Avila College acknowledges the Wurundjeri people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the College is built.
Visionary approach benefits students

The 2012 school year will be a reference point for two major initiatives that will help better equip our students for their future pathways - students in Year 7, 10 and 11 are benefitting from the 1:1 MacBook program and our new building will be occupied by our Year 7 and 8s from the start of Term Two.

Anywhere Anytime’ access to digital learning

One of the goals identified in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2009) was that ‘all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. To be successful learners, young Australians are to be "creative and productive users of technology, especially ICT, as a foundation for success in all learning areas"’ With this goal in mind, Avila College has made it possible for all students in Year 7, 10 and 11 to have ‘anywhere, anytime’ access to a digital learning platform via their MacBooks. Students in all other year levels are also able to access this technology via laptop trolleys that are strategically located throughout the school. What this new technology has created are learning spaces that allow students to access curriculum documents online, work with other students without being in the same classroom and gain electronic feedback from their teachers. These learning platforms create an online learning environment whereby quality teaching and learning can be supported via a range of assessment and collaborative teaching tools.

A very clear direction the College took to support both staff and students with the increased use of these technologies was to appoint an eLearning Leader for 2012 and beyond. For much of Term One, Mr Jason Isma our new eLearning leader has been working both formally and informally with staff and students gauging the needs of both groups and planning for the future use of technologies throughout the school. While not necessarily new to extending the virtual classroom, it is hoped Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, blogs and Edmodo – all become ‘common speak’, not only in teaching and learning but the way assessment is given to students. See page XXX for more information about the MacBook rollout at Years 7 and 10.

New Building

I am pleased to announce that by the start of Term Two all Year 7 and 8 classes will have relocated to the new building. While much of the focus for Term One was the finalisation and fit-out of the interior spaces – all is on track for these two year levels to be further inspired in these state-of-the-art learning spaces. All interior spaces, including all classrooms, offices, meeting rooms and central spaces are fully climate controlled as well as being equipped with motion detector sensors for all light fittings throughout the building. We hope in some small way this will reduce the unnecessary use of lights being left on when the rooms are vacant. The official opening and naming of the building will be held later in the year. See page 10 for a photographic tour of the new building.

Ms Louise Gunther
College Principal

Three eras of principals

Special guests at the Opening School Mass on Thursday, February 16 included foundation Principal of Avila College, Sister Patricia Carroll (1965 - 1973) and immediate past Principal Ms Liz Gleeson (2006 - 2010).

Together with current Principal, Ms Louise Gunther, the leadership trio marvelled at how much the College has evolved over almost 50 years in order to provide the best possible education for young women in a caring Christian environment ... from extremely humble beginnings in temporary classrooms for its 110 students to a modern day campus for 1120 students.

Sister Patricia Carroll commented that the Avila of the 21st century had far exceeded her dreams for the College, which she considered extremely ambitious back in the early 1960s.

Pictured above: Comparing notes from their respective eras of principalship are Ms Gunther with Ms Liz Gleeson and Sister Patricia Carroll.
Achievements, milestones set exciting pace

Avila has enjoyed an exciting start to the new school year with many achievements celebrated and milestones reached in Term One alone.

The year was launched on the back of our outstanding 2011 VCE results, with three students gaining ATARs of 99 and above, placing them in the top one per cent of the State. Our 2011 College Dux Fiona Canny attained 99.75, Georgia Delaney attained 99.45 and Lauren Pecora attained 99.00. See page 4 and 5 for more details of the results and tertiary offers and placements.

Testimony to Avila’s strong tradition of public speaking and debating, Kiara Goldsmith won the public speaking section in the Lions Youth of the Year competition for the Monash District. Kiara and Genevieve Townsend were two of the five finalists from the District. See page 17 for Genevieve’s report.

In sport, sprinter Nana-Adoma Owusu-Afriyie, 8 Gold, has become the Australian under-14 sprint queen, following her successful grab for gold in the 100m and 200m events at the Australian Junior Championships in Sydney on March 17 and 18. Her success further fuelled Nana’s ambition to compete on the Olympic stage.

At a staff level, Mrs Christine Valladares has been honoured with a prize for excellence in secondary teaching by the Australian National University in Canberra. Mrs Valladares was one of only six teachers nation-wide to receive the award. She was nominated by Connie Chong, our 2004 College Captain, who has recently graduated from ANU with a Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery.

In addition, the College has witnessed the rolling out of the MacBook program at Years 7 and 10 and our new two-storey classroom building is all but finished, ready for occupation at the start of Term Two.

National teaching honour for Mrs Val

In what could only be described as a truly-deserved tribute, Mrs Christine Valladares was one of six teachers nationwide to be honoured with a 2011 Australian National University (ANU) prize for excellence in secondary teaching at an ANU graduation ceremony in Canberra in December. In addition, Avila College was recognised as a ‘School of Provenance’.

The award recognises inspirational teachers who have helped shape the lives of ANU graduates. Mrs Valladares was nominated by 2004 College Captain, Connie Chong, who has completed a Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery at ANU. Mrs Valladares was a special guest at Connie’s graduation ceremony on December 16 when the teaching awards were presented.

The citation that was read for Mrs Valladares focused primarily on Avila College’s teachers who provide their students with opportunities to enrich their lives outside of the classroom. In the citation, Connie reflected on how public speaking at Avila had developed her confidence in having a voice to speak out, which she used later as a member of the Oaktree Foundation. She also spoke of the Reconciliation Group and the College’s foresight in working for the dignity of Aboriginal people long before other institutions.

Mrs Valladares was presented with cheques for $3000 for herself and $1500 for the College. Mrs Valladares and Connie are hoping that the prize money will be used to provide an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land on which the College is built.

A dedicated teacher, Mrs Valladares joined the staff at Avila in 1987. She is well known and loved for her care and concern for all students, past and present, and her passion for social justice and Reconciliation. She has also been the driving force behind public speaking and debating at Avila for many years and teaches English, Oral English and Religious Education. In her quiet unassuming manner, Mrs Valladares is a leader by example and a wonderful role model for all students. She is a strong advocate for giving young women, leaders of tomorrow, a ‘voice’ and a deep sense of social responsibility.

See page 25 for more about Connie’s address at the ANU graduation ceremony.
High achievers - ATAR of 95+

Fifteen of our Class of 2011 students achieved an ATAR above 95, placing them in the top five per cent of the state.

Their impressive results reflect their hard work and commitment to study, and earned them choice, and entry, to an exciting range of career options, as can be seen by their choice of tertiary studies in this acknowledgement of our high achievers.

Gabrielle Bourke 98.95
International Studies/ RMIT

Margaret Hezkial 98.25

Dineshki Silva 97.7
Science
Melbourne

Michelle Andrews 97.35
Arts
Monash

Neethu Pynadath 97.3
Biomedicine
Monash

Melissa Chila 96.65
Commerce
Monash

Cindy Punta 96.5
Science at the Uni of California - awaiting offer

Stella Harianto 96
Radiology/ Medical Imaging
Monash

Mary Canagaratnam 95.65
Environments (Architecture)
Monash

Ella Gasowski 95.45
Primary Teaching
Deakin

Sarah Chan 95.4
Textiles
RMIT

Lillian Smith 95.25
Physical & Health Education
Monash

Fiona Canny 99.75
Arts/Law
Monash

Georgia Delaney 99.45
Arts
Melbourne

Lauren Pecora 99.00
Commerce
Monash

2010 College Dux, Alexandra Saltis, was an inspiring guest speaker at the 2011 Presentation Evening. See page 22 to read how much Alexandra, who is undertaking an Arts/Law Degree at Monash, values the way in which her time at Avila has prepared her for adulthood.
Avila College celebrates the outstanding achievements of students who completed Year 12 VCE and VCAL studies in 2011. The emphasis, rightly so, has been on the top achievers: the 17 per cent of students who achieved an ATAR above 90, especially the College Dux Fiona Canny with a score of 99.75, closely followed by Georgia Delaney (99.45) and Lauren Pecora (99.00).

Special congratulations also to students who gained perfect scores: Fiona Canny in History - Revolutions and English, Lauren Pecora in Business Management, and Marina Izman in Design and Technology. Congratulations to 2011 Year 11 students, Laura De Rango (Health and Human Development) and Emily Rebbechi (Visual Communication and Design) who gained perfect scores in their 3/4 studies. In another major achievement, Alex Height, Ayesha Comerford and Meera Fernandes gained perfect scores in their Drama solo performance examination last October and as a result, were invited by the VCAA to audition their performances for the prestigious Top Class Drama in 2012.

It is also important to note that Avila had a 100 per cent pass rate and a considerable number of students achieved study scores and ATARs well above expectation. A spectacular 65 per cent of Avila students achieved an ATAR of 70 or above, ranking them in the top 30 per cent of the state. This ensured that 105 students were offered their first preference in the round one offers for tertiary study. Those who gained entry to highly sought after courses included Allana Constance and Laura Anderson who were among more than 250, selected from 2000 applicants, for RMIT’s Photography degree course.

Many of these students have now commenced their studies for a wide variety of exciting and rewarding careers spanning an extensive range of disciplines at various institutions in Melbourne, country Victoria and interstate. Monash continues to be the preferred university.

Good VCE results are the culmination of many years of school education, not the result of one year of study. It is important to emphasise that good study habits, organisation and commitment need to be developed in the junior years and consolidated throughout secondary schooling. Such is the rigour of Year 12 studies that being ill prepared diminishes the likelihood of success. A passive attitude and lack of commitment is not a satisfactory foundation for success. All Avila students are encouraged to actively seize the academic opportunities the College offers.

Students in years 7 to 11 are strongly reminded that if you want to be successful in your Year 12 studies, build the right foundations now.

To the Class of 2011, we wish you well in your future pursuits, in the knowledge that you will face the world with confidence and purpose.

Mrs Louise Swift
Year 12 Co-ordinator
Special guests

Special guests at the Commencement Eucharist and Induction of Avila College’s Student Leaders included past principals and teachers, members of the Presentation Order, staff and student leaders from Mazenod College, members of Mellica Campbell’s family, as well as past students and the parents of current students.

Principals of Avila and Mazenod, Ms Louise Gunther and Father Michael Twigg, OMI, with their student captains and vice captains from L-R, Patrick Noone, Sashika Harasgama, Sarah Genovese, Sean Paulding, and Christopher Chew.
liturgy. Fr Michael's homily regarding what it means to be a Christian lover not only ennobled our 2012 College theme of ‘Passion, Imagine, Pursue’ but also sent out a challenge to us to follow the command of Jesus to ‘love as I have loved you’ (Jn. 15: 9-17) from the perspective of being Eucharistic people. We were invited to come, as a community, and sit around the Table of the Word and the Table of the Eucharist so that we may be fed and nourished to go out and be Eucharist (be other Christs) for each other and the world.

At that wonderful time in the celebration when those gathered came forward to receive Eucharist, the prayer that followed became the focus of our intimate relationship, in prayer, with Jesus and each other. I present it in full in the hope that our prayer and purpose at that time in the Eucharist will become your prayer and purpose in the year ahead:

Bless what we are about to begin, O God,
Open our eyes to discover.
Open our ears to listen.
Open our hearts to care.
Guide our best efforts. Encourage us.
Amen

Mr John Rhynehart
Faith Development Co-ordinator
While our traditional Saturday Information Sessions and College Tours have provided a valuable introduction to our school for prospective students and their families, we have introduced weekday Open Mornings in order to showcase our school in action.

Our first weekday Open Morning on Thursday February 23 was very successful with about 100 visitors to the school.

While the format was similar to our Saturday sessions, the student-led tours around the campus enabled visitors to stop at various classrooms, including specialists rooms and see the learnings taking place.

A big thank you particularly to our Year 10 and 11 students who conducted the tours and proved to be such wonderful ambassadors for our College.

I would like to extend an invitation to current parents and visitors to join us for further sessions in terms two, three and four - Tuesday, May 8, Tuesday, August 14 and Tuesday, October 30. These dates will provide an excellent opportunity to view our new two-storey classroom building which we are preparing to occupy from the start of Term Two.

Please note that our final Saturday session was held in February.

Ms Louise Gunther
Avila College Principal

Open Morning pictures, clockwise from above:
1. The McKinley sisters, Bridget, Jessica and Charlotte, from St Timothy’s and accompanied by mum Tricia were all eyes as Stephanie Della Penna and Romy Crellin dissect a sheep’s brain;
2. Past student Kaaran Clarke (Class of 1986) took a trip down memory lane, as well as to show the College to her twin daughters, Ella, and Grace who are in Grade 5 at Laburnum Primary School. Escort by Isabelle Wright, Year 11, they are pictured with Julia Rush, Courtney Ager and Jacinta Frizziero in the library.
3. Abbey Gibson tries her hand at drums for big sister Kiah, who is in Grade 6 at Holy Trinity, parents Sarah and Brett, and Year 10 tour guide Deanna Apostolopoulos.
4. The Montenegro sisters from St Paul the Apostle Primary School in Endeavour Hills, Oriana, Grade 6, and Nadia, Grade 1, visit the Music School with their guide, Ruth Smith.

New students welcomed to Avila

In addition to our new Year 7s, Avila has welcomed 15 new and returning students this year. Pictured at a welcome morning tea are from L-R, Christian Harding (Year 9), Amanda DiSilvestro (8), Kirstin Knight-Bilson (12), Mirunaalini Gopi (10), Natasha Tseng (12), Kim Bui (10), Danielle Gorr (8), Eleni Giakoumis (8), Phoebe Cowling (11), Alicia Cusolito (9), and Vanessa Tan (10). Absent: Sallam Albarouki (11), Sajan Dambawinne (8), and Isobel Blackman-Bishop (11) and Jaya Domingo. See Page 17 for new staff members in 2012.
In this 50th anniversary year of the calling of the Second Vatican Council by Bl. Pope John XXIII it is good to be reminded of the tremendous impact the Council has had on the Church. *Gaudium et Spes*, the document relating to the Church in the Modern World begins with these lines: The joys and the hopes and the anxieties of people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of people [GS No 1]. There is no doubt that Avila women happily continue to live these words.

At this stage it would be simple for me to recite the myriad of activities we have been involved in during Term One and to marry each with the words of the Council Fathers above - because that is exactly what we have done. We have done it with generosity, pride and commitment. However, permit me instead to provide a more reflective piece which considers why we engage in good works for Caritas or participate in Christian Living Days or spiritual moments and celebrate in liturgies.

In an increasingly secular world much of the meaning which underpins the existence of a Catholic school becomes lost. This is especially true when we consider a student body which has become increasingly more unchurched than in previous generations. The difficulty arises when the students happily give of themselves, their time, their money, their gifts and do so with sincere generosity but fail to connect it with the Gospel values that not only underpin their goods works but also underpin the *raison d’etre* of Avila College. To this end, we parents and staff, need to help the girls make this link: good works in themselves are good but good works as a response to the Gospel make them meaningful!

When we consider the great women we have chosen to venerate or to look to for inspiration, I often hear the echo of the Council Fathers in the introduction of *Gaudium et Spes*. Each of the patronesses of our Houses, long before Vatican II, understood what *Gaudium et Spes* is asking us to understand and live in today’s world. The challenge now is to constantly remind the girls that because the faith program we present to them is, in part, a response to *Gaudium et Spes*, and their Baptismal call, that they not only inherit the wisdom, courage and Christian response of these four great women but that they are continually called to be like them in their daily lives of prayer and activity. The girls, like Caroline Chisholm, Julia Flynn, St Mary MacKillop of the Cross and Nano Nagle, find their inspiration and energy from Jesus of Nazareth: He who is central to our very existence as a Catholic School and who is ‘the Way, the Truth, and the Life’ [Jn 14:6].

Julia Flynn is described as ‘person of unselfish disposition and wide sympathies.’ She was an educator who knew the ‘griefs and anxieties’ of a developing Catholic education system and its slow response to the issues of educating young women in the modern world. She spent herself on this issue and brought to life the scripture: ‘I am the living water ...’ [Jn. 7], that is, she spent herself in an attempt to bring life-flowing ‘water’ into the world of education so that it may become an opportunity of growing in knowledge. Seeing a need, she responded and the response was deeply rooted in the Gospel; she was a woman of the Gospel.

Additionally, Caroline Chisholm’s work with travelers to the Victorian gold fields and women in the docks as they disembarked from ships newly arrived from a far away country, took the words of Jesus and made them her own. I don’t know, but I feel certain that the Gospel language of service was at the core of her great and good works: ‘I have come to serve, not to be served ...’ [Mk. 10: 45]. At one stage she is noted as saying: ‘I promise to know neither country nor creed, but to serve all justly and impartially’. And she did! Again, the Gospel values of love and service were at the core of her work. We invite Avila girls to make the same connection.

Australia’s first saint, Mary MacKillop was constantly urging her sisters to: ‘Never see a need without doing something about it.’

Today, through the Sisters of St Joseph, and through the great woman herself, we are continually called to respond to this tenet and to do so with immense empathy. If we allow the Gospel values to sift into our hearts and beings, such empathy will be instant. While we may see a need and throw a bit of money at it, it is almost an empty gesture. However, if we see a need, and even in a small way, make a difference because we have acted with empathy, kindness and compassion then we are not only potentially making a difference but we are truly behaving as disciples of Jesus. The congregation founded by Mary trusted deeply in ‘the Providences’ as taught by Mary MacKillop: if there is a need, God will provide. Once again the words of Jesus were etched on the heart of Mary MacKillop: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God’ [Jn. 14: 1].

Lastly, Nano Nagle, a woman whose charism permeates this place, once said: ‘Not words but deeds.’ It’s as simple and as difficult as that. The call of the Gospel is active, not passive. Of course Nano was incredibly active in the justice issues in the Ireland of her time. Her sisters, the Presentation Sisters, continue today to seek out the injustices in the world and to bring these to the fore and then attempt to rectify the issues in whatever way they can. Their motto, like our sister school, Star of the Sea, is the simple charge: be active; do good works. The compassionate Nano Nagle was bursting with Gospel love and in a special way, through her works and through the works of the Sisters, make manifest the words of Jesus: ‘I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.’ [Jn. 10:10].

So, we are *Ecclesiae Filia*: Daughters of the Church. By our very existence we are called to be the new MacKillop, the new Chisholm, the new Flynn, the new Nagle and the new Teresa of Avila. We are called to be like them - the core of which is the active, empathetic, tireless and compassionate response to the Gospel of Jesus. It’s a radical response! When we do this, not only are we forming young women who can link the Gospel to their personal lives but we are also forming a relevant, vibrant and Christ-like community; a domestic Church; a group of believers who not only live *Gaudium et Spes* but understand its inextricable place in our daily living.

With every best wish for the coming joy of the Easter season and in the joyful hope of forging a new pentecost at Avila College, let’s continue to pray for and support each other.

Mr John Rhynchart
Faith Development Co-ordinator
Countdown to occupation of new building

Excitement is mounting as Avila College prepares to occupy our much-anticipated new building in time for the commencement of Term Two.

The building, which will accommodate the Year 7 and Year 8 classes, will be officially opened later in the year.

Built at a cost of $4 million, the two-storey building features 16 classrooms, year-level offices, meeting room, learning support centre, and a lift. The classrooms have sliding walls to enable the creation of even larger learning areas. All lighting and cooling are sensor controlled for energy efficiency. The interior design of the state-of-the-art complex boasts aesthetically pleasing colour schemes and plenty of natural light.

Members of the Avila community wishing to view the new building are most welcome to come along to our School at Work mornings. Our next morning will be on Tuesday, May 8.

Pictured clockwise from top: The new building before the commencement of landscaping; one of two stairwells at either end of the building; the lift, one of the entries; modern toilet amenities; classroom with sliding walls to create a larger learning area; upstairs locker area; classroom with interactive white board (IWB) and teacher’s desk.
MacBook ‘instruments’ rolled out

There was an incredible buzz of excitement across the College as the 1:1 MacBook program was rolled out to two more year levels in February - with the 1:1 program now at years 7, 10 and 11 (2011 roll out).

First up were the Year 10s who accompanied their parents to an information night which concluded with the collection of their new computers. The following evening all Year 7 parents met their daughters’ teachers, heard more about the year ahead, including the conditions for the hire of the MacBooks and then took their precious cargo home to charge up overnight.

It has been exciting to witness the enthusiasm with which the girls have taken up the challenge of becoming experts in the use of their new ‘instruments’. The analogy of an ‘instrument’ is deliberately used at Avila to remind students, teachers and parents that the MacBook is much more than a mere tool or machine. Like a musical instrument, students need to care for their MacBooks and to practise so that they develop the capacity to not only create work that will amaze their teachers but that they will be so proud of that it will inspire them to love their learning.

During their introductory ‘bootcamp’ sessions where they ‘booted up’ their MacBooks for the first time, students were introduced to the idea that, as administrators of their instruments, they needed to understand some ‘under the bonnet’ operations. Systems Administrator, Mr Russell Curr led students through establishing their accounts and some of the settings for moving easily between different school and home wifi access points, as well as some handy hints to maximise battery life. Mr Jason Isma, our newly appointed eLearning Leader, taught the students the importance of setting up logically labelled files, some handy keyboard shortcuts, how to make back-ups with Time Machine and how to care for their ‘instrument’.

Having undertaken training late last year, the year 10 Tech Angels were able to provide much valuable assistance to their peers in both years 10 and 7 with the initial set up of the computers. The Tech Angels demonstrated their impressive problem-solving skills as they gently guided those who were less confident or uncertain. Of course, they were also well supported by Avila IT Help Desk staff, Mr Bratislav Simic, Mr Frank Virgona and Ms Lavinia Vasundran.

From such positive beginnings the enthusiasm has not waned as students integrate the use of collaborative Google docs into their classes, work with fellow students and teachers in Edmodo, exchange solutions to a range of technical problems with classmates and continually change their laptop wallpaper to incorporate the latest photographic offering from popular band, One Direction.

Like the students, the teaching staff are exploring, exchanging and collaborating; finding ways to meaningfully incorporate technology into and beyond their classrooms. With a sound foundation in teaching theory and practice, they are engaging students in their learning, developing thinking skills and habits of mind that enable deeper learning, and exposing students to some of the most genuinely innovative education available.

To be amazed at how education is changing, just ask any year 7, 10 or 11 Avila student to demonstrate some of the different ways she is learning to play her ‘instrument’.

Madeleine Franken, Deputy Principal
(Curriculum)

Pictured right: Mr Simic helps launch Bianca Dentensano with her new MacBook. Far right: Rolling out the Year 10 MacBooks are Mrs Chris Nichols and Ms Jacinta Girolami with Mikaela Ortolan and her father Robert, and Olivia Fullman with her mother Fiona.
Following in their mothers’ footsteps

There could be no higher recommendation for the quality education that Avila offers its students than for past students to choose to send their own daughters to the College.

Each year there is a steady flow of ‘Old Cols’ daughters commencing at the College and this year is no exception with 15 new Year 7 students whose mothers attended Avila. Currently there are almost 100 students at the College who are the daughters of past students.

To celebrate, and record, the growing tradition of mothers sending their daughters to Avila, group photographs are taken on the first day for Year 7s.

This gathering always proves to be quite a social occasion where the Avila spirit is alive. The conversation flows freely as the ‘Old Cols’ recognise faces from their own year levels or those of their sisters and share memories.

Without exception the past students are full of praise for the modern campus and the excellent educational and co-curricular program available to students.

Established in 1965, Avila College has grown tenfold from 110 students to 1120 in 2012.

At the Opening of the School Year Mass, founding Principal, Sister Patricia Carroll, said that the Avila of the 21st century had far exceeded her dreams for the College, which she considered extremely ambitious back in the early 1960s.
The excitement and anticipation was contagious when 200 bubbly, although some were a bit more nervous than others, and immaculately groomed new Year 7s arrived for their first day of secondary schooling at Avila College on Friday, February 3.

As the new Year 7s made their way to their homerooms to meet other enthusiastic students and staff, it was clear that another era had commenced at the College, now in its 47th year.

The girls have been quick to embrace the 2012 Year 7 theme, ‘Go For It’, by joining many of the extra-curricular activities, and their energetic participation in events such as the House Swimming Carnival.

Term One has been packed with many exciting events and new experiences. The girls mastered their locks and lockers and are now able to navigate their way around the school grounds with ease. They have participated in many special year-level events, such as Friendship Day, Swim Day and Peer Support, which have enabled them to make new friends and to discover more about their new school and themselves. They also experienced their first whole-school Eucharist and a whole-school assembly.

One of the highlights of the term was the introduction of the Mac 1:1 laptop program. The girls have embraced their new laptops and are enthusiastically learning how to get the most out of their new eLearning ‘instrument’. They are extremely appreciative of the innovative laptop program and are demonstrating a high level of responsibility and maturity towards such an opportunity.

Looking to Term Two, the ‘Go For It’ theme is sure to be evident at the much anticipated Year 7 Camp at Phillip Island from May 2 – 4.

The students are also looking forward to the big weigh-in of their pumpkins in Term Two. The girls have been growing pumpkin seedlings they were given at Orientation Day so it will be interesting to see who are the green thumbs.

Without doubt, the Year 7s have settled in well and are quickly becoming part of the Avila community. Congratulations such on a wonderful start to the year.

Mrs Tanya Induni
Year 7 Co-ordinator
Reconciliation @ Avila

Pictured from L-R, Gemma Stack, Kate Riethmuller, Grace Dungey, Amy Christenson, Lyra Walker-Mackay, Miranda Koroknai, and Genevieve Townsend with students from St Joseph’s College, Geelong.

Preparing for The Long Walk

An Avila College contingent is preparing to join Michael Long for The Long Walk on May 21, from Federation Square to the MCG.

To help prepare, Aboriginal elder, Aunty Fay-June Ball, visited us to explain the importance of this event for the Aboriginal community of Melbourne. Aunty Fay, a Wiradjuri woman of New South Wales, provided an understanding of the ‘black armband’ view of history; the historic bridge walks at this time; and the frustration that led Michael Long to walk to Canberra. She explained the symbolism of the walk and reminded students of the fantastic footy they will see at the ‘Dreamtime at the G’ game.

The Rec Group is currently making a banner for us to walk behind, which all Avila students will have the opportunity to sign on ‘Close the Gap Day’. Families are invited to join us on the walk. Contact Mrs Christine Valladares if you have any queries.

Listening But Not Hearing

Avila students have been following the Senate debate on the ‘Stronger Futures’ legislation that will extend the Northern Territory Emergency Response for another 10 years and put in place harsher measures for communities like Santa Teresa. The government has argued that these measures are being put in place after consultations with and approval from the prescribed communities. The report, ‘Listening But Not Hearing’ proves that the government did not run effective consultations – and never intended to take note of the opinions of the people in the communities.

Members of Avila’s Reconciliation Group attended the recent launch of the report where former Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, said the legislation would bring the ‘protectorates back again ... and there were strong grounds for the Legislation to be struck down in the High Court’. Ian Viner, once the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, said that the legislation would ‘undermine customary law’ with the ‘special measures making it impossible to Close the Gap’. Nicole Watson, one of the authors of the report, emotionally spoke of her disillusionment at the ‘shambles of a process’ and the toll this is having on people in communities like Santa Teresa. Alastair Nicholson, the former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, declared the legislation ‘racist’, while Justice Frank Vincent (Provost of Zelman Cowen Centre), asked us to consider whether we really were the nation of the ‘fair go’ or whether our nation was fundamentally racist.

It was a night of powerful ideas, given depth by moving footage of Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory pleading with government officials in consultations who were clearly not listening. It gave our Year 10s an even greater desire to go to Santa Teresa and support the people of this community. Mrs Christine Valladares, Reconciliation Group Co-ordinator

At the launch from back L-R, Justice Frank Vincent, ‘concerned Australian’ Georgina Gartland, Mrs Christine Valladares, Tessa Wijesinghe, Leah Giakoumis, Amy Clarke, Tamar Haigazian, Pia Paggotto. Front L-R, Francesca Carl, Rebecca Andrews and Jade Sheehan.

Fire Carriers Conference

This year the Fire Carrier’s Conference was held at beautiful Amberley Retreat Centre on the Yarra River. It is always energising to get together with the other schools who have the same commitment to Reconciliation. We had a chance to ‘network’ and be inspired by stories of some fantastic activities that have been happening in other schools. We even managed to get some students to sign up to the ‘Reconciliation Group at Avila College’ on Facebook! The conference was an excellent opportunity for re-assessing ’The Covenant’ that Avila College makes with the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry each year as part of the Fire Carrier Program. Also Vicki Clark and Sherry Balcome provided us with resources and ideas that we will use this year. Grace Dungy Year 11
On February 24 the Year 8’s headed to Jells Park to participate in their first Christian Living Day for 2012. The sun was shining and as soon as we arrived we knew this was going to be an unforgettable experience.

The day started with a beautiful prayer while we sat and enjoyed the fresh air. We were then split into our homerooms and got to know our fellow class members, homeroom teacher and RE teacher. We played various games that allowed us to step outside our comfort zones and feel more comfortable around our peers. We talked about social justice, forgiveness and the different issues that occur in and around our school environment as well as discussing our beliefs at Avila College. This really opened our eyes and motivated us to become a better friend, a better student and a better person overall.

We joined with the other homerooms for lunch which enabled us to further broaden our friendships, as well as strengthen old ones. Being with girls we wouldn’t normally work with was surprisingly a lot of fun! We discovered we had many things in common with some of our classmates that we wouldn’t have known without Christian Living Day.

Christian Living Day provided a link to new opportunities and new friendships. It enabled us to learn about others as well as ourselves and it made us forget about any worries that we had. Being outdoors, getting away from the busy school life and crowded corridors gave us time to think about others and how we could live a life like Jesus did. We learned that by following Jesus’ example and forgiving others, we were able to let go of our guilt and focus on the future. It was great to see everyone joining in, having a go and seeing their smiles as we headed back to Avila. Everyone left with at least one new friend.

SRC leaders Danielle Darbyshire, 8 Pink and Brooke Ryan, 8 Orange

And there was the fly. Stuck in the tsunami of spit ...’ This is just one example of Boori ‘Monty’ Pryor’s storytelling magic that he shared with a gathering of Avila’s 200 Year 7s on February 24.

Boori came to Avila to share his highly entertaining story telling talent and tell us a bit about himself. His visit was timely because, in General Studies, we are exploring the concept of identity and belonging through story telling. We are learning how important it is to find out more about other cultures and how it enables us to respect one another’s culture and traditions. We have also had a close look at Boori’s most recent book, Shake a Leg.

An amazing and entertaining story teller, Boori really made us think about reading and writing in a different way and made us reflect on how we can draw on our own life experiences when we write narratives. Boori taught us many things about Aboriginal culture simply by weaving information through his stories. And, it was clear that no matter what the culture, kids will be kids! Boori had us erupting in laughter as he told many stories about himself and his siblings playing pranks on each other and their healthy sibling rivalry, common to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous families today. He was hilarious! Boori also played the didgeridoo for us which was awesome.

We all loved Boori’s storytelling and hope he can visit us again.

Much gained from CLD

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This day wouldn’t have been possible without the work of our Year Level Coordinator, Miss Ingrid O’Sullivan, and our homeroom and RE teachers. Given the success of our first Year 8 Christian Living Day, we are all looking forward to the many more to come!
In 2012, the Art Department plans to spread the love of Art by creating a ‘Wall of Fame’ of student art work in each year level corridor. The works of art will be changed frequently to showcase the diverse activities that can be undertaken under the umbrella of Art at Avila. They promise to be a beautiful and eye-catching feature in the year level corridors.

The Art department, together with year level Art captains will also host lunchtime Art Club for the junior school in terms two and three. There will be many fun activities that will allow the younger students to let their imagination and creative skills run wild.

A special welcome to our new Art captains: Stephanie Berlangieri (Year 12) and Bianca Vasile (Year 12 vice), Rachelle Criticos (Year 11), Nikki Pecora (Year 10), Denise Do (Year 9) and Katrina Amoranto (Year 8).

That’s it for now, but stay on the lookout for more art surprises to come!

Mrs Donna Bell
Head of Physical Education

As part of their Physical Education program, the Year 8s travelled to Point Leo for a day of beach safety activities, run by Life Saving Victoria staff.

The beach program enabled the girls to develop their water safety skills in a beach environment and followed on from the water safety sessions they had at the pool in Year 7.

The weather was kind to us, with the warm temperatures allowing the girls to enthusiastically participate in activities such as the effective use of PFDs (personal flotation devices), how to check for currents; safe and enjoyable ways to enter the water; rescue techniques; body boarding and DRSABCD emergency theory.

Year 8s, Dhakshini Sivashanker Murali and Arshini Boteju had this to say: We learned how to do CPR, surfing, boogie boarding, rescuing someone and what to do when you are in a rip. It was a really good experience because most of us didn’t know about the hazards of the beach. Thank you to all the people who organised this excursion for us. We had a fabulous time.

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As a Year 11 student in 2011, Phoebe Tapley was one of 25 Victorian students selected for the Melbourne Theatre Company’s ambassadors program. One of the highlights for Phoebe was meeting Geoffrey Rush, Australian of the Year, and Oscar, Tony and Emmy awards winner. Phoebe was also invited to write of her year-long experience for the MTC website. The article was published with the accompanying photograph with Geoffrey Rush and some of the other Year 11 ambassadors.

Photograph courtesy Melbourne Theatre Company

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‘Walls of fame’

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Denise Do (Year 9) and Nikki Pecora (Year 10)
Giving voice to contemporary issues

Lions Youth of the Year is an annual competition for young people in positions of leadership to share their opinions on contemporary issues in a formal setting. Avila’s Kiara Goldsmith is this year’s Public Speaker of the Year for the Monash District of Lions.

On Thursday February 16, five VCE students, who were competition finalists, from the Monash area were guests at the Waverley International Inn for a dinner together with family, teachers and members of the Lions Club. At an interview the preceding weekend, the three judges asked contestants about our involvement in activities and our opinions on issues.

On February 16, the finalists had to present a five minute speech and reply to two impromptu questions. The speeches ranged from the horrifying facts on children in detention, to the terrible consequences of drink driving. I spoke on the need for communication with our Indigenous population, and the public speaking winner, Avila’s Kiara Goldsmith, spoke about the Murray Darling Basin. The impromptu questions asked our opinion on sports star’s wages and the effect of reality television shows on children.

The MC was talented and friendly and the night ran smoothly with everyone being respectful and interested in what we had to say. The speeches were fantastic to listen to and it was great to be around girls who have similar interests and world views.

I would particularly like to thank the Lions Club for holding the event as it allows young people to challenge themselves, meet new people and voice their opinions. Genevieve Townsend

Tell me, teach me, involve me ...

As Benjamin Franklin stated, ‘Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.’ This quote was proven to be true by Avila students on February 26 when they participated in the 2012 Victorian State Debating Team Trials.

Avila was represented by Angela Stapleton, Sophia Elliott and myself (Year 9s), Olivia Staffieri (Year 10) and Genevieve Townsend (Year 11) who competed in this challenging test of our argumentative skills as we expressed our diverse opinions on a variety of recent events.

The trials consisted of two secret topic debates for students from years 8 to 12 from various schools throughout the state. Though the topics were quite difficult, we learned and gained confidence as we watched the more experienced students debate, and took note of the advice given by the adjudicators.

By ‘giving it a go’ we had the opportunity to put the invaluable lessons into practice. We had lots of fun and were glad that we had the opportunity to take part. Special congratulations to Genevieve Townsend who successfully made it to the final round of selections, but was not successful in making the team. We congratulate Genevieve for her wonderful achievement.

Roshali Lokuge, Year 9

Welcome ‘AJ’

Personal assistant to the deputy principals, Mrs Jodie Dean and husband Cameron welcomed the safe arrival of their baby daughter, Arizona Jodie (AJ), on December 29.

‘AJ’, who weighed in at 3.4kg (7lb 6 oz) at birth, is a new playmate for her two-year old big brother, Jesse.

Pictured: Mrs Dean and ‘AJ’.

New staff

Several new staff members have joined the Avila community this year.

Welcome to the following:

Sr Maria Lazzaro
College Chaplain

Mr Jason Isma
eLearning Leader

Ms Felicity Maxwell
Yr 7 GS/Eng/Debating

Ms Bree Kitt
English/RE

Ms Marie O’Brien
Teacher librarian

Ms Lavinia Vasundran
IT Support

Mrs Catherine Angus
School nurse

Miss Anna Franceschini
Administration officer
Firstly, it is genuinely such a pleasure to be back amongst the Avila community. In the excitement of moving on after Year 12, I did not consider how much I would miss the people and the atmosphere that helped transform me into a young woman.

My experiences at Avila were not something that I reflected on greatly during my six years as a secondary student. In casting my thoughts back to secondary school, which now feels so unbelievably long ago, it is the overall atmosphere that I have come to appreciate most; the mutual respect between pupils and teachers, the caring attitude that infiltrates activities and services, the compassion and the positive and pragmatic steps taken towards social justice. In the wider community, Avila girls are recognised for these qualities. I participated in an inter-faith program this year and the founder of the program, upon learning that I was a previous Avila student, commented that Avila girls always have such a respectful attitude towards diversity, and always participate willingly in acts of social justice. That comment was what I needed to help me understand that this was the greatest gift given to me by Avila College. All the subject-specific knowledge that we feed our minds, the formulas, the texts, the facts are all crucial. However, nothing is so important as the attitudes and beliefs that are formed, cultivated and strengthened by Avila. Ultimately, Avila showed me the importance of assisting others, which I hope will shape my professional and personal life. As past or present Avila girls, we should all try to fulfil the expectations that the wider community have of us - and rightly so, as we are more than capable of them.

Another element of my Avila experience that I did not reflect upon greatly was the strength that Avila gave me as a young woman. Avila taught me that underestimating young women is wholly unwise and that underestimating yourself as a young woman is even more so. Surely, that attitude was part of the Presentation Sister’s vision when they founded Avila College - the development of young women who are intellectually formidable and strong-minded. This attitude is what drove me to realise that I was capable of entering the course which I undertook this year - Arts/Law at Monash University. Arts/Law is something that I wished to pursue since the end of Year 9, and I know that my parents, teachers and peers saw the determination in me when I spoke of obtaining a place in the course. It is so gratifying to be studying the course that I dreamt of doing for more than half of my secondary schooling. However, your own hard work can only come so far - the rest of your accomplishments must be attributed to the environment which fostered you and gave you confidence. This is the effect that Avila had on me, and what I have to thank the school for.

Of one thing I am certain - I would not have the same understanding of myself, my faith or my values if I had not been schooled at Avila, of that I am certain. To Avila girls, it is easy to undervalue what you do as part of a routine, but be thankful for what Avila has and will give you. To the Avila staff, thank you for seeing me along the path that fulfilled my ambitions. Without you all, I would not be able to appreciate the fortunate position in which I now stand.
Leading orthoptist humbled by courage of young patients

Orthoptist and past student, Sandra Elfride Staffieri (nee Penso) is constantly inspired and humbled by the many children she works with who have blinding eye disease.

‘Despite their condition these children just get on with it,’ said Sandra, Clinical Research Orthoptist at the Centre for Eye Research Australia. ‘Their courage and resilience is humbling.’

The Class of 1981 graduate is a highly respected and award-winning orthoptist – as a researcher, educator and clinician. Her research findings have been presented at both national and international conferences, she lectures to students of orthoptics, ophthalmology and medicine, as well as continuing the clinical care of children with eye disease.

At Avila, Sandra was a focused student keenly interested in a career in the medical field. She said she benefited greatly from the Avila tradition of nurturing students to become independent young women capable of attaining any goal they were prepared to work towards.

‘I was terrified of boys so glad I was at an all girls school!’ Sandra added.

Sandra provided the following insights into her work:

**What does your work involve?**
Currently I spend most of my time undertaking genetic eye research looking for the genes that cause eye disease. Some of the conditions I have been studying include congenital cataract, glaucoma, strabismus (eye turns) and retinoblastoma (RB, children's eye cancer). This work often requires both interstate and international travel, so it is very busy and varied. As my background is in the clinical aspects of these diseases, I co-ordinate the projects, examine all the participants and collect their DNA samples which are then sent to the various laboratories with whom we are collaborating.

**What do you find most rewarding about your work?**
It has been great fun marrying my past clinical expertise with research. The research is very interesting and it is exciting to meet new people. It is extremely satisfying when you publish your findings or are part of a major discovery which changes the way some eye diseases are treated. Most of all though, I love the challenges of examining children and being able to help them and their families through what is oft en a very diffi  cult time that can last several years. I have looked aft er many children from birth to adulthood and now I am starting to look after their children. I love the relationship that develops with the child and the parent and watching them grow and overcome their diffi  culties. Also the opportunity to teach other doctors and clinicians is also great as you are part of the future, beyond your own working life.

**Greatest challenges?**
There is a lot of heartbreak when you can’t make a child ‘better’ and trying to be positive when you know the situation may not turn out in a positive way. It was also a very big decision to retire from my clinical work as Chief Orthoptist at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) when I loved it so much. However the challenge of learning new skills and achieving things I never thought I would be capable of has been extremely rewarding. And of course, balancing raising a family (Julian, now 20 and Olivia, 15) and working full time ...

**Career highlights to date?**
Too many to count! Every time a child’s vision has improved, is a highlight. And having the privilege to be a part of a child’s treatment and involved in improving their vision, their appearance, or being able to support a family through the diagnosis and treatment of their child’s eye disease, particularly in my role as Retinoblastoma Care Co-ordinator at the RCH. It beats the prizes and awards every time.

**Professional awards?**
Most recently I was awarded the Brainwave Travelling Scholarship by the Department of Neurology at the RCH. This will enable me to attend the 2nd World Paediatric Ophthalmology Congress in Milan and present some of my research findings into RB. I will also travel to Canada and the USA where I will meet other RB experts at major paediatric centres. I hope to see how they manage and co-ordinate the care of these children in the hope we can learn from their experiences and improve our care of Australian children, as well as foster international collaborations as RB is a rare disease.

**If you had your time again, what would you have done?**
I always wanted to be a paediatrician. I didn’t have the marks so I ended up in health sciences to see where it would take me. Alphabically, orthoptics came before orthotics and speech therapy in the VTAC handbook – and that is where I stayed. I think if I had my time again, I would hope to be doing the same thing. I was very fortunate to have been encouraged and mentored by some great people early in my career and lucky enough that this continues.

Interview conducted towards the end of 2011 by Ashleigh McGregor for a VCAL assignment.
From pro squash to pro trainer

Who would have thought that a young girl with a passion for squash could follow her dreams to become 14th in the world in women’s squash? That is just what former Avila student, Meeghan Bell did and much more – she has drawn on her interest in health and fitness to establish her own thriving personal training business based in Mount Waverley.

Meeghan pursued squash at international level after secondary school and then successfully completed studies for a degree in Communications. After graduating from university, and to support herself while looking for a full-time job in the film and media industry, Meeghan worked part time at the Melbourne City Baths. She was initially employed as a customer service officer but was soon given an opportunity to study a certificate IV in fitness and started working in the gymnasium. Meeghan enjoyed the work so much she decided to pursue a career as a personal trainer where she could also be her own boss. In March 2008 Meeghan launched her business, ‘Forever Strong Fitness’, in Mount Waverley. Earlier this year she moved to more spacious premises in High Street Road, just around the corner from Avila.

Meeghan finds her work extremely rewarding, especially when clients, ranging in age from 15 years to 80, achieve their goals. She also thrives on owning and running her own business, embracing every challenge as an opportunity for growth.

‘When I’m faced with a challenge or a problem I try to see it as an opportunity to learn and grow,’ Meeghan said. ‘It is important to be creative and flexible in the way you solve each problem as it arises.’

While Meeghan, (Class of 1990) only attended Avila for her final two years of secondary schooling, she said the experience greatly contributed to what she has achieved. She said Avila was an empowering environment where students were encouraged to be independent and to work hard towards achieving their goals and aspirations. It was during her time at Avila that Meeghan discovered her passion for squash. Meeghan believes it is important for young women to be involved in leadership and during her time at Avila she started the College’s first environment club.

Meeghan’s message for young girls who aren’t sure of a future career is ‘to do the things you love, and enjoy life … most importantly, follow your heart.’

Interview conducted towards the end of 2011 by Selina Fatouros, for a Business Management unit on Public Relations

Past College Captain graduates with Medicine/Surgery

Congratulations to 2004 College Captain, Connie Chong, who has graduated from the Australian National University in Canberra with a double degree in Medicine and Surgery.

Connie was joined at her graduation ceremony on December 16 by her parents and former teacher and mentor, Mrs Christine Valladares whom she had successfully nominated for one of six ANU awards for excellence in secondary teaching.

Connie, whose secondary teaching prize nomination was accepted as the most impressive in her student group, addressed the graduation ceremony. Connie spoke passionately about her vision for her peers and their need to make a commitment to service in the communities in which they will work. Mrs Valladares was thrilled to witness this remarkable young woman address such a distinguished audience.

Past College Captain and Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery graduate, Connie Chong, addresses the distinguished audience at her graduation ceremony.
Nicolette Thein (nee Sholl), a Class of 1990 graduate, has carved herself a rewarding career niche on the 'business side of medicine' as a health information manager (HIM).

She described a HIM as the perfect fit for anyone with a leaning towards business management and an interest in health and/or medicine, without being hands-on with patients.

Health information managers (HIMs) design and manage information systems in the healthcare system. They collect and generate records and reports about patients who are being treated by doctors and other clinicians. HIMs use their clinical knowledge of disease and surgical procedures, technical knowledge of computer systems and databases and their management skills to set up and monitor these systems. HIMs also play a key role in the security and legal use of people's medical records and health information by establishing appropriate procedures and handling and protecting personal data.

'Positioned at the heart of the health care system, HIMs contribute both to the healthcare system and to people's health by providing the information systems and data central for medical decision-making and patient-care planning,' explained Nicolette who has further specialised as a clinical coder.

'HIMs are essential for hospitals to function; for Victoria and Australia to have good quality information about the health status of Australians; for patients' information to be kept private and confidential; and for the future planning of healthcare services.'

One of the key organisers of a 20-year Class of 1990 reunion last year, Nicolette said she was privileged to hear many girls’ reflections ... 'there's no doubting that the College fostered true friendships, school spirit and belief in self'.

'I know my time and studies at Avila encouraged me to be an independent thinker. I never doubted that whatever I chose to do in the future, my efforts would be rewarded ...The friendships I formed have remained lasting and strong,' said Nicolette.

Music was one of Nicolette's passions at Avila and one that she continues by singing and playing the violin at her local church.

‘Our College hymn and College song will never be erased from my memory and I continue to sing the hymn to my children (on request!) at bedtime.’

Interview conducted towards the end of 2011 by Celeste Fisher and Olivia Dwyer for a VCAL assignment

Avila golf proves to be corporate asset

It is amazing how golf lessons during her Avila days have proven to be an extremely handy skill for Pamela Anderson (nee Addicott-Whyte, Class of 1997)) in her role as a marketing executive in the finance services industry - and yes, Avila once offered golf lessons. Working in a male dominated environment, Pamela, 32, has found it beneficial to be able to join her colleagues and associates on the golf course where so much corporate networking and relationship building occurs.

Pamela is a marketing executive with Australian Financial Services (AFS), one of Australia’s leading financial planning groups with a growing number of representative offices around Australia. Her role involves developing, promoting and protecting the AFS brand; and planning and delivery of all training events in Australia and overseas. Pamela also supports the AFS’s 86 practices Australia-wide to assist them with their marketing needs. In addition, Pamela was part of a project team that recently launched two new financial products and brands. Pamela mentioned that some of the international conferences she organises are in countries such as Portugal, Egypt, Vietnam and Thailand. She loves the challenge of ensuring everything runs smoothly; her only lament is that given the efficiency of electronic communication, she does not always get to attend the conferences herself.

Apart from learning how to play golf, and win colours for hockey, Pamela noted that her experiences at Avila were empowering and helped shape her into the person she is today. She values the encouragement and guidance she received to work to achieve, and the friendships and strong sense of community.

Having completed a Bachelor of Business Marketing and a Diploma of Financial Services, Pamela urged students to pursue their dreams and to use constructive criticism to rise above and overcome any negativity.

'Put in all your effort because, at the end of the day, every bit counts,' said Pamela, adding that it was important to take risks and to leave your options open.

Interview conducted towards the end of 2011 by Gabrielle Nehma for a Business Management unit on Public Relations
It was a magical evening on February 24 for the Year 12 Formal when the year 12 girls arrived in their glowing gowns, aboard their ‘golden carriages’ at the Brighton International.

The evening was like a fairytale, perfect from the beginning to the end of the evening, for the Year 12s, their partners and staff who attended.

As one of the Year 12 VCAL organisers, it was truly rewarding to see the evening unfold. All our hard work and the frustrations in organising such an event proved well worthwhile. It was truly an invaluable experience in event management with a sharp learning curve.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the night such a success and one to remember.

Christina Ferraiuolo
On Friday March 9, seven girls from years 7 and 8; 9 and 10; and 11 and 12 represented Avila College in the SCSA Tennis Tournament at Boroondara Tennis Club. All the girls played magnificently and at a very high standard but unfortunately no teams made it to the finals. It would be great to see even more girls try out next year so they can have an excellent day out and hopefully get into the finals.

Natalie Sursock
Tennis Captain

Nana-Adoma Owusu-Afriyie has become the under 14 Australian sprint queen. The Year 8 Gold student recently competed in the Australian Junior Championships in Sydney where she won the under 14 100m (12.90 seconds) and 200m (26.20 seconds) events. Nana has been preparing for the championships since early last year so was thrilled that all her hard work and training paid off. Her success further fuelled her ambition to one day run in the Olympics, as well as being a dream birthday present just days before she turned 13. In the week leading up to the competition, Nana won the Leader Newspaper’s Under 15 Sports Star encouragement award.

Katherine Konstantinidis
Swimming Captain

It was with great determination and enthusiasm that Avila College swimming team raced against Genazzano, Siena and Sacre Coeur at the annual Genazzano Swim Meet on February 17.

All the girls swam exceptionally well throughout the evening. Many received placings with Avila College finishing fourth overall.

Well done girls and Avila!

Genazzano Swim Meet

Pictured, the Avila swim squad and Teaghan Sutherland showing her style.
Year 9 Camp

On Tuesday, March 13, 200 very enthusiastic Year 9 students headed off for a week of outdoor activities, camping and fun. The girls went to various locations around the state, including Cape Otway, Anglesea, Warburton and Point Leo and participated in activities such as surfing, raft making, kayaking, bush walking, surfing, horse riding, mountain biking and reef studies.

At camp, the girls learned how to set up tents, cook on camping stoves, read compasses, navigate their way through different water sources, as well as a lot more about what each of them is capable of achieving. They encountered heat, wind and torrential rain; a number of native animals, and challenges in each of their activities.

Thanks to all involved (parents, teachers and Bindaree staff) in making the Year 9 camp a great success. A huge thank you to the girls for their enthusiasm, excellent behaviour, and positive attitudes. Thanks must also go to the staff at each location, who sacrificed their time to ensure the smooth running of camp for another year.

Ms Marina Kelly
Camp Co-ordinator