

# 2024

## Annual Report to the School Community



### **Our Lady of Mercy College**

52 Cape Street, HEIDELBERG 3084

Principal: Judith Weir

Web: [www.olmcheidelberg.catholic.edu.au](http://www.olmcheidelberg.catholic.edu.au)

Registration: 914, E Number: E1075

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## Principal's Attestation

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I, Judith Weir, attest that Our Lady of Mercy College is working in consultation with the Victorian Catholic Education Authority towards being fully compliant with:

- The minimum standards and other requirements for school registration and school boarding premises (if applicable) as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic).
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2024 school year under the Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth) and the Australian Education Regulations 2023 (Cth).
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

Attested on 16 May 2025



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## About this report

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Our Lady of Mercy College is registered by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC), provides parents and the wider community with information about the school's activities and achievements throughout the year including information about various aspects of school performance. The Report is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the school community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can also be obtained from the [My School website](#).



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## Governing Authority Report

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The 2024 Annual Report to the School Community provides an excellent commentary on the endeavours of the talented staff, parents, caregivers, and students at Our Lady of Mercy College who have worked generously with dedication and excellence to achieve success in this past year.

I hope that as you read this report, you too will share my delight and that of the Mercy Education Board of Directors in the many triumphs of 2024. From academic and sporting achievements to the spiritual, social and emotional care, all who are associated with Our Lady of Mercy College can be proud of the tangible evidence of success across all areas of school life.

A report of this nature captures words and pictures that can jog our memories and remind us of people, places and events. However, it is more difficult to capture the impact of the unspoken actions that touch both hearts and minds and make a difference to our world. These are the quiet places where God and Mercy reside and where we are held accountable for what is dear and precious to all of us who are connected with this community and Mercy education.

As a Catholic school, informed by the legacy of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, Our Lady of Mercy College educates generations of students and empowers them to enter the world as Mercy people with a mission to look beyond themselves and drive change.

Guided by our values of Compassion, Justice, Respect, Hospitality, Service, and Courage all of us are called to be, in the words of Catherine McAuley, "shining lamps, giving light to all around us."

The Board of Directors recognises the incredible commitment of the Principal, Judith Weir, the College Advisory Council, Leadership Team and all staff in fostering a strong community where everyone thrives.

From leaders, to staff, students and families: your contributions have added to the College's and Mercy Education's rich history and will be joyfully shared in years to come.

I look forward to the journey ahead as we work together to ensure Catherine's shining lamp continues to light our ways in service to others.

Georgina Smith  
Board Chair  
Mercy Education Ltd



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## Vision and Mission

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### **Our College Vision**

Our Lady of Mercy College Heidelberg, founded in 1910, is a Catholic Secondary Girls' College and is a ministry of Mercy Education Ltd. The College's vision and work are inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and guided by the example of Mary and the charism of Catherine McAuley.

We are a community of learners where excellence is pursued in all we do and where relationships are nurtured to enable individual growth and a sense of belonging for all. We empower our girls to be women of joy, courage and compassion who retain an enduring commitment to God's vision of mercy and justice for all.

### **Our Vision for OLMC Girls**

They will be awakened to the life-giving traditions of the Catholic faith. They will recognise their own and others' innate dignity and humanity. They will be independent, active and curious learners.

They will be encouraged, supported, challenged and heard.

They will engage in respectful and authentic discernment about the scripts of their lives.



## **Our Values**

### **Justice**

We seek to:

- Extend hospitality to all
- Respect the dignity of each person
- Respect the sacredness of the earth and nature
- Act for justice in our school, local and global communities.

### **Compassion**

We seek to:

- Nurture generosity of heart and a spirit of kindness
- Understand others and respond to them in times of need
- Know the power of forgiveness and offer this to others.

### **Courage**

We seek to:

- Embrace life, recognising our strengths, limitations and possibilities
- Promote perseverance and risk-taking in learning
- Be a school community where all are encouraged to reflect and grow
- Live authentically, guided by the values taught by Jesus.

### **Joy**

We seek to:

- Embrace moments of grace and beauty in our world
- Share and celebrate as a community
- Bring energy and enthusiasm to all that we do
- Awaken in students the awe and wonder that will lead to lifelong learning.

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## College Overview

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Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) Heidelberg provides extensive learning programs for students from Bulleen, Bundoora, Doncaster, Donvale, Greensborough, Heidelberg, Ivanhoe, Kingsbury, Macleod, Mill Park, Montmorency, Templestowe and Thornbury East.

The College has the capacity for eight streams at Years 7, 8 & 9 to move through to Year 12. Our February 2023 enrolment was 1192 students.

Community life at OLMC is enriched by our Catholic faith and Mercy heritage. We draw on these traditions to help our girls find pockets of spirit in themselves and their world. Our social action, community engagement and outreach programs provide girls with many and varied ways of developing their social consciousness.

Our learning culture features a strong commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. The College has achieved a consistent record of good learning outcomes over many years.



Staff members contribute significantly to this learning culture. They are energetic, collegial, highly motivated educators who are passionate about learning, love teaching girls and are committed to their own professional growth. They have specialist knowledge in girls' education and draw on this expertise to provide safe, nurturing and stimulating learning environments.

At OLMC, the social and relational aspects of student growth are at the forefront of our efforts. The crucial relationship between wellbeing and learning success is well established. We therefore ensure specific programs and structures are in place to counteract the negative influences that impact on our girls. We also value our role in enabling and nurturing friendships that endure well beyond students' time together at OLMC.

Our learning environments feature technology-rich spaces and purpose-built facilities for Sport, the Performing Arts, Science and Design and Technology. Our Centenary Building provides Year 7 and 8 girls with contemporary, colourful and engaging learning spaces and our Nalleijerring Centre is a wonderful facility for Physical Education, Sport and lunchtime activities.



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## Principal's Report

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The theme for 2024 chosen by our Student Leaders was 'A variety of Gifts but one spirit'. The gifts of each of our students, teachers and staff are shared in a spirit of generosity based in our Mercy tradition. At OLMC we celebrate our talents in many different ways through our classrooms and day to day learning, on the Sporting field, in Music, Drama and the Arts, along with an extensive co-curricular program encompassing opportunities to develop a variety of gifts.

Our students also share their voices through debating, public speaking, Student Representative Council (SRC), formal and informal leadership roles. Teachers lead them to develop their talents in Science and Technology, Visual Arts and Media. We will daily see our values of courage, compassion, justice and joy shared freely.



This year has been an exciting year filled with lots of special events and wonderful successes for our students. It has also been a year of discernment as we completed our school review and began the process of developing the next strategic directions 2025-2029. The wisdom and talents of so many were shared with us as we consulted staff, parents and students about our strengths and the challenges that lay before us for the next four years.

Throughout the year our students experienced success beyond our doors through participation in a range of external competitions and programs. Talented Science students and staff were involved in the STEM Mad showcase. The Choir competed for the first time in a prestigious competition in Ballarat and won. Our regular GSV competitions once again this year saw teams bring home a number of trophies. This year we were also privileged to host the annual Frayne Speech Festival where our students won Debating and Voice Choir.

Our Social Justice teams were once again hard at work supporting members of the Exodus community through Bread Run, Exodus Dinners and Camp Heide. The courage and compassion shown by each person, be they a staff member or student, in supporting these initiatives is inspiring and something very special to OLMC. In these moments you would see bright shining lamps giving light to those around them as Catherine McAuley has encouraged us to do.

The College Advisory Council, Finance Committee and Parent's Association, once again have all experienced a successful year. All of these committees comprise parents, alumni and friends to OLMC who give their time and talents to ensure that we can be the best we can. They have led important events and initiatives that enhance connections and provisions for our community.

The outreach work of our Social Justice teams strengthened this year and saw a large number of students connecting in authentic ways with members of the local community. Students worked with Primary School students at St Pius reading club and also led a holiday program for children from the Exodus Community. Camp Heide, during the September school holiday. Our ongoing association with the Exodus Community allowed staff and students to serve those in need through Bread Run and the preparation, cooking and sharing of an evening meal each fortnight. Further, our long and ongoing association with McAuley for Women and Children and Mercy Works grew in strength.

Thank you to all members of the OLMC Community for sharing your talents with us and helping to make OLMC a place where we can all feel empowered together.

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## Catholic Identity and Mission

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will make explicit the treasures of the Scriptures, the Catholic tradition and the Mercy story and how this is lived out in our human experience.
- We will deepen staff and students' understanding and knowledge of Catholic moral and social teaching and support students in developing personal meaning in their lives.

*OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 1 and 2*

### Achievements

#### 2024 Scriptural College Theme

*'Varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit' (1 Cor 12:4)*

Our Student Leaders, in their commitment to building and strengthening our community, chose a profound theme from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 4: "Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit..."

While this text may be understood on a surface level, the leaders aimed to inspire students, staff, and families to reflect more deeply on the unique gifts bestowed upon each of us by God and how we might use these gifts to serve others in keeping with our Mercy Tradition. In the original Greek, the word for gifts, *charismata*, is more accurately translated as "gifts of grace," given by God for the benefit of others.

Catholic biblical scholar Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., explains that *charismata* refers to "grace- gifts bestowed by God for the building up of the Christian community, not for personal prestige" (First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, Yale University Press, 2008, p. 455). Similarly, Luke Timothy Johnson emphasises that these gifts are "manifestations of divine grace, entrusted to individuals for the common good" (The First and Second Letters to the Corinthians, Sacra Pagina Series, Liturgical Press, 1999, p. 268). Both scholars affirm that Paul's use of *charismata* underscores the communal and self-giving purpose of these gifts within the body of Christ.

Over the year, there were many examples of these God-given gifts and how our OLMC students have used them to serve others. This spirit of service is the same as

Jesus embodied in the Gospel, which inspired Catherine McAuley to reach out to those rejected or hurt in her society. As Mercy people, we are fortunate to continue loving God and serving our neighbour. It's a tradition and a responsibility we are called to do. Remember, we are all part of 'One Spirit-many Gifts'.

### **Prayer and Liturgies**

As a faith-filled community, we continued to celebrate God's active and loving presence, calling us to live out Mercy daily. We began the school year and the season of Lent with a whole school Ash Wednesday Mass and later commemorated the Triduum with a Holy Thursday liturgy. Throughout the year, our calendar was enriched by significant ceremonies including Anzac Day, Mercy Day, Class Masses, the Graduation Mass, the Remembrance Day Liturgy, and Advent celebrations. OLMC students generously offered their time and talents to lead and participate in these liturgies, embodying the spirit of active discipleship.



### **Social Justice Initiatives**

In the spirit of Mercy, as lived and modelled by Catherine McAuley, we continue to walk alongside others with compassion and purpose. This year, many students devoted their time to building community and upholding the dignity of all through various Social Justice initiatives. Their contributions included regular participation in



the fortnightly Exodus Family Dinners, where Year 8 and 11 students shared meals and formed genuine connections with our community companions.

Year 10 students continued their partnership with St Pius X Primary School, offering academic support and engaging in shared learning experiences that nurtured mutual respect and friendship. Many also volunteered at our Annual High Tea, raising awareness and vital funds for McAuley for Women and Children.

Throughout the year, our Justice Groups remained deeply committed to advocacy and education during Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, and Eco-Justice Day. The Feminist Collective played a pivotal role in highlighting the challenges faced by young women globally, especially concerning access to sanitary products. Their efforts led to generous donations supporting homeless women and those in temporary accommodation through McAuley Services.

During the September holidays, Camp Heidi brought joy to our friends in the Exodus community. Year 11 students planned and led a series of engaging activities for the children. Student leaders also attended the annual Young Vinnies conference, while Year 7 students shared life and story fortnightly with our dear friends at VMCH's Trinity Lane.

In the lead-up to Christmas, Year 9 students prepared and packed hampers—generously filled by our staff—to share with families in the Exodus community, extending warmth and kindness during the festive season.





## Mercy Day

Mercy Day, celebrated worldwide in honour of the charism, spirituality and example of Catherine McAuley and the many Sisters of Mercy, is celebrated close to the feast of Our Lady of Mercy on 24 September. It was on this feast day in 1827 that Catherine opened her first House of Mercy, in Dublin. Mercy Day is a treasured moment in the life of our College: a time to pause, give thanks to God for the many blessings we receive, and live out the spirit of Mercy in concrete ways. It is also an opportunity to stand in solidarity with Mercy Works, the Sisters of Mercy, and their partners who work tirelessly to support vulnerable communities locally and abroad. This year, our collective efforts focused on helping survivors of domestic violence in the Philippines. Mercy Day continues to be a significant celebration, marked by joy, community, and a shared commitment to compassion and justice.



## Religious Education Curriculum

The Religious Education teaching team has remained committed to reviewing and enhancing units of study to ensure RE continues to be engaging, meaningful, and closely aligned with students' lived experiences. This year, the curriculum was further strengthened by the writing of development student-friendly rubrics that link assessment tasks to specific skills and knowledge. In addition, existing courses were

thoroughly revised, refined, and embedded into our Learning Management System, supporting students to take greater ownership of their learning and their faith journey.



## Value Added

**Year 8 Reflection Days** focused on the theme of connection as Mercy people. Through storytelling and interactive games, students explored the parable of the Good Samaritan, reflecting on how we are called to connect with one another, offer forgiveness, and celebrate life in community with their peers.

**Year 10 Reflection Days – Wonderfully Made** were held in Terms 1 and 4 and were deeply impactful. The program invited students to reflect on the sacredness of each person, created in the image of God. It also provided a respectful and thoughtful space to explore important topics such as sexuality, identity, and consent.

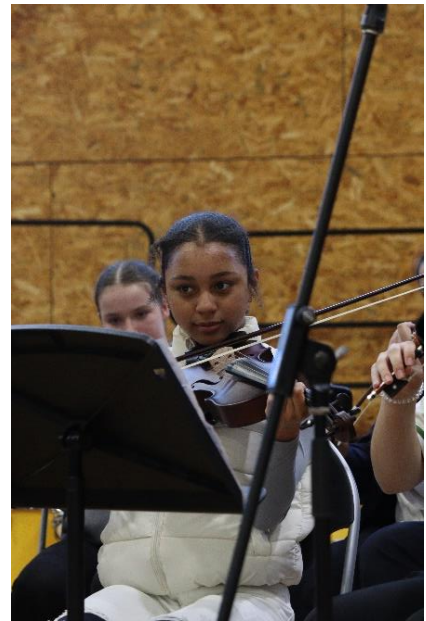
**Year 11 Reflection Day** took place in Greensborough, offering students the opportunity to reflect on what truly matters in their lives. As emerging leaders, they were encouraged to consider their unique role within the OLMC faith community and how they are called to live Mercy in action.

**The Year 12 Retreat** was centred on the story of the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35), inviting students to reflect deeply on their personal journeys and the paths that lie ahead. Set over three days and two nights, the retreat offered a sacred pause amid the busyness of the academic year—a time to listen, reflect, and encounter God in the presence of friends and shared faith.

**Class Masses for Years 7 and 8** were held in the College chapel, with many Pastoral Groups gathering in prayer to give thanks for their blessings and to hold the world's needs in their hearts.

**Justice groups and partnerships.** Significant learning and outreach programs were undertaken in collaboration with people and organisations external to the College, such as the Exodus Community, Heidelberg West, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Fire Carriers groups and Mercy Seeds of Justice groups. These include:

- Dare2Donate – school-based activity to raise funds for McAuley for Women and Children
- Exodus Bread Run
- Exodus Family Dinners
- St Pius X Reading Club
- Camp Heidi
- Mercy Education Limited Seeds of Justice
- Young Vinnies
- FIRE Carriers
- Trinity Lane
- High Tea – supporting the ministries of McAuley for Women and Children.





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## Learning and Teaching

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will put the student, their learning and their wellbeing at the centre of all we do
- We will investigate and implement strategies for optimal and sustainable use of our resources to promote contemporary learning and community development.

*OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 3 and 6*

### Achievements

#### Developmental Rubrics

Following a review of our Assessment and Reporting Policy, the College engaged consultants to work with each Learning Area to create developmental rubrics. This work has been most valuable in making the expectations of what is required for a task much clearer for students and colleagues. The interrogation of tasks and rubrics has been a highly valued component of the College's professional learning. It has allowed teachers to have greater precision in identifying student strengths and achievements, growth that has occurred, as well what the next steps and challenges are for a student. This work is ongoing, with one Learning Area remaining to have this as their professional learning focus in 2025.



## **OLMC Pathways program**

Providing support for students in thinking and planning for pathways is an evolving space. In 2024 our Careers Coordinators worked closely with Year 9 students, and their pastoral leaders, in providing students with opportunities for an authentic experience of applying for employment. Over a series of workshops students had the opportunity to learn how to create their resume and write cover letters. This resulted in students submitting a mock job application and having a mock interview.

Through a partnership with the Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network for the Real Industry Job Interview (RIJI) program, students were able to be interviewed by experienced local business owners and recruitment professionals. The interview experience allowed students to prepare and feel the emotions that are often felt when being interviewed for a new role - some were nervous going in, but came out proud of how they handled the situation and with a sense of confidence. Students were interviewed for approximately 20 minutes and received five minutes of verbal feedback on their resume, cover letter and interview, and also received individualised written feedback.

Students in the senior years also benefitted from the opportunity to meet with our Careers Coordinators across the year. This year all Year 10 students had an interview with a Careers Coordinator as part of the Year 10 Pathways program.





## STEM and Extension in Science

An example of an enrichment opportunity at the College in 2024 was our Year 8 STEM club. From March to June the Year 8 STEM team embarked on an exciting journey with the BrainSTEM Games. During this period, students honed their skills in research, problem-solving, critical thinking, and brainstorming. The team focused on exploring food security and its connection to climate change in Australia.

Students conducted a survey among OLMC students, and the results revealed that many people are not fully aware of how climate change impacts food security and affects some of our favourite foods. Based on the findings, students created an educational website to raise awareness on this important issue.

Students had the opportunity to present their research and final product during a workshop, which was a highly rewarding experience for all involved. Students then had the opportunity to present their project at the STEM MAD Showcase in September.



## Languages

For the first time since 2019, 23 students from Years 10, 11 and 12 travelled to Japan in April for a study tour. Seven students from Sacred Heart College also joined us as we travelled to Tokyo, Miyajima Island, Hiroshima and Kyoto. The tour was a wonderful opportunity for students to practice their Japanese, to attend our Japanese sister school, Seirei High School, in Akita, and experience an insight into Japanese life through a homestay experience. We were then fortunate to have students from our Akita visit us at OLMC in July, and experience life in Melbourne, through staying with an OLMC host sister and attending OLMC for a week.



These opportunities are rich in learning, and the growth of student confidence in their use of language during the tour is remarkable. We are looking forward to 2025 as some of our students will be travelling to Italy.





## Professional Learning Teams and Teacher Development

Teaching staff at Our Lady of Mercy College worked in Professional Learning Teams (PLT) in 2024. Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) were based in Learning Areas in order to facilitate collaboration and sharing of resources, ideas and insights. The PLTs will be aiming to see a measurable improvement in student learning outcomes over a period of time and involve trial and error. The subject focused PLTs made use of a range of data sources but particularly NAPLAN, VCE results and internal assessment results. Some examples include Developmental Rubrics, strategies for extended responses, and reading for understanding.

## Student Learning Outcomes

NAPLAN provides further information as to our students' abilities, and can help identify areas that the cohort may benefit from further focus. The cohort overall has performed well in the tests when compared with the state and national medians. In some cases, such as Writing, there is a significant difference between the state and the College, with over 45 points difference in the median. This is higher than the results in the four other tests.

An example of how this Year 7 NAPLAN data has been used is by looking at the Reading results. This led to a review of the texts selected for study in English and whether they are suitably challenging for the students, based on the cohorts NAPLAN and their ACER PAT results. This data has also helped us to identify students for our literacy and numeracy support programs.



Year 9 data for NAPLAN indicates that cohort overall has performed well in the tests when compared with the state and national medians. In some cases, such as Grammar and Punctuation and in Writing, there is a significant difference between the state and the College. In Grammar and Punctuation there is a difference of 54 points between the College's 25th percentile (555) and the state (501), and 30 points at the 75th percentile (OLMC 648, state 618).

An example of how this Year 9 NAPLAN data has been used is to identify students who would benefit from greater extension in Mathematics through selecting Advanced Mathematics as a Year 10 subject.

<b>NAPLAN - Proportion of students meeting the proficient standards</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Year level</b>	<b>Mean Scale score</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
Grammar & Punctuation	Year 7	580	86%
	Year 9	599	80%
Numeracy	Year 7	561	85%
	Year 9	583	79%
Reading	Year 7	573	91%
	Year 9	593	83%
Spelling	Year 7	556	85%
	Year 9	576	82%
Writing	Year 7	598	94%
	Year 9	628	91%

\*A school's NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate. Data not reported for 2024 due to participation not meeting these criteria or no students were assessed. Participants include students who were assessed, including non-attempt, or those exempted from the test.

Senior Secondary Outcomes	
VCE Median Score	32
VCE Completion Rate	99%
VCE VM Completion Rate	80%
VPC Completion Rate	*

\*Data not reported for 2024 due to insufficient data i.e. less than 4 students are recorded as taking up this option.

Post-School Destinations as at 2024 In 2024 there were 180 Year 12 students	
Tertiary Study	96%
TAFE / VET	*
Apprenticeship / Traineeship	*
Deferred	*
Employment	*
Other - The category of Other includes both students Looking for Work and those classed as Other	*





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## Student Wellbeing

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will put the student, their learning and their wellbeing at the centre of all we do.
- We will establish new and strengthened approaches to building parent engagement in and understanding of their daughter's learning and in the life of the College.

*OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 4 and 7*



### Achievements

#### Student Leadership and House Initiatives

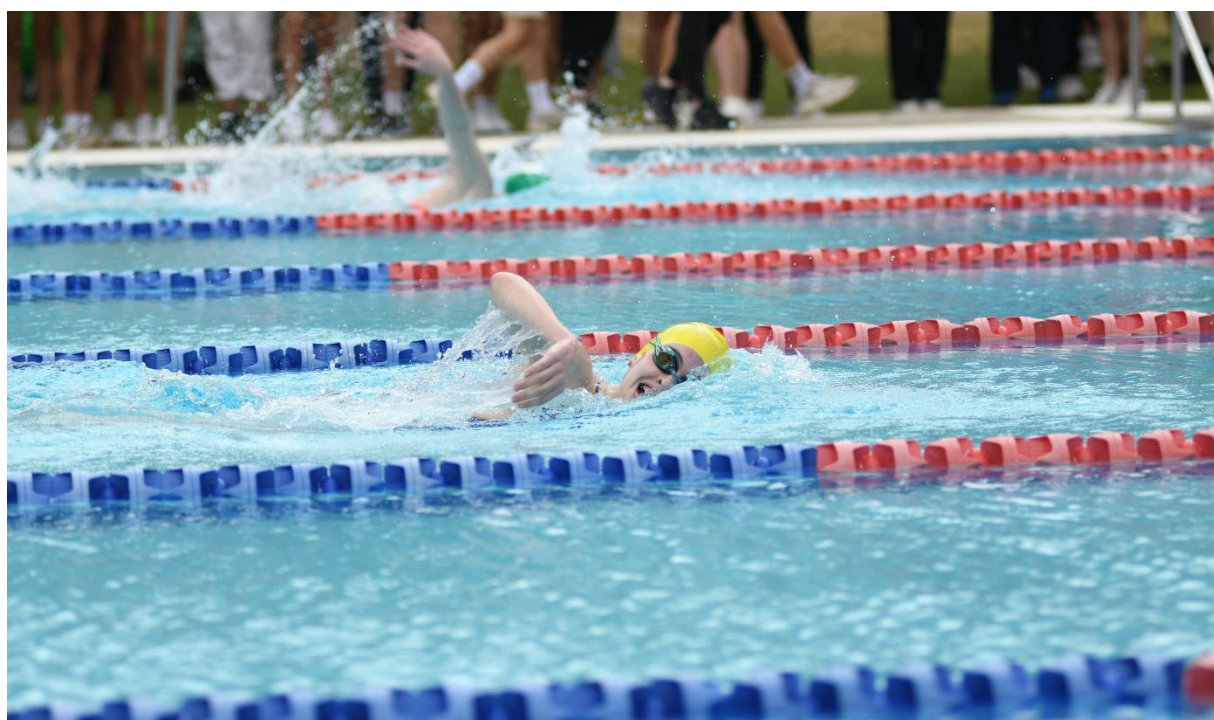
Our Senior Student Leadership Team played a highly significant role in building a sense of belonging for students and maintaining a strong sense of community in 2024. The Student Leadership team utilised the College values of Courage, Compassion, Justice and Joy to help build a sense of what it means to be part of the OLMC community.

The piece of scripture that was the College theme for 2024 was 'Variety of gifts, but the same Spirit' (1Corinthians 12:4). The team used this theme to anchor their work and to guide their communication with students. A core message throughout the year was that unity and strength in our community arises when we recognise and celebrate the unique talents and gifts within our school.

OLMC has a rich co-curricular program with students having the opportunity to involve themselves in the various GSV competitions, participate in the music and performing arts programs, or commit to the various social justice groups that run throughout the year. All of these activities provided opportunities for students to recognise and utilise the gifts they see in themselves but also in others.

This theme also guided a number of activities run by the Student Leadership Team in 2024. One of these activities, which is led by the Student Leadership Team, is Dare2Donate. This day of joy (for the students) and courage (from the staff) is an important fundraiser for McAuley for Women and Children, with a total of \$1680 being raised on the day.

House Arts was held as another opportunity for students to share their gifts and talents. This year, our Year 8 students performed their much-loved Pastoral Just Dance routines, and some of our Senior students worked with our Year 7s to develop House based routines that were performed on the day. It was wonderful to see these Senior students give of their time to support our Year 7s and build connections with our newest house members.





Another important date through the year in relation to building College community is Mercy Day. After celebrating mass together in the Nalleijerring Centre, students and staff alike enjoyed the OLMC disco, treats from the café run by the VCE VM students, and finding a new outfit at the second-hand clothing stall. The badge-making stall once again proved to be very popular and many students enjoyed creating their own tote bag. To finish the day we once again gathered together in the Nalleijerring Centre to showcase some of the performances from House Arts this year. The Student Leadership Team provide students with the opportunity to buy tokens electronically in the lead-up to Mercy Day. This helped the college raise \$6480 for Mercy Works.

The SRC team raised awareness of a number of prominent issues throughout the year. This included the National Day Against Bullying and Violence and R U OK? Day where students connected through art activities, cupcakes and meaningful conversations. Our Year 9 House Vice Captains also provided important leadership throughout 2024. These students ran an Easter Egg Hunt for Year 7 and 8 students, and supported the House Captains in such events as the College Swimming and Athletics Carnivals.



## House Trophy

Every year a trophy is awarded to the House with the most points accumulated via various events. It is a combination of participation numbers and success that leads to a House winning the coveted trophy. In 2024, the results were as follows:

1. Carmel 5,675 points
2. McAuley 4,300points
3. Loreto 3,500 points
4. Mercy 3,250 points



## Pastoral Program

An effective way to build community begins with the connections that students make within their Pastoral Group. In morning Pastoral and during Lesson 3 on Day 7, the Pastoral team work hard to provide opportunities for students to gain a sense of belonging to their Pastoral Group. This begins at the start of the year, with various 'Icebreaker' activities, but continues during the set activities that are planned for the Pastoral Program throughout the year. A few of the highlights of the Pastoral Program are listed below:

### **Year 7 Pastoral Program**

- Time & Space Evening for Year 7 students and their significant female mentors
- Completing modules as part of the eSmart Digital Licence, an initiative supported by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation
- Year 7 Camp at Phillip Island
- Preparation of their time capsules as a way for students to capture the highlights of their first year at OLMC.

### **Year 8 Pastoral Program**

- Time & Space Evening for Year 8 students and their significant male mentors
- Completing modules as part of the eSmart Digital Licence, an initiative supported by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation
- Building connections as part of the Year 8 Pastoral Dance Competition
- Camp at Lake Dewar Lodge Adventure Camp.



### **Year 9 Pastoral Program**

- Peer Support
- Training and leadership skills
- Growth mindset and goal setting
- Cyber Safety presentation from Susan McLean
- Resume writing and interview skills
- The Butterfly Foundation.



## Senior Students Wellbeing Programs

Our Senior Pastorals are based in Houses and consist of Year 10, 11 and 12 students. Senior Pastoral had a focus on the following activities as part of their Pastoral Program:

- Career Action Plans
- Learning a New Skill Sessions
- Women's Health Week activities
- In addition, Year 10 students had a focus on Safe Partying. Sonya Karras is an experienced presenter and advocate for safe partying amongst young people. Students learnt about the effects of drug and alcohol substances, as well as how to look after themselves or others who may be affected.
- Meanwhile, Year 11 students engaged in the Big Sister Experience. This program is designed to increase the students' self-awareness and resilience. Topics included self-worth, friendship, trust, navigating relationships, setting boundaries and mental health awareness. It was an engaging and interactive seminar for the Year 11s, with many useful tools and strategies presented on how to make wellbeing a priority.
- Finally, Year 12 were given a choice of activities that had a focus on health and wellbeing. These activities included information on the health system and how to access services, a self-care presentation from Banyule Council, and a session on the impact of good nutrition and reading product labels carefully.



## Value Added

The Time and Space Program, which is offered to Year 7 and Year 8 students and their families, continues to provide a valuable way to connect with our community. The program is based on Year 7 students taking time with a key female in their life (mother, grandmother, godmother, etc.) to share their feelings with their 'significant other' about what they most valued in the relationship, and what they needed from them as they entered and transitioned into secondary school life. It was likewise an opportunity for the women to reciprocate along similar lines. The Year 8 evening was for students and a key male mentor or figure in their life. This was an opportunity to discuss 'growing up' and how this change might deepen and alter the dynamics of their relationship. The discussions at both evenings were facilitated by older OLMC students. There are a significant number of these Senior OLMC students who choose to return each year to volunteer at this event. This is testament to the value of the program. It is also wonderful to see this service to the College being modelled to our Junior students.

This program is an opportunity for our families to be more involved and engaged in some aspects of school life that our students experience.

Other initiatives have helped build connections between our Senior and Junior students throughout this year. These included the development of a buddy system between Year 7 and Year 12 students in each of our houses, and the support provided by Senior House students in the development of Year 7 House dance performances at House Arts this year.

Our Student Leadership team worked with the Counselling Coordinator to continue to develop a Wellbeing page on CANVAS, our Learning Management System, to help make various resources to support mental health and wellbeing more accessible to students.

Throughout 2024 the role of the House Vice Captain was further developed with particular initiatives assigned to these Year 9 students. This assisted the connection between middle school and senior school for House events throughout the year.

A significant initiative for 2024 was the College's partnership with Challenge Success, a non-profit organisation affiliated with Stanford University's Graduate School of Education. Through our partnership with Challenge Success, we could access their survey which was completed by all students at the beginning of Term 2. This survey has given us rich data that can inform us in regards to our students' sense of belonging, wellbeing and level of engagement in the classroom. Our continuing work with Challenge Success will give us strategies to assist us to continue to elevate student voice and implement strategies that foster these aspects of school life.

## Student Satisfaction

In 2024, the MACSIS survey of student satisfaction was conducted. 2024 was a challenging year for some of our students. The impact of online learning and being isolated from peers and the broader community in recent years, has meant that for some students, meeting the learning and behavioural expectations of the College has been difficult. For some students, spending their initial years of secondary school online has meant that making connections with peers has not been easy. The MACSIS survey results help College Leadership identify areas of focus for our College community.

One of these areas related to how much students feel that their teachers hold them to high expectations. In this area, we saw an improvement in comparison to results for 2023.

In addition, OLMC achieved results above the MACS average for all schools in the following areas:

- 49% viewed OLMC as a school that promotes strong learning dispositions
- 53% of students had a strong sense of their psychological and physical safety while at school.

## Student Attendance

The procedures for student absences are as follows:

- If prior notification has not been received at the College by approximately 9.30 am on the day of absence, the College will send an SMS to the parent or guardian advising of their child's absence.
- If a parent or guardian does not contact the College to provide an explanation on the day of their child's unexplained absence, the College will attempt to contact the parent or guardian of the student within three days of the unexplained absence, either by telephone or email. The College will record the reason for the unexplained absence if a reasonable explanation is received.
- If after contacting the parent or guardian, no explanation is provided within 10 school days, the absence will be recorded as an unexplained absence and remain recorded as an unexplained absence in the College's attendance database.
- Parents and students are advised that an accumulation of five unexplained absences in a 12-month period could lead to a referral of the accumulated absences to MACS.

Years 9 - 12 Student Retention Rate	
Years 9 to 12 Student Retention Rate	92.78%

Average Student Attendance Rate by Year Level	
Y07	90.9%
Y08	89.6%
Y09	88.6%
Y10	88.3%



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## Leadership

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will grow together by facilitating opportunities for collaboration and research-based professional learning
- We will develop a model of empowered leadership that operates in an environment of trust and respect that enhances both autonomy and diversity.

*OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 3 and 5*

### Achievements

#### Leader Development

The Leadership Team continued to engage with a Critical Friend to support the team to further their strategic focus and to develop new ways of addressing emerging issues around student learning outcomes and wellbeing.

In 2024 the Leadership Team also worked closely with the community and an expert consultant, Mr. Paul Dolan, to develop the Strategic Directions for our community 2025-2029. The process included representatives of parents, students and staff. Our starting point for discussion was informed by the OECD report focused on education for 2030.

The Leadership Team and the College Advisory Council worked closely together and with our consultant to discern the strategies that will ensure that OLMC continues to be a place of excellence in learning, faith development and wellbeing. We are excited and looking forward to an official launch of our new strategy in 2025.

#### Middle Leaders Development

This year some of our Middle Leaders began working with Ms. Kris Darmody, teacher and lawyer who works with people to help understand and resolve conflict. She led our leaders through a program of "Conflict Competency". The feedback from leaders has been very encouraging and the work with them will continue into 2025.

#### Teacher Candidate Program

OLMC continues to engage with pre-service teachers and were happy to host a

number from ACU and Deakin University. We also engaged two pre-service teachers in our Learning Support Team. We are privileged to support new teachers in their learning and hope to expand the number of pre-service teachers in 2025.

### **Professional Learning Teams**

As in previous years, teams were formed based on Learning Areas, using the Data Wise model of inquiry. This approach focused on the development of key knowledge and skills for teachers, based on the learning and wellbeing needs of our students. Each Learning Area trialed a range of pedagogical strategies designed to engage students and encourage them to move beyond their comfort zones.

Some Professional Learning Teams continued their work with our consultants to establish Developmental Rubrics. These rubrics aim to make the pathways to higher levels of achievement visible to students and foster student agency by encouraging them to direct some of their own learning. This work will continue in 2025.



### **Professional Learning**

As is the case each year, teachers at OLMC are encouraged to engage in learning that will challenge them. This has seen teachers involved in a number of programs over the course of the year to enhance their knowledge, particularly in the area of VCE.

A group of staff also had the privilege of working with Real Schools, an organization committed to supporting schools to fully develop and enhance the use of

Restorative Practices. In light of the work and feedback from the team of teachers, this will be a feature of our professional learning in 2025.

Expenditure and Teacher Participation in Professional Learning	
<p>Teachers at OLMC participated in a wide variety of professional learning activities over the course of 2024.</p> <p><b>Middle Leaders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Development with New Tech Network</li> <li>• Conflict Competency training for Wellbeing Leaders</li> </ul> <p><b>Professional Learning Teams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Rubrics</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Area based learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VCE subject briefings and examiners meetings</li> <li>• VCE Assessors</li> <li>• Members of VCE Exam setting panels</li> <li>• Victorian Curriculum 2.0 for all Learning Areas</li> </ul> <p><b>OLMC Staff Conference</b></p> <p>Workshops on pedagogical practices, classroom strategies, AI and faith development were held over a four-day conference in December. Staff from OLMC led their colleagues through a range of new learnings that enabled them to engage in professional growth.</p> <p>The conference also focused on Wellbeing and providing ideas and opportunities to practice good self-care.</p>	
Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2024	106
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1165.00

Teacher Satisfaction

MACSSIS data from 2024 shows a consistency of teacher satisfaction from 2023 to 2024. In particular the view of the workplace, teamwork and staff relationships has continued to be an important area for teachers, and data regarding Collective Efficacy has remained steady. The staff Leadership relationships improved in 2024, reflecting the work that has been done around a number of areas to support staff in their work with students from both an academic and relational perspective. The positive rating for Instructional Leadership also improved in 2024 and once again, the commitment to professional learning and the work to improve practice has been affirmed by teachers. Areas for continued improvement include providing teams with support through dedicated time for collaboration between and among leaders. The Catholic Identity of the College was highly regarded by staff with 82% rating this aspect of our work positively. This figure was also above the MACS average. At OLMC we strive to live our values through our Catholic and Mercy traditions and it is valued highly by our staff which is an important contributor to the experiences of all.

Areas of success:

- 92% of teachers felt school leaders were friendly towards them
- 87% of teachers felt the leaders were knowledgeable about teaching and learning practices
- 71% of teachers positively rated their access to professional learning opportunities
- Working in teams, and the success of those teams in responding to student needs, was very highly regarded by teachers.

Teacher Qualifications	
Doctorate	1
Masters	36
Graduate	48
Graduate Certificate	6
Bachelor Degree	92
Advanced Diploma	10
No Qualifications Listed	11



<b>Staff Composition</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	5
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	112
Teaching Staff (FTE)	98.98
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	58
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	49.76
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0

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## Community Engagement

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### Goals & Intended Outcomes

- We will investigate and implement strategies for optimal and sustainable use of our resources to promote contemporary learning and community development
- We will establish new and strengthened approaches to building parent engagement in and understanding of their daughter's learning and in the life of the College.

*OLMC Strategic Plan 2020-2023, Key Commitments 6 and 7*

### Achievements

The school review was a focus for much of our work this year. Parents engaged in workshops and consultation sessions providing feedback on key aspects of the work of the school. Discernment about the needs of young people into the future and our role as educators and parents also featured in the consultation. The voices of parents are very much present in the draft documents of the next strategic directions.

As part of our focus on improved communications, a concerted effort has been made to enhance our communication strategies. In 2024 we introduced the "SIMON Everywhere" App for parents and staff. The App allows parents to access information about their child's learning and attendance while also providing options for updating medical records and excursion permissions. The take up has been pleasing and we are hopeful that by the end of 2025 most families will have at least one parent or guardian on the app.

Each fortnight teams of teachers and students take time to share stories of their success both here at school and with their interactions with the broader community in our College newsletter. Accompanied by photos, our newsletter has developed into a wonderful narrative of life at OLMC, while remaining an important source of communication and has grown in readership.

### Mother's Day and Father's Day Events

The OLMC Parents' Association again held the annual Mother's and Father's Day Events in 2024. Mother's Day was attended by nearly 200 people and included students and significant women in their lives. Some families had three generations of women there on the night. A photo booth allowed everyone to capture the moment and dress up for photos. The night was a great success and we are looking forward to 2025.

The Father's Day breakfast was attended by approximately 80 people. The student-led liturgy, offering a blessing for each significant man, was very special.

This and other initiatives of the Parents' Association were warmly and gratefully received.

### **Parents' Association**

A very committed team of parents meet regularly to plan events and fundraisers in support of the students at OLMC. We are blessed to have such a large and strongly engaged team of parents. One of their goals is to build community engagement and they were very successful in 2024 in increasing participation in a variety of ways. They have great plans for 2025 and we look forward to continuing a very fruitful relationship.

Another of the goals of the Parents' Association is fundraising. Each year they very generously support the provision of amenity to students. In 2024 the donation of \$20,000 will be put towards improved outdoor seating for students.

#### **Parents' Association Events**

- Mother's Day Supper
- Father's Day Breakfast
- Comedy Evening
- Bunnings BBQs.

### **Mercy Works and McAuley for Women and Children Fundraisers**

Each year the College hosts a 'High Tea in Heidelberg' to raise funds for McAuley for Women and Children, an organisation that helps women and children confronting family violence to rebuild their lives. It was very special to once again welcome so many members of OLMC and the broader Mercy Community to the event, including a number of Sisters of Mercy. In addition to sharing good food and company, we also spent time listening to the experiences and needs of McAuley for Women and Children. In these moments we have the chance to show gratitude for all that we are so lucky to enjoy.

Our students regularly focus on our role in the community beyond the gates of OLMC. Each year students spend time on Mercy Day reflecting on the works of Mercy Works, in particular their work in Papua New Guinea and with Indigenous





communities in remote parts of Australia. Our staff and students baked, made badges, sold second hand clothes, coffees and played games, all to raise money to help those who belong to the broader Mercy Family.

## **Parent Engagement**

Earlier sections of this Annual Report account for various activities and events that helped to build strengthened partnerships with our parent community in 2024. The activities/events included:

- The Year 7 Welcome Mass – see Catholic Identity and Mission
- The Year 7 and Year 8 Time and Space Programs – see Student Wellbeing
- Pastoral Meetings for Year 7, 8, 9 and 10
- Subject Selection and Subject Expo programs (online) – see Learning and Teaching
- Parent Information Evening for Year 7
- OLMC and Marcellin joint wellbeing evening for parents.

## **Parent Satisfaction**

In 2024, the MACSSIS annual school survey of parent satisfaction was conducted and it was pleasing to see a further improvement in the number of parents completing the survey, particularly those whose children began Year 7 this year. OLMC was above the MACS Secondary School average in many areas of the survey. Particularly pleasing was improvement in measures regarding the barriers to education. This has improved since we returned from remote learning. Further, parents continue to value the school climate and Catholic identity of OLMC and this is reflected in the improved survey results.

Other measures of parent satisfaction and engagement with the College was the highly attended Parent Evenings at the start of the year, where parents engaged with the Pastoral Leader for their child's class along with other parents from the same Pastoral class. The information evenings and Parent/Student/Teacher Interviews were also well attended. An ever-increasing number of families are taking the opportunity to attend our various functions held to provide information or showcase the many talents of our students. Our students truly appreciate performing for packed houses.

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## Financial Performance

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The school's financial performance information and a report of the financial activities of the school's boarding premises (if applicable) have been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [www.olmcheidelberg.catholic.edu.au](http://www.olmcheidelberg.catholic.edu.au)

