



5. Principal's Report AGM-

The Jubilee Year of Pilgrims of Hope saw Sacred Heart College proudly celebrate its 165th Anniversary. Guided by the College Captains' inspiring theme, "Be the light that inspires hope", the year was marked by purpose, unity, and remarkable milestones, from academic achievements to community engagement.

To honour the College's 165th anniversary, the Maguire Ceremony was held on the Junior Oval, bringing together over 2,000 guests for a joyful celebration of heritage and community.

House spirit was strengthened through a series of lively interhouse competitions, including quiz-style events inspired by TV shows. The annual carnivals were highlights, with Siena winning both the Swimming Carnival and the Arts Festival, and Padua claiming the Athletics Carnival.

During the year the College hosted several significant events including International Women's Day which was celebrated with the Mercy Empowerment Dinner. Guests were inspired by speakers Gemma Sisia and John Stanley from the School of St Jude in Tanzania. They shared the story of how Gemma, a young woman from Melbourne, built a thriving institution over 30 years ago that now serves over 2,000 disadvantaged students.

The College Captains led two new parent engagement initiatives; the inaugural Mother's Day Yoga, Yoghurt & Granola Breakfast in May, which will now become a permanent fixture on the school calendar. The morning began with a yoga session led by Tara Lynch (parent) and concluded with a body prayer led by staff member Nicole Crone. So as not to neglect Fathers the Captain second parent engagement initiative was the Father's Day Dinner held in September, where fathers and daughters shared a meal followed by a panel discussion. The panel featured Geelong AFL Assistant Coach Nigel Lappin, player Ted Cholley, and AFLW Melbourne recruit SHC alumni Mekah Morrissey, who spoke on balance, resilience, and contributing to something greater than oneself. Proceeds from the evening supported Mercy Works.

During 2025 the students engaged in numerous Learning Experiences & Outreach. Students participated in transformative camp experiences at new venues with Year 7 students travelling by bus and ferry to Camp Manyung in Mount Eliza in February for activities fostering connection, teamwork, and resilience. Whilst our Year 9 students spent three days at The Summit Outdoor Adventure Park in August, embracing the theme: "Courage to participate, resilience to persevere, and growth to succeed". Through physical challenges, students set personal goals and pushed beyond their comfort zones.

The College also expanded its outreach efforts by partnering with Feed Me Geelong. Each week, Year 11 students and a member of the Leadership Team sorted rescued produce from local

supermarkets, stocked shelves, and prepared food hampers. Mid-year figures showed Feed Me Geelong's extraordinary impact, diverting 184,141 units of fresh produce from landfill, distributing 10,000 food relief packs, and preparing over 40,000 meals to assist the community with cost-of-living expenses.

Committed to community partnerships the College Chapel hosted two exceptional musical events. The "Singing Joyfully – Choral Performance" featured the Barwon Heads Chorale and included beloved pieces by Bach, Mozart, Franck, and Fauré. "Jam for Refugees – The Class of 1685" showcased Terry Norman on harpsichord and the SHC Senior String Ensemble, directed by Georgie MacLucas. The program celebrated composers born in 1685 (Bach, Handel, and Scarlatti) alongside contemporary works. Proceeds supported the Combined Refugee Action Group (CRAC) and the SHC Refugee Scholarship Fund.

Progress continued on Stage 5 of the Master Plan—the Sports and Wellness Precinct—which is nearing completion. Construction of the state-of-the-art Sports and Wellness Centre began in October 2024, and the College anticipates Student Services relocating before the end of the year. In 2026 we will host the first whole-school assembly in this transformative space and stage 2 of the project will begin with the demolition of Mercy House, the construction of a new maintenance facility and the development of the carpark and surrounding landscaping work.

Shifting our focus to– Strategy 2021 and beyond Strategic Pillar 2 – Clever and Creative Learning, our timetable redesign is the focus of a research project with Deakin University to assess its impact on preparing students for life beyond school.

Our Maker Space has continued to evolve with three focus areas: Design Futures lab, STEAM Career Pathways and Open Lab sessions. Design Futures Lab explore AI visualization, illustration, world data. Partnering with Parks Victoria and Science Gallery Melbourne they explore the themes of: Conservation, extinction and climate change. Their current project – is to build a Tiny House that on competition will be donated to Global Sisters or Horizon House. To do this the College has partnered with 11 organisations who will provide mentoring, materials and guidance. The STEAM Career Pathways Program requires students to explore emerging STEAM careers through meeting experts, excursions, guest speakers, mentorship, and placement all of which has allowed us to leverage our extensive alumni network. Open lab sessions are where discipline-based learning occurs. Our Product Design staff partnering with Orotan Australia continue to work with students to repurpose Orton garments and bags which would otherwise have ended up in landfill. Our biology classes explore Future Food Systems. Partnering with the SJC Systems Engineering class they are designing and constructing a vertical garden with integrated water pumps and grow lights for the new materials lab enabling the growth of new materials on site.

Our students are not the only ones dabbling in AI. At the Year 7 Family Welcome night SHC launched their AI Chatbot. This Chatbot is designed to provide families with answers to the questions they have relating to SHC.

Our VCE 2024 cohort was made up of 216 students completing Unit 3 and 4 studies. Of these, 187 received an ATAR score, 17 completed VCE 'S', and 11 obtained a VCE VM Certificate. Matilda Messer was named Dux of the College with an impressive ATAR of 99.85. The median SHC ATAR was 73.6, and an average ATAR of 70.64 compared to the state average ATAR for girls at 70.42. Notably, 5 Year

10 students completed Unit $\frac{3}{4}$ achieving 38.4 average study score, 2 students achieved 40+ and 196 Year 11 students completed $\frac{3}{4}$ Unit achieving an average study score of 33 with 27 students achieving a study score of 40+ and one Year 11 student received a perfect score of 50. In addition, 6 students complete university courses through Deakin Accelerate.

Pillars 1 & 4 – Living the Sacred Heart Way and Care for Our Common Home -The Reconciliation Action Plan and Laudato Sí Goals are now in their fourth year, embedding social responsibility and cultural reconciliation whilst Pillar 3 of our strategy *Culture of Wellness* has seen the focus for 2025 on respectful relationships with Sacred Heart College now a Respectful Relationship lead school.

In this time of uncertainty, the College Advisory Council, our sub committees, the Alumni Committee, the College extended Leadership Team and our Student Leaders came together to focused on risks and opportunities. This group attended two workshops one held in February and the second in May identifying and exploring 5 key risks/opportunities for SHC namely:

- Teacher attraction and retention
- SHC reputation in the community
- All girls' education - desirability and relevance
- School community engagement and
- Fundraising and outreach engagement

Thanks to this work actions plans are underway to mitigate risk, and work has begun on developing a Proposition Statement and exploring 13 possible future scenarios for what SHC may look like in 2035 its 175 Anniversary Year. Watch this space!

These highlights offer a glimpse into an extraordinary year where Sacred Heart's vibrant spirit and unwavering commitment to fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and hopeful community.

I extend my deepest gratitude to those from our Alumni Committee who have played a pivotal role in this year's 165th Anniversary year. My thanks go to Emma Tyler, Leader of Development, Marketing, and Communication; Jo Welch, our dedicated College Alumni Officer; and Laura Doherty (1976), who at the beginning of this year took on the role of Acting President of the Alumni Committee for which I am most grateful. Her commitment and hard work have ensured the association continues to connect alumni whilst fulfilling our Mercy Mission. I extend a further thanks to Treasurer Enza Hughes (1987) who has been on the Executive for the past 5 years, and Committee members: Di Spence (1968), Daniella Pavlovic (2001), Franca Bonanno (1987), Adrianna Maddalon (2012), Kath Andrews (1985) and committee members finishing up this year – Jade Hovey- expecting her first baby and Amanda Kunjka. Their steadfast commitment to advancing the SHC Alumni Strategic Plan has been instrumental in continuing our SHC Mercy Story.

Anna Negro
Principal