



**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

**TO THE**

**SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

**FOR THE**

**2012**

**ACADEMIC YEAR**

**COVENANT COLLEGE, TUGGERANONG, A.C.T.  
ASSOCIATION INC.**

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT to the COLLEGE COMMUNITY  
for the 2012 ACADEMIC YEAR**

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Covenant College's Annual Report for the 2012 academic year.

Our theme in 2012 was Pressing On. The Term Verse to Remember for each term was:

Term 1: Isaiah 41:10

***"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."***

Term 2: 2 Corinthians 4:6-9

***"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."***

Term 3: Colossians 1:10-12

***"And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light."***

Term 4: Philippians 3:13-14

***"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."***

2012 followed on from 2011 with the expectancy of another small, but significant rise in student numbers as had been the case in 2010 and 2011. However, this did not eventuate and new enrolments were the lowest on record. This caused the College Council to reconsider the College's Enrolment Policy which now allows for families other than Protestant families to enrol. It is hoped these changes will lead to improved numbers for 2013. At the time of writing this report, numbers have increased with a good number of Kindergarten students enrolled.

Our College community continued to work to deliver a truly Christian education built on, and delivered within, a Christian world and life view. God has again proven his faithfulness to his people.

The following report highlights 'major' activities that happened in the College. These activities plus 'minor' events (not noted here) were reported to the College community via *the Communicator*, the College website and student assemblies during the year. I am thankful to the various members of our dedicated College community and the wider community who contributed so selflessly during the year. Certainly we give praise to our wonderful God for His provision for us as we desire to see children grow up in His ways for His glory.

Following a meeting with representatives of the ACT Block Grant Authority regarding funding available for new buildings, Covenant College was involved in negotiations with Trinity Christian School and Galilee School regarding the establishment of Trade Training Centres at each of the three schools. However, despite a number of meetings, the involvement by all schools was postponed to be considered for future funding rounds.

## COUNCIL

The Chairman's report gives a clear outline of the work faithfully carried out by Council and its Committees on behalf of the Association. After the AGM, while remaining a member of Council, Mr Jeff Buckpitt stood down as Chairman and Dr Richard James was elected to succeed him.

This policy-making body of the College ministry has sought to work for the good of our parents and their children to the glory of our Lord and Saviour. Please remember them in your prayers as they labour in the Lord's Name.

The incumbent Principal, Mr Donald Surtees, gave notice to the Council that he would be stepping down from the position at the end of the year. Mr Martin Keast from Hamilton, New Zealand, was selected to replace him.

### Committees

Please pray for those who serve us so generously with their time and talents on various committees. We would be pleased to welcome others to join in the important committee stage of Council's work. It is both satisfying and a way to keep well informed of what is happening in the College.

### Income

	\$ Total	\$ Per student
<b>Net recurrent income 2012</b>		
Australian Government recurrent funding	700,093	5,344
State/Territory Government recurrent funding	267,148	1,982
Fees, charges and parent contributions	514,543	3,928
Other private (capital) sources	<u>84,262</u>	<u>643</u>
<b>Total gross income</b>	<b>1,566,046</b>	<b>12,007</b>

### Re-registration

After satisfactorily dealing with the first two conditions of the College's 2011 re-registration review, the Curriculum Committee worked with staff members to ensure the third Registration condition was satisfied prior to the beginning of the 2013 school year.

### STAFF

God continues to bless the College with committed teaching and non-teaching staff – all of whom are ably gifted Christian men and women. As always, we are thankful for God's provision of staff to help fulfil the aims of the Association in the classroom and the maintenance of a safe and caring learning environment.

In 2012 Covenant College employed 16 (11.3 FTE) teaching staff, and 5 non-teaching staff (3.4 FTE). The dedication of staff members was evident in that staff absences represented less than **2.5%** of total days worked.

All teaching staff members were deemed qualified for their positions, satisfying the current registration staffing requirements of the ACT Department of Education. For the first time all staff were registered through the newly introduced Teacher Quality Institute (TQI). The qualifications of our staff include: Masters Degrees (1); Bachelor Degrees (16); Graduate Diplomas in Education (6); Other Diplomas (5); and Teachers Certificates (3).

The ratio of male to female staff was 6:10. There were no indigenous members of staff in 2012.

Staff changes were kept to a minimum. At the end of first semester Mrs Liberty Overton (K/1) resigned to await the birth of her child and Mr Ivan Young (6/4) retired after a long association with the College. We were pleased to welcome Miss Evie Stubbs from New South Wales as Mrs Overton's replacement and Mrs Hooley replaced Mr Young.

Despite the mid-year changes, teachers were again able to concentrate on their areas of knowledge and expertise thereby helping to fulfil the aims of the Association in the classroom. As always, we are thankful for God's provision of staff who serve at the College.

### Professional Development Weeks

#### 30 January – 3 February:

- Rev Peter Gobbo (Tuggeranong Presbyterian) and Rev Greg Brien (College Chaplain), led staff in devotions over the five days.
- Rev Bob Frisken (New Hope International) was the week's keynote speaker. He presented sessions on "*A Christian Worldview and the Christian Teacher*".
- *Training in Microsoft Office – Outlook 2007* was conducted by Mrs Jenny Anderson.
- A Senior First Aid course was conducted by Red Cross and completed by all staff.
- Council Chair, Mr Jeff Buckpitt, addressed Staff on Council's 2012-2017 Strategic Plan.
- Mr Chris Butler organised a Staff / Council Breakfast.
- In-house orientation was conducted by the Principal and Bursar.

#### 18 – 22 July:

- Rev Dr Peter Laughlin (WVAC and Principal – Alliance College of Australia), led staff in the devotions over the five days.

- Most sessions for the week were given over to Curriculum Planning for implementation of the Australian Curriculum in 2013.
- Semester One Reports were completed by staff members.
- Council Chair, Dr Richard James, addressed Staff members on issues facing Council.
- Mr Jason Ward, from Trinity CS, and Mr Kevin Lyons, Curriculum Committee member and IT consultant, conducted sessions for staff members on planning and implementing the Australian Curriculum.
- Mr Butler organised a Staff / Council Breakfast.
- In-house orientation was conducted by the Principal.

Staff devotions have continued each morning and a number of our staff have taken their turn in leading this precious time of fellowship. Staff members continue to remember each other and a number of our families and their needs in prayer each morning.

Staff members attended cross-sectoral meetings organised by the Teacher Quality Institute(TQI) and network meetings for further professional training in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

## **STUDENTS**

Last year the College's enrolments were 135 students at the August census date (including 7 overseas students) which was a decrease from the previous year's enrolments. We value the prayers of our community as we seek God's blessing through the growth of enrolments. The student body included students from South Korea, Philippines, Indonesia, USA, Britain, India, Singapore and South Africa.

Year 10 students who left the College in 2012 were enrolled in Colleges throughout the ACT including Trinity CS, Brindabella CC, Lake Tuggeranong College, Canberra College and Lake Ginninderra College.

### **Student Attendance**

The student average attendance rate was 95.1%. The rate in Infants/Primary was 94.5% and in Secondary 96.0%. Students at the College are required to be in attendance each day that the College is in operation. Students absent from the College are required to furnish a reason (from their parents) *in writing, signed and dated*, for their absence upon his/her return. Parents are requested to telephone the College before 8:50am if their child is going to be absent. Each morning, absence slips are completed by the Class Teacher or Head of House. These are forwarded to the Office secretary who marks the electronic rolls for each class. The College contacts parents if a student has an unexplained absence from the College – this is usually done within 45 minutes of the rolls being marked each day.

### **Students with Special Needs/ESL**

Students with special needs have been well catered for with the mandatory process of SCAN identifying those most in need of assistance. The Study Skills elective option (limited to six students) continues for students needing special help to organise their workload and ensure assignments are completed by the due date. Modified levels of work have been applied to students in a number of subjects. The ESL course developed and implemented for students from overseas has proved beneficial and helped inform the tracking of students in their academic progress. The number of full-time overseas students has reduced during the course of the year. Tracking of all students has been maintained and students with special needs identified and helped.

### **Student Activities**

The annual Foundation Day Lecture and Service were addressed by the Rev Bob Frisken, President of New Hope International. His topic for the Lecture was *Covenant in the postmodern era* and for the Service he spoke on *Living Worthy Lives*.

Senior students in Year 10 were given Leadership badges to recognise their position in the College. The students worked as a leadership team both as a cohort of students and as leaders of their House teams.

Bruce Coleman, CEO of The Choices of Life (which upholds the value of human life from conception to natural death), spoke to parents, teachers and students in Years 5-10 about this most important issue. His message was very well received by all those in attendance.

A three day camp for all Secondary students at Camp Longbeach, Bateman's Bay, NSW, was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The Years 9-10 Outdoor Education elective class camped out overnight as the climax to a unit on preparation for outdoor, overnight activities.

Insitec continued to provide industry experts in ICT to help deliver the College's Year 8 Computing courses in 2012.

\$1,823 was raised for our Care Ministries during 2012. This is important in understanding the Biblical pattern for supporting God's kingdom work. Students participated in Gifts Days and Treats Days which helped raise the funds for the support of our Compassion child, the provision of fresh water for 10 poor families and the distribution of Bibles to countries around the world through the Bible League.

Other important student activities were the:

- Receiving of New Testaments by Year 7 students from a Gideons representative;
- annual visit to K/1 by the ACT Fire Brigade;
- visit by Broughton Anglican College, inspired students as to what could be achieved in the performing arts as their choir and orchestra sang and played a variety of musical genres;
- Visit by students in K-6 to Llewellyn Hall where they were entertained by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra;
- Visit by the Ark Van;
- Infants/Primary students involvement in World Maths Day and National Literacy and Numeracy Day;
- Debating Finals;
- Year 6 Dinner;
- Year 10 Graduation Dinner;
- Year 10 Work Experience; and
- participation in College, MPSSA, SSSA and ACT swimming, cross country, and athletics carnivals.

Taylor, Livingstone and Carey houses competed against each other in the annual Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. In 2012 Taylor won the Swimming Carnival, Livingstone the Athletics Carnival and Carey the Cross Country Carnival.

Many students in both Primary and Secondary were involved in zone and ACT carnivals throughout the year. Students were also involved in gala days for sports such as soccer and softball and cultural pursuits such as chess, choir and band.

Swimming lessons were held over a two week period in Term 4 for Years K-6. This is an annual event which has excellent outcomes for the students.

Extra-curricular activities in chess, choir, volleyball and football were held at regular periods for interested students. Students were notified of trials for MPSSA and SSSA teams to compete at ACT carnivals/competitions

A number of students excelled in UNSW ICAS English, Maths, Science, Spelling and Writing competitions.

The College Concert Band is now under the tutelage of the Jerabomberra Academy of Music (JAM) after Ramos Music moved headquarters to Cooma. While numbers are not as strong as in previous years for a number of reasons, the Band has worked hard under Mr Samuel Andrews and presented some pleasant items at the Evening of the Arts and the Thanksgiving Evening. The College choir, High School Harmonies and the Years 9-10 music ensemble also gave us some special performances throughout the year.

A new music venture, the Music Soiree, was undertaken by Secondary music students in consort with the Food Technology elective students. Organised by Mrs Cain and Mrs Lyons, this was a most successful evening. A matinee was held the next day for visitors from local aged care facilities.

The annual *TAG Quest*, a performing arts talent quest, served up some most enjoyable items which were well received by the College community.

The annual *Evening of the Arts* was held at the Stromlo HS auditorium in Warramanga in 2012. Many and varied were the items with individuals, ensemble groups, soloists, choirs, staff members and the College Concert Band all making an appearance. Mrs Lyons brought it all together again for us in her special way.

The annual Bush Dance was held at the Gordon Primary School hall. It was another great evening of fellowship which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The Thanksgiving Evening proved a fitting climax to the year, with students, parents, and staff members gathering together to give praise to Almighty God for His provision of all our needs in 2012. It was held in the Performing Arts Centre at Calwell High School. We appreciated the messages from Rev. Peter Gobbo (Tuggeranong Presbyterian Church) and Dr Richard James (Council Chairman). Particular highlights were the items presented by a number of our students and staff members under the direction of our Music teacher, Mrs Wendy Lyons.

Students were aptly rewarded for work throughout the year with the following awards given out on Thanksgiving Evening: Principal's Award, College Dux, Sportsmanship Award, Director of Studies – Secondary Award, and the Director of Studies – Primary Award. Class awards were also awarded for Christian Character, High Academic Achievement, Academic Improvement, and Sportsmanship.

The 2012 edition of the College yearbook, *Collage*, again proved what an excellent record of College events it is – especially as it was the first full colour edition produced. Much of the work and commentary on events was written by students giving parents a first-hand account of what College life is all about. Again we give a special thank you to Mrs Coleman for her efforts in compiling this wonderful record.

### Benchmarking

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9 sat the NAPLAN national benchmarking tests in, reading, writing, spelling, grammar and numeracy. The following table compares these results, showing the percentage of our students who scored results at or above the national benchmarks. From the tables you will note that the College has achieved some very good results.

Since the beginning of 2010, these results have been published on the Federal Government's "My School" website. The 2012 results are due to be published in late Term 1 in 2013. What they show is that most of our classes performed well when compared against all Australian students at their Year level. The comparison is most favourable in Years 3 and 9.

However, as with any statistical analysis, there are many variables that can affect the results and the result of any student in any given year eg. being recently arrived from overseas with minimal English skills; having had a death in the family. League tables, made from such information by the media, do not take into account such variables nor do they attest to the faith-based nature of many schools where the teaching of certain values is of the highest priority. While they may laud a school with one cohort of students, they might just as easily do the opposite with another.

Reading				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Year 3</b>	100%	100%	90% (9/10)	100%
<b>Year 5</b>	92% (11/12)	100%	80% (4/5)	95% (19/20)
<b>Year 7</b>	100%	100%	100%	94% (17/18)
<b>Year 9</b>	100%	100%	94% (15/16)	100%

Writing				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	100%	100%	80% (4/5)	100%
	100%	100%	100%	100% (17/18)
	100%	100%	94% (15/16)	100%

Spelling				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Year 3</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Year 5</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Year 7</b>	100%	100%	100%	94% (17/18)
<b>Year 9</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

Punctuation & Grammar				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
	100%	94% (15/16)	100%	100%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	100%	100%	100%	94% (17/18)
	93% (14/15)	100%	94% (15/16)	100%

Numeracy				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Year 3</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Year 5</b>	92% (11/12)	100%	100%	100%
<b>Year 7</b>	100%	100%	100%	94% (16/17)
<b>Year 9</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

The above tables show the percentage of our students who scored results at or above the National Minimum Standards (NMS).

The figures enclosed by ( ) represent actual student numbers.

While the College has excelled academically, it is not the most important thing. The College's purpose, as stated in our Constitution, "to encourage ... the pursuit and dissemination of true Christian scholarship in all areas of the school's curriculum and interest, so as to establish a truly Christian world view in all disciplines of life," is what matters. 'Our Covenant' adds to this:

- (i) by precept and example, to confront students with the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ so that in God's appointed time, they might come to exhibit the fruits of true repentance and faith in Christ, confessing Him as Lord and Saviour;
- (ii) to train students in the beginning of Christian scholarship and seek to give incentive for their continuing development as Christian scholars;
- (iii) to develop and apply principles that set the Christian ideals of citizenship, godly character and the spirit of reverence, so that personality and sense of responsibility are developed together in the entire life of the scholar; and
- (iv) to this end students will be encouraged to achieve the highest standard consistent with their capabilities in all their activities pursuing excellence for the glory of God."

Might we be ever grateful to our wonderful Heavenly Father for the opportunity He has provided through the College to grow our children in His ways.

## **PARENTS**

The parents prayer meeting which has met each Tuesday for the past nine years ceased and was replaced by a fortnightly Saturday prayer meeting to pray for the needs of the College from 7:30am to 8:00am.

A *Spalding Course for Parents* was held over three evenings in March led by Mrs Liberty Overton, our K/1 teacher. It proved most beneficial for the good number in attendance.

Many parents, staff and students were involved in the Spring Fair, an annual event on the College calendar. With the \$8,415 (net) raised, it was agreed that proceeds of the Fair would be used to help purchase a new digital telephone system for use across the whole College.

The Kindergarten Orientation morning was held on Tuesday, 20 November.

Parent/teacher interviews were held in Term 1, Week 7 and Term 3, Week 3. An interim report was forwarded to parents prior to these special evenings. Semester reports were distributed to parents at the end of Semesters 1 and 2. The reports are 'plain English' report cards with A – E grades.

Weekly communication with parents is via the *Communicator*. It is distributed each Thursday afternoon by hard copy and email.

## **GENERAL**

With funds from the Australian Government, the Rev Greg Brien continued to serve as the College Chaplain for two days per week. The benefit of the chaplaincy service is acknowledged by parents, teachers and students. We are thankful for the work Rev Brien carries out amongst us – especially the Chaplain's Breakfasts held each fortnight for different grades and the visiting speakers, who include members of the staff, College community and wider community.

## **Surveys**

Annual surveys of parents, staff and students (Yrs 3-10) as to their views on the performance of the College in 2012 were again undertaken.

**Parents:** We are very appreciative of the meaningful input by parents and the level of satisfaction with the College expressed by parents. It is worth noting here that responses provided in the parent survey were once again very positive with the high scores - on a rating scale of 1 to 5 (5 = strongly agree) - being given to the questions about:

- The College being Christ centred (average score of 4.72);
- Willingness to recommend the school to other Christian families (4.68);
- A Christian worldview comes through clearly across the College's program (4.67);
- The College is a safe and caring community for my child (4.64); and
- The College's administrative staff members are friendly and helpful (4.61).

**Staff:** Areas of greatest strength noted (on a rating of 1-6) by staff were:

- The College administrative staff are friendly and helpful (5.79);
- The College is a safe and caring community (5.50);
- The College is a Christ-centred school (5.43);
- A Christian worldview comes through clearly across the College's program (5.36);
- Staff treat students with respect (5.36);
- The College has a good Primary dress uniform (5.21); and
- The Principal is competent and approachable (5.21).

**Students:** On a rating scale of 1 to 5, and in response to the question "I am generally satisfied with my school and the quality of education I receive", the average score was 4.08 with a 95% response rate..

Along with other scores (refer Chairman's report) these results suggest that the College is meeting most parent, staff and student expectations in providing a Christ centred, high quality education in a safe and caring environment.

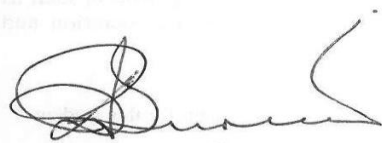
An Open Day and Information Evening were held in May, with further information distributed at the Spring Fair in October.

### **CONCLUSION**

2012 was a year of *Pressing On* – in line with our theme. With the Council having dealt with some weighty matters regarding enrolments, we pray that we will see Covenant College press on with confidence into the future.

God continues to lead us now into 2013 as we build on the work completed in 2012. We look forward with anticipation to seeing God continue His wonderful blessings on our ministry as we take up the theme for 2013, *God's Goodness*.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald R. Surtees', written in a cursive style.

Donald R. Surtees  
Immediate Past Principal [Principal to 13-01-2013]  
18 March 2013