

## OLMC Semester News | July 2020



ONLINE LEARNING STATISTICS





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# Lonely Days Lonely Nights

After several years of planning and construction, the Design, Art and Technology (DAT) Centre was ready for Term 2 classes. Alas, COVID-19 called the shots and the Centre remained devoid of students and staff for over eight weeks.

The new Arts studios, break-out areas and kitchens have been designed to enhance collaboration, experimentation, risk taking and the display of student work. A towering light-filled void runs through the middle of the building, with the top level offering a viewpoint to the Mercy Hospital for Women, stunning vistas of the Yarra Flats, and glimpses of the Dandenongs. Some of these same views were shared by the painters of the Heidelberg School more than a century before!

The next phase of the College Master Plan (Stage 6) is now underway. Alongside the DAT Centre will be a new café and food court, a senior classroom block and some landscaped outdoor areas. These will be connected via a raised walkway and there will be a large undercover area that will greatly enhance student amenity and improve campus circulation.

As *CapeStreet* goes to print, the DAT Centre has recovered from its initial abandonment. Student energy, movement and creative enterprise fill its spaces and define its footprint. Long may this prevail!



# Reserved for the Principal

I think the word most used over the course of this year has been ‘unprecedented’. It aptly summarises the extraordinary circumstances we found ourselves in as the world came to terms with the unfolding reality of a pandemic. This year will probably forever be known as the Year of COVID-19.

The pandemic has disrupted our lives in ways we have never known and certainly never expected. We have learnt to live and work at home, to find ways to enjoy our much smaller worlds, and to ‘Zoom’ expertly. We have also witnessed incredible acts of kindness and support. We saw so many give of themselves to ensure that others would be cared for in big and small ways. We spoke with people in our neighbourhoods we have never seen before and our dogs are the fittest they have ever been.

Through all this, our teachers and students worked together and adjusted to remote online learning. We all went into this with trepidation, not certain we would find a rhythm, maintain our connections or continue to develop as learners. A testimony to the strengths of our relationships was the way that both teachers and students joined forces to ensure their interactions were frequent and rewarding. Our Student Leaders were keen to show the way, organising activities that included sport, quizzes or opportunities for fun.

Before all this happened, we welcomed all staff and students to the start of the school year with our opening Mass, where we unveiled our theme for this year; ‘Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God’ (Micah 6:8). We never imagined how relevant and important this theme may be for us in 2020. Our Year 7 families also enjoyed the Welcome and Investiture Mass.

The first Assembly each year is an important opportunity for us to acknowledge and recognise academic excellence and endeavour. We celebrated the achievements of the Class of 2019, in particular the highest performing students across the cohort and within each subject. It was a joy and privilege to congratulate the girls for the hard work and dedication that enabled them to achieve such success.

The Year 12 Student Leaders had the opportunity to lead their first assembly and our Sports Captains were able to expertly lead students to compete in events and cheering at the Swimming Carnival. These were highlights of the first half of the year that have become more significant as our chances to gather as a whole school reduced.

Parents have been extremely important partners over the course of the last few months. Many have juggled their own work demands while supporting their children with their schooling. It has not been easy and we thank parents for all the ways that they showed us support. Our teachers were regularly buoyed by the wonderful affirmations they received from parents about the quality of the learning offered to their daughters. We have often spoken about the partnership between school and home. In so many ways this semester, we were truly in partnership. We have together shared in the joys and challenges of ensuring that students continued to experience powerful relationships and success in their learning.

As a community, we have successfully learnt from home and transitioned back to school. I hope when we reach calmer times, we can rejoice in the gift of unity that was strengthened as a consequence of such difficult circumstances. We have learnt a great deal about ourselves, remote learning and new ways of working. Many of these experiences will change working lives for many years to come.

Thank you to everyone in our OLMC community. Your commitment, resilience and faith in each other has enabled our students to flourish. You have contributed in unprecedented ways to the challenges of our unprecedented times. I remain ever grateful for your support.

Judith Weir





# Welcome and Investiture Mass

The first major College event for 2020 occurred on 20 February, when we officially welcomed all new students and their families to OLMC and formally invested our 2020 Student Leaders. Held in the Nalleijerring Centre, the Mass was led by Father Kevin Hennessy CP. Close to 700 students, staff and family members appreciated the thoughtfully prepared prayers, readings and rituals, with the choir contributing significantly to an uplifting liturgy.

The Mass also enabled the assembled group to participate in the official investiture of our Year 12 Student Leadership Team. These students were voted by their peers to initiate and support student-led activities within and across year levels and on behalf of the College community. Their time to shine has been subject to unprecedented challenges throughout Term 2, however, significant adaptability, innovation and enterprise have defined their leadership (refer page 7).



## CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CAPTAINS

College Captains	Isabella Mikus	Olivia Zumbo
Faith & Justice Captains	Margarida Bacalhau	Isabel Clements
Communications Captains	Amy Gillies	Amy Shaw
Arts Captains	Minami Adcock	Kataleen Lim
Sport Captains	Keely Bennett	Gemma Cox
Carmel House Captains	Phoebe Peacock	Jada Sciacca
Loreto House Captains	Eleanor Jones	Emily Newell
McAuley House Captains	Lauren Metz	Sarah Perrett
Mercy House Captains	Cara Butler	Sonia Rech



# Celebrating Excellence



## Top VCE Graduates Acknowledged

At our first whole school assembly for 2020 (Wednesday 12 February), we formally celebrated with our 'Top 10' VCE high achievers from the Class of 2019. Girls who had achieved the top score in each VCE subject were also acknowledged. Well done to the following 'Top 10' graduates whose ATAR scores ranged from 96.15 to 99.15.

Emily McLean (Dux)	Jenny Le
Katia Lepore	Sophia Dowling
Stephanie Uzelac	Destinee Stubbs
Isabella Henry-Jerrett	Anais Gadsden
Natalie Botta	Mina Wang

The assembly provided the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate several highly significant achievements of our graduates. These were:

**Kate Keenan's** short film 'Wingman' was selected for the 2020 VCE Season of Excellence Top Screen Festival.

**Ashleigh Miron's** set and prop pieces from her Monologue exam (from Sweeney Todd) was selected for display at the 2020 VCE Season of Excellence Top Designs Exhibition.

**Isabella Henry-Jerrett** received a perfect score of 50 in Media.

## Wise Words from College Dux

At the assembly, our 2019 College Dux, **Emily McLean**, shared with current students some hard-earned wisdom about her VCE experiences. Extracts from her speech are reproduced here:

*I remember being like you are today, listening to the Dux give her speech with my own preconceived ideas of what an individual must sacrifice to be in the position I am today - that they must be someone who dedicated all of their time to studying, someone who stopped doing everything they love, someone who stopped attending social events. I remember thinking whilst the Dux gave their sophisticated and articulate speech - wow, I will never be like them.*

*I did not receive an award at an assembly until I was in Year 11, so the prospect of standing where I am today was something I hoped for but never thought would become reality. However, I continued to work hard and try my absolute hardest in everything I did. So today, the two most important things I would like you to take away are, continue to strive to do your best and continue doing the things that make you happy during VCE.*

*I would like to extend my gratitude to a myriad of individuals who carved the path for my achievements through VCE. To my family, for being my number one supporters. Whenever I was stressed for a SAC or exam, you were always there to comfort and reassure me. I would not be here today if not for your constant love and understanding, and for that I am forever grateful. To my friends, for always making me smile whenever I was struggling and for being people that I can always rely on. Lastly, but definitely not least, I would like to thank all of my teachers from Year 7 to 12 who facilitated my growth as a person and guided me in my acquisition of knowledge...*

*Congratulations to the class of 2019 for their amazing achievements. They truly are a group of outstanding women who will achieve great things. To the class of 2020 and future VCE students, remember to find a harmonious balance between school life and your social life, and that your results do not reflect your worth as an individual. All that you are able to do is try your best and with that you should be extremely proud of your efforts.*





# Sports Highlights

## House Swimming Carnival

Congratulations to Carmel House, who triumphed at the House Swimming Carnival for the fourth consecutive year. The Carnival was held at the Northcote Aquatic Centre on 10 March.

### FINAL TALLY

Carmel	Loreto	McAuley	Mercy
1221	1084	1072	895

The weather was perfect for the occasion and a great day was enjoyed by students and staff as they swam, played volleyball, volunteered or cheered on their teammates. Mercy House won the House Spirit Award for their outstanding cheering and for the number of volunteers and participants.

Year Level Champions and Runners Ups were each presented with a medal. The award recipients were determined by the number of points they tallied throughout the day. Congratulations to these girls and to **Olivia Nguyen**, who was awarded the **Overall Fastest Swimmer** of the day.

YEAR LEVEL	CHAMPION	RUNNER UP
Year 7	Darby Wilkes	Isabella Richardson
Year 8	Zoe Basile	Amelia Howes
Year 9	Sofia Piaia	Alessia Napolitano
Year 10	Charlotte Woods	Georgia Alexander
Year 11	Olivia Nguyen	Eliza Bannan
Year 12	Alice Peck	Isabel Clements

## GSV Zone Winners

Two OLMC softball teams were awarded Term 1 GSV Zone Winners. Despite no finals being played, the teams performed exceptionally well throughout the term to place themselves on top of the ladder. Congratulations to the following teams and their coaches for this great achievement.

### JUNIOR B SOFTBALL

Coached by Mrs Garvey-Page and Ms Boemo

### INTERMEDIATE A SOFTBALL

Coached by Mrs Daly and Ms Tabban



# Offsite but on the job

As a Student Leadership Team, we continued to meet ‘virtually’ in Term 2. Our main focus was discussing ways to keep normality, or the new normal, fun and alive. We wanted to ensure that all students were able to have fun, stay connected and maintain motivation in a very disrupted and difficult time.

We put together a number of initiatives to build morale. ‘Fun Friday’, which took place for most of the home learning period, encouraged students and teachers to get involved in an assigned theme every Friday, such as ‘Fun Mugs’, ‘Crazy Socks’ and ‘Footy Friday’. These themes allowed students to share a moment of laughter and enabled teachers and students to bond with one another, despite it being through a screen.

Our Arts Captains led an initiative called ‘Masked Acts’. This saw students upload videos of themselves, sharing their talents. Those who chose to participate were disguised with a mask, and other students were asked to guess who the performers were. These videos were very successful, with many students getting involved and many more guessing the performers. Masked Acts was so much fun that the initiative continued to run even when we returned to school!

Since we were unable to host OLMC’s annual Athletics Carnival this year, the Leadership Team worked on other ways for students to stay active at home. Our Sport Captains and House Captains, together with the Year 9 House Vice Captains, launched a ‘House Stepathon’. This involved students tracking their steps to gain House points, whilst also helping them stay active. The House Captains also launched a House Reading Competition.

Finally, in conjunction with a large number of staff, we created a video to spark joy and show students that their teachers were there for them. This video involved teachers dancing and lip syncing to the song ‘We are Family’. The final product was loved and appreciated by all.

Overall, we are proud of what we achieved and we hope our community did indeed stay connected, maintain motivation and have fun.

Amy Gillies, Communications Captain







### Livestream Music Tuition

‘Music lessons online – how do we do that?’. This was the first of many questions we encountered when preparing for home-based learning and teaching. Thankfully, high levels of innovation, enterprise and problem solving skills came to the fore, and ingenuity thrived.

Our biggest challenge was instrumental music lessons. Some girls had to share a space with the rest of the family – having a blaring trumpet in the background of a parent’s work conversation didn’t always go down well! For some, devising a makeshift drum kit was a dilemma, however, with the guidance of percussion teacher, Mr Potocnik, many improvised kits were constructed. Couches, carports and backyard verandas became the ‘new normal’ learning spaces.

And then there were the singers, often faced with a smiling Ms Russo on the screen and her giant cactus picture in the background. There were moments of joy when everything worked and they sounded good, but frustrations were high when the internet went down or froze, or when Google Meet couldn’t cope with the high notes! There was also a lot of new learning that took place regarding performance and technology – Where do I stand? Where does my instrument face so as not to make the teacher go deaf but still see what I’m doing?

In the end, through the support of staff, students and their families, all of the music programs were a success and we experienced many achievements and moments of joy and laughter along the way. We are so glad that we were able to bring a different way of thinking and learning to students each week, also, that we as teachers learned new ways of practising our craft.

Jo-Anne Mileto, Instrumental Music Coordinator



### Science Heptathlon

The remote learning period in Term 2 provided an excellent opportunity for Year 7 and 8 students seeking some additional challenge in science to become a contender for the 2020 OLMC Science Heptathlon Award.

In athletics, the heptathlon is a seven-event program of competition in diverse events, from Javelin to Hurdles. A Science heptathlon, in the same spirit, offers diverse challenges to the competitors. Students could select seven events from a field of 20 possible projects, including:

- Preparing a photo essay on diversity in eucalyptus species
- Creating a Rube Goldberg course – otherwise known as a spaghetti machine
- Making nut milk and doing a nutrition (and taste) comparison with cow’s milk
- Writing about the impact of bushfires and epicormic growth
- Creating botanical art
- Writing a fictional story about art conservation
- Designing a backyard chicken coop
- Creating a crazy musical instrument like a theramin
- Preparing a map of Australia showing where the inland sea might have been

There was a solid field of entries from ten students and some outstanding products. Our overall 2020 Science Heptathlon Champion was Charlotte Daffey, who created a portfolio of seven outstanding projects. Congratulations Charlotte.

Susan Long, Science Learning Leader



### Journalists and Poets

Even though it was only a few weeks into isolation, and all of us at OLMC were experiencing life and education in a very different way, my Year 8 English class remained focused and busy.

One assignment was to apply their journalistic skills by interviewing family members and documenting a family story of cultural or generational significance. Before starting this task, they were to reflect on their own lives – their childhood, cultural background, where they feel they belong, their own story so far. They were then to write a poem that expressed their memories, passions, fears and achievements.

The following poem is just one example of the uplifting and sometimes moving work they submitted.

#### Where I am from Mary Kyriakopoulos 8SLO

*I am from a world of family and celebration,  
Where we all stand together as one big nation.  
We have feasts with family all together,  
And make some memories that we will always treasure.*

*I am from a school that helps me read and write  
I learn new things that make me bright.  
I am from a place that’s like my home  
Where we stand together and I’m not alone.*

*I am from a house that is from Greece  
Towards each other, we all show peace.  
The colours of our flag are blue and white  
With our friends we stay up til night.*

*I am from a world of equality and justice  
We travel the world without a compass  
I am from a wide imagination  
That forms an amazing creation.*

*I am from a space of tunes and music  
That join together to form an acoustic  
I am from a world of cardio and fitness  
From running and walking to becoming a gymnast.*

*I am from a place with family and friends  
I just hope that the fun never ends!*

Teri Papadopoulos, English Teacher



### Enkaku jugyou / L’Enseignement à Distance / l’Apprendimento a distanza

What a learning curve it was for the language teachers and our students as we adapted our courses to accommodate remote learning.

We worked hard to find new ways for students to continue to practise their spoken language and to be exposed to listening comprehension texts through Google Meet. We were pleasantly surprised to see just what could be done.

Language students are no strangers to the raft of wonderful online tools that are available to help develop skills outside of the traditional classroom. We used Education Perfect for students to record themselves speaking; played interactive vocabulary games on Kahoot and Quizlet Live; shared links to interesting Youtube clips in the language through Google Classroom; and made short videos that enabled us to introduce new concepts to our classes.

While some of our planned cultural workshops and excursions had to be cancelled, the Alliance Française Berthe Mouchette French Poetry competition reinvented itself so that students could still participate in this annual event. Normally, our French students in Years 8–10 present a memorised French poem, with authentic pronunciation and appropriate expression, to a visiting examiner at the College. This year, however, the students were invited to don their school uniforms at home (this is serious stuff!) and film themselves reciting their poem. The videos will be sent in to the Alliance Française via a secure platform for judging. Bonne chance, les filles!

Fleur Davison, Languages Learning Leader





## Virtual Money and Simulated Sharemarket

During Semester 1, a number of eager Year 10 and 11 students participated in the bi-annual Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) Sharemarket Game. Students received a virtual \$50,000 which could be invested over a 10-week period in up to 220 companies on the ASX. The game simulated the live market, which allowed investors to experience its full volatility.

Prior to buying shares, the students arranged themselves into teams and conducted research about companies, investigating features such as products sold and profitability. They analysed the external environment to assess what factors could affect these companies in the future. Students also learnt how shares can be used as an investment strategy by receiving dividends and capital gains. Taking this into account, students bought shares with the hope of 'buying low and selling high'.

**As with all investment decisions, risk was involved. Teams were able to chart their portfolio value over the period of the game, with some days seeing their portfolios in the red, and other days being more kind to investors!**

After the conclusion of the game, with brokerage fees accounted for, the results for the students varied, with some making modest gains and others doing exceptionally well. The winners were Ellena Cortese and Isabella Riitano (featured), with an impressive final portfolio value of \$60,933.19. Congratulations to these girls and all participants.

**William James, Humanities Teacher**



## With These Hands

**Remote learning did not get in the way of a performance opportunity for our Year 7 Drama students.**

Throughout Term 2, our Drama students put their expressive skills to work in a different way, bringing to life a range of exciting and engaging puppets in our online classroom. With a quick change to the performance assessment and a number of research tasks about the mastery of puppetry, our students were tasked with creating their own character.

Using their hands, socks, paper and lots of other everyday materials from around the home, students created a diverse range of puppets and an even more diverse array of narratives. The names, backstories, movements and voices created by the students really brought these puppets to life.

With prompts like, 'Excuse me, I hope you don't think I'm nosy but...' and 'You'll never guess what happened on the way to...', their creativity shone through. The task brought so much enjoyment that the puppets joined forces and created ensemble performances that students presented over Google Meet.

It was wonderful to witness the students' creativity and performance skills, as well as their adaptability. We might have some future puppet masters on our hands.

**Felicia Taine & Suzie Bradmore, Drama Teachers**



## Lego Masters

Our annual Lego Masters Competition was successfully undertaken via a virtual Makerspace Classroom. Students strengthened their skills in spatial awareness, engineering, creative thinking and design as they built something for each weekly challenge. For participating students, the thrill of a winning design, seen and voted on by the OLMC community, was a highlight.

**Students from Years 7–10 entered some fantastic creations each week, with most participants commenting that the competition was a challenge to their creativity, also, that it helped to keep them busy during isolation and 'find something else to do instead of looking at a screen'.**

Molly Whyte, 7KWS, built the entrance to Luna Park, which was one of the most popular of the competition.

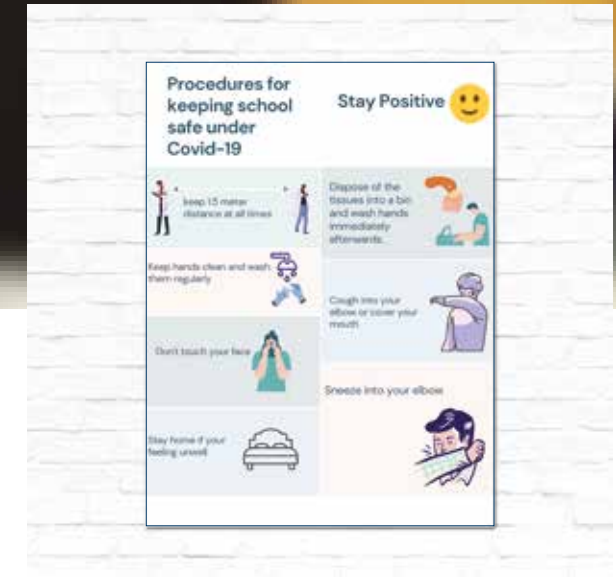
*I really enjoyed the landmark build because it was fun and made me think of ways to create certain shapes to match the real landmark. Having a limited Lego collection led to some great parts' usage, my favourite being turtle flippers, made from green minifig flippers.*

Zoe Cifuentes, 7HGI, had a great take-away learning from the challenge:

*I learnt that you just have to work with what you have got, and I think that during these times this is a really important message.*

Congratulations to all students who took part in the competition. We certainly have some creative engineers at OLMC!

**Honor Gillies, Science & Makerspace Teacher**



## Worksafe Inspectors in the Making

**COVID-19 provided VCAL students with a valuable real-life opportunity to explore workplace health and safety, with the workplaces now also including their own homes.**

Students were required to set up an appropriate and safe home learning space, ready for remote learning. Safety inspections were conducted, with students observing issues requiring action not just in their 'home office' but around the house. Students were required to develop 'Isolation Folios', with fully documented plans, photos and evaluation reports for their projects. The requirements were mapped to the learning elements of Personal Development Skills – health and wellbeing, family and social responsibilities, and environmental responsibility.

A range of interesting projects resulted, such as the design of wellness and exercise routines, reorganisation of wardrobes and the establishment of tutoring schedules for younger siblings.

Turning their attention to OLMC as a workplace, the students referred to COVID-19 workplace guidelines and information for employees, and assessed how routines and protocols would need to change in order to keep staff and students safe. They created checklists and posters for the school community (featured) and utilised their creative talents to put together informative 'return to school' videos for the Year 7-9 students.

Year 11 VCAL student Eliza Caithness reflected that for her, remote learning during the months of isolation was a positive experience.

*We were set activities which closely connected us to the pandemic, such as our health and safety projects. We also delved into how some of the front-line workers have been affected by Corona virus, and how the world's leaders have been relied upon to make very difficult decisions.*

**Helen Hamblin, VCAL Coordinator**





## Civics Enterprise & Innovation

Remote learning was no barrier to Year 10 Enterprise & Innovation elective students participating in the \$20 Boss Program, sponsored by the Foundation for Young Australians. Classes were transformed into a series of virtual business meetings and labour sessions.

Through the Foundation, students were provided with \$20 to set up a business, develop a product/service and run a trade period that generates a profit. They formed business teams and applied key concepts of business and product/service development.

Our students took on roles in ICT, Product Development, Product Logistics, Human Resources and Purchasing & Finance. Their teamwork excelled, with members playing to their strengths in designing and establishing the enterprise and managing a physical trade period. Whilst these tasks are usually complicated enough, COVID-19, remote learning and social distancing added another layer to their creative thinking and business development process. As a result, a 'click and collect' system was developed.

Some of the company logos for the students' businesses are featured here. High levels of engagement and productivity were evident throughout the program, and the learning outcomes were significant.

Melinda Williams, Careers Coordinator

## Let's Get Physical!

In preparation for remote learning in Term 2, we were conscious of the need to keep the girls active, to have some non-screen time in their day where possible, and to ensure their safety whilst 'getting physical' at home.

At the junior level, students were encouraged to use a PE Logbook to record and reflect on how they kept active. During class time, activities included PE with Joe, Zumba, HIIT workouts and physically interactive board games. Many of these workouts were completed through Google Meet – this platform was instrumental in delivering interactive, fun and engaging lessons.

We had to reconsider our PE assessment tasks during online learning. This led to the use of video analysis, personalised training programs, and students gathering feedback as a tool to improve skill technique. During these tasks, students engaged family members in their learning.

Senior VCE PE involved rethinking our practical classes and data collection requirements – these are integral aspects of the subject. An innovative strategy that worked well was grouping students in Google Meets, where they completed practicals collaboratively using at-home equipment. Year 12 PE students also went ahead with a planned incursion by METS Performance, using an online platform that worked well.

While many of these learning experiences represented dramatic changes to how we would normally teach the subject, we recognised that students gained independence and confidence in their learning. These positive work habits are something we will instil in future programs.

Deb Daly & Jemma Banfield, Health & PE Teachers

## Prophets and Dioramas

It is not unusual for Religious Education (RE) classes to express their understanding of concepts and other learnings through artwork and creative expression. For Year 9 students, their Term 2 ISO learning was no exception.

Students were required to choose a biblical prophet story they had studied in Term 1 and find some objects from around their homes – toys, legos, dolls, sticks, soft pets (whatever!) – to create a scene from that story. They were to explain their choice of story, include one or two characters in their diorama, and describe the process of constructing the scene.

Many highly creative and skillful works were submitted for assessment. Interestingly, it was a task that vindicated the 'hoarders' amongst students and their family members – those who argue ad nauseum that 'stuff' should be kept because you never know when you might need it.

Featured above is the work of **Ava Jordan, 9BKE**, who said this of her diorama:

*I have chosen the story of Jonah and the whale and represented the key components of the story through the use of lego, and lego only. I have focused on the main characters in the story, which were Jonah, God and the whale. This is demonstrated through light that is directed in a way to bring out these main characters more. By the way, God looks like a sun and Jonah is on the top of the little green hill.*

*This task was challenging as I am not good with lego. With a little help from my brother on making the whale, I managed to pull together the different aspects of the story to make this scene. It was hard to make God as I don't really know what he looks like, so in my eyes, he looks like a different shape of the sun, because he represents hope and light at the end of the tunnel.*

Congratulations to all the girls who demonstrated wonderful resourcefulness and attention to detail in their dioramas.

Elise Cooper, RE and English Teacher

## Homespun Arts and Cuisine

When the challenge of learning from home was presented to the Design, Art and Technology (DAT) team, we saw it as an opportunity to employ our design thinking and problem solving skills. We needed to come up with ways for our students to stay creative, continue to develop practical skills, share their work and maintain our learning community.

The outcome of our planning meetings was the creation of the DAT@Home website.

**The aim of DAT@Home was to give our students a range of optional activities to complete. Giving students a choice recognised that all households are unique, with different access to materials and spaces. Also, our students have diverse passions and interests – giving them a choice helped to ensure they were engaged in their learning!**

Projects that students worked on included cooking healthy (and some less healthy) meals, photography, scratchback etching, collage art, digitally recreated famous artworks, block coding and writing film reviews.

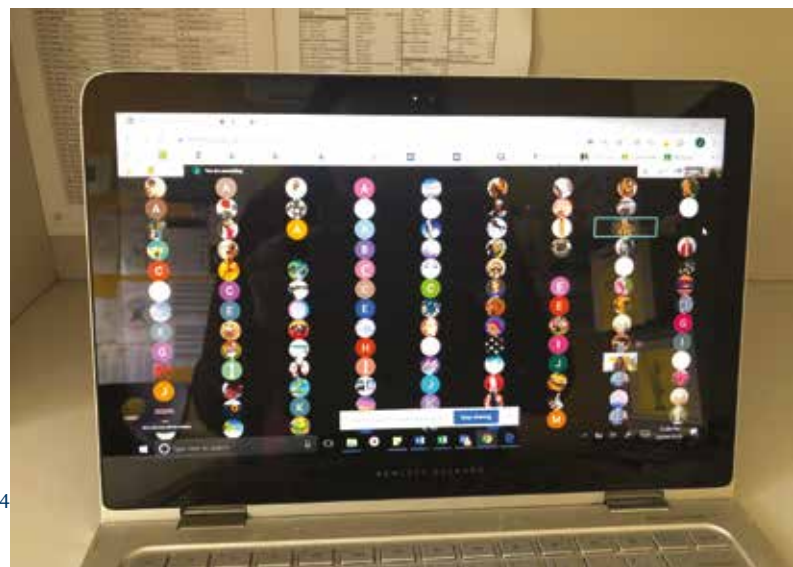
We hope that this website will remain a wonderful artefact of the unique experience of learning at home in Term 2, 2020.

Mark Jenkinson, DAT Learning Leader





# Reflections on Teaching Remotely



Simon Conlan

**In February, we welcomed Simon Conlan to the College as our new Deputy Principal and Leader of Learning Development. His first six months in the role have been a 'baptism of fire'.**

In my 30-year career, I have taught at a range of schools, including co-educational, all boys, all girls, independent and Catholic. I have held a range of leadership positions and for the last six years have focused my attention on the professional development of teachers. This is now a central component of my current position at OLMC. I also teach Year 11 English to a great group of students.

I am pleased to have been part of OLMC's response to the COVID-19 lockdown of schools. Many people have commented on how well the staff responded to the demands of remote and online learning. From my perspective as a leader, their professionalism has been impressive.

My experience of remote learning has largely been positive, although I wouldn't trade it for onsite teaching. I found it an effective way to deliver content and it certainly allowed students to adjust the pace of lessons to better suit their needs. I will definitely retain elements of online learning, notably screen casting and the use of a website for my class. What was lacking, in my experience, was the spontaneity of question/answer sessions and discussion. These are important components of many school subjects.

I reflect on my teaching quite a lot, but the events of Term 2 have led me to do this more often. One of the conclusions I have come to is that, if the lockdown had to be endured, this excellent school was the place to be.



**William Balme**  
Years teaching: Graduate, 9 months

It's safe to say that my first year of fulltime teaching has not gone to plan! As quickly as it all began, and our whole-school assemblies

came and went, we were sent into online teaching.

Overall, my students worked well and found their groove from home. I enjoyed the pace of teaching and learning, setting up group work and facilitating discussions, just as I enjoyed the elaborate home lunches. There were more than a few raised eyebrows from the girls on our Google Meets at some of my party shirt/sweater combos.

Although I found it incredibly challenging and awkward to speak into the ether of my laptop camera, with no faces looking back, I found that I became more comfortable with slowing down and appreciating a steady pace at home. This correlated with my teaching and the wider learning experiences of our students. Being empathetic and understanding of their individual needs, whilst encouraging academic rigor, presented a challenging balance, but one with huge benefits. I built relationships and saw my students prosper and remain emotionally invested in their learning, wellbeing and the wellbeing of their school community.



**Christopher Hudson**  
Years teaching: 5

My first day of teaching at OLMC coincided with the first day of online teaching. This was certainly a challenge!

Building positive relationships is a core component of quality teaching, and to have to do that remotely was a test of my teaching ability. I was very lucky to have such a great bunch of students who were supportive of having a new teacher during this time. The understanding and compassion I received made the transition to a new school a lot easier. For that, I am incredibly thankful!

I was able to see this challenge as an opportunity for professional growth, allowing me to deliver more purposeful lessons and focus on the 'quality' of what I was doing in the classroom, rather than the 'quantity'.



**Geraldine Lewin**  
Years teaching: 35

Students left early for the Term 1 holiday break, but staff spent those four days busily learning the basics of the online platforms and new technologies that

we would be using to deliver our Term 2 classes.

My learning curve was steeper than many others and I headed into the holidays with the basics sorted but consumed by the challenge of teaching Chemistry and Mathematics – two keyboard-unfriendly subjects – from the other side of a screen. Despite a few hiccups along the way, I now have a much-expanded suite of technology options available to me as I plan my face-to-face classes. I am buoyed by the knowledge that our students had my back and worked with me to make their learning experiences as successful as possible.



**Rosemary Jones**  
Years teaching: 30

Teaching is never boring, yet the experience of working online has been the most unusual experience I've had since jamming the photocopier on my

first day at a new school.

The difficulties of teaching the Horizon term in a virtual world is a little like jamming that copier - everything started off smoothly in 2020, only for heat and light and crazy movements to bring the whole thing to a shuddering halt!

I've been fortunate to work with an amazing team of creative professionals. We have located that paper jam, and sifted and sorted the Horizon term to engage the Year 9 students in ISO. From the circular icon on our laptop screens, we have broadened our program via Google Meets, Classrooms and Screen casts. It has been frustrating, annoying and challenging, but often the final copy of something is different from the original. It still works, though, and Horizon ISO Term 2 edition has made it through the jam.





# Gratitude from Parents

The Principal and members of staff received many messages of gratitude and commendation for OLMC's remote learning program. Some of these messages are reproduced here, with permission.

It is one week in [23 April] and a huge congratulations to you and all the staff at OLMC. We all knew this was going to be different and a little difficult, to say the least, but you all have pulled together and so far produced a great outcome. Online learning is working well and even better than many were expecting. You and your staff have done exactly what you teach your students – teamwork, perseverance, and not to be afraid to try new things. **Parent, Year 8 student**

I have two daughters at OLMC and can say that they have been highly motivated and felt heavily supported by their teachers during this period of remote learning. Teachers have been accessible, making it easy for the girls to seek clarification on tasks when needed. Being a teacher myself, this has alleviated a lot of pressure from me when I am frantically busy delivering back-to-back live lessons to my own students. When speaking with friends (and comparing notes.... cos that's what parents do!!), I can say with great confidence that OLMC has definitely been front runners. For this we are most grateful and appreciative. **Parent, Year 7 & 11 students**

A big heartfelt thank you to the teachers and support staff for all the hard work everybody has put in during this difficult time of COVID-19. I have been so impressed with the way OLMC transitioned to 'school from home'; everything has just worked! While the first few days may have been challenging, as everyone became used to the new way of working, my daughter settled in pretty quickly and got down to business. I believe this is very much due to the professional and supportive manner with which the teachers approached each day. They have made life seem a little normal for the girls and have supported them to become more resilient – qualities which will no doubt place them in good stead for the future. **Parent, Year 8 student**

I really feel compelled to let you know how impressed I am with the system implemented by OLMC to enable our girls to learn from home. While it certainly helps that I have a self-motivated and highly engaged daughter who enjoys learning, I thank all the teachers for the hard work they are putting in. I also thank OLMC for having all types of resources available to our girls should they need it. **Parent, Year 10 student**

Thank you for the most amazing job you have done in providing 'Home Learning' for our girls. They have had clear guidelines regarding how to approach their learning, academically, socially and emotionally. Support, if they need it, has been available within a structure that has enabled them to feel secure and comfortable in their learning. Our girls are clear on their teachers' expectations and this has enabled them to set personal goals to achieve positive outcomes in their study and learning habits. We are acutely aware of how much work it has taken to set up home learning. The organisation and communications have been commendable and very much appreciated. **Parents, Year 10 & 11 students**

## ONLINE LEARNING STATISTICS



40,425

Google Classroom posts



223,116

Google Drive Files created



13,505

Google Meet video calls



EducationPerfect

1,461,465

Education Perfect questions answered



5373

ClickView Videos watched



## Onsite and on the job

As a teacher I have always found schools a strange place without students. Students bring noise, laughter and energy to our everyday lives. In many ways, remote learning didn't change this. There was laughter and energy when seeing students' faces on a Google Meet and this was always a highlight.

Throughout the weeks of remote learning, the school remained open and welcoming for students who needed to be onsite. This group included students from all year levels. Most did not know each other and each had a different reason for being here. Some were children of essential service workers and some were those who had the insight to know that working at home was not successful for them.

**Each morning this group came in, found their space in the Learning Commons and logged on. And each day they came to know each other better. The morning greetings became more confident, and the conversations at recess and lunchtimes became increasingly animated.**

Each day, supervising staff had them doing something different in their breaks – a tour of DAT, a group yoga session, or a semi-quick walk around the grounds to get some air. For the students there had to be some perks, for example, the first to see the new DAT building, and daily teas/coffees/hot chocolates from the staffroom.

Hopefully the girls will have fond memories of this significant time in their lives and the new friends they made in circumstances they never expected! May they know that their presence on campus at OLMC made the staff here very happy.

**Brooke Kilborn, Head of Student Wellbeing**

## Student Perspectives

Despite being the eldest student in the Learning Commons, all the girls and I made friends. Whether it was the option of lunchtime hot chocolates or yoga, or our conversations with the teachers and librarians, we all found ourselves becoming more intertwined as a group, and genuinely caring about each other and how we were coping. I was able to efficiently complete my classwork, maintain a relationship with the other students and teachers, and take significant comfort in the routine of returning back to my school every day, like I have been for the past 13 years.

**Ella Thomas, Year 12**

Ms Weir was so kind to us. We were the first students to see the new DAT building and she also gave us yummy hot chocolates from the staff room – just our treat. All the teachers were so nice and excited to be at school with us. At lunchtime we played volleyball on really sunny days and watched TV when it was rainy and cold. This whole online experience was different for everyone, but for me, to be able to do it at school will be something I will treasure forever.

**Lillian Marriner, Year 8**

School in quarantine was very different. It was really quiet and there were only around five of us each day. We went on a tour of the new DAT building and were often rewarded with a hot chocolate. I got to know a lot of the girls quite well and made new friends. I think overall it was the best thing that I could have done, because I think it was really beneficial to keep everyone on task.

**Indra Lambeth, Year 8**





# Community News

## IWD Breakfast



Like all communities, OLMC has in recent months cancelled many events. Thankfully, International Women’s Day was celebrated before COVID–19 lockdown and social isolation regimes were enacted. Our IWD Breakfast on Friday 8 March was well attended and, as in previous years, very much appreciated by guests.

The theme for 2020 was **#EachforEqual**. The theme reminded us that an equal world is an enabled world, and that a composite of individual and collective actions can help to build a gender equal world.

*An equal world is an enabled world.  
Individually, we’re all responsible for our own thoughts and actions – all day, every day.  
We can actively choose to challenge stereotypes, fight bias, broaden perceptions, improve situations and celebrate women’s achievements.  
Collectively, each one of us can help create a gender equal world.  
Let’s all be #EachforEqual.*

We welcomed Ann Maree Keenan (Class of 1980), Julianne Lee (Class of 2004) and Laura Henshaw (Class of 2010) as our guest speakers. All three shared their stories and views on how stereotypes can be challenged and how we can improve gender equality. The importance of celebrating women’s achievements was emphasised.

The Year 12 Student Leaders assisted with the hosting of the event and ensured that there was an endless flow of tea and coffee. Proceeds from the breakfast – approximately \$900 – went to McAuley Community Services for Women.

## VCAL Award



Each year, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) confers awards to students undertaking the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The awards are for outstanding achievement in a range of categories.

Three OLMC students of the Class of 2019 – Celeste Curcio, Sophie Foster and Scarlet Petti – won the Intermediate Team Achievement Award. They received the award on 30 April in an online ‘virtual’ ceremony.

The Backyard Bell Project was a community partnership with the Exodus Community in Heidelberg West. There are several houses that have been earmarked for redevelopment, however, in the short term, the Exodus Community has secured leases to make them available for families needing housing assistance.

OLMC’s partnership goal was to enhance the external appearance of one of the properties, now home to a single mum and her young daughter. The students resolved to create an outside living space that was safe, attractive and included a place to play — with a fairy garden of course!

The following VCAA statement encapsulates the girls’ achievement, which is attributed also to OLMC’s VCAL Coordinator, Helen Hamblin.

*Through their involvement in this partnership, the three VCAL students demonstrated creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, persistence, communication skills, motivation, initiative and leadership. The girls embraced the opportunity to work as a team to plan and deliver a project for a specific cause, gaining a better awareness and understanding of issues that affect their local community. They are to be congratulated for this incredible effort.*

## Vale Joan Ryan



Joan Ryan (nee Curtis) attended Our Lady’s in the 1930s. She completed her Intermediate year in 1935. Until recently, we believe that this made Joan our oldest living past pupil. She passed away on 22 May, 2020 at the impressive age of 99.

Joan was the second eldest of a family of seven children. She attended St Monica’s Primary, which later became St John’s. While in the eighth grade, she was awarded a scholarship to attend Our Lady’s.

As recently as March this year, Joan fondly recalled the names of the girls with whom she shared the class – Ella Raike, Patricia Riley, Joan Casarini, Eileen Hunt, Ethel Neander and Xavier Quinn. She recalled studying English, French, Mathematics, Algebra, Geography and Drawing. She fondly remembered Sr Columbus, who was her teacher for both years, and Sr Stephanie and Sr Antony. She held vivid memories of playing tennis and of the concerts, when Mrs Lanigan was always on hand to help out. She also spoke of the nuns’ rules about hats and gloves, and the seams in stockings that had to be straight.

When Joan was asked what it was that she most valued about her time at Our Lady’s, she said that it was ‘the love of the nuns for the students – they made sure that you learnt everything and gave you a good grounding for life.’

Judith Bellisini, a good friend of Joan’s, shared the following tribute:

*Joan was a really gentle beautiful woman in every sense of the word. She was also a woman of faith... Joan was interested in everything that was happening in our world, had a great memory, read widely, and loved to paint right up to the end! She will be sadly missed by all.*

## Keeper of Our History



Without archives, many stories of real people would be lost, and along with those stories, vital clues that allow us to reflect and interpret our lives today. (Sara Sheridan)

In February, we were pleased to welcome **Natasha Ressia** to our staff as the College Archivist. Her start to the year has been a very different experience to the norm, but she has taken it all in her stride.

*I have previously worked in archaeology and collections/records management. I started in the industry by volunteering on archaeological excavations in the CBD, and by interning with the University of Melbourne’s collecting institutions. This coincided with studying for a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree, followed by a Master’s degree in Urban and Cultural Heritage.*

*During the last few months of my Master’s degree, as well as in the aftermath of my graduation, I worked as a Relocation Officer for the Ian Potter Museum of Art, assisting with the transfer of all collections to an external storage facility. My interest in managing collections continued to grow exponentially throughout this period, and I am extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to now work as an Archivist for OLMC, a school with an incredibly rich history.*

*If you are looking to donate material, conduct historical research or have any other enquiries about our Archives, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at nressia@olmc.vic.edu.au.*





## OLMC Design Art and Technology (DAT) Centre

Open for  
Business

Term 2, 2020

