

# **2020 Annual Report to the Community**

## **Our School Vision**

### **Identity Statement**

St Mel's is a proud Catholic school and kindergarten striving, learning and achieving together, through Christ, our light.

### **Vision Statements**

St Mel's strives to:

Build a community illuminated by our Catholic Tradition and grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Nurture the spirit, mind, and body of each learner.

Create learning environments that invite learners to inquire, explore and discover.

Embrace all families working in partnership with parish and community to engage in life long learning.

Rejoice in the diversity of our community and celebrate its uniqueness.

### **Graduate Outcomes**

At St Mel's we endeavour to educate students who:

Demonstrate openness to faith and willingness to act justly.

Are open to nurturing their personal spirituality

Are curious engaged learners, risk takers in their learning and life long learners.

Are literate and numerate.

Have good self-awareness and confidence to explore possibilities

Understand their responsibility in caring for all God's creation.

Show understanding and appreciation of the diversity of society.

Are respectful, cooperative, and can communicate and work with others harmoniously.

### **School Overview**

At St Mel's we acknowledge that the child is a capable person, who from birth can readily manage multiple relationships, both Divine and human, that is willing to make meaning of the world about them.

In collaboration with the child, parent, teacher and community, St Mel's works to create engaging learning experiences that are founded on the theories of past and current researchers such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Cavaletti, Robinson, and Malaguzzi.

Learning at St Mel's is organic and fluid, creating opportunities for the child to experience success in learning via play, the arts, literature, numeracy, physical activity, sciences - learning is multi-disciplinary and is accessed in an environment that is welcoming, homely, challenging and encouraging.

As a learning community, St Mel's takes co-responsibility for all it's citizens, citizens of the world, allowing each member to live life in the abundance of God's love, in union with young and old, with the expectation that all can LEARN.

We not only welcome all those who chose St Mel's as a place of learning, a place where relationships are formed and built upon, but more so we hope to create a community where ALL belong.

Principal ReportDear Parents and Friends

I would like to take this opportunity to thank St Mel's community for your continued support over the past 12 months. It has been a great privilege to lead St Mel's with much being achieved and much more on the horizon yet to do. Leadership isn't an easy gig and you don't always get it right, but the rewards of seeing the kids grow; learn and flourish is what makes being principal an exceptional honour. The support from our school board, parents and friends, school staff and students is appreciated beyond words can express. Thank you.

What a strange year it has been? Covid 19 has had such a stranglehold on us all and has dictated pretty much everything we do, think and say. School life has been very different. Moving to remote learning at the end of term 1 and continuing to do so for a total of 13 weeks (on and off) was so foreign and confusing, that none of us ever thought it could be possible but we did it. Not only did we do it, we did it well. Our students continued to learn, grow, inquire and became more resilient and appreciative of what they have, as did we all.

I'd like to express my thanks and gratitude to all in our community on the response to the demands that this year has put on families, especially those juggling work commitments, having to supervise online learning or facing financial hardship. Our

call to wellbeing has been outstanding. Whilst there have been many negatives there have been many positives which we, as a school, will learn from and adapt to suit our needs.

The past 12 months at St Mel's has seen much more than just surviving COVID. Our children have been given many opportunities to explore the world about them. The teaching staff has worked hard to improve pedagogical practices, adapting to changes to give our children the best strategies to learn and apply their thinking. As parents you should be proud of your children's efforts.

St Mel's is a community that is committed to its Catholic Traditions, always striving to create learning experiences that meet the needs of the child and allows each student the ability to succeed and grow as an individual. We continue to rely on the support of our parents, adults and friends to build the community that we have. As an Education Community we are dependent on the support of the parent to ensure we are not working in isolation, but rather in unison. As a community we have worked hard to foster a positive and trusting relationship, and continue to share the ideas, vision and conversations that will further enhance best practices and learning opportunities.

Next year we embark on a journey of discovery. Our vision, mission, pedagogy and strategic directions will be examined and eventually re-formalized to ensure we evolve as a community of learners. New strategic plans will be created that will enrapture past, present and future educational thinking and creativity. It's exciting times and we call on all in our community to embrace the challenge.

I thank all parents that entrust their children to us. It is our honour to share this time in your child's life. More so I wish to thank you the members of St Mel's Parish Education Community and Parent Social Club. Thank you Melissa Hamilton (PEB Chairperson) and Mel Shiels (social committee deputy chair) for accepting the call to lead. All committee positions are currently available.

To quote Pope Francis: "The future is, most of all, in the hands of those people who recognize the other as a 'you' and themselves as part of an 'us.' We all need each other."

May we respond to the Pope Francis' call for solidarity by being aware of the blessings in our lives and seek to share those blessings with our community—especially the least among us and those who most need our support and care. This is what St Mel's is renowned for and is what we will continue to do.

God Bless.

Chris Summers

Principal

CI Review  
Review of 2020  
CATHOLIC IDENTITY ~ Action Plan 2020

To develop an authentic culture of service to others, reflecting the life that Jesus led.

To embrace the diversity of our community while maintaining and deepening our catholic traditions, identity, teachings and Mercy charism (history). (2017 - 2021)

How do we develop in our students a call to action for social justice?

We had a wonderful day celebrating our Feast Day on Feb 6th. Danae Napier our new Catholic Identity Leader led us beautifully in the morning with a liturgy focusing on the importance of helping others. Students have been collecting second hand books to donate to fire victims across the state and this became the focus for our feast day. Students worked in their House Groups designing bookmarks to accompany the books we have been collecting. Each bookmark was individually created with a special message or image to highlight our concern and wishes for a speedy recovery. Students finished the day with a shared picnic on the oval and had zooper doopers to quench the thirst of a many hard working child. Thanks Danae for organising a great feast day and to all students, teachers and parents who joined in to help us celebrate.

National Apology Day Breakfast ~ Feb 13th. We had a good contingent of students and families represent St Mel's at the Apology Day breakfast on Thursday. This significant event seems to be getting bigger and bigger in Shepparton. Our students were amazing ambassadors for their school and for some, their culture. Well done to all those involved.

Raising money for the missions or Caritas has been difficult this year due to Covid however people have continued to be very supportive of those doing it tough at the moment. Random donations of food, clothing and household products have been greatly appreciated.

The Catholic University in Leuven, was commissioned by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) to design a process and tools, based on sound research, to accomplish the goal of understanding our current Catholic identity and where the school community might like to see itself in the future. 2019 was the 3rd time St Mels' community has participated in the ECSI survey. The data we receive helps us to build a better picture of where we are in terms of us as a catholic school and how we can continue to build our catholic identity in an ever changing and secular society. The challenges are getting bigger but it's important catholic schools don't lose sight of who we are and how we can express our catholicity.

Danae Napier and Chris Summers met with David Walker Catholic Identity Leader from the CEO to discuss our data results from our ECSI (Enhancing Catholic School Identity) recently. Whilst most of our data is quite positive there are areas we need to work on to ensure St Mel's continues to provide the best education we can in the model that Jesus has taught us.

Our children who are growing into an increasingly pressure filled world need to be self reliant, questioning and reflective. We have found this to be ever present when teaching students about the Gospel stories of Jesus.

Learning and Teaching  
Outcomes

## LEARNING AND TEACHING

To develop a culture of goal setting, exploring different options in learning, taking action as needed and reflection on our teaching practice, to improve our pedagogy, student learning and parental engagement.

To provide a guaranteed and viable Teaching and Learning plan that enables St Mel's students to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. (2017-2021)

How well do our students display interdependent learning skills and how do we know?

Lisa Burman has continued to work with our staff this year sharing her love of story writing and strategies to help us embed good writing practices across the school. Lisa has worked closely with staff to model good teaching and learning in all areas of the literacy curriculum. Professional learning was completed via Zoom meetings held throughout the year. Consultants such as Lisa help to engage the learner and instill the confidence of teachers to continue to be the best educators they can.

Whilst there have been negatives this year there have been many positives which we, as a school, have learned from and adapted to suit our needs. Using online learning platforms, virtual meetings and attaining a new level of cleanliness and hygiene have all worked in our favour and will help us moving into 2021. The past 12 months at St Mel's has seen much more than just surviving COVID. Our children have been given many opportunities to explore the world about them. The teaching staff has worked hard to improve practices, adapting to changes to give our children the best strategies to learn and apply their thinking.

#### Pastoral Wellbeing

To encourage stronger ties with all parents to empower our community to DREAM BIG

St. Mel's fosters a spiritual, healthy, safe and hope filled community that nurtures and develops the dignity of each individual. (2017 - 2021)

How do we foster a culture of acceptance and inclusion amongst the whole school community using PBIS model and approach? Pastoral Wellbeing is a very complex and difficult job, demanding much time and school resourcing. It is though one of the most important areas of school life to get right. The complexities some families face day to day compounds the need to ensure all children are kept safe, are loved and supported at school. Thankfully we have a very dedicated and experience team of teachers who lead this important area at school.

Mr Chris Quinn has been employed in the role as Senior Leader: Pastoral Wellbeing / Special Needs. Chris will lead our pastoral wellbeing team, which comprises of Mrs Elisabeth Rodriguez who continues in the role of Pastoral Wellbeing and school chaplain. We have also employed Melinda Ryan in the role as chaplain and wellbeing support to help Lis with the demands of family and student support. Mrs Cherie Malanati joins us as our new Learning Diversity coordinator and curriculum support person. Cherie has a background as a speech pathologist and has worked extensively with children with high needs and traumatic backgrounds.

St Mel's follows a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) Framework which provides a broad range of systemic and individual strategies for achieving social and learning outcomes whilst addressing behaviours of concern.

Our Behaviour Support Team (BST) continued to work with Dan Petro throughout 2020 via online platforms and met twice a term to ensure our systems, structures

and strategies that support the implementation of our three school expectations: Respect everyone and everything; Be your best and Help others succeed. The importance of the framework was highlighted for the team as we recognised the variance in perspective that each individual can bring to a situation. Implementing such a framework builds opportunity for consistency and clarity for students and teachers when addressing behaviours of concern.

A tragic downside to the pandemic has been the economic disaster especially those who have lost their jobs. Our thoughts and prayers were with all in our community who were doing it tough financially throughout the year. I'd like to thank our school Wellbeing Team; Lis Rodrigues, Melanie Ryan and Chris Quinn for the incredible work they did to ensure families were being supported.

#### Value added

#### Wellbeing and Engagement 2020

- ~ School Camps Week 6 2020 (Ballarat years 3/4, Canberra 5/6)
- ~ Student Leadership Teams
- ~ St Mels' Art Show Nov 2020 (Covid restricted and live streamed to families)
- ~ School Excursions to Aquamoves, Dookie (Mt Major), Canoeing
- ~ Year 6 Retreat Dec 2020

#### Child Safety

St Mel's School promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all students.

All students enrolled at St Mel's, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe.

The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse.

We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

#### Child Safety Achievements

In 2020 St Mel's was externally assessed and reviewed by the VRQA as part of their Full School Review process and for the implementation and enactment of Child Safe Standards under Ministerial Order 870. The governing authority approved St Mel's as being compliant in all areas of child safe practices including the implementation and commitment to policies, codes of conduct, reporting and response procedures and induction of volunteers.

Commitment to staff training to minimising risk and recognition of child abuse is held once a term at the first full staff PLC. All staff annually completes online Mandatory reporting modules and forward completion certificates to the school principal.

All staff have read and signed the Code of Conduct as a part of our ongoing updates, along with policy familiarisation and the completion of e-modules for mandatory reporting, disability discrimination, anaphylaxis and asthma.

All volunteers complete volunteer agreement forms and volunteers register is maintained along with working with children's check (WWCC). Volunteers are inducted and sign and sign Child safe policies and code of conduct.

Students regularly participate in lessons to empower and respond to any issues concerning their safety and wellbeing. This directly links to Standard 7 Empowering Students.

A dedicated Child Safe team has been formed with regular meetings being held to discuss and / or address Child safe practices. Jane Stock, Chris Summers, Chris Quinn, Cherie Malnati, Melinda Ryan and Liz Rodriguez are part of this team.

Website and weekly newsletters outline our commitment to Child Safety.

Annual school calendar and information booklet includes St Mel's commitment to Child Safe practices.

#### Leadership and Management

To ensure that we maintain our current practice and philosophy when developing and planning future teaching and learning programs, in light of a change of leadership.

To be inspirational leaders who develop genuine relationships across the community and provide authentic leadership opportunities in order for all to reach their full potential. (2017- 2021)

What is the school's role in supporting parents with knowledge and skills, resilience, cyber safety, technology etc.? Leadership Changes for 2020

Mrs Danae Napier was employed as Catholic Identity Leader. Mr Chris Quinn has been employed in the role as Senior Leader: Pastoral Wellbeing / Special Needs.

Chris will lead our pastoral wellbeing team, which comprises of Mrs Elisabeth Rodriguez who continues in the role of Pastoral Wellbeing and school chaplain. We have also employed Melinda Ryan in the role as chaplain and wellbeing support to help Lis with the demands of family and student support. Mrs Cherie Malanati joins us as our new Learning Diversity coordinator and curriculum support person.

Cherie has a background as a speech pathologist and has worked extensively with children with high needs and traumatic backgrounds. Jane Stock is also very much



a key person in her role as Senior Leader: Learning and Teaching. Her extensive knowledge of curriculum and understanding of helping students access the curriculum is second to none. I'm calling this our "A" team. We are very lucky to have such an amazing group of people working at St Mel's.

2020 our leadership team committed to regular meeting schedules to ensure all areas of school life were being attending to and all members were on the same page. These meetings were an essential component to our promise of delivering supportive management and leadership across the school. Good things were achieved and good foundations laid to help guide our future directions.

All year six students were given opportunities to build upon their own leadership capabilities with students being rostered on for meals on wheels, canteen duty, leading school tours and helping in the kindergarten.

The school environment, both classrooms and playground, reflect the school leadership's care of and commitment to providing an engaging and attractive place for students. Our philosophy of learning has influenced both the utilisation of the current learning spaces and the design of the new learning spaces. Financial resources have been used purposefully to enhance the school's learning, physical activity, social cohesiveness and spirituality.

The needs and care of students and their families is paramount within the school community, evidenced by the many programs, structures and processes to support the more vulnerable including students with additional needs. St Mel's has established strong relationships with allied and medical health specialists to support relevant students.

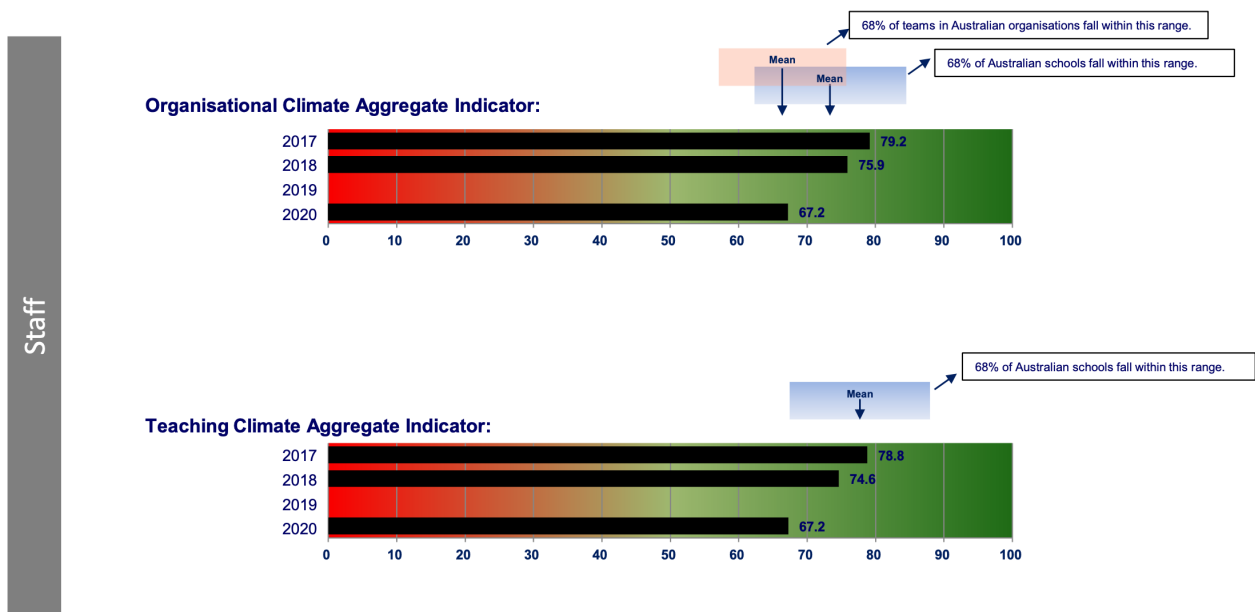
All staff had their goal setting meeting with the principal at the beginning of the year and Annual Review Meeting (ARM) in terms three and four to finalise staff intentions or class placements for 2021. The ARM is an opportunity to reflect on work practices and set goals for ongoing professional learning and growth.

### **Staff Professional Learning 2020**

- ~ Lisa Burman PD Writing (online PD provided for staff)
- ~ Dan Petro BST & PBIS PD
- ~ Child Safety Standard 7 Empowering Students
- ~ Right and Respectful Relationships PD
- ~ Individual Learning Plans (ILP's)
- ~ NCCD training
- ~ Students with Disabilities PD

## Teacher Satisfaction

In 2020 St Mel's participated in a formal feedback survey Insight SRC. Our results to the survey were down as compared to previous years. It has been noted that the timing of survey was not conducive to teachers being positive about completing the survey as it was in the middle of the pandemic.



## School Community

To embrace and rejoice with families in partnerships with the parish and community to engage in lifelong learning

To create and nurture within each person a deep respect and appreciation of all the resources made available to us by God our creator - now and for future generations. (2017 - 2021)

## Achievements

Whilst there have been negatives this year there have been many positives which we, as a school, have learned from and adapted to suit our needs. Using online learning platforms, virtual meetings and attaining a new level of cleanliness and hygiene have all worked in our favour and will help us moving into 2021.

I'd like to take the opportunity, to express my thanks and gratitude to all in our community on the response to the demands that this year has put on families, especially those juggling work commitments, having to supervise online learning or facing financial hardship. Your ability to adapt and take on the challenge of remote learning was simple amazing and you all survived! And have, I believe, gained a new appreciation of what teachers do! 😊

The past 12 months at St Mel's has seen much more than just surviving COVID. Our children have been given many opportunities to explore the world about them. The teaching staff has worked hard to improve practices, adapting to changes to give our children the best strategies to learn and apply their thinking and as parents you should be very proud of your children's efforts. We certainly are.

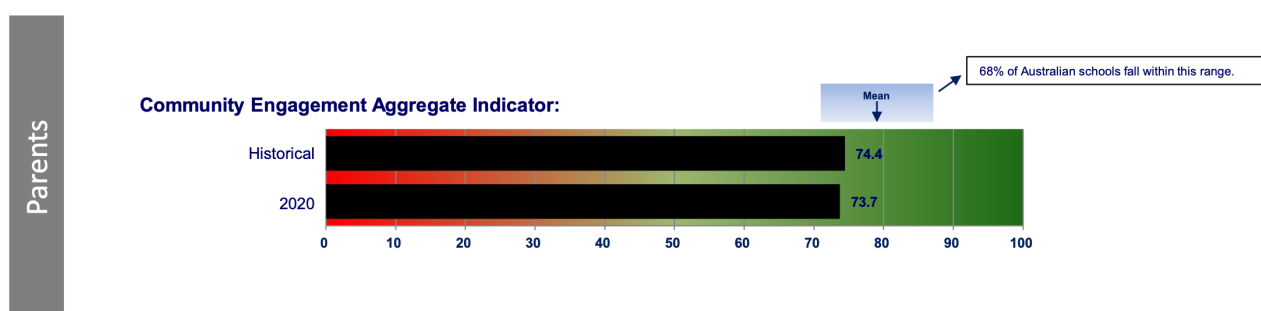
Thank you to our school advisory board. We have an incredible team of members who work diligently in governance and leading strategically the direction of our school. Thank you especially to Melissa Hamilton for being our school board chair and for being a great support. Thanks Melissa.

Thank you, Mel Shiels for stepping into the role as vice-president of our parents and friends committee. It hasn't been much of a year to fund raise or to enjoy the usual 'fun stuff' our community does.

To our staff....thank you. You give selflessly of your time and always go above and beyond. We are very lucky to have such a hardworking staff, and I am forever grateful of your commitment and generosity especially this year with all that was thrown at you.

Thank you especially to our executive leadership team: Jane, Quinny, Danae and Cherie. You have come on board this year, some brand new to the school, taken on the pandemic and have come out the other side still smiling and working hard to help make St Mel's the best school it can be. You're a wonderful team to work with and I look forward to next year with enthusiasm with what we can do and achieve.

## Parent Satisfaction



We have identified several key areas especially student and staff wellbeing and student behaviour as being areas for improvement. Staff morale and quality teaching and learning will also be our main priorities for improvement for 2021 and beyond.

## Annual Action Plan

St Mel's is a proud Catholic Education Community striving, learning and achieving together, through Christ, our light.

### PASTORAL WELLBEING

To encourage stronger ties with all parents to empower our community to DREAM BIG

St. Mel's fosters a spiritual, healthy, safe and hope filled community that nurtures and develops the dignity of each individual. (2017 - 2021)

How do we foster a culture of acceptance and inclusion amongst the whole school community using PBIS model and approach?

### LEADERSHIP

To ensure that we maintain our current practice and philosophy when developing and planning future teaching and learning programs, in light of a changes in leadership positions and responsibilities.

To be inspirational leaders who develop genuine relationships across the community and provide authentic leadership opportunities in order for all to reach their full potential. (2017- 2021)

What is the school's role in supporting all staff and parents with children of diverse cultural and education needs.

### LEARNING AND TEACHING

To develop a culture of goal setting, exploring different options in learning, taking action as needed and reflection on our teaching practice, to improve our pedagogy, student learning and parental engagement.

To provide a guaranteed and viable Teaching and Learning plan that enables St Mel's students to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. (2017-2021)

How well do our students display interdependent learning skills and how do we know?

How do we enact our Learning and Teaching philosophy around playful learning?

## CATHOLIC IDENTITY

To develop an authentic culture of service to others, reflecting the life that Jesus led.

To embrace the diversity of our community while maintaining and deepening our catholic traditions, identity, teachings and Mercy charism (history). (2017 - 2021)

How do we develop in our students a call to action for social justice?

How do we further develop our sacramental program in light of Covid 2020?

## STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES

To embrace and rejoice with families in partnerships with the parish and community to engage in lifelong learning

To create and nurture within each person a deep respect and appreciation of all the resources made available to us by God our creator - now and for future generations. (2017 - 2021)