



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

TO THE

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

FOR THE

2011

ACADEMIC YEAR

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

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT to the COLLEGE COMMUNITY
for the 2011 ACADEMIC YEAR**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Covenant College's Annual Report for the 2011 academic year.

Our theme in 2011 was *Following Jesus*. The Term Verse to Remember for each term was:

Term 1: *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* (John 8:12)

Term 2: *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls."* (Matthew 11:29)

Term 3: *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."* (John 14:21)

Term 4: *When He had called the people to Himself, with the disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* (Mark 8:34)

2011 followed on from 2010 with another small, but encouraging rise in student numbers. This was an answer to prayer. 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 blessed us physically, financially and spiritually.

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.

COUNCIL

In 2011, while Mr Andrew Biggs took a well-earned sabbatical after many years of faithful service, we were pleased to welcome the addition of two new members, Mrs Rebekah Adams and Mr Kevin Lyons.

The Chairman's report gives a clear outline of the work faithfully carried out by Council and its Committees on behalf of the Association. Mr Jeff Buckpitt has worked tirelessly as Chairman, keeping members focussed on completing the many and varied agenda items. 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. Council have continued their support of me in my role of Principal and for that I am most grateful.

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

Net recurrent income 2011	\$ Total	\$ Per student
Australian Government recurrent funding	741,544	5,252
State/Territory Government recurrent funding	277,683	1,967
Fees, charges and parent contributions	498,948	3,534
Other private sources	88,919	630
Total gross income	1,607,094	11,382

Re-registration

A major focus of much of the effort of our community was expended in ensuring the re-registration of the College for the next five years – 2012 to 2016. Much work had been done in the preceding years with the final reviews of new and updated policies, curriculum and general systems completed in 2011. The efforts of the many were rewarded with a positive report on the College – its education and facilities – by the review Panel. Three conditions were attached: delete all references to corporal discipline in documentation; review the Indigenous Education Policy to be more specific; and introduce ICT to Infants classes in line with the Australian Curriculum in 2013. The first two have been satisfactorily dealt with and the third will be completed by the beginning of 2013.

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 2011 Covenant College employed 15 (11.4 FTE) teaching staff, and 7 non-teaching staff (4.0 FTE). The dedication of staff members was evident in that staff absences represented less than 1.5% 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 (6); and Teachers Certificates (2).

The ratio of male to female staff was 6:9. There were no indigenous members of staff in 2011.

Staff changes were kept to a minimum. At the beginning of the year Mr Adam Heaton (English, History) joined us from South Australia, but left at the end of Term 2 and was replaced by Miss Karina Andrews.

Despite the mid-year changes, and the compositing of some classes, 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

31 January – 4 February:

- Rev Andy McConaghy (Queanbeyan Presbyterian) and Rev Barry James (CRCA – Canberra), led staff in the devotions over the five days.
- Mr Rob Clements presented a session on *"Discipline and the Teacher – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"*.
- Mr Greg Brien, Curriculum Coordinator, led the staff in Curriculum Planning.
- Mr Mark Spencer of CSA informed staff on *Child Protection and Duty of Care*.
- *Training in Microsoft Office* was conducted by Mrs Jenny Anderson.
- A first aid CPR refresher course was conducted by Red Cross and completed by all staff.
- Mr Jeff Buckpitt addressed Staff on issues facing Council.
- Mr Chris Butler organised a Staff / Council Breakfast.
- In-house orientation was conducted by the Principal and Bursar.

18 – 22 July:

- Rev Ken Graham (WVAC) and Dr Peter Laughlin, (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.
- Mrs Jenny Ward from Trinity CS, addressed staff on *Students on the Autism Spectrum*.
- 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.

STUDENTS

Last year the College's enrolments were 142 students at the August census date (including 8 overseas students) which was a small increase over 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 and China.

Year 10 students who left the College in 2011 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 94.4%. The rate in Infants/Primary was 94.3% and in Secondary 94.4%. 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 Bruce Christian, former Moderator General Presbyterian Church of Australia. His topic for the Lecture was *Transforming Education* and for the Service he spoke on *Building on the Rock*.

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.

A three day camp for all Secondary students at Camp Longbeach, Bateman's Bay, NSW, was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Students are looking forward to the 2012 camp which is to be held at the same venue.

Insitac continued to provide industry experts in ICT to help deliver the College's Year 8 and Years 9/10 (elective) Computing courses in 2011.

\$2,136 was raised for our Care Ministries during 2011. 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 and 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.
- the ACT Fire Brigade's annual visit to K/1;
- Infants/Primary students involvement in World Maths Day and National Literacy and Numeracy Day;
- Year 6 excursion to Sydney;
- 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. Livingstone won the Swimming and Athletics Carnivals and Carey the Cross Country.

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, softball, and Oztag and cultural pursuits such as chess, choir and band.

Swimming lessons were held over a two week period in Term 1 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.

Students in the College Concert Band played some challenging pieces for us throughout the year including the Evening of the Arts, the Spring Fair and the Thanksgiving Evening. The College choir and the Years 9-10 music ensemble also gave us some special performances throughout the year.

TAG Quest, a performing arts talent quest, continued the tradition begun by Footsteps to Fame. It was again very well received by the College community.

The annual *Evening of the Arts* was again held at the CCC auditorium in Monash. 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 2011. It was held in the new Performing Arts Centre at Calwell High School. We appreciated the messages from Rev. Ken Graham (Woden Valley Alliance Church) and Dr Richard James (Council Vice-Chairman). Particular highlights were the items presented by a number of our students under the direction of our Music teacher, Mrs Wendy Lyons and the College Concert Band.

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 2011 edition of the College yearbook, *Collage*, again proved what an excellent record of College events it is – especially with the addition of colour in some parts. 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 2011 results were published in February this year. What they show is that most of our classes performed very well when compared against all Australian students at their Year level. The comparison is most favourable in Years 7 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
Year 3	100%	100%	90% (9/10)
Year 5	92% (11/12)	100%	80% (4/5)
Year 7	100%	100%	100%
Year 9	100%	100%	94% (15/16)

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

	Spelling		
	2009	2010	2011
Year 3	100%	100%	100%
Year 5	100%	100%	100%
Year 7	100%	100%	100%
Year 9	100%	100%	100%

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

	Numeracy		
	2009	2010	2011
Year 3	100%	100%	100%
Year 5	92% (11/12)	100%	100%
Year 7	100%	100%	100%
Year 9	100%	100%	100%

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

A faithful group of parents has met each Tuesday to pray for the needs of the College from 9.00am to 9.45am. Please consider joining us for this vital ministry. There is always room for more. A prayer breakfast was also held each term.

A *Spalding Course for Parents* was held over three evenings in March led by Miss Liberty Venning, 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 over \$7,000 raised, it was agreed that proceeds of the Fair would be used to help purchase a new student server.

The Kindergarten Orientation morning was held on Tuesday, 22 November. The follow-up picnic at the end of January near Lake Tuggeranong also helped to cement relationships of parents and students as the new year approached.

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.

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.

Surveys

Annual surveys of parents, staff and students (Yrs 3-10) as to their views on the performance of the College in 2011 were again undertaken. My thanks to the Chairman of Council for his work in analysing the final statistical information presented below.

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 being given to the questions about the College being Christ centred (average score of 4.82 on a rating scale of 1 to 5) and willingness to recommend the school to other Christian families (4.72).

Staff: Responses to the question "Overall I am satisfied with my employment at the College" showed an overall average rating of 4.68. Areas of greatest strength noted by staff were "the College is Christ-centred" (4.79) and "College admin staff are friendly and helpful" (4.74).

Students: In response to the question "I am generally satisfied with my school and the quality of education I receive", the average score was 4.26.

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.

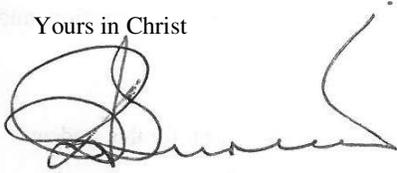
CONCLUSION

2011 was a year of *Building Up* – in line with our theme. With the Council dealing with some weighty matters regarding enrolments we pray that God will enable them to set the course that we see Covenant College press on with confidence into the future.

A special thank you must go to my friends and brothers in Christ, Mr Tim James (Bursar), Mr Chris Butler (Director of Studies – Secondary) and Mr Daniel van Bentum (Director of Studies – Primary) for their support and encouragement. Thank you also to the families of staff members for their understanding and support along with Association members, parents, and churches whose help cannot be overstated.

God continues to lead us now in 2012 as we build on the work completed in 2011. I look forward with anticipation to seeing God continue His wonderful blessings on our ministry as we take up the theme for this year, *Pressing On*.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donald R. Surtees', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Donald R. Surtees
Principal
27 March 2012