Hollywood Movie Musicals". It was fitting that the concert opened with 'Fugue for Tinhorns' which cast our mind back to last year's special production of "Guys and Dolls".

**Film-making** is another area of significant interest to many of our students. Film-making and script-writing became a skill focus with elective groups in the second half of the year. The lessons aim at giving students the opportunity to work collaboratively and creatively, developing and devising their own and others' ideas for short films. Students have learnt to draw on their knowledge of films and put on their 'Director' and 'Producer' hats through creating simple scripts and storyboards. Next year, we look forward to being able to access some new computer technology with plans to improve the IT facilities. This is very exciting as it will open up new possibilities in the near future for students to work on collaborative projects that meaningfully link both the Visual and Performing Arts disciplines.

- *Transition / Senior Music*

This year has witnessed the formation of our first '**Rock Band**' in our Transition Music elective. Students have responded very well to the challenge of developing their own talent and individual skills on an instrument (or in some cases several instruments!). Following a 'Musical Futures' approach, this involves practical music making that starts with music students like, recognise and engage with. It has been amazing to witness the growth in confidence and ability demonstrated by these students since the start of the year. The Transition Rock Band have been invited to perform on stage at this year's '**Amp it Up!**' concert held at 'The Channel' (Arts Centre Melbourne). It is the second consecutive year Rossbourne has been involved in

this performance and I am very excited for the students as they have a chance to perform to a wider audience. Next year, the band will hopefully continue as students move into Senior School.

Senior music elective has focused on both solo and group performances with students eager to practice and rehearse pieces to perform at this year's '**Get Your Act Together (GYAT)**'. Last year, we launched this for the first time in the Old Hall. This year has seen the lunchtime programme solidify as more students are taking to the stage to deliver short performances of their choice to their peers during Wednesday lunchtimes. Senior music students, as part of their learning, are encouraged not only to perform on stage but show leadership through hosting and mentoring the younger students who are new to the school. We have already been treated to some wonderfully entertaining items in term four and we are looking forward to discovering who will be invited to perform for this year's final live show, a new addition to GYAT. In early December the whole school will be invited to see a selection of student performances and then be asked to vote on their favourite act.

- *Middle School*

To allow students to experience a breadth of Music and Drama activities, we have two 50 minute lessons for Middle School per week. At the end of March students visited the Playhouse Theatre at the Arts Centre for a wonderful live theatre adaptation / performance of David William's heart-warming tale, "**Mr Stink**". Students enjoyed re-enacting their favourite parts of the story to each other back at school. Chloe, the protagonist, loves creating her own imaginative stories. This was a perfect bridge for our students to begin inventing their own stories as a class. Through this, students have been able to gain more awareness of how to apply some basic dramatic techniques and strategies when re-telling stories to an audience.

Early in second semester, Middle School went on another planned excursion, this time visiting **ACMI** (Australian Centre for Moving Images). Students were there to learn more about Film and TV production and in particular experience the use of Green Screen technology. To prepare for this outing, students spent several weeks discussing film genres and watching short excerpts from films, highlighting the conventions of each genre. Students then worked in small groups to write and act their own short script for inclusion in a Fantasy film, "**The Magic Camera**". It was a challenging task for students, however, with practice and a growth mindset they certainly made progress. The day of the filming inside ACMI studio arrived in mid-August at ACMI. It was a very enjoyable and rewarding day, culminating in us all viewing the premiere screening of the film in ACMI's state-of-the-art studio. As a staff member observing their willingness to participate on the day, it was particularly evident the extent to which new students have progressed this year with their personal and interpersonal and social development.

Middle School have also been very actively involved in music making, both acoustically and electronically. Over the year we have been learning how to listen to the beat and distinguish basic rhythmic and melodic patterns or loops used in contemporary pop music. Students have learnt to play along using a range of instruments, such as ukuleles, boomwhackers, marimba and xylos, and more recently keyboards. We have enjoyed using iPad apps, such as LaunchPad to layer different loops together and produce dance tracks. In the last week of term three Middle students participated in a **fantastic music incursion** with a visiting musician and educator **Benji Miu**. It was so encouraging to see students so engaged with Benji and willing to get up on stage and create loop based music. Before camp we have also developed our ability to sing in unison and not be afraid to sing up during the campfire! It can get quite loud at times during our lessons when we are all playing together but it is so wonderful to hear them in full voice and our control and awareness of sound is always steadily improving.

**Food Technology** - Another productive and exciting year was had in the Food Technology room with the introduction of new units of work and 3 first time Transition and Senior excursions. Students had the opportunity to take advantage of our herb garden, the abundant crop of citrus from the Living Skills garden. While safety, hygiene practices and healthy eating are a priority in the Food Technology Department, learning and practicing new skills in knife handling, stove work and correct use of equipment was a focus at all levels.

In Middle School we started the year with the importance of a healthy balanced diet, the functions of food and students tasted foods from the 5 food groups. In Semester 2, the theory classes concentrated on measurement and how to operate the stove safely. The practical units included breakfast cookery and an introduction to the use of small equipment and utensils. Tasks included fruit salad, sausage rolls, French toast, hash browns, breakfast wraps and poached eggs.

A comprehensive student tour of the Queen Victoria Markets enabled our Transition students to taste their way around the food sections of the market while learning about the history, the products and the diversity of the food market. The Food in Fashion unit experimented with Quinoa fritters, roasted Kale, 5 spice chicken and crispy chickpeas. A mystery box challenge and an assignment on the Celebrity Chef of their choice was included in the programme in Term 4. Working towards independence in the kitchen is an important life skill to establish so when the Healthy Lunch Box Unit returned, students prepared rice paper rolls, rolled omelettes, wraps, fritters and falafels, completing tasks independently. Environmentally friendly packaging and reducing waste was a weekly consideration throughout the unit.

Our Senior students have been involved in a Dietary and Cultural Needs Unit which involved modifying and preparing recipes for specific diets e.g. gluten free, lactose intolerance, low GI, diabetes etc. An assignment based on family food traditions was also included. In term 4 a Pastry and Yeasted Dough's Unit was introduced. The student's handmade shortcrust, French puff, choux and Danish pastries as well as basic bread and chapati doughs. Sources of food was another unit that created much discussion on Thursday mornings. The class looked in detail at food origins, primary and secondary food processing, purchasing locally at Farmers Markets and reducing the carbon footprint. Dishes prepared in the Senior elective classes this year included Pad Thai, Lamb ragout, beef koftas, butter chicken, wontons, risotto, gnocchi and baklava. Excursions included a cookery demonstration and spice tour of the Oasis Bakery in Semester 1 and an Asian Food tour and Sushi workshop in Term 4. Visiting food based establishments definitely gave the Senior students a glimpse of what career opportunities were possible in the hospitality industry. Three of our students are already working casually after school in food based establishments and they were happy to share their real life experiences.

*Art - "Art is a method of understanding, a way of penetrating the world and finding one's place in it, and whatever aesthetic qualities an artwork might have are almost an incidental by-product of the effort to engage oneself in the struggle of entering into the thick of things."*

**Paul Auster**

The Visual Arts programme aims to engage, inspire and enrich the lives of students by supporting them to reach their creative and intellectual potential. It has been my pleasure throughout 2017 to see my students grow in confidence, understanding, and skill. Their innovative responses to art always surprises.

- *Senior School*

Our Senior School students began the year examining the trend of taking "selfies". After much discussion, it was concluded that whilst "selfies" help to record experiences, and capture special moments, there is a darker side to this global phenomenon with concerns being raised about narcissism, obsessive behaviour and lowered self-esteem. Our students also examined the history of portraiture (how facial images were recorded before the invention of digital photography and "selfies"). They were then challenged to create "selfie" inspired artworks using mixed media techniques including photography, collage, printmaking, painting and drawing. Collage techniques quickly became a favourite amongst the student group with many choosing to use photographs as inspiration for inspired and unique artworks. Some students even requesting to complete a second collage project.

Towards the end of the year, our Senior students explored the physical, social and personal functions of art linked to the twin themes of Construction and Destruction. Each class went on a photographic expedition into Melbourne City, and our students were quite surprised by the array of architectural styles within a single city block with many students commenting that they had never really observed or appreciated the unique features of their City. They also

examined the graffiti of Hosier Lane with much debate of graffiti as “art” or “crime”. Returning to school, we further analysed modern and historical architectural styles, and the work of several artists who have used the themes of the urban landscape, architecture, revolution, war and natural disasters as inspiration for their artworks. Following some practical instruction in the use of perspective, students were challenged to create their own responses to the topics studied.

- *Transition School*

Our Transition students spent the beginning of the year exploring the significant role of art in culture. They were encouraged to make connections across cultures through the designs, symbols, materials and techniques used by various culture’s art and crafts. The initial focus of study was the stories, art and materials used by the indigenous cultures from Australia and the North West Pacific Coast of America. The art room quickly became a hive of activity with many students choosing to make Dream Catchers and Masks. During the remainder of the semester, each student researched the art and culture of a country of their own choice before choosing an art project linked to that particular culture. It was lovely to see the individual expression of each student, their willingness to experiment with art materials, alongside their sensitivity to cultural traditions.

In the second half of the year, Transition students explored how artists have used the concepts of Inner and Outer Space as inspiration for works of art. They analysed the lives and artworks of several artists as inspiration for their own project responses with practical activities involving guided experimentation in the use of oil pastels, soft pastels, acrylic paints, fluid acrylics, inks and spray paint to create varied effects. Spray painting techniques were extremely popular with each student taking the opportunity to create their own Outer Space inspired artwork. Also popular was a special two week programme devoted to introducing students to Fluid Art techniques whereby students were required to use their knowledge of the colour wheel to make informed judgments about contrasting and complimentary colour selection.

- *Middle School*

Middle School students started the school year delving into the history and development of the popular art form known as Zentangles which uses line work and repetitive pattern to create unique and beautiful works of art. Known for its support in the development of focus and creativity, many students commented that they found the Zentangle process relaxing, but also challenging as mistakes could not be rubbed out as they are considered part of the artistic process. Each student worked hard to create a traditional tile before using their developing skills within an individual Zentangle and Collage Animal project. Some students became so enthusiastic about the art of Zentangles that they continued to work on extra Zentangle projects outside of art class with one student encouraging his whole family to do the same at home.

Their next class project involved the development of sculptural skills. Each student was challenged to turn a surreal “Animal” drawing of their own invention into a skeleton using wire, pliers, newspaper and foil before using paper clay and paint to give their creature form. It was not an easy task yet the art room soon exploded with many colourful and unique life forms with many students being pleasantly surprised by their problem solving abilities.

In semester 2, Middle School students examined mythical creatures from the past, as well as the work of illustrators behind the amazing animatronics creatures and monsters used in today’s film industry. Practical activities fostered student confidence in drawing both for sustained periods and in short succinct sessions with student drawings forming the basis for the creation of a range of monoprints using Foam, Perspex and Gelli Print Plates. Students really enjoyed their experimentation with paint and texture.

- *Production Paint Crew*

Each week during term two, a small group of students volunteered their time during the Friday afternoon activity period to make and paint sets for the school’s production of “All Shook Up”. The Production Paint Crew worked tirelessly to produce large and small scale artworks within some short time frames. Along the way they developed valuable friendships, communication and vocational skills. They should be so very proud of their achievements.

- *50 Year Celebration Mosaic Project*

During term 3 a dedicated group of students volunteered to become the Leadership Team for our Celebration Mosaic Project. Week by week, the team put forward design ideas, and vigorously discussed materials and colour choices. They also scoured the school looking for the “perfect spot” for their Mosaic. They were unanimous in their decision that the Mosaic had to be located in a position where each day every student could see it and the student entrance area met their criteria. Towards the end of term 3, the group began making and glazing specially designed ceramic feature elements. Term 4 saw members of the Leadership Group leading whole class groups and school staff in the making of the Mosaic. They should be very proud of the result of their efforts.

- *Principal’s Art Collection*

The Principal’s Art Collection has become a great opportunity for our students to show their pride in their work and our students take the opportunity to be part of and judge this collection very seriously. For the first time last year, the judging was so close we had multiple Prize Winners. Congratulations to all who participated.

**Work Experience** - The Work Experience programme at Rossbourne School is significantly different from those that are offered at many other schools. A far more individual and flexible approach is taken to allow for individual student needs. The programme runs along the following guidelines;

- Students can undertake Work Experience at any time during the year and is not restricted to specific dates.
- Students can complete their Work Experience over a 2 week period, over 1 week, or for a designated day over a 5 week period.
- Students do not have to undertake a full day. This can be negotiated between the employer, student and the school.
- Not all students are required to do Work Experience. Only those students who show a genuine desire and skill set are required to be involved.
- The programme is supported by the teacher and student attending an initial interview, and the teacher then visiting on occasion to ascertain the student’s progress.

Over the years this has allowed many students to get an insight into the world of work and to explore many areas.

This year has seen 18 students undertake work experience in their final years at Rossbourne, with a total of 33 placements throughout the year. Some students have used their work experience time to explore a particular industry that is of interest to them, whilst others have been less selective, and have just wanted to see the demands of a work place.

Students were fortunate to be able to gain experiences in the following work setting:-

- Food / Hospitality
- Retail – Myer / Coles
- Office Work / Clerical
- Childcare
- Sport & Aquatic centres
- Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE)
- Building Industry
- Horticulture / Landscaping / Ground Maintenance

At the time of writing, one student will have completed his 5<sup>th</sup> placement for the year as he is work ready, and keen to look at a variety of options. As with all things at Rossbourne, a partnership between parents and school is essential in not only finding opportunities, but also in determining the suitability and skill set of the students involved. We are very fortunate to have the resources and flexibility to develop and maintain a programme such as this, and the students are indeed fortunate, that these opportunities exist. Just another way that the Rossbourne experience provides opportunities for students!

**Pathways Programmes** - It is inherently beneficial to support students in their transition from school into the adult world and Rossbourne facilitates this in a number of ways. During the final two years of schooling, students will be offered opportunities to participate in programmes that occur 'beyond the school gates'. Over many years we have developed strong relationships with Melbourne Polytechnic, Holmesglen TAFE, Box Hill TAFE, Inner Melbourne VET Cluster (IMVC) and many others. This enables us to gain access to their programmes and allow the opportunity for students to gain independence and acquire specific skills and knowledge.

Rossbourne Students can access three different programmes. They can participate with other high school students in mainstream programmes to facilitate their movement back into mainstream education. They can access programmes that are offered specifically for students who have learning difficulties, or they can participate in programmes that are offered only to Rossbourne students. These programmes allow students to get VET (Vocational Education and Training) opportunities and to gain Certificate 2 accreditations in subject fields.

This year:-

- 7 Students participated in a Furniture Construction programme at Holmesglen TAFE, every Thursday for a semester. They constructed a coffee table that was exhibited at the Fringe Furniture Exhibition at Abbotsford Convent.
- 2 Students learnt about Animal Care each Thursday for the duration of the year and completed components of their Certificate 2 in Animal Care at Box Hill TAFE.
- 1 Boy completed elements of his Certificate 2 in Building and Construction also at Box Hill TAFE.
- 2 Boys undertook an Introduction to Sport and Recreation at Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre which ran one day a week over a 6 month period.
- 'Animate Your Life' offered 2 boys the opportunity to develop their computer animation skills, each week for a semester.
- A total of 16 students attended Holmesglen TAFE to undertake studies in Horticulture and also Furniture finishing.
- A total of 20 students went to Melbourne Polytechnic (Pahran Campus) to learn basic stop animation techniques. Another group learnt about the skills and attributes required in the Cafe industry through their Cafe Culture programme.

We are in a very fortunate position that our students can access these programmes to acquire these skills, and we congratulate the students who have challenged themselves to move beyond Rossbourne and prepare themselves for the future.

**Parents' Association** - It's been another great year for the Rossbourne Parents' Association (RPA) with a good mix of community, social activities for parents, staff and students, fundraising, with both formal and informal networks coming together.

While we have enjoyed many great events this year, we are really proud to have launched our new Vision Statement:

*"Our parents and students at Rossbourne School are unique and come from diverse and varied backgrounds. As the voice of the parent population, we celebrate and respect our diversity and we aim to bring us all together by fostering and encouraging a community spirit, thereby enriching the Rossbourne journey for staff, parents and students."*

The feedback we received from the Rossbourne community following the launch this year has been tremendous and the focus on "community spirit" has resonated with many parents. It gives us a great sense of accomplishment and encourages us to do more to bring together the diverse and varied groups that make up Rossbourne.

Our Vision Statement has also guided many of the programmes and activities we co-ordinated in 2017. From the welcome drinks at the start of the year for new parents, to the Bunnings BBQ and cake stall, the informal coffees, movie night and uniform sales ... the list goes on! Each of these events focussed on community and our many thanks to everyone who

volunteered to set up events, donate items, share food, make cakes, manning stalls and coming along.

Another highlight of the year was our parent's drinks evening that we held in May. It was great to see parents and staff come together to share some food and enjoy a few drinks in an informal setting. The relaxed environment allowed us to get to know each other better and build networks that will hopefully continue throughout the Rossbourne journey and beyond.

It was great to see the Sports Inclusion Programme grow and evolve this year. Sports Inclusion continues to be an initiative that the RPA is passionate about and the uptake by both past and present students has been exceptional.

**Sports Inclusion** - Sports Inclusion at Rossbourne is a part of the Parents' Association and its role is to encourage, facilitate, communicate and co-ordinate sporting activities for Rossbourne students outside of school hours. Getting involved in sport outside of school has so many fitness and social benefits. Forming these habits and relationships now, whilst at Rossbourne, places our children well for continuing on in life after Rossbourne.

A large part of Sports Inclusion involved co-ordinating the after school basketball training and the teams in the Friday night Power Assist Basketball League which have current Rossbourne students. This year we had 5 training sessions each week with around 50 students / past students enrolled in training. We now have a healthy bank of information on inclusive sports opportunities outside of school that the students can tap into and I am very happy to say that there are many students involved in many of these. Popular sports have been netball, soccer and bowling. Snow Sports is another wonderful opportunity for sport and friendships and I would like to thank Amber Collins for co-ordinating the Rossbourne team this year.

A highlight for me this year was putting together a new basketball team for the Friday night competition. The first game was so exciting and it was wonderful to see so many family members come along to support the players. To see the joy on the faces of the players and their families, reminded me of why Sports Inclusion is important for Rossbourne students and families. Another highlight was observing a table of past Rossbourne students at a recent dinner celebrating 30 years of the Power Assist League. These young adults had such an enjoyable night together. Basketball brought these students together socially – proof that participation in sport reaps benefits that go beyond health and fitness.

### **Student Attendance**

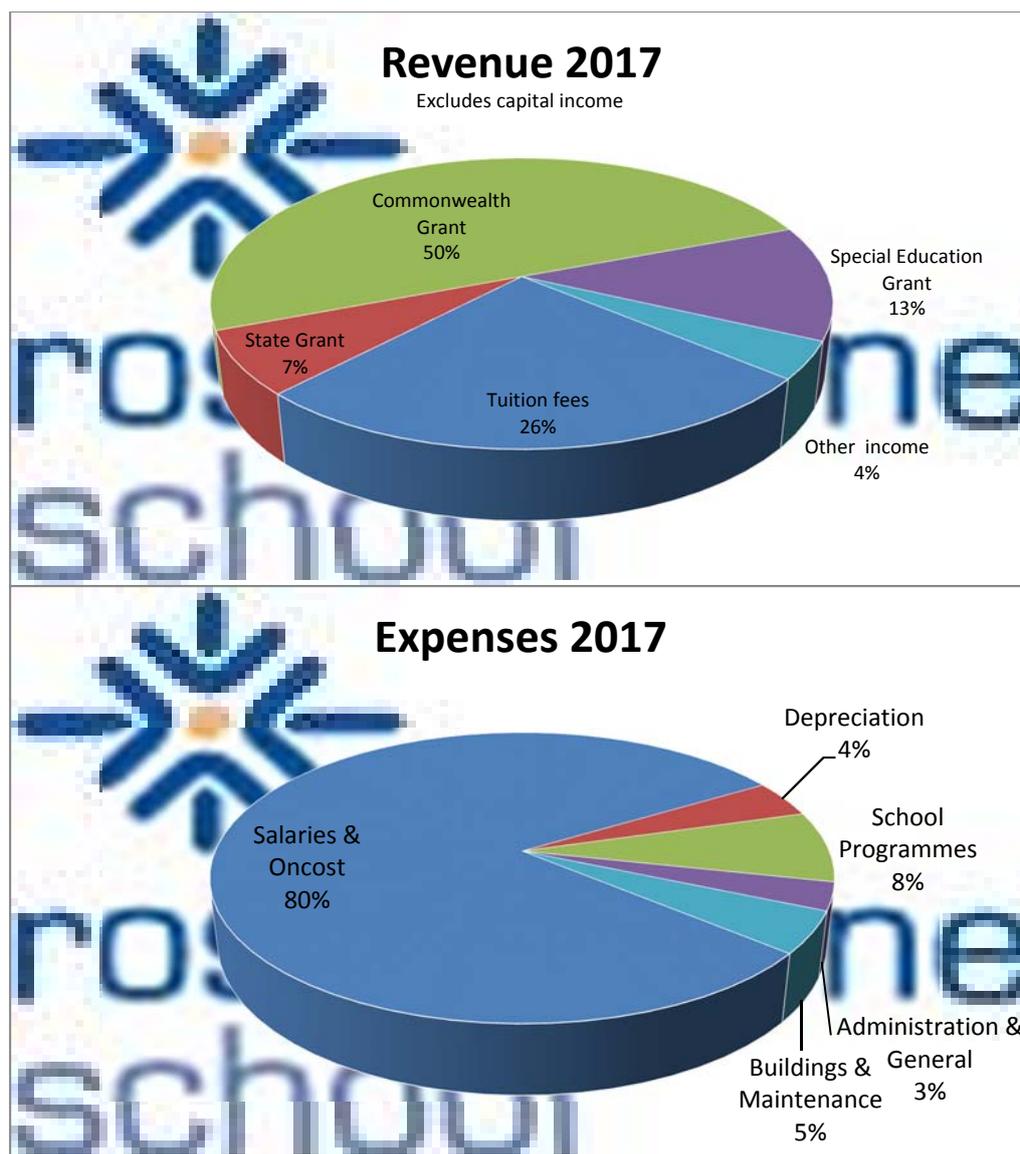
The average attendance of students of the 2017 school year was 93.2% (2016: 93.2%).

### **Staff**

Teachers' daily attendance rate at Rossbourne was marginally below the previous years attendance due to long term absentee of a staff member, the average attendance for 2017 was 95.0%. (2016 – 96.9%).

In addition, staff attended 46 days of external professional development in 2017 and a number of in house school based development programmes. The average expenditure for paid professional development training was \$660 per staff member. Training and Development programmes focused on teaching theory, teaching and learning strategies, ICT use, resilience and self-esteem, individual learning needs, Autism and student wellbeing. Involvement in Professional Associations is encouraged and a range of staff members make significant and valued contributions to the work of these associations and interest groups.

## Operating Income & Expenses for the Year Ending 2017



Combined funding from the Commonwealth and State Governments represented 70% (2016: 66%) of total revenue at Rossbourne and Tuition fees 26% (2016: 27%). Expenditure directed towards Salaries and oncost represented 80% of total expenditure compared with 82% over the previous two years.

### Conclusion

Our School Council members have once again given their time and expertise to the Rossbourne community and I offer them my sincere thanks for their continued interest and support. We are indeed fortunate to have such a willing group of Council members who share a vision for the ongoing development of the School. In addition, I thank all those within the school community who have assisted in so many ways throughout 2017.

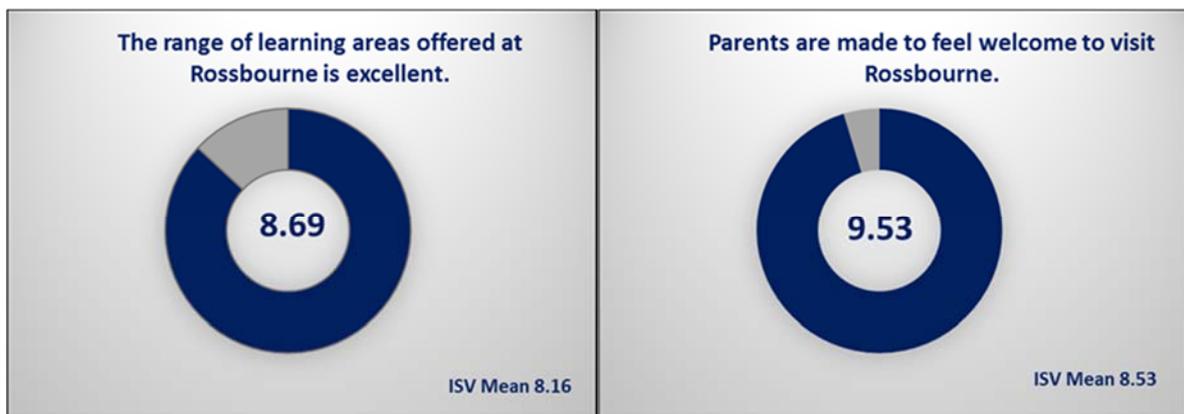
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# Appendix A

## Rossbourne Parent Satisfaction Survey 2017 Headline Indicators

The dial and numeric figure represents Rossbourne's average score out of ten for the respective questions with the ISV mean represented in the bottom right corner indicating the average score for Victorian Independent Schools that had participated in the survey.



My child is motivated to learn at Rossbourne.



ISV Mean 8.18

Teachers stay up-to-date in the things they teach.



ISV Mean 8.21

The learning program offered at Rossbourne meets the needs of individual students.



ISV Mean 7.82

Students receive excellent support at the start of each school year.



ISV Mean 8.07

Teachers understand the differing abilities of students and teach accordingly.



ISV Mean 7.65

Rossbourne's library has outstanding resources for students.



ISV Mean 8.05

Students have access to high quality materials and resources that help them learn.



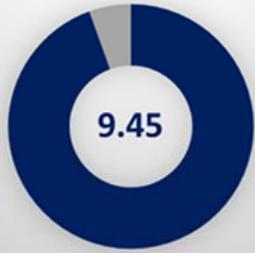
ISV Mean 8.26

Students are well prepared for the next stage in their education.



ISV Mean 8.18

Teachers at Rossbourne know and care about my Child.



ISV Mean 8.32

Parents are kept informed about the learning programs undertaken by students.



ISV Mean 7.82