



26 June 2008

Dear Parents

Additional information to the 2007 Annual Report

The Commonwealth Government has prescribed a number of topics upon which the School must comment concerning performance aspects of the School that may be relevant to parents and other interested parties. As a parent-controlled school, it is quite natural that Maranatha is supportive of approaches that further inform parents about the life of the School.

Earlier in the year, the School was pleased to distribute the Annual Report for 2007 to all parents and members of the Association giving quite expansive detail on aspects of school life. There are several other vehicles – for example: Churinga, the School’s annual magazine; Newslink giving snapshots of topical events; Re-Connect, maintaining contact with the student alumni; and the weekly Newssheet - that are similarly regularly distributed to parents and past students giving even more depth on life in the School.

We are pleased to now provide supplementary data that fills-out the remaining elements of the profile of Maranatha in respect of the 2007 year.

Staff Attendance

The average attendance rate of staff (in terms of full-time equivalent work days) during 2007 was 99.83% (99.82% in 2006).

Arrangements are made to cover any absence of staff from classes, usually through engagement of relief staff or, where internal arrangements allow, by extra provision by existing staff.

Staff Retention

The proportion of teaching staff retained in 2008 from 2007 (in terms of head count) was 95% (93.4% in 2006).

Teacher Qualifications

In 2007, there were 80 full and part-time permanent teaching staff employed at Maranatha. All had teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or held overseas qualifications recognized within the Teaching Australia – Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership guidelines. The following is the distribution of the highest qualification held:

Diploma	2.9%
Bachelor degree	45.4%
Post graduate diploma or other qualification	43.4%
Masters or higher qualification	8.3%

A number of staff were studying for further qualifications and we are delighted with the number of staff undertaking post-graduate courses with the National Institute for Christian Education with its emphasis on Christ-centred education.

All staff held authority to teach from the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Maranatha takes particular care to ensure that teacher qualifications are commensurate with the subjects that the teachers teach, especially for senior school classes.

Expenditure and teacher participation in professional learning

All teaching staff participated in professional learning activities. A particular focus of the professional development program during 2007 was in having all teaching staff undertake at the commencement of Term 3 two credit units of the Master of Education program conducted by the National Institute for Christian Education.

Maranatha also provides staff with access to broad-ranging external professional learning opportunities covering formal curriculum understanding, innovation in learning, current educational research and effective learning practices. A number of these programmes are conducted very professionally by the Association of Independent Schools Victoria, of which Maranatha is a member.

Total expenditure on professional development was \$70,500 for purchase of/participation in external courses/resources – it does not include costs of staff or relief staff associated with attendance at external courses and internally conducted activities; the average expenditure per teacher on professional development in 2007 was \$883.

Student attendance and retention

A snapshot sampling of the attendance rate of students during 2007 indicated an attendance rate of 95% (94% for 2006). Attendance rates were quite consistent across all grades; the male and female attendance rates were not materially different. Maranatha takes particular care to follow up any un-advised absence within a very tight timeframe, including formal confirmation from parents.

Maranatha has a quite stable student population with a significant proportion of students enrolling in the early primary years continuing their education right through to the end of schooling in year 12. However, some student movement is to be expected at any grade level and particularly at key points such as transitioning from Primary to Secondary and moving into Senior Secondary.

The proportion of Year 12 students concluding school at the end of 2007 who were students in the school in Year 9 in 2004 was 77.5% (70% for 2006).

From information gathered via the exit interview process, the majority of the students who do leave within the senior school years usually do so to pursue a trade-based career option.

Senior Secondary outcomes and post-school destinations

The median Study Score attained in the 2007 VCE was 30. The proportion of Study Scores of '40 and above' was 6%

The top ENTER score attained in 2007 was 98.3. The proportion of students achieving an ENTER Score of 90 or above was 10%, while the proportion of students achieving an ENTER Score of 80 or above was 28%.

The proportion of students who satisfactorily completed VCE in 2007 was 98.7%

The following is a snapshot in respect of the 2007 Year 12 leavers from Maranatha:

Tertiary applicants	82% of students who satisfactorily completed VCE
Tertiary offers (University/TAFE/VET)	87% of applicants
Tertiary enrolled	56% of offers made

Deferred

15% of offers made

National reading, writing, spelling and literacy benchmarks

In 1999, the state and Commonwealth ministers responsible for school education agreed to set *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*. In 2004, these Goals were enhanced by, among other things, introducing benchmarks against international comparisons. National targets have been agreed in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and numeracy for Years 3,5,7 and 9. The benchmarks can be accessed at <http://www.online.curriculum.edu.au>.

Within Victoria, the benchmark testing is undertaken within the framework of the Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) conducted by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Results of the AIM Test for each student are distributed by Maranatha to the student's family. During 2008 the program will be further enhanced by the adoption of common national tests, referred to as NAPLAN Tests. These will have very similar attributes to the AIM Tests – because of the wider testing regime and calibration of results, the 2008 results are not likely to be distributed before October 2008.

The collective results for Maranatha students showed the following proportions of students achieving above the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks in 2007:

Year Level	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Grade 3	96%	96%	94%
Grade 5	94%	100%	100%
Year 7	94%	100%	92%
Year 9	100%	100%	100%

The results also indicated a very pleasing trend for the proportion of Maranatha's students attaining within the upper 10% of the state:

Year Level	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Grade 3	25%	23%	17%
Grade 5	18%	17%	19%
Year 7	21%	10%	19%
Year 9	20%	26%	19%

Extensive surveys of parents, staff and students were undertaken in 2007; the results of those surveys were reported upon in last year's Annual Report. They have been springboards for a number of initiatives already – including revised procedures for Parent/Teacher interviews, especially in the programming of interviews for secondary students of Endeavour Hills; closer assessment of educational outcome expectations by teachers and students; extensive review of the structure of the middle school grades at Endeavour Hills; professional development of staff in the Christ-centred curriculum; and, a focus on the nature and extent of dialogue undertaken by year Level Coordinators with students, particularly at the senior levels – and will continue to influence the direction of the School for some time ahead.

Further surveys have been undertaken during 2008 of parents who had Prep and Year 7 students in 2007 (representing the two major enrolment entry points into the School) and of VCE students of 2007 along with a sampling of VCE students of the preceding five years.

The surveys in respect of Prep and Year 7 were heavily geared towards aspects of students settling into the grades and of communications at various levels between elements of the school and the parents and students. The generalization is that good, positive trends emerged.

For the very broad question of how parents felt their child settled into the grade, responses were:

	Prep	Year 7
Very easily and fairly easily	67%	81%
With difficulty at start but became settled	19%	13%

The Prep experience was somewhat predictable but the point has been noted that there is more that can possibly be done to assist.

It was apparent that there is some room for the School improving the communications with parents at the secondary level so as to strengthen the experience of the School and parents achieving together.

While peer pressure was shown to be of concern to parents, it was pleasing to see that the incidence of bullying was slight and that parents had confidence in teaching staff satisfactorily addressing any incidents. Nevertheless, further work has been undertaken this year in counseling students who had been identified by the student body as not behaving acceptably.

Although it remains a standalone statistic that will gain more meaning in ensuing years, it is interesting to note that the average response to the question posed to the Year 7 cohort on the amount of time spent on the internet/computer games pointed to 15%, just short of the amount of time given to homework.

The VCE survey showed a lot of interesting trends for which analysis had not been completed at the time of issue of this report. The survey represents one part of a larger exercise initiated by the Board in reviewing the School's VCE program that is still on-going.

Yours in His Service

Vernon Clark
Principal