This edition of Scientia Cum Religione celebrates the richness of life at the College today as it continues the traditions of the past. It is a collection of highlights for 2014 incorporating student successes, College initiatives and achievements of our ex-students all celebrating the strength of this community.

We hope you enjoy reading this magazine and through it feel connected with the College today. Current families, especially students, will no doubt be inspired by our inspiring alumni.

For our ex-student’s we hope you will thoroughly enjoy seeing and reading about your College today. Many of the events and activities are the same you enjoyed here whilst a student.

The Development Office enjoys and welcomes your feedback, so do contact us with your comments and suggestions. If your contact details have changed please update them, and indicate any areas of interest. Many exciting events are planned for 2015 and we look forward to welcoming you back to St Vincent’s College.

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JACINTA What distinguishes St Vincent’s from other schools you have taught at? MR HOGAN Given I’ve only taught in boys schools but I’ve actually worked in a number of co-ed schools as a consultant: What’s taken me almost from the first day is the friendliness and openness of the students. The fact that on my first day at recess some year 9 girls tapped on the window and said, “Come and have morning tea with us.” So the friendliness and the warmth and the way they describe their tutor group as family... I think a lot of other schools would envy a pastoral care system where the girls identify or use the word family to describe the pastoral care. I think Vinnies is pretty special for those reasons.

JACINTA Who’s the better School Captain? MR HOGAN Aghh, that’s terrible. As I said when we walked to the Whalan Memorial, in 36 years I have never enjoyed a day more with the School Captain than walking with the two Captains that day. It made me very connected with the school but also with them.

JACINTA What motivates you to come to St Vincent’s every morning? MR HOGAN That’s a fantastic question because my family would say that I’ve got a spring in my step since I started here, not to say I didn’t at other schools but I really do enjoy coming everyday. There’s a lot of things of things I enjoy. I enjoy the company of the girls incredibly. I’ve really enjoyed the company of the staff here particularly Ms McLean, Mr Graham and Mrs Parker who have made me feel welcome and helped me. The fact that the girls laughed at what I said at the first assembly is the reason there is a spring in my step because of the level of support that I feel around. So I don’t know the school as anything other than a happy school.

PHOEBE What aspect of St Vincent’s do you think you will remember most once you leave at the end of this term? MR HOGAN Probably two things. I love the historical factor that this is the oldest girls school and its location and I never would have thought that I had the opportunity to connect with a place like that. The other is that I think I’ll know the students here for the rest of my life, so whether I stay here for a term or I stay here for ten years I’ll really look forward to bumping into students who come up to me and say, “Do you remember I was a student in Year...” Which is what I love about Riverview and St Aloysius, that I still meet everyday people who say, “Do you remember my son or do you remember me?” I’ll really look forward to meeting girls in the future.

PHOEBE What was your hope/goal to achieve during your time as a student? PHOEBE What was your hope/goal to achieve during your time at St Vincent’s. Do you think you would like to see you extend your time at St Vincent’s. Do you think you would like to extend your journey here until our year has finished? MR HOGAN When I first came, I came specifically for a short period of time and I have fallen in love with the place so we’ll just have to wait and see.

JACINTA No gossip.

JACINTA Please comment on the strong and rich history within St Vincent’s College, which gives reason to celebrate days such as yesterday where the whole college gathered for the 175th anniversary of the Sisters of Charity.

MR HOGAN That’s a very good question because lots of private schools in Sydney, lots of Catholic private schools in Sydney, pride themselves on their Higher School Certificate results, or on winning the rugby, or the rowing, or something and they miss the point of who they are. What has staggered me here is that the students understand the mission of the Sisters of Charity, and they understand a little about Ignatian Spirituality. What is far more important in this place than sport, or academic results, who I am and what I look like, is being a good person. I think “Wow, what a great school for so long to have produced fine young women.” Yesterday we met some of the Sisters and I met older past students who were here to share their story with Year 10, and they’re all the same. They’re very confident, comfortable in themselves, and very positive. Wow, what an impressive school, to put all those other things aside and concentrate on being good people.

JACINTA Do you know the lyrics to the school song? Be careful with your response. We have reliable sources that suggest you do not. MR HOGAN I do not. I now know the chorus but I don’t know the two verses.

JACINTA Why did you choose to revisit your career in being a principal after retiring a few years ago? MR HOGAN It’s a myth that I retired. What I decided was that I had ten good years of my life left and I didn’t want to spend it where I had been successful and spent a lot of my life. I actually wanted to do something different. Initially I did some consultancy, and this was an incredible opportunity, which made me realise that what I do at schools is what I do best. So coming back to it has made me realise that whatever I thought I’d do after Riverview, that my talents are probably towards education and students. Which is where I should put my efforts. 

Straight from the Principal’s desk

Interview with Acting Principal, Mr Shane Hogan and 2015 College Captains, Phoebe Haylen and Jacinta Mitchell.

PHOEBE Mr Hogan, it’s no secret that you’re a definite favourite among the student body and many girls would like to see you extend your time at St Vincent’s. Do you think you would like to continue your journey here until our year has finished? MR HOGAN When I first came, I came specifically for a short period of time and I have fallen in love with the place so we’ll just have to wait and see.
The Sisters of Charity were founded in 1815 by Mother Mary Augustine Aikenhead at Dublin, Ireland, with the special mission of serving the poor. This religious order was soon to found and conduct numerous Catholic schools, orphanages, hospitals and houses of refuge for the poor in Ireland, Scotland and England.

In 1838, the Foundress decided to send five of her sisters to Australia, initially to minister in Parramatta among convict women at the Female Factory and Catholic orphans at the Orphan School.

These sisters, the first religious women in Australia, soon gained much respect for their charitable works among the poor in Sydney and Parramatta: the Catholic community encouraged these skilled and dedicated nuns to open a free Catholic hospital for the sick poor, to be based on the model established by Mother Mary Aikenhead at St Vincent’s Hospital, Dublin (1834), which was greatly needed as the Sydney Infirmary, the only hospital at the time, was far too small to adequately respond to the health care needs of the city’s growing population; many, especially the sick poor, were turned away. In 1853, a bazaar was organised by a committee of leading Catholic citizens: it raised sufficient funds to enable the sisters to purchase a property which would accommodate their planned hospital for the sick poor. The Sisters took possession of Tarmons in the first half of 1856.

The Tarmons mansion was built in 1838 on grounds sloping to the shores of Woolloomooloo Bay, by Sir Maurice O’Connell, who was then the Commander of the military forces of the Colony of New South Wales. The building was possibly designed by John Verge, an architect of repute who had also designed Elizabeth Verge, an architect of repute who had also designed Elizabeth Garvan Institute of Medical Research, St Vincent’s Clinic and the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, according to the same spirit of services to the sick and the poor which enabled the foundation of so many works of charity by the Sisters of Charity throughout Australia.

In 1858, soon after the opening of St Vincent’s Hospital at Tarmons, the Sisters also opened a small primary school, at Tarmons, the Sisters also opened a small primary school, St Vincent’s School: the children of Australia’s first convent then taught by two novices, in classes held in some classrooms. By the early 1960s Tarmons had reached such a state of disrepair that it had to be demolished to make way for a new hospital.

In 1855, as he was anxious to dispose of Tarmons prior to returning to England, Sir Charles put the property to the Sisters on generous purchasing terms. The Sisters repaired and altered the mansion to accommodate their planned hospital for the sick poor, their school for Catholic children and their own residence, the convent, all to be named after the patron saint of the poor, St Vincent de Paul, as had been the tradition with the Irish Sisters of Charity.

Eventually, St Vincent’s Hospital, Tarmons, Potts Point, received its first out-patient in August 1857 and its first in-patient was received into the Women’s Ward in November of the same year. The sisters provided the nursing care for which the Sisters in-charge, Sister M. Baptist De Lacy, had been trained at St Vincent’s Hospital, Dublin, as was the tradition with the Irish Sisters of Charity.

Significantly over the next decades (new buildings in 1886, 1908 and 1973) and is now a secondary college for girls, with boarding facilities. From 1857/58 St Vincent’s Convent, Tarmons, housed the nursing and teaching nuns of Potts Point and also became the Mother House of the Congregation.

In 1853, a bazaar was organised by a committee of leading Catholic citizens: it raised sufficient funds to enable the sisters to purchase a property which would accommodate their planned hospital for the sick poor.
Blessing and opening of Tarmons
Address by Elizabeth Dodds rsc, 29th April 2014

The original Tarmons was built in 1838, the same year that the Sisters of Charity, our foremothers, arrived in Australia.

We are gathered here today on one of the most historic precincts of Sydney...land surveyed by John Busby, the colonial surveyor and civil engineer, and built on, in all probability, under the supervision of architect, John Verge, who certainly built our neighbouring Rockwall House and Elizabeth Bay House. Our newly refurbished College building, Tarmons, is indeed erected on land of great historical significance: land once of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation; then owned by the Irish military Commander, Sir Maurice O’Connell; land purchased by Sir Charles Nicholson, an Englishman, and land eventually, thanks to the generosity of Catholic women and men, purchased by the Sisters of Charity. Land on which was erected the first colonial Catholic hospital, the first permanent convent of the Sisters of Charity and the first Australian primary and secondary school of our Sisters: St Vincent’s College.

What secrets and stories this site could reveal. As a former student of the College I remember well the “old convent” and especially ducking around the back of it after athletics training at the Elizabeth Bay oval and getting a drink and biscuit from the sisters who worked in the kitchen before the long train and bus rides home. That was last century! I won’t give you the exact year!!

What was the history of that old convent, Tarmons? Originally it was the home of Sir Maurice O’Connell who probably named his home “Tarmons Villa” and where he lived with his wife, Mary, the daughter of Governor Bligh. Sir Maurice was a Kerry man and he chose the name Tarmons for his home, because among the Kerry clan, the word Tarmons meant SANCTUARY.

What a sanctuary Tarmons has been throughout the decades! Sir Charles Nicholson, an Englishman and a medical doctor, who was a founding Fellow of the University of Sydney Senate and later Chancellor was the next owner. Many former students of this College who graduated in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney, did so under his coat of arms and his portrait. I well remember that coat of arms and that portrait, as I know many other graduates of the University of Sydney present here today do also.

The Living Room of Tarmons used by both Sir Maurice and Sir Charles became the first ward of St Vincent’s Hospital. The windows, cedar panelling and shutters from that room are still preserved within the Sisters of Charity Archives just here to the left of where I am standing.

When Sir Charles decided to return to England in 1855 he sold Tarmons to the Sisters who repaired and altered the building with one thing in mind...A Catholic hospital for the sick poor, modelled on the one built by our Foundress, Mary Aikenhead, in Dublin.

The first patients were admitted in 1857. In May 1858, in some of the other Tarmons rooms, the sisters opened a primary school, St Vincent’s School. Eventually when the hospital was moved to Darlinghurst in 1870, with typical ingenuity, the Sisters opened St Vincent’s High School. Students were accommodated in rooms within Tarmons. As you know, the primary and secondary schools were brought together in 1882 under the auspicious title: St Vincent’s Ladies College. As I walked into the College this morning I was greeted by two students. I asked “Is this St Vincent’s Ladies College or is this St Vincent’s College?” The reply was “It’s called St Vincent’s College but we ARE ladies!”

In the 1960s the old building was demolished, and was named St Vincent’s Convent, housing a community of about 60 sisters (I was one of them!). Thirty years later, the number of sisters had decreased and Tarmons was handed back to the College. Refurbishment took place year after year. Boarders were housed within its walls until 2012-2013 when this new Tarmons building was created for 21st Century learning and teaching spaces.

As I said in the beginning, what stories Tarmons could reveal. More will unfold during this 21st century.

May our Provident God bless Tarmons and all who have dwelt on this land since the early days of colonial Sydney.

May Tarmons continue to live up to its name and be a SANCTUARY...just as Sir Maurice O’Connell had hoped. Thank you. Elizabeth Dodds rsc Director of the College Board
The College Masterplan

Tamrons Re-Imagined
St Vincent's College has never stood still, occupying the same site for 156 years. The College has evolved and changed over the years responding to educational needs. The development of our learning facilities has been at the forefront of the College Board strategic planning, as the challenges of our site both in terms of size and historic buildings mean not only are our general maintenance costs substantial; but on a small site expansion and development needs to be smart and maximize return. A Master Plan has been developed and Stage One was completed with the major development and refurbishment of Tamrons in 2013. Students are now enjoying eleven new teaching spaces within Tamrons. These classrooms are open and spacious providing collegial learning spaces; as well as specialist facilities, a large dance studio, a food technology kitchen and refurbished TAS areas responsive to the needs of modern learning. Stage One has not only provided exciting new learning spaces but has expanded curriculum choice for students. The complete Master plan has been approved by the Board, which includes a new multi-purpose hall, performing arts facilities, new centralised library and staff facilities. The final stage also includes parking and a new entrance to the College from Chaliris Avenue, with plans to re locate the swimming pool to the area behind the Garcia Building. The recommendation to adopt this plan was then accepted by The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries with work on the next phase beginning October 2014.

Current building work
The current building work once completed will transform the College facilities, connecting the main learning spaces (Tamrons, Victoria Street and Vincentia Buildings) together and create a plaza of learning and social interaction, providing ease of access and movement, opening up existing classrooms and creating collaborative learning spaces. This is a substantial undertaking by the College, and will benefit from the support of our entire community, an undertaking that will directly impact students today and generations to come. If you would like to know more, view the plans or discuss your participation or gift, please contact Lyn O’Neill, Director of Community and Development, +61 2 9358 5398 or email dod@stvincents.nsw.edu.au.

“It can be argued that buildings are not the focus of schools but rather students and their learning. I agree that the education of women to make a difference in society is what inspires the staff at the College today and for all the decades before. But, pause to think about the way a building old, new or still being imagined can influence learning and create community.

How can buildings create community? Don’t people create a sense of community through care of each other and a common purpose? However, buildings are symbolic of community. They are the solid, tangible evidence that people believe in a common goal and have faith in the future.”

Ms Fay Gurr, Principal

St Vincent’s Day
On Friday June 13 the College celebrated St Vincent’s Day. This day is a celebration of our patron saint, St Vincent de Paul, whose example of service and love inspired Mary Aikenhead to take him as the model for the schools and hospitals which the Sisters of Charity have founded. St Vincent’s College has always been aligned with a wide variety of Catholic charities and charities within our local community. This year on St Vincent’s Day a new initiative was begun. The history of the House patrons’ work was the core of the social justice service each House was aligned to, with the ultimate aim that the involvement with the service will be ongoing throughout the year. It may not be a physical presence but a simple letter or a card to the charities or organisations and on St Vincent’s Day each year each House would once again provide a service to their charity. St Vincent’s Day was all in all a success. The day began with a wonderful breakfast organised by the College leaders. Plenty of freshly made bacon and egg rolls and pancakes helped the girls brave the winter morning as they chatted away and shared a breakfast with their peers. Followed by a liturgy prepared and led by Year 12 students. Year 12 leaders reflected on the urgency of action and drew on the inspiration St Vincent provided Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity as they began their work in ministries of education, health and welfare. The day gave the students the opportunity to put into action the College’s values of Generosity of Spirit, Hope, Justice and Service to the Poor. The services the students were involved in were quite varied and across Sydney as well. For example, students collected money for the Sydney Children’s Hospital, visited the elderly at Elizabeth Lodge, assisted students at St Balbair School at Homebush Bay West, or set up housing facilities for the Salvation Army at Dulwich Hill. The day also gave many students the chance to learn something about other people and the issues that they face on a daily basis. Guest speakers from The Wayside Chapel, Youth Off the Street, Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul, Jesuit Refugee Services and Edmund Rice Centre all came to the College and informed our students about issues relating to homelessness, troubled youth, refugees and asylum seekers, giving students insights and a chance to clarify the misunderstanding that is sometimes portrayed in the media.

Social Justice

St Vincent’s Day

Scientia Cum Religione 2014

Scientia Cum Religione 2014

Social Justice
Impelled by Christ’s Love

Anne Taylor rsc

Her name was Mary Aikenhead – a greater lover of God, who had a huge compassionate heart for God’s most needy.

In Dublin she was asked by Bishop Daniel Murray to begin this new group of religious women. The Irish Sisters of Charity were founded in 1815 to be universally useful. Each Sister undertook many tasks in those early years, caring for orphans and repentant women, giving religious instruction in schools where the poor had a free basic education, and visiting the sick and prisoners. They took on new tasks year by year as the number of Sisters grew. Mary started her own schools and eventually realised her great dream: a hospital for the poor where they could be treated with love and dignity.

Mary responds again to the needs of the poor…

Soon after the new congregation began, Mary Aikenhead was told about the needs of the Australian Church by Bishop Polding, its first bishop, who asked the Sisters of Charity to work with the downtrodden Catholic women convicts at the Female Factory in Parramatta. Moved by stories of the plight of the poor, Mary called for volunteers to go to the New South Wales Colony. The five volunteers Mother M John Cahill (b 1793), Sister M John Baptist De Lacy (b 1799), Sister M Xavier Williams (b 1803), Sister M Lawrence Ceter (b 1811) and Sister M Francis de Sales O’Brien (b 1809), left Ireland in August 1838, fired with Mary’s large-minded, visionary and practical enthusiasm for the poor, especially for convicts. These women were the first religious women in Australia.

These Sisters came from a congregation active in teaching, nursing, looking after orphans and repentant women, used to managing its own affairs (including finance). The pioneer Sisters visited and instructed women convicts and the sick, taught poor children, prepared people to receive the sacraments of the Church and cared for repentant women and orphans. Sister Baptist De Lacy inspired the other Sisters to open a church and cared for repentant women and orphans.

The five volunteers Mother M John Cahill (b 1793), Sister M John Baptist De Lacy (b 1799), Sister M Xavier Williams (b 1803), Sister M Lawrence Ceter (b 1811) and Sister M Francis de Sales O’Brien (b 1809), left Ireland in August 1838, fired with Mary’s large-minded, visionary and practical enthusiasm for the poor, especially for convicts. These women were the first religious women in Australia.

These Sisters were also asked to serve the Irish who were in distress from famine and the great potato blight. In 1848, they were commissioned to come to Ireland. They arrived in Carlow on 22 February 1849.

The pioneer Sisters were not the first religious women to come to Australia. A few years earlier, a young woman who had been converted by a Catholic priest in Ireland, Sister M. Frances de Sales O’Brien, had written to her London superiors in 1838 to ask for permission to go to Australia. In 1847, the Board of Longitude in London, which had been asked by the Irish government to find a religious community to care for women convicts, recommended the Sisters of Charity. The Board of Longitude gave the sisters a year to consider this proposal.

The Sisters, under the leadership of Mary Aikenhead, had three responsibilities: to begin religious congregations, to work as missionaries in Ireland and to work as pioneers in Australia. The Sisters of Charity’s sisters would be active in schools, hospitals, orphanages, missions and charitable activities.

In 1848, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul were founded in London as part of their mission in Ireland. The Sisters of Charity in Australia were not associated with the Sisters of Charity in Ireland.

These Sisters had a strong tradition of education and care for the poor. They believed in education and training for women, and they established schools, hospitals and orphanages. They also worked in charitable organisations and missions.

The Sisters of Charity in Australia were part of a larger network of religious congregations that worked together to serve the poor. They were influenced by the spirituality of Saint Vincent de Paul, who was an important figure in the development of the Congregation of the Mission in France.

The Sisters of Charity are an important part of the history of Australia. They were one of the first religious congregations to be established in Australia, and they played a significant role in the development of education and health care in the country. They continue to work today in many areas, including education, health care, social welfare and community development.

ST VINCENT’S COLLEGE CELEBRATES THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA.

ST VINCENT’S COLLEGE

In May 2014, the community of St Vincent’s College gathered with gratitude to celebrate the 175 year anniversary of the Sisters of Charity in Australia. We were blessed with perfect weather and the company of many of the Sisters of Charity - several of whom share an association as ex-students, former teachers, sisters or parents living here in Bethania when it was a novitiate or in Tarmons when it was a convent.

Over 100 people enjoyed afternoon tea on the lawn. It was a delight to welcome the Sisters, past students, former parents, staff and our own students who added to the afternoon through their musical performances and their presence welcoming guests. Each Sister was given a card and a candle from the college to mark this special event.

Many shared their story, giving testament to the impact of their education here at St Vincent’s College and giving thanks to the Sisters. Students today follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before. We recognise and give thanks to the sisters and are inspired by the tradition and values of the Sisters of Charity, including: Generosity of Spirit, Hope, Justice, Respect and Service of the Poor.
Graduation represents a significant milestone for students of our College as they embark on the next chapter in their life beyond St Vincent’s College.

“...”

Farewell from the Class of 2014

Graduation Speech by Lucy Kenenhan and Jody McPhee – 2014 College Captains

It’s never easy to let go of something you love especially when it has been a central aspect of your life for so long. However, it is time for year twelve to close the door on their high school experience at St Vincent’s College and move out into the greater world to experience all life has for us. But we won’t do this alone. Even though we now take another path, we go with the support of our parents, family, friends, and the College in our hearts as we embrace our future.

The College, for me, has been more than just a place of learning for four years. As a boarder, it has been my home, and as a student, it has been the place that I have grown in confidence and maturity. I have had experiences in social justice, performing arts, sport, academics and boarding that have shaped my perceptions of people and the world. I have learnt to not only strive to do well academically, but utilise the opportunities at the College in order to become a more well-rounded young woman. I will miss the relationships with students through tutor and classes, and the amazing spirit and enthusiasm that recently shone through at Performing Arts House Dances. St Vincent’s enables us to develop into the confident, just and sensible women who can utilise their potential to change the world, one small part at a time while fulfilling our dreams, whatever they may be.

The girls I’ve spoken to in the past couple of weeks have been understandably excited to be finally finishing what has been a long and often arduous 6 years of high school. But the last couple of weeks have also been incredibly difficult and emotional. Some of us have spent 6 years of our lives at this college- that’s about 1,200 days or 720 hours or 432, 000 minutes of school- not that anyone’s counting. And despite the stress of year 12 we have managed to have one of the most amazing years of our lives.

The great thing about being in year 12 is, well, being in year 12. There’s an intense sort of camaraderie that you form over early morning classes and those hours spent cramming before exams. You come to understand that you work better when you work together, and in the words of the singer, Lorde, we know that we’re on each other’s team.

It’s evident that every girl who graduates from this college never truly leaves St Vincent’s, and what it has given them, behind.

To the students, thank you for your constant enthusiasm, laughter and positive spirit you bring to this College. Whether it be through tutor, the boarding house, classes, extracurricular activities or house groups, you have touched each year twelve in some way. Lucy and I have watched all of you grow over the year, taking up new opportunities, especially in the Houses, and we are so proud to be a part of this community. A person once said “We can’t always choose the music life plays for us… but we can choose how we dance to it.” We know St Vincent’s girls can dance, and we have seen this year twelve group dance hard. We know this is said every year, but girls we beg you to get involved, throw yourself into the opportunities at the College and the houses, learn something new about yourself, meet someone new, and have fun while you dance hard. If Lucy and I didn’t, we wouldn’t have had such a rewarding experience and have confidence as we now have to move to our next adventure.

To the staff, thank you for providing us with unwavering support to develop us as educated and aware young women.

Throughout our time at the College you have left an imprint on our life. You have gone above and beyond, always challenging us to not just learn, but to think for ourselves so we may be confident, individual women. You have dedicated a significant number of extra hours, so we may develop greater in academic, spiritual and justice pursuits. You emulate the values of this College as role models for all students, and have shared with us wisdom, humor and hope for the future. We will miss you all greatly.

Finally, I wanted to draw attention to the fact that a lot of people speak about something special that they find at St Vincent’s. Over our six years we’ve come to realise that, that something is a great ability to send young women into the world, not only educated and articulate, but with compassion, understanding and determination- its evident that every girl who graduates from this college never truly leaves St Vincent’s, and what it has given them, behind. When I asked my parents about what they thought of my years at St Vincent’s they said sending me here was the best decision they made for my education, because this college doesn’t just produce smart people, athletic people or even talented people; it produces good people. And so, today, looking out at the Class of 2014 I know that we all have the capacity and desire to be not only incredibly successful but also genuinely good. And honestly, I think the world really needs a few more good people in it.

Farewell MS GURR

Today we also farewell Ms Gurr, one of the good people. A woman who has been such a source of inspiration to all of year 12 through your great example of courageous leadership. We started together at the College, all the way back in 2009, and it has been such a privilege to take this journey with you. We have been through two building projects and look forward to seeing the fabulous space that will evolve with this third project starting this term. We have been cheered on by you on the sporting fields, applauded at debating and public speaking, and received standing ovations by you at performing arts and musical showcases. You have joined us on camps, retreats, excursions and international trips. You have worked with our teachers to make our learning exciting and our results deserved; introducing new subjects and spaces for us to learn. Together we launched a new way of being in Houses and next term a new way of being as a community when we shortened our school day. Thank you for all the time you have devoted to this College and to the girls who find their home within it. We know you will be sorely missed.

The Belgian naturalist Charles Dubois said “The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to opportunities and brighter futures; to be brave, to creative and to be compassionate. To Ms Gurr, may your future be as bold and as courageous as your leadership at the College has been. To the entire St Vincent’s Community, thank you for your camaraderie, support and friendship; may you all be the good people you were born to be.”

Lucy Kenenhan and Jody McPhee, 2014 College Captains

Vale Class of 2014

Scientia Cum Religione 2014
Boarding has always been at the centre of St Vincent’s College; it is integral to our history and important to our future. The opportunities for girls when they board are limitless and the friendships they make last a lifetime. This sentiment is echoed again and again by current boarders and past parents.

Boarding also adds a fabric and dimension to College life that is experienced by all within our community and for many, it is for good reason why they choose St Vincent’s College. In 2014 Ms Rose Reid was appointed as the new Head of Boarding, bringing to the role a commitment to a girl’s education and the integral role boarding has at St Vincent’s College. Throughout 2014 both Ms Reid and Mrs Gurru visited regional areas meeting with boarding families, providing opportunity to get to know each family further and strengthening relationships. Along with these ‘one on one’ visits with parents, dinners were held in Dubbo, Griffith, Newcastle and Canberra for past parents, present and prospective families. These evenings were very enjoyable, with plenty of laughter, sharing of news and opportunity for people to catch up and reconnect, testament to the strong spirit within our Community.

Reflection by Jodie McPhee, Year 12 boarder

In reflecting on our time at St Vincent’s College it’s necessary to revisit the process that led us here to the first place. Why St Vincent’s College? There is the story of St Vincent who was unwavering in generosity and goodness. He did a lot for the world and left a wonderful legacy. Also well heard good things about the school and over the years had come into contact with the occasional ‘Vinnies’ family. They appeared grounded, balanced people – the girls had ‘that something’ which is so hard to define.

And so to the school tour… No pressure really, we don’t want much for our girls, just a perfect education, and you have about an hour to show us.

On tour we get the ‘feel’ of the place. What demonstrates that ‘feel’? Smiling girls, engaging staff… The tyranny of distance forces us to rely on the phone and occasional visits. The phone is ok; catch up on happenings punctuated by the odd complaint about food – mash not quite right or the lasagne not up to scratch. Parental visits are a great indicator of how our girls are going, and what a pleasant outcome we have! Our daughter is happy, calm and well settled.

One of the real tests is when we are leaving after a visit or dropping our girls off after a break. All goes smoothly, everyone calm. This is no small achievement for a boarding school, I once went to drop one of our boys off at school only to have him hit the central locking on the vehicle and refuse to get out!

Another type of interaction is St Vincent’s College in the country. Fay and her team go bush for a week and host boarder parents at various functions. These are a wonderful opportunity for the ‘Vinnies’ friends to come together, and the bonding with existing and new parents is undertaken with considerable enthusiasm. I have some great (though at times hazy) memories of these nights, ‘Vinnies’ displaying generosity of spirit in every sense of the word!

So as we come together at the end of our daughters’ journey with St Vincent’s College what do we find?

• Confident, capable, compassionate and discerning young women
• A joy to us and an asset to a world riven with chaos and madness
• Generosity of spirit displayed by our girls

What it is like to be a boarder at St Vincent’s College

Reflection by Jodie McPhee, Year 12 boarder

Boarding at St Vincent’s College is an invaluable opportunity which I was given as I began attending the College in year nine. Since I left my home in Scone, boarding has become an integral part of my life which I will greatly miss when I leave at the end of 2014. Through boarding I have become more independent and confident through the many experiences and the support of the boarding community, developed lifelong friendships with girls in all year groups, and had access to a significant amount of opportunities in the city which were unavailable before.

Boarding has a significant role in the life of the College. It brings a diverse group of girls who develop strong relationships with the day students and are able to share their varying ‘country’ experiences in the classroom and the playground. Many of our students have developed geographical skills through their connections with girls from across Australia.

The boarding experience is a unique aspect that the College has, especially in its central location, which is shared only with the local community, but other school students through extracurricular activities such as sport and performing arts.

The regular school day for boarders varies depending on involvement of extracurricular activities and plans made with friends. For me, it is usually an early morning start for breakfast, then to school for early morning mathematics extension classes. My school day is similar to most, with lunch spent with friends or involvement in extra activities. After school I either enjoy a run in the Botanical Gardens, head to the school gym or extra-curricular activities of sport, social justice or performing arts. There are two hours of set study a night that is supervised with experienced teachers, with plenty of opportunity for free time before and after. Dinner a menu created with input from the Boarder’s Representative Council. It’s not unusual for me to look into the courtyard from my room after touring the junior girls outside playing volleyball or tennis before returning to study.

I’m so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a boarder at the College. At the closing of my final year here, I’ve had the opportunities to not only extend myself academically, but experience activities in sport, the performing arts, social justice and leadership. I have developed the courage and confidence to speak to any group of people, whether large or small, whether in my local community or as part of a larger group. I’ve gained the confidence to take things on and do them, which I may not have done in the past.

Pip, Year 10 Boarder

“Adjusting to boarding is the hardest thing that a girl will have to do, and sometimes the best decision that a girl will ever make.”

In saying goodbye, we feel it is fitting to end with what demonstrates that ‘feel’. The spirit of this place and the people who call it home. It’s necessary to revisit the process that led us here to the first place. Why St Vincent’s College? There is the story of St Vincent who was unwavering in generosity and goodness. He did a lot for the world and left a wonderful legacy. Also well heard good things about the school and over the years had come into contact with the occasional ‘Vinnies’ family. They appeared grounded, balanced people – the girls had ‘that something’ which is so hard to define.

And so to the school tour… No pressure really, we don’t want much for our girls, just a perfect education, and you have about an hour to show us.

On tour we get the ‘feel’ of the place. What demonstrates that ‘feel’?

• Smiling girls, engaging staff…
• The tyranny of distance forces us to rely on the phone and occasional visits.

The phone is ok; catch up on happenings punctuated by the odd complaint about food – mash not quite right or the lasagne not up to scratch.

Parental visits are a great indicator of how our girls are going, and what a pleasant outcome we have! Our daughter is happy, calm and well settled.

One of the real tests is when we are leaving after a visit or dropping our girls off after a break. All goes smoothly, everyone calm. This is no small achievement for a boarding school, I once went to drop one of our boys off at school only to have him hit the central locking on the vehicle and refuse to get out!

Another type of interaction is St Vincent’s College in the country. Fay and her team go bush for a week and host boarder parents at various functions. These are a wonderful opportunity for the ‘Vinnies’ friends to come together, and the bonding with existing and new parents is undertaken with considerable enthusiasm. I have some great (though at times hazy) memories of these nights, ‘Vinnies’ displaying generosity of spirit in every sense of the word!

So as we come together at the end of our daughters’ journey with St Vincent’s College what do we find?

• Confident, capable, compassionate and discerning young women
• A joy to us and an asset to a world riven with chaos and madness
• Generosity of spirit displayed by our girls

What it is like to be a boarder at St Vincent’s College

Reflection by Jodie McPhee, Year 12 boarder

Boarding at St Vincent’s College is an invaluable opportunity which I was given as I began attending the College in year nine. Since I left my home in Scone, boarding has become an integral part of my life which I will greatly miss when I leave at the end of 2014. Through boarding I have become more independent and confident through the many experiences and the support of the boarding community, developed lifelong friendships with girls in all year groups, and had access to a significant amount of opportunities in the city which were unavailable before. Boarding has a significant role in the life of the College. It brings a diverse group of girls who develop strong relationships with the day students and are able to share their varying ‘country’ experiences in the classroom and the playground. Many of our students have developed geographical skills through their connections with girls from across Australia.

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I’m so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a boarder at the College. At the closing of my final year here, I’ve had the opportunities to not only extend myself academically, but experience activities in sport, the performing arts, social justice and leadership. I have developed the courage and confidence to speak to any group of people, whether large or small, whether in my local community or as part of a larger group. I’ve gained the confidence to take things on and do them, which I may not have done in the past.
With great excitement and a flurry of colour, 2013 marked the launch of the new six houses at St Vincent's College. This excitement and colour has continued in 2014 as the new houses have been further embedded into the day to day life of our students playing a pivotal role.

The house system at St Vincent's College was first introduced in 1950 where the College was divided into four houses; Carmel (blue), Vincentia (red), Ignatius (yellow) and Aikenhead (green). The house system has always been an important framework fostering a sense of identity for students and valuable support. As the College has grown a process of review and reflection led to the decision to develop the house system further and with larger student numbers introduce six houses.

The house system builds on the strengths of the Tutor group and uses the vertical houses as the unit around which all the pastoral and administrative functions revolves building a nurturing environment through which all girls are known, valued and affirmed. The six new Houses were officially launched early 2013 and fitting that the new house names honour the rich tradition of the five Sisters of Charity who began the work of the Sisters of Charity in Australia and Mary Aikenhead who is the inspiration for their work, providing a fitting model of intelligence and compassion for our students.

In 2014 we celebrated our second House Patron Liturgies were new students and staff were welcomed into their Houses in the context of a Liturgy and party. There was great energy on the day as the stories of our six house patrons were celebrated and shared. We were delighted to have Sr Angela Bourke rsc and Sr Annette O'Connor rsc join us as well as Sr Anne Taylor rsc who is such an important member of our community. Thank you to Sr Angela for joining De Lacy House and Sr Annette O'Brien House. We look forward to further connecting with other Sisters of Charity as we continue to celebrate the great legacy that has been given to us members of St Vincent’s College Community.

My year as the Williams House Captain has certainly been the most challenging and rewarding experience of my time at Vinnies, but the spirit and enthusiasm of the entire Williams Community have made it definitively worth it. I would like to thank the entire Williams house who have made 2014 a year I will never forget. I’m sure Williams will continue to shine over the years.

Juliette Kennedy, 2014 Williams House Captain

O’Brien is an eclectic group of girls with talents in many fields. Getting to know the girls this year has been such a privilege because they are all such wonderful young ladies who uphold the college values with strength and pride.

Charlotte May, 2014 O’Brien House Captain

The house system has always been an important framework fostering a sense of identity for students and valuable support.

CARNIVALS IN 2014

The swimming carnival is always a highlight of Term One and this year was no exception. It was a wonderful day of competition and House spirit. The Day Girls versus Boarders Relay was a very close event and a lot of fun! It was awarded as a deadheat. Congratulations to Cater who won the overall House Championship.

The annual inter-House athletics carnival was held in term 2 at E S Marks Field Kensington, and it was another great day where the houses fiercely competed. Congratulations to Aikenhead who won the carnival overall and congratulations to De Lacy for winning House spirit.

The house system has always been an important framework fostering a sense of identity for students and valuable support.

AGE CHAMPIONS

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Launch of Six Houses

AIKENHEAD | CAHILL | DE LACY | WILLIAMS | O’BRIEN | CATER
Performing Arts contributes to College Life.

Congratulations and recognition is in order to the Performing Arts students for their contribution to College life. Students from Performing Arts perform in a range of College events, on weekends and outside the College. I am continually proud and impressed by our student’s generosity, skill and enthusiasm to contribute in any way they can.

To name a few, the blessing of Tarmons held earlier in the year where the orchestra, choir and Alana Thorne and Claudia Jelic performed absolutely magnificently. Those that attended the afternoon tea to celebrate the Sisters of Charity 176 year anniversary enjoyed performances from the wind ensemble and Charlotte Robertson. Francesca Guerrero sang a moving tribute to mothers at the Mother’s Day Dinner. The wind ensemble, jazz and rock band plus a range of individual performers provided great entertainment at the College Spring fair. These events are important College events that are not about performance, however, having such skilled musicians and singers perform adds enjoyment and grace to the occasion.

Peter Pan

The 2014 College production of Peter Pan performed to full houses on opening night and then the following three shows, including the understudy matinee show! This was very exciting for all involved as it was clear that word of mouth had spread how good the show was and bookings rushed in. I would like to emphasise that without excellent ensemble work on and off stage, Peter Pan would not have been as good as it was - so congratulations to all involved, you did an amazing job and were a joy to work with.

The Green Screen

Changes in some of the Drama rooms have had Students of Drama excitedly asking - why the weird green wall, Miss? The answer is ‘green screen’. In many films and commercials, the backgrounds are green screened in after the actors and their team finish the film shoot. This year Drama students have had experience of acting green screen. Year 10 studying Commedia Dell’Arte, the traditional use of Italian mask and improvisation, used backgrounds that depict historically accurate sets through the green screen.

Year 9 studying physical theatre used the green screen to create backgrounds for their movement pieces. As you can imagine, they can be flying or be in a river of Chocolate (Charlie’s Chocolate Factory style). The sky is not the limit once you start thinking outside ‘real’ limitations and let students be as creative as they can be. In Drama, students study different historical theatre and drama styles but it is how they can use it and interpret its value for themselves that is interesting for them and for me. Taking Commedia and Physical Theatre styles and allowing students to re-imagine is turning out to be a very exciting way for students to learn, and for me to facilitate that learning.

The Black Room

Again students who are new to Drama have asked, why is everything including the ceiling black? The “Black Box Theatre” is not a new idea, professional theatre practitioners, if they are lucky enough to have one, start in this neutral space when they start creating new work. The void allows everything you add - bodies, a glove, an old fashioned chair for example, to have symbolic meaning as the room disappears and you focus on the person and/or their relationships with the limited things around them. As drama often requires students to learn about difficult concepts like symbolism, ritual, mood and tension, the ‘drama’ of the black really helps students focus on the object and it’s meaning in that moment of time. The ephemeral nature of drama requires them to understand dramatic meaning in that space and in that moment. By stripping back the theatrical experience and building clearly and explicitly, students have a solid, physical and visceral understanding of theatre and drama as a living thing.

Commedia mask donation from ex-student

Earlier in the year I attended the NSW Drama Conference. Not only was this a valuable professional development experience it was a delight to meet three ex-students, also in attendance. Two are now Drama teachers and one was representing her travel company, which organises school trips. All three women were friendly, talented and articulate, and spoke of how much they loved their years at St Vincent’s College. They were excited to discuss their activities and productions since leaving SVC and were happy to hear about performing arts today. What struck me the most however, is the generosity and engagement they bring to their work and to all they do, they are living the St Vincent’s spirit and they spoke of it, and how much they loved their teachers, at length. I was proud to be the representative for St Vincent’s College at this event.

At the end of the conference the grand prize - the Commedia mask set was drawn and one of the ex-students Jo Gollotta won and to my surprise she handed it over as a gift to the College. I would very much like to thank Ms Gollotta for her kind and generous gesture.

I would like to thank the performing arts students, their teachers and tutor for all the work they contribute to the greater College life.

Ms Catherine Johnson
Head of Performing Arts
**Around the College**

**Street Retreat**
In the July holidays St Vincent’s hosted 56 students and teachers at the third Annual Street Retreat. Sr Anne and Ms McLean led powerful and rewarding experiences for students from St Vincent’s, St Columba’s (Essendon), Mt Carmel (Hobart), BethNehem (Ashfield) and All Saints (Liverpool). They were delighted with the maturity and leadership that students from all schools showed throughout the five days of experience, reflection and action.

“The Street Retreat is a visible way in which we, as members of Mary Aikenhead Education Australia, give students opportunities to find Christ like models in our contemporary world. People like: Sharon from Safe Haven who offers a welcoming home for victims of Domestic Violence; Val from the Reconciliation Church in La Perouse, who seeks to celebrate and be witness to the connection between Aboriginal Spirituality and Catholicism; the team from Wayside Chapel who provide a safe place for broken and lost souls. The Street Retreat provides students with an opportunity to meet these witnesses to Christ’s love and then reflect and pray on the ways in which they, as adolescents, can be emissaries of God’s mission.”

Ms McLean
Director of Faith Formation

**Fashion Parade**
In July the TAS Department held their inaugural Fashion Parade event in the College Hall. Students showcased their stunning handmade creations, which included Year 7 pyjama pants, Year 9 vintage dresses, Year 10 corsets, Year 11 Alice in Wonderland costumes, and Year 11 Design and Technology costumes with moveable parts.

Students worked tirelessly to complete their works to make sure everything was finished in the lead up to the parade, there truly was an air of ‘Project Runway’ around the College! Each House donated second hand clothing items to form their own collections of outfits, which were also paraded as part of the fashion parade. Items were later sold to raise fund for the Wayside Chapel.

Edwina Waters carried out the role of MC with flair, adding a touch of theatre to the evening. Polly Sayers, Gabby Stapleton and Eleanor Mitchell orchestrated a professional show with their outstanding efforts on sound and lighting. Tickets were sold out on the night, allowing us to raise even more funds for the Wayside Chapel.

The total funds raised for the Wayside Chapel from the Fashion Parade and clothing sale was $903.00. A representative from the Wayside Chapel was presented with the cheque by a group of Year 11 Design and Technology students.

Ms Stella O’Toole

**Eastern Area Outreach Luncheon**
In term three St Vincent’s again hosted lunch for visitors from the Sisters of Charity Eastern Outreach program. A group of Year 10 students prepared a wonderful lunch for all to enjoy.

Amongst the conversation, Bronte McIntyre and Inda Wyvill performed a beautiful duet accompanied by Liv Petersen on guitar, and Tess Stevens who ended up hosting rounds of rather intense games of bingo.

Thank you to Year 10 for your involvement in this event, and especially to Brigid McManus who did a wonderful job of being MC for the day. Special thanks to Sr Anne for always helping the students in preparing for the lunch, and Tamie Blair, the coordinator of the Eastern Outreach program, in preparing the students and organising the clients to visit our College.

Ms McLean
Director of Faith Formation

**Occasional Living History Talks**
As part of the occasional Living History talks, a variety of students from Years 10 and 12 gathered in Tarmons to hear the story of Lena Goldstein. Now 95, Lena and her brother promised each other in the Warsaw Ghetto that one must of them must survive so that their story could be told after the war. Her parents, one other brother and his family and Lena’s boyfriend, had already been either sent to Treblinka death camp or had been killed attempting to escape. The brother with whom she made the pledge the night she left the Ghetto was later killed.

After escaping the ghetto with the assistance of sympathetic guards, Lena, along with three others, was hidden in a bathroom for 18 months by a cooperative Pole who was also risking his life. When the war overran that hideout, Lena’s group of four along with five other Jews hid in a tiny underground bunker for six months while the war between the Nazis, Polish partisans and the advancing Russians raged above them.

After the war, Lena worked with a Jewish committee attempting to reconnect families after The Holocaust. In the process of this - and with an extraordinary stroke of luck - she managed to find her sister who was living in Russia. In 1949, Lena and her sister managed to emigrate to Australia. For her tireless work Lena was awarded recently an Order of Australia.

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Ms Stella O’Toole

Mr. Jeff Lowndes
HSIE History Teacher
Thank you to those who committed their time and resources to the Master plan. The College Foundation Committee has been proud to play a part in the College’s ongoing heritage and the furthering of our School's vision. To this end, our donors, parents, ex-students and friends have been critical in the next exciting phase of our growth and expansion of the College. Our annual Giving campaign is an opportunity to remember the generosity and legacy of previous generations. Parents, past parents, Grandparents, staff and Friends of our College for their support and generosity.

ANNUAL GIVING

The College would like to thank the following people who supported the College Annual Giving program.

"Every effort has been made to ensure that these lists are accurate. All information given has been released in Development Office, any changes will be noted.

ANNUAL GIVING 2014*

Mr and Mrs D Evening
Mr and Mrs B Feeney
Mrs M Heagney
Mr and Mrs A O'Sullivan
Mr D Donkin and Ms J Cichero
Mr and Mrs C Raeside
Mrs J Beitl
Mr W and Mrs S Lawrence
Dr A and Mrs E Roydhouse
Mr A and Mrs S Rodriquez
Ms R Robertson
Mr K Riedel and Mrs P Arends
Mrs Penny Brenac
Paris Brenac, Francoise McCallum President of Parents, past parents, Grandparents, staff and Friends of our College for their support and generosity.
Reflections from a Year 7 Student on finishing her first term at St Vincent’s College

I have just finished my first term of high school at St Vincent’s College, Potts Point, Sydney. St Vincent’s College is definitely a place that you feel the proud traditions and rich history.

My first term at SVC has been full on, action packed and super exciting starting to high school. I have loved every moment of it! With so many new things to learn and to try, I don’t know how I am going to keep this up for the next six years!

I have gone from a school where I knew all 360 students and everyone knew me in the school, to a school that is much larger, with 2 tennis courts and a swimming pool and double the number of students. I started the year a little nervously as I only knew one other girl at this school. I was worried the girls in my tutor group wouldn’t like me, people in my class wouldn’t want to befriend me or I would just get lost in this large school and make a fool of myself… None of the above turned out to be a problem. The girls in my tutor were lovely and eager to make sure I felt welcomed. People in my class all turned out to be in the same boat as me and were happy to meet new girls. As for getting lost, it happened, but the girls around the school were always making sure I knew where I was going and the teachers were very helpful and forgiving.

On top of my normal schooling I learnt that there were a myriad of additional things you can sign up for. So I made an enthusiastic start joining: Co-curricular drama of course, Dance, Water Polo, the school production of Peter Pan, Dance ensemble, IGSIA swimming, the SRC (Student Representative Council), Debating and the PR (public relations) club. I might look a little bit overwhelmed, but I am not sure, but I also took on the role of making a video, representing my house Aikenhead.

I was lucky to come to St Vincent’s College on the Ex-Students Drama Scholarship. So I have a huge “thank you” for not having this support, I would have never come to St Vincent’s and experienced all the amazing opportunities that this wonderful school community has to offer. I feel privileged to have been invited to one of the best schools in Sydney! All I can hope is, I make this fine school proud.

Eve Cogan, Year 7 Student

A remarkable lady who left her mark

RUTH FORAN nee MULLER

Ruth was a boarder at the College from 1936 to 1943, though was a regular visitor to St Vincent’s College from the age of two, as her mother was a long-term boarder (Sr Marion) was a boarder from 1923 to 1930, and later College Principal.

The following is an excerpt from the eulogy given at Ruth’s funeral by her daughter Terri, held in St Vincent’s College Chapel.

I’ve often thought that if Ruth had ruled the world there would have been no wars, hatred or spite. Instead there would have been bubbling laughter, an unending supply of incredible roast potatoes and we would all be dressing in the most amazing knitted garments.

My mother was one of the most genuinely loving people I know. She shared the theory of others delivering and experiencing immense joy, and she revelled in her family and wide circle of friends. Her passion was love and enthusiasm about mother I have rarely met anyone who was so completely and utterly capable of enjoying the moment. Ruth was our beloved matriarch, and over many years of Monday night dinners her fierce determination, wrapped in the softest of velvet covers, forged us together, making us into a family with a shared passion and enthusiasm for the community we love.

Ruth was our historian and the repository of family knowledge and I now find myself wishing I’d listened more closely to the wonderful stories she told us so often. She never had an easy childhood though you would never know that from the contentment she radiated. The fact that it had not been easy for her has only made it easier for me to determine that those she loved would never lack for anything if she could help it.

Ruth’s father Karl Muller was born in Austria background but fought as an ANZAC in WW1. My sister Ann had hoped to take Mum to Gallipoli for the centenary in April 2015 - and it is very sad that this is not to be since Mum adored her father and the visit would have been a wonderful tribute to his memory.

On his return Karl married Mona, by all accounts a feisty young woman of Irish background, and the two set about starting a family - first a son and then a daughter a few years later. This was the time of the Great Depression and it had long-lasting impacts on those who lived through it - one of the more benign being Mum’s love of baking and cooking. I think my daughter would have been just as passionate about living the good life as is and making a video, representing her house Aikenhead. She would have been a bit of a kitchen chef and I would never have known that. She would have been a bit of a kitchen chef and I would never have known that.

When she was little, Ruth ran out from our pub and under a car. She was very badly hurt and initially was not expected to live. In the end she spent 9 months in hospital and, since these were the days before skin grafts, her wounds were packed daily with gauze and antiseptic. I can only guess at the loneliness and pain this must have held for such a small girl- but mum in her re-telling simply expressed gratitude to those who looked after her so well.

There was more pain later when her beloved older brother Paul died when he was only 9 in a playground accident in Blackheath. But then Barbara came along and Ruth undertook the role of big sister with unbridled enthusiasm. I can only say that Barbara was the most beautiful child she had ever seen - but the pub milieu in which Barbara spent the first few years of her life also meant that that little chub could sneer as a trooper. It was obvious then that a bush hotel was no place to bring up a young woman and so at age 8 Ruth was enrolled as a boarder at St Vincent’s College in Sydney and entered as a Sister of Charity some years earlier. Her nun’s at the College became her surrogate mothers, and her friends here, her surrogate siblings. That extended family was important because when Ruth was a boarder the church had no separate girls’ hall. When Mum became both mother and sister to Barbara and they have remained incredibly close ever since.

To say that Ruth lived her life at St Vincent’s College is an understatement and some of the friendships she made while here at the College have endured until her death. More importantly the Charity’s ethos of love and service imbued her from that moment on. She once told me that it was here at St Vincent’s that she learned that an intelligent, determined woman could accomplish anything in life she puts her mind to. In return Ruth worked tirelessly over the years both for the College and St Vincent’s charities and through this she met an amazing group of women- including Claire and Deirdre who were there for her always but most importantly also for Mum.

Ruth was an accomplished sportswoman, playing both basketball and tennis, but it was the piano which she excelled in. Ruth played the piano sublimely and matriculated at a level which would have allowed her to study at a music school. Instead she started work at the Taxation Department. It was there that she met and fell in love with my father Jack.

Married women at that time were not allowed to continue working in the public service so, on one small wage the young Jack and Ruth established a small household and family at Yagoona, in those days on the very outskirts of Sydney and still surrounded by bush. It can only be imagined how easy it was to move so far from family and friends but with her usual determination Ruth simply made loads of new friends from amongst her neighbours and through her Church-Christ the King. She never forgot her friends from school and the Tax department however and through reunions and meetings those special friendships were maintained as well.

She channelled her passion for music into playing the organ on Sunday and ran voluntary music lessons for the primary
kinds. Some years later, though, my youngest brother was still a toddler, Mum made an unusual move for a woman of the time and returned to administrative work – first at Mount Prichard Primary School and then at St John’s at Auburn. Much later with her family off her hands Ruth was further able to pursue her love of music through her friendship with Shirley and Margaret. They went to the Opera regularly and immersed themselves in beautiful voices performing beautiful music. When my mother became too unwell to attend live performances she relied on her extensive CD collection. Some of these have informed the music we have chosen for today’s Requiem Mass. Now seems the right time to tell you that Ruth had a total crush on Bnr Terfel – though I fairly certain my father would have understood.

About my sister…

MARY (O’DONNELL) GLEN (1935-2012)

By Helen (O’Donnell) Peters

(Helen attended St Vincent’s from 1957 to 1961, was a popular student gifted with a truly beautiful singing voice who featured in many of the school’s musicals and concerts).

Mary O’Donnell was the firstborn child of Tom and Gladys O’Donnell. Two boys followed and I was born 10 years after Mary. Completing her primary schooling at St Patrick’s, Kogarah Mary attended St Vincent’s from 1947 to 1950. She was an enthusiastic and bright student who was immensely proud of her opportunity to attend. An aunt, Miss Margaret Monaghan, born about 1875, also attended St Vincent’s many years before and was perhaps one of the College’s earliest pupils who subsequently became a teacher.

Mary was a severe asthmatic and often became ill and unable to breathe, especially when exams or big events loomed. She left St Vincent’s to attend Business College. She excelled as a student and her first job was secretary to the General Manager of Australian Blue Metal. As the eldest of four, in a family with limited financial resources, she helped by paying board. I remember she and her boyfriend John, later becoming her husband, taking me to see Johnny Ray at the Sydney Stadium. Mary married at 21 years and she and John built a house at Gymea where they had three sons in 6 years.

With my father’s assistance, Mary and John bought the Royal Hotel in Condobolin. This began her country life in 1960. After several years back in Sydney, they returned to Condobolin where for many years, she helped the community. Whatever was needed, Mary always gave her time and energy to others. In her seventies she became a councillor for the Lachlan Shire, despite the need to undergo dialysis 3 days a week. She died aged 24 and 47 respectively. I was extremely proud to sing “Panis Angelicus” at Mary’s funeral in Condobolin. I followed in her footsteps and attended St Vincent’s where I obtained my Leaving Certificate completing my schooling.

A few years back I arranged mitochondrial DNA testing which traced our mother’s ancestry back to a woman living in the Dordogne region of France 40,000 years ago. At the moment Mum passed away she became one of that line of forebearers stretching back unbroken throughout time. There is a meaning and a rhythm in her becoming part of that thread – but it is in the contemplation of that move from present to past that we stumble now. It was Cicero who said that the life given to us by nature is short – but the memory of a life well spent is eternal. I personally believe that love is how you stay alive in the hearts of others. We who remain here after Ruth has left us will do all to join in singing the College song as a final tribute to Ruth, Terri Foran Class of 1979.

About my sister…

Ruth O’Donnell was the second child of Tom and Gladys O’Donnell and is currently the youngest sibling. She was born in 1938 and attended St Vincent’s Primary School in Condobolin. Ruth was passionate about music and later went on to study at the University of Sydney. She was a well-known opera singer and performed in many notable productions. Ruth passed away on January 17, 2012, leaving behind her husband, John, and three children. Her funeral was held in Condobolin and was attended by many close friends and family members. Ruth’s legacy continues to inspire many through her love for music and dedication to her community.
I cannot remember the date but I do have other memories of the first day. I remember being shown where to hang my hat on the whispering stairs in the Victoria Street entrance at the back of the old hall. It was 1950 and I was four. In those days it was not unusual for boys and girls to start school when they were four and go into transition before kindergarten. I suppose it is equivalent of the modern day preschool.

Two years later I had the ‘opportunity’ to be a boarder for the first time when mum had to be admitted to hospital for an operation. My sister Anne had her fourth birthday on the day she too became a boarder. Such was the dedication of the Sisters of Charity that this was not an unusual event. In fact there was a fairly large junior boarding school at the time and I remember Sr Terence was in charge. We got up to mischief and I am sure we gave Sr Terence many premature grey hairs. It taught her many many years later, she had left the order, and I can attest to her memories of her time spent with the junior boarders.

In those years it was a co-ed school in what is now K-2. And I remember the annual junior ball. The girls wore mini tuxedos. Each class was presented a dance that they would perform at the ball. The Kindergarten class was presented as debuantes. The girls wore long white dresses and the boys wore mini tuxedos. Each class was presented a dance that they had rehearsed and parents made dresses appropriate for the dance. Our parents and friends sat around the hall and clapped where appropriate. Of course, Mr. Reilly took photos. In fact, he was always the photographer! He took the photos of my first dance and those at the last dance in the school hall a full 13 years later.

That there were the Speech Days. They included at various times plays, ballet performances, choral items prepared by Miss Ives and verse speaking items prepared by Miss Coyle.

And sports carnivals at Trumper Park! My memories of sports carnivals were that it always rained. I can remember the statue of St Joseph being placed near the stand but praying never really seemed to work... the rain persisted. Moving the carnival to Reg Bartley Oval seemed to make a difference as there were more carnivals uninterrupted by rain.

And of course there were the liturgical events. When you reached the Second Class you made your First Communion in the School Chapel. In those days all students made their first communion as a school group. Families and friends received and were then welcome to join the first communicants for a special celebration. When I was due to make my First Communion there was an epidemic of measles / mumps and chickenpox and four of us could not be present. The nuns arranged a special ceremony for us when we were well and we had our parents and family present. And, we got to have cakes and treats as well, just like the others.

As local students (I grew up in Kings Cross) my sisters and three or four other girls were often asked to come to school on Holy Thursday, in First Communion frocks, to participate in the then a very different liturgy. My First Communion frock grew with me as mum had to adjust it to fit. I don’t remember how many rose petals I had sewn in my dress!

While I was in Primary school there were many changes made to the position of the classrooms. Our infant classes were held in a large classroom at the back of the Hall. We looked out over the harbour and the tennis court, which was where the swimming pool is now. When I was in third and fourth class our classroom was at the back of the old convent. In fifth class we occupied a large room on the ground floor of Bethania. This was a residence of the Sisters of Charity and was the aged care facility for the old, retired nuns and we were very aware of their presence in the building.

By the time I reached Sixth Class in 1958, the new primary school, Aikenhead House had been completed. It was a building dedicated to the Junior School. Before the Official Opening we took off our shoes before we entered the building and wore slippers or socks, to save the floors for the official opening. It was an interesting time for buildings. At the same time the Chevron Hotel was being built on Macleay Street. A giant hole had been excavated for the second stage of the building. Funds ran out and for many years we had to cope with mosquitoes that bred in the abandoned excavation site as it filled with water after rain. Over the years the K-6 classes disappeared, and so did the boys! Eventually the Primary classes disappeared altogether.

In my early days at the school Parents could pay for day pupils to join the boarders for a hot lunch in the refectory. On more than one occasion mum would have had to deal with the unwanted ‘foods’ hidden in the pocket of the apron. As junior students we really enjoyed climbing all over the grotto area. It was a great place to play games.

When I was at high school there was one class in each year. There may have been upwards of 60 students in each class and we all had our basic lessons together. This was not unusual in those days. We were split into smaller groups for what are now called electives.

Science was not taught in the days before the School Certificate. At SVC you could elect to do Biology or Chemistry in the senior school Chemistry practicals were held on Saturday morning. There was a Chemistry Lab, Biology Space and lecture room opened on the first floor of a building, opposite Aikenhead House by the time I reached Fourth Year. The ground floor housed the laundry. I went on to do a Science Degree and became a Science Teacher. By the time I started teaching Science was a compulsory subject for all students in Years 7-10.

There are many other memories of those days. One of the most memorable was the Combined Sports Carnival. These involved students from all the schools run by the Sisters of Charity coming together at Lewisham Oval to compete in a number of competitions. In 1963 there were 18 schools involved. Competitions included such things as sprints, ball passing, zig-zag, skipping races, potato races and flag races. But one of the most important events was the grand parade. The Head Prefect of St Vincent’s College carried the banner of the Sisters of Charity and the Sports Captain, carried the school banner, and led out the whole senior school in a three abreast formation height from tallest to shortest. Schools had marching squads that competed against each other to music provided by the cadet band of one of the local Brother’s schools. This was serious business and we practiced for many hours before the event, under the eagle eye of Miss Burrows, much remembered as a trainer of PE teachers for students in Catholic schools in NSW. I can remember the school being marched out the gates in Victoria Street, in formation, and practicing up and down the street. Imagine that today!

St Vincent’s College was always regarded as Posh Poor students from other schools, one year our double decker bus broke down on Parramatta Road, another school bus passed us up and made some comment about Posh Poor breaking down. The response from my bus was that we came from ‘Woolloomooloo Heights’. That was the nature of the school and, although a private school the school community would not countenance any members of the community regarding themselves as being superior because of wealth of their parents.

Sport in my days of school was very different to what those opposed to today’s students. I live in Darling Point today and see the students training in Rushcutters Bay Park. In my day there was no sports uniform. For school carnivals parents were required to sew a colour cotton strip in house colours to the bottom of the summer uniform. At some stage in latter years a sports dress was designed.

Not only were the sports uniforms different so were the sports we participated in. Netball was called basketball. There were two types of basketball, men’s was 5-a-side with a backboard and women’s was 7-a-side. We also competed in Tennis. Competitions took place between Catholic girls schools throughout Sydney. One week we might be at Santa Sabina at Strathfield and the next, OLMC Burneave Bay. We went by ourselves on public transport and someone was responsible for bringing the oranges, no bottled water and sports drinks! There were no central venues. We played in our school uniforms, white socks and sandshoes.

Now we had Sports Carnivals that involved a marching competition between the four houses Aikenhead, Carmel, Ignatius and Vincentia. We competed in five divisions – midget, junior, primary, intermediate and senior. Sport activities included 75 and 100 yard races, zig-zag relays, skipping, egg and spoon races, potato races, flag races, ball passing and the 440 yard relay.

The uniform only changed twice in the time I was at school. Boarders had a fawn winter uniform that they wore on Sundays, throughout the year. Just before I left school the navy blue winter uniform, worn by everyone throughout the week, was replaced by blue felt hat that was worn throughout the year. During my time at school we wore stockings all year round and didn’t wear the school without hats or gloves. This was very much the norm for schools at the time.

There was one other article of uniform that was worn once a year on a Speech Day. It was a long sleeved, three box pleated, white dress with navy buttons. The senior students wore a pale blue cap over their shoulders to distinguish them. I know – mum spent many hours making these caps when they were introduced.

Dances were single sex affairs. Up until fourth year we learnt to dance with each other and strove to perfect such dances as waltzes, barn dances and the tiles of Erin, Jack Keating, a well known Sydney Dance Teacher drilled us in the art of graceful dancing. Just as in primary school our parents were invited to watch us perform. In the final years we had the opportunity to be invited to dances at local boy’s school and have them come to us. These were very structured but had their lighter moments. Supper was in the Refectory and we all moved together...
from the hall to the Refectory under the watchful eyes of the nuns scattered along the way. The Stomp gave me another fond memory. I have fond memories of this last year.

I lived ten minutes from school but my parents made the sacrifice to send me to board in my last year to give me opportunity to get on with my studies. This was a memorable year. One of the first shocks was being made Head Prefect and then moving into the Head Prefects Cribute. What made it special was that it was wider, had a curtain that did not open onto the corridor and the bright pink sink. I believe the Head Prefect was traditionally a boarder. It was not until 1965 that the first day pupil, Jill Davies, was elected as Head Prefect. Jill was a local girl who had attended St Vincent’s from primary school.

Living so close I could send my washing home. I did not need to use brute strength to separate both sides of the starched uniform that came back from the laundry, before I could wear it. I have fond memories of this last year.

The flat roof was one of the places where boarders spent their recreation. Boarders did not change out of their uniform after school or on weekends. We wore our uniforms all day, every day. I can probably recall many other small and interesting facts but my most enduring memories of St Vincent’s are of the education I received there. I was educated by an amazing group of women who were strong in their faith and their commitment to our education. Not all were instinctive teachers, many had limited school or on weekends. We wore our uniforms all day, every day.

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I wish to thank Claire for her time away from such valuable research, and I look forward to future visits.

Alexandra Sutcliffe

Class of 2005

I fondly remember Alexandra as a demure and studious, spoken but solitary in her company. Her capacity to think creatively and swiftly has not stopped; in fact, it has been an important aspect of her tertiary education.

Alexandra began a Bachelor of Arts at Sydney University, perhaps influenced by a love of sandstone first acquired at the College. However, she quickly realised sandstone alone was not enough and transferred to the National School of Art to repair for her studies for a Bachelor of Fine Arts in print making. She has recently been employed at Annette Larkin Fine Art Gallery in Oxford Street, Waterloo, where she is a research assistant for the secondary market, involved with many private collections.

Her memories of her tertiary education are very warm because of the structure of the course, a tradition that stretches back several decades. This was studio-based model from Monday to Friday for eight hours.

Alexandra’s next dream is a twelve-month internship at MOMA with a specialty in prints. Given her drive and intelligence, I expect we shall soon be reading postcards from there. What I have been aware of is her identification of her goals and her fully focused determination to achieve those dreams.

There may be some who suppose of a gentle-womanly young woman with a deep love for visual art might be a dreamy sprite, but Alexandra Sutcliffe is a powerhouse in disguise.

New York has been wonderful

Suzanne O’Connor SVC English Teacher

Dining with an Accountant

Being famously innumerate, I never thought I would find any common topic with an accountant. However, when the accountant is Rochelle Smith, there is never enough time in which to finish the conversation.

Rochelle arrived at the College in 2007, leaving behind her in Cooma and carrying with her the misery of a particular summer, a summer of unchecked homesickness. She sat at the very back of the Year 11 English class, pale faced and wan, completely silent. Add to the agony of homesickness the culture shock of a much bigger school full of strangers and even stranger teachers and the result is one bereft country mouse.

So how did she transform into the vivacious young woman who had just addressed a Hall full of Year 12 students and parents and was now confidently discussing her journey to Hong Kong where travelling solo? Despite this shy exterior, Rochelle was always made of grit and spirit. She knew she had to realise that she had to work harder than she had ever done before and this was a genetic trait captured the young teachers.

The strength of rural Australia informed her behaviour and she worked and wrote and wrote some more and revised even more. A high point of my teacher career, one which stretches back to the Jurassic Era, was ringing Rochelle on the morning her HSC results were to be released. Her university career had included work experience for a boutique firm of accountants as well as other less career relevant jobs that enabled her to travel to some parts of the world and acquire a taste to travel even more.

She has begun to study for her CPA, so that dream will have to wait a little. She is so warm and full of enthusiasm for her chosen career that she made it sound interesting! Obviously all those English classes have had some effect.

Accountant O’Connor SVC English Teacher

Where are they now?

PhD Cancer research talk from Claire Henry (SVC Graduate 2009)

Year 12 Biologists enjoyed a presentation by Claire Henry on Friday 5 September. Claire has been involved in cancer PhD research for the last couple of years at the University of New South Wales.

Ovarian and endometrial cancers are the most common and most lethal gynaecological cancers, and in Australia, twelve women are diagnosed with gynaecological cancer every day. Unfortunately, diagnosis occurs too late in many cases, with 80% of ovarian cancers being diagnosed at stages where surgery is the only potential therapy for cure or prolonging survival.

Biologists learnt much from Claire, not only the cell biology involved but valuable insights into life as a researcher, daily routines in the laboratory, using equipment to analyse samples, and the long processes involved in drug trials.

I wish to thank Claire for her time away from such valuable research, and I look forward to future visits.

Chris Reynold, Head of Science

Are they... they now...?

A letter from an ex-student

I recently attended the IQ Squared debate addressing the topic of just how many history museums can we invent!

Dr Karen Fisher
Ex-Student Class of 1982

Where are they now?

Plan public lecture by Ann-Mari Jordens

Wednesday 7 May 2014

Public Lecture by Ann-Mari Jordens

Wednesday 7 May 2014

Public Lecture by Ann-Mari Jordens

Wednesday 7 May 2014

Public Lecture by Ann-Mari Jordens

Wednesday 7 May 2014
Class of 2009

Vinnies class of 2009 recently held a five year re-union at The White Horse Hotel in Surry Hills. Organised by Alice Gardoll and myself, Sarah Moran, the School Captain and Vice Captain, the night was an absolute success, with almost 80 girls from the Class of 2009 attending, some flying into Sydney just for the occasion. With such a large group of individuals. So it was no surprise that there were a few attempts to break into the reunion by boys at The White Horse Hotel that could see through the windows into our function room.

Speaking with everyone it was very clear that we’ve all experienced a lot of change over the last five years. Some good, some bad, some still catch up with high school friends regularly; others have barely seen a classmate since graduation. But it was heart-warming to see that regardless of all that change, under the one roof we are all still a very close group of friends, truly proud of being Vinnies girls. There was food, drinks, decaffeenating chatter and laughter and some truly impressive dance moves displayed by everyone. When the only drama of the night is an argument over which 90’s song to play next, you know you’ve thrown a successful reunion. The feedback from those who attended was extremely positive and it’s safe to say that the 10 year reunion will be a great success also, although with many friendships re-kindled I’m sure there will be a few mini reunions between now and then.

Full credit to Alice Gardoll for such a well organised night, thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Sarah Moran
Class of 2009

Stay Connected

Ex-Students, past parents and friends of our College are an important part of our community and keeping the connection with the College is why SVC Spirit is so special. Our community is at the heart and strength of our College.

Please keep in touch; we would be delighted to invite you back to visit or share in some of the events at the College, whether it is performing arts evenings, career evenings or our regional dinners.

Your contact details can be updated simply on the enclosed form or by visiting the College website.

Stay connected and continue to receive news, and updates from the College.

2015 UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunset on the Deck
Welcome back the Class of 2014
Wednesday 25 February
Welcome back as ex-students the Class of 2014, to celebrate achievements, contributions and to wash them well for 2015.

Launch of “Inspiring Women” speakers series
Thursday 5 March
A new initiative that will be of interest to senior students, parents and teachers.

College Open Evening
Monday 9 March
For prospective families who might be considering St Vincent’s College, please help promote this within your own networks.

SVC Past Parent’s Welcome Back Cocktails
Friday 20 March
Connections with past families and past parents are important. In 2014 St Vincent’s College held it’s first ‘Welcome Back Cocktail Evening’ for past parents. It was a great night, enjoyed by all who attended; with request to repeat again in 2015.

2015 Regional Dinners and Visits

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<tr>
<td>Dubbo</td>
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Regional Dinners for past, present and future SVC families will be held throughout 2015. If you live in a regional area we look forward to catching up with you in 2015. Please spread the word with those you know who share a connection with the College and ask them to update their contact details so we can ensure they are invited to SVC Dinners and events.

Enrolment Tours
Enrolment Tours morning teas for 2015 will be held, more details can be found on the College website or please get in touch with Tammy Hancock our College Registrar, registrar@stvincents.nsw.edu.au or by phone +612 9368 1611

Wednesday 6 May

Tuesday 11 August

Friday 23 October

Ex-Students Union Inc.

Are you a member of our ExStudent’s Union?

Our Ex-Student’s Union is an important part of the College Community and provides support and fellowship, networking and reunion opportunities for all our Ex-Students.

Are you currently receiving the Ex-Students publication – The Victoria? If not, the Union would love to reconnect with you so please get in touch with Francoise McCallum, President of the Ex-Student Union.

Email: exstudentsadmin@stvincents.nsw.edu.au

Visit Us

A visit from Michelle Longrayoux (nee Matthews)

Recently Michelle popped in for a visit whilst in Sydney. Michelle attended St Vincents from 1967 to 1970. Her family lived in PNG so Michelle was a boarder. For the last 30 years Michelle has taught at Lilydale Primary School in Victoria. Michelle is also an accomplished Judo teacher, holding a 5th Dan black belt and was in Victorian State Judo team for seven years and made the Australian Judo team from 1979 to 1983 competing in USA, England, Canada, Italy, Hawaii and New Zealand. Michelle thanks for visiting!

The Class of 1964 returns

It was lovely to welcome back to the College Sandra Borger nee Baz and Maree nee Nesbitt. They are currently organising the 50 year reunion for the Leaving Class of 1964. It was their first visit since they left as students in 1964, and they thoroughly enjoyed a walk around the College. The reunion is being held on 15 November 2014, for more details please contact sandyborger@gmail.com.

A visit from Jan and Joan

Lovely having two ex-students drop in and visit, Jan Ryan from the Class of 1966 and Joan Harte from Class of 1951. Joan was visiting Australia from the States, where she has been living for the past 42 years. These ladies are also former members of staff, teaching here at the College from 1966 to 1971. They have fond memories of their time and it was a delight that they took the time to pop in and visit.