



LEARNING TO THRIVE; ENGAGED IN THE WORLD

CREATING OUR FUTURE
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2015 – 2018





The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made. And the act of making them, changes both the maker and the destination.

– John Schaar, Futurist

We at Ballarat Grammar see the coming years as a period of exciting challenge: a time when the School will build on an already-enviable reputation. Behind this stands a wealth of tradition, and in 2017 we shall celebrate 140 years since the establishment of Queen's College.

The directions outlined in these pages result from consultation with hundreds of students, parents, staff, Board members and members of the wider Grammar community. We thank all who have contributed to this process. There has been careful analysis of the latest local and global trends in education.

Over recent years, an ambitious capital works program has delivered first-class learning facilities to accommodate a growing school. Thanks to the generosity of many, we have facilities which are unsurpassed in regional Australia. But we are proudest of the warmth of relationships which bind staff and students in their learning endeavours. All of this makes for an environment conducive to effective learning, and this process is the firm focus of our new strategic directions.

Learning happens in many contexts and at many times. The spirit of community which envelopes our young people will enhance their learning progression. We invite all who have an interest in Grammar to join us, in one way or another, in creating a fulfilling future for our young learners.

Hon, Rob Knowles AO
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Stephen Higgs
Headmaster

BALLARAT GRAMMAR

LEARNING TO THRIVE;
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OUR REGIONAL ANGLICAN SCHOOL FOSTERS:

Academic aspiration

Trust

Opportunity and engagement

Optimism and resilience

Social and environmental justice

within the search for faith and meaning.

THE ESSENCE OF BALLARAT GRAMMAR

Ballarat Grammar looks to a positive future from the standpoint of a proud tradition dating back to 1877, when Queen's College was established. In 1911 the Anglican Diocese founded Ballarat Grammar School, and in 1973 these schools combined to form Ballarat and Queen's Anglican Grammar School. The co-educational school, known as "Ballarat Grammar", educates nearly 1500 students from early childhood to Year 12, based on a 16 Ha parkland campus north of Lake Wendouree. Over 200 boarders live on campus, in five family-oriented boarding houses. Boarders are country students from all States, with a small number of overseas students.

The earliest learners, from age six months, are in childcare in the new Centre for Early Education (CEEEd) which also offers programs, based on the Reggio Emilia philosophy, for three and four-year-old children.

The Junior School, from Prep Grade to Year 6, as part of its candidacy for membership of the International Baccalaureate, is offering the IB's Primary Years Programme. This delivers the Australian Curriculum in an internationally-renowned framework. Year 4 classes operate for most of their week in a purpose-

built environmental learning centre on the School's 50 Ha farm at Mount Rowan, 3 km north of the Wendouree Campus.

The enriching breadth of student involvement expands as students move into the Senior School, where programs lead towards a choice of forty VCE studies and a VCAL stream, with excellence in outcomes illustrated by numerous Premier's Awards.

Throughout the School, academic aspiration is fostered within a framework which nurtures all-round

personal growth, in a research-based, structured "positive education" program. This is founded in positive relationships between and among students and staff, a distinctive feature of the School being the warm, respectful and trusting relationships which characterise its community. These relationships in turn reflect the Christian values at the heart of Ballarat Grammar, expressed in the Anglican tradition of openness and inclusivity, in ways which invite students to search for meaning.

An ambience of ambition and encouragement supports students as they explore diverse talents and they range widely. Learning is enriched by partnerships, most importantly with parents, who work closely with the School to sustain young people's developing growth mindsets. Students compete in more than thirty different sports; they perform and exhibit at the highest level in different visual and manual, musical and theatrical arts; they take on outdoor challenges from the Grampians to the Alps; they are active in service to the local community in myriad ways, and in action for social justice.

The ethos of service is at the core of the Round Square, an international fraternity of over a hundred schools, committed to working together for a better world. This fundamental commitment involves students in many ongoing service projects, both locally and globally, from working with disadvantaged youth in Wendouree West to providing fresh water to hill tribes in Thailand, or English lessons in Timor Leste. Term-long exchanges to Round Square schools in eighteen countries, and service-based conferences, for example, in Jordan, Germany, and India, foster international understanding through friendship and service. Helping others through service enriches students' lives by building positive connections with their communities and helps them find meaning and fulfilment.

Round Square membership also requires a commitment to action on behalf of the natural environment. From the earliest days, Ballarat Grammar has had a strong connection with the land. This is expressed most obviously today in a thriving Agriculture program based at the Mount Rowan farm, and also in the environmental underpinnings

of the Year 9 program, housed in an experimental centre with its own wetland on the main campus. The School's commitment to environmental improvement is apparent in expanding rooftop photovoltaic arrays, with several wind turbines.

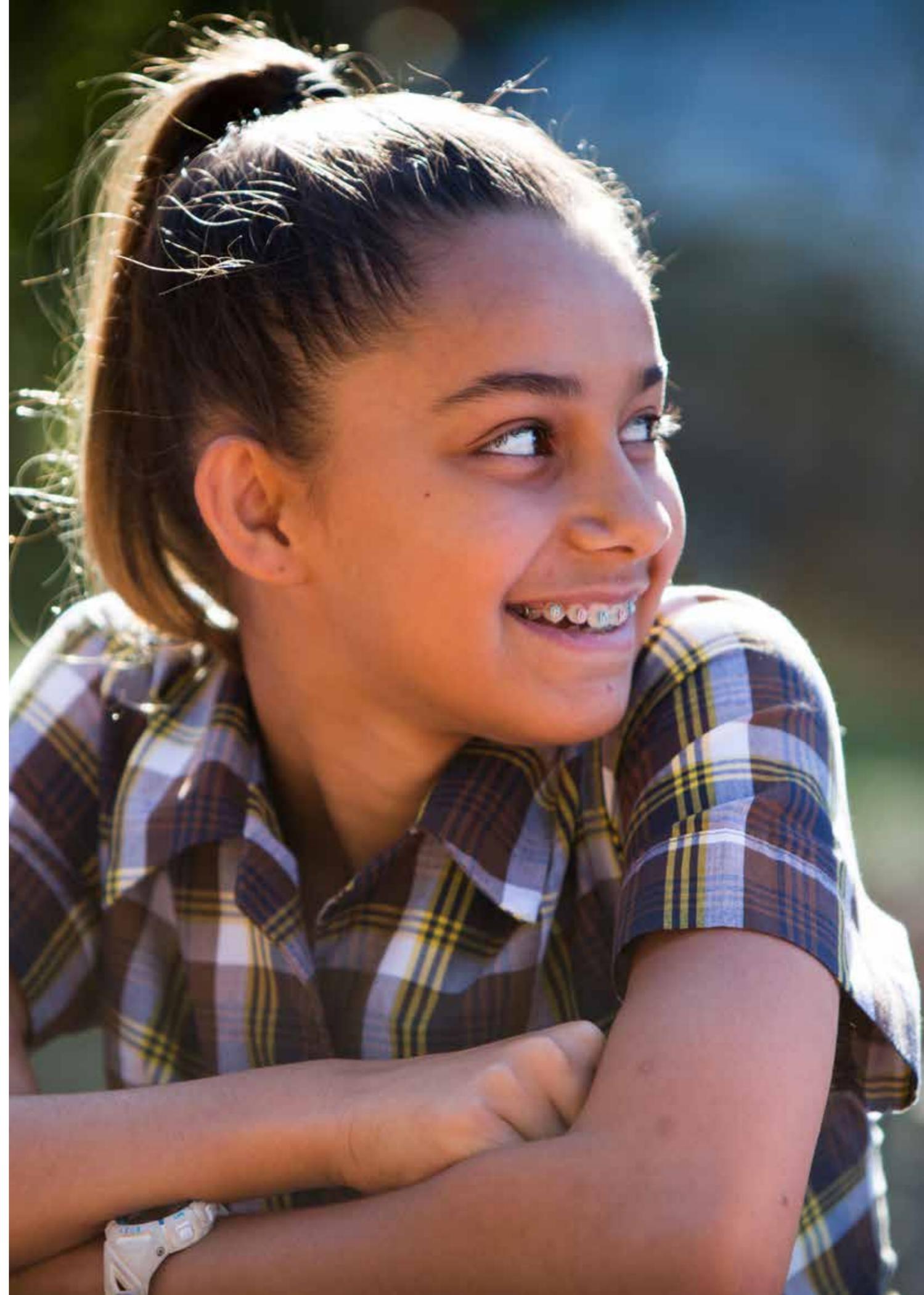
Year 9 students venture to explore the City of Melbourne, spending three weeks at the School's City Cite campus, usually living in Melbourne for that experience. One measure of the value of that experience is that thirty other schools send their classes to City Cite for programs run by Ballarat Grammar.

The outstanding facilities of the Wendouree campus support learning in many forms: modern class facilities are designed to facilitate collaborative learning; the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts enriches school life but also catalyses community engagement. Such facilities strengthen the arm of our most important resource, a talented and committed team of teaching professionals. The generous provision of physical resources also speaks of the generosity of spirit of the School's community. In this spirit, Grammar welcomes students from

many backgrounds, from Ballarat, across Victoria, from all States and from overseas: students from regional and remote communities; students of different faith backgrounds; students from refugee and indigenous communities; exchange students from around the world.

Surveys show that students leave Grammar with high levels of confidence about their future. Following expert careers guidance, they progress to many and varied destinations, emboldened by strong and abiding relationships formed at school. Equally, Grammar looks to its future as an exemplary regional school, providing exceptional value not only to its members but also to the wider community.

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DIRECTIONS FOR **FUTURE GROWTH**

In 2015, the Junior School has grown to three classes at all levels, and a sixth stream at Year 7 takes the School to what the Board sees as the ideal size, with further growth in enrolments on the Wendouree campus not currently envisaged. For the foreseeable future, growth will be in quality.

A major thrust of the last strategic plan was the institution of a comprehensive wellbeing program as a foundation for learning activities in all pursuits at Grammar. The School's "Positive Education" program, based on the science of Positive Psychology, has received national and international recognition. It aims to develop thriving, independent learners through the growth of the "whole child", a strategy which has been

loudly and repeatedly affirmed by Ballarat Grammar parents. More recently, it has become apparent that this approach of building a social, emotional and spiritual bedrock to which we anchor all learning endeavours is becoming recognised internationally as having the highest efficacy.

Grammar's commitment to the environment and to international understanding will continue to expand learning horizons and

many current highly-regarded programs will remain. The focus of coming years will be on the continuing upgrading of learning programs to ensure that they meet the needs of young people who will emerge from school into a much-changed world in the 2020s and 2030s.

With this focus in mind, while preserving the many strengths of the School, we plan to:

1. **INCREASE THE ACTIVATION OF OUR LEARNERS**

Within a culture which fosters the capacity for creativity, collaboration, compassion, communication and critical thinking, we shall

- 1.1. more widely use "positive education" to promote learning.
- 1.2. cultivate a growth mindset, and academic tenacity.
- 1.3. continue to develop structured inquiry as a preferred teaching method.

1.4. align students and teachers as learners, striving together, supported by parents.

1.5. increase the personalisation of learning and learner self-management.

1.6. continue to promote learning as an enduring habit of mind, applicable within and beyond the classroom.

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2. OPTIMISE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

While preserving the warmth of caring relationships which underpins the Grammar learning environment, we shall

- 2.1. document the Grammar Learning Philosophy, its basis in research and its innovative dimensions.
- 2.2. communicate this Learning Philosophy, and its wellbeing underpinnings, to the School community.

- 2.3. support staff and students in the use of data for improved teaching and learning outcomes.
- 2.4. continue the development of pioneering learning facilities.
- 2.5. utilise technology to give students greater control of learning and to improve learning outcomes.

4. STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALISM

Supporting teachers as collaborative and continuing learners, we shall

- 4.1. personalise the coaching program for growth in line with clear ambitious goals.
- 4.2. nurture effective evidence-based teaching practices.
- 4.3. encourage further sharing of best-practice teaching techniques.
- 4.4. Further develop knowledge of contemporary understandings of learning and the nature of learners.
- 4.5. reinforce collegial teamwork and collaboration between departments and different levels (CEEd, Junior and Senior Schools).
- 4.6. transform the professional review system to foster individual growth and aspiration.
- 4.7. enhance internal career progression for long-serving staff.



3. REIMAGINE THE MIDDLE YEARS (5 – 9) LEARNING PROGRAMS

Building on strengths of the Junior School PYP, and current specialised programs at Years 7 and 9, we shall

- 3.1. ensure the continuity of programs in Years 5 – 9.
- 3.2. foster an understanding of the specific learning needs of the middle years.
- 3.3. draw ideas from other world-class middle years curricula.
- 3.4. recruit staff with specialist middle years expertise.
- 3.5. reconsider structures such as timetable and the House system across Years 5 – 9.

5. ENSURE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE SCHOOL

To enhance the strength of the School, as the future becomes less certain, we shall

- 5.1. nurture an understanding that the richness of Grammar's offerings is dependent on the strength and diversity of enrolments, and that all members of the community contribute to this strength.
- 5.2. support Admissions processes with contemporary communications strategies.
- 5.3. manage areas of enrolment oversupply with care and sensitivity.
- 5.4. promote the clear value of early entry, for Primary students into Prep Grade, or boarders into Year 9, as a way of enhancing academic outcomes.

Stephen Higgs – Headmaster

6 March 2015