



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

TO THE

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

FOR THE

2025

ACADEMIC YEAR

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

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for the 2025 ACADEMIC YEAR**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Covenant Christian School's Annual Report for the 2025 academic year.

For 2025 the theme is 'Jesus Christ is Lord' and the associated Theme Song was 'This is Amazing Grace.'

The term verses set for student memorisation as well as being the text for assembly devotions during the year were:

Term	Verse	Rationale
1	And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matt 28:18-20	Christ has all authority, He is the true Lord of all.
2	Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The sceptre of Your kingdom is a sceptre of uprightness; You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond your companions" – Psalm 45:6-7	Jesus Kingdom is ruled in uprightness and justice
3	Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."-Gen 1:26	Our purpose is to serve Christ through taking dominion over all He created to His glory.
4	Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God – Rev 11:15-16	The right response to Christ's Lordship is worship.

2025 saw the continuation of the steady enrolment growth we have been experiencing along with other independent schools in the ACT and throughout Australia.

The School continued to deepen our intentional focus on a classical Christian educational approach and held our first information evening for parents in November. We anticipate holding an information evening each year and providing other resources as we explore and deepen the implementation of this approach to sound and genuine Christian education. It is very encouraging to be part of a worldwide renewal of classical Christian education which has been growing rapidly since the early 1980's as Christians recover what was the norm for Christian schooling in most preceding centuries but was driven out by the rise of progressivist education in the 20th century. There are several classical Christian school initiatives now operating in Australia, and there is growing interest across the country. Regular conferences are now happening across Australia. Staff training in 2025 focussed on helping staff develop their understanding and how to integrate this approach with the national curriculum requirements. Our Foundations of Christian Educations speakers often present a topic that relates to classical Christian education.

The staff of the school has grown in response to increased student numbers and there has been some refinement of roles as the new leadership adjusted structures to meet changed needs.

Covenant Christian School continues to be affiliated to Christian Education National (CEN) which provides support and fellowship with like-minded schools, particularly in the ACT and NSW. Emmaus Christian School is the only other CEN-affiliated school in the ACT. We also maintain regular contacts with other Christian schools in the ACT through Principal and Business Manager forums. The Principal and the Chair of Council attended a CEN Governance Conference that focussed on strategic planning held in Melbourne in November.

Covenant Christian School is also represented in the ACT education sector through our membership of the Association of Independent Schools in the ACT (AISACT). This organisation provides many supporting services to

the school including professional learning opportunities, legal advice, Employee Assistance Program, and advocacy with the ACT government agencies on behalf of independent schools.

COUNCIL

The Chairman’s report covers the work of Council and its Committees in 2025.

Council provides a valuable oversight and governance for the school and has sought to give wise and God-honouring direction in all its deliberations. Please continue to uphold these faithful servants of the Lord in your prayers.

Continuous Registration

The ACT Education Act now stipulates that independent schools such as Covenant are now under a “continuous registration” regime which means that we no longer have a 5-year cycle of audits but we do have to provide a statement of compliance each year and be subject to periodic audits. There was no specific audit for Covenant Christian School in 2025.

Recurrent Income (\$)

MySchool Data – 2025 (provisional)

Aust Govt	3,603,431
State Govt	925,770
Fees etc.	2,216,613
Other private	118,121
Gross	6,863,935
Deductions:	114,815
TOTAL	6,749,120

STAFF

Covenant Christian School's greatest asset is its dedicated staff. They work daily with students, both in and out of the classroom. We are blessed with a talented and committed team of Christian teachers and support staff who create a safe, nurturing, and God-honouring learning environment.

In 2025 Covenant Christian School employed 33 (25.1 FTE) teaching staff and 29 non-teaching staff (14.6 FTE) across Years K-10. Teacher staff absences represented 7.03% of total days worked.

All teaching staff members were deemed qualified for their positions, and are registered with the ACT Teachers Quality Institute (TQI) where applicable. The breakdown of highest qualifications held by all (non-casual) teaching staff is as follows: 5 Masters degrees, 10 Grad.Dip., and 18 Bachelor degrees. All registered teaching staff achieved at least the minimum approved professional learning as required by TQI during the year and were thus able to renew their practising certificates for the following year.

All our staff and regular volunteers hold valid and current WWVP (Working with Vulnerable People) registration.

The ratio of male to female teaching staff (K-10) was 6.1/19.0 (FTE basis) or 7:26 by headcount. There is one member of staff who identifies as part-indigenous.

In 2025 we saw some new positions commence or more fully develop:

- Mrs Keturah Jones joined the team as the first Years 7-10 Student Wellbeing Coordinator which will support the Head of Secondary and the Years 7-10 Homeroom teachers to provide wellbeing and pastoral care for our students.
- Mr Jeremy D’Abrera commenced as a full-time multi-faceted role as Executive Assistant to the Principal combined with providing IT support on-site and marketing expertise.
- Mr Jesh Moonsamy joined in a number of roles: Laboratory Support, Teacher Aide and also assisting the Finance team.
- Our first double-streamed Kindergarten cohort with Mrs Tamara Doran and Miss Lily Horton-Hume as the teaching team for this key grade.
- Miss Hannah Pierce taught some classes in Primary (KG-Yr 4 Digital Technology mainly) under a Permit to Teach.
- Miss Lily Horton-Hume and Mrs Ebony Winnett transitioned from being Teacher Trainees and started their first full-time year as new graduate teachers.

- A number of people joined us as Teacher Aides, Learning Support Assistants in the ELC, bus drivers, cleaners – all vitally important roles which have been expanding as we have realised the need is significant and growing.

In 2026 the following staffing changes are being made:

- Learning Support will be lead by Mrs Jane Crawford following the resignation of Mrs Kari Hunt.
- The Year 1 cohort will be split into two classes, one taught by Mrs Veronica Manns and the other by Mrs Hannah Wright (nee Pierce).
- Mrs Christl Watt becomes the full-time teacher for Year 3.
- Mrs Sharyn Laughlin moves to Year 5 as their full-time teacher.
- Mr Mich Jones joined the Secondary team part-time as a History and humanities teacher.
- Mr Grant Frost has been appointed as Year 6 teacher but personal circumstances have prevented him commencing at the beginning of Term 1. Sadly, he subsequently resigned as his personal situation did not resolve as hoped. At the time of writing we are actively seeking to recruit a permanent teacher to take this class.
- Mr Joshua Colbourn joins the staff as Sports Coordinator for K-10 and he will also be teaching some Primary Physical Education classes.
- A number of Teacher Aides/LSAs joined us –Miss Philippa Smith, Miss Gabi Lingenfelder, Mrs Jay Moore, and Mrs Danielle Hughes.

Professional Development Weeks

28 – 31 January 2025

- Devotions each day were held on site led by a range of local pastors.
- Teachers were given significant time to work on the implementation of Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum, particularly focusing on Achievement Standards and reporting against them.
- A Staff/Council/Pastor’s breakfast was held which gave great opportunities to engage with and encourage the leaders of our supporting congregations.
- A Socratic Seminar on ‘Norms & Nobility’ was held.
- In-house orientation for new staff was carried out by the Principal and Business Manager and the respective Directors of Studies the previous week.

21 - 25 July 2025

- The first two days were allocated for staff personal preparation time.
- A devotion with Rev Doug Watson was held on Wednesday followed by a talk by Council Chair, Dr Richard James.
- The bulk of our teaching staff and some support staff travelled to Toongabbie in Sydney to Campion College for a set of professional learning experiences focussed on classical Christian education and the Liberal Arts. The rest of the week was spent engaged with “PL@Campion”.
- The mid-year reports were finalised and distributed at the end of Term 2.

Each school day (Monday-Thursday) begins with staff devotions, led by rotating team members. This time of reflection and encouragement from Scripture includes prayer for staff, school students and their families, specific year groups, a supporting local church, and other requests for praise, thanksgiving, and intercession. The School Council is also regularly lifted up in prayer. Each Friday staff gather for a time of singing praise to God with Bible reading and prayer.

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Covenant Christian School operates an Early Learning Centre which is comprised of a Preschool which operates between 8:45am and 3:15pm and Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) The Preschool provides two sessions each week: Session A for the first part of the week, and Session B for the second half of the week with Wednesday alternating between Session A and Session B over a two-week cycle. We partner with an external provider for Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) and that is currently being delivered by YWCA. This relationship has been very beneficial to the School and we are seeing the OSHC service growing in numbers.

The Preschool has been operating since 2016 and has grown over the years. Under the leadership of Director, Mrs Julie Prattis, the Preschool staff prepared for a significant review aimed at lifting the Preschool’s published quality ratings. The review was held in 2025 and saw significant improvement in almost all areas of the quality ratings, with

many areas now reported as 'Exceeding'. This was a commendable result and the fruit of a lot of hard work by ELC Director, Julie Prattis, Educational Leader, Rachele Potter and their team.

In 2025 the Preschool year started with 23 enrolled across Sessions A & B.

During 2025, a Thursday morning playgroup was introduced. The purpose of this new strategic initiative was to support families, promote educational continuity, maintain enrolments and build educational outcomes for children. This initiative has proved highly successful and playgroup has expanded to two groups in 2026.

Now in 2026, for the first time in the history of the school, the Preschool is operating at 100% capacity (a total of 38 enrolled students) with an attendance of 22 students each day in both session A and B.). This promises to be a significant contributor to future school growth as this cohort enters Kindergarten in 2027.

STUDENTS

The school had 320 students (K-10) enrolled at the August census date, 4 of whom were international students.

The Year 10 students who left the School in 2025 enrolled in Brindabella Christian College (2), Canberra College (6), Erindale College (5), Hawker College (1), Lake Tuggeranong College (1), MacKillop College (7), Marist College (3), Narrabundah College (2), Trinity Christian School (9), and work (1).

Student Attendance

The average student attendance rate was 91.1% (Years 1-10) across the whole year. The rate in Infants/Primary was 92.3% and in Secondary 89.8%. The breakdown per year level is below:

Full Day Attendance Rate by grade

Year 1	91.6%	Year 6	92.6%
Year 2	91.4%	Year 7	91.7%
Year 3	93.8%	Year 8	90.0%
Year 4	91.6%	Year 9	85.9%
Year 5	92.9%	Year 10	90.4%

Students are expected to attend Covenant every day school is in session. If your child will be absent, please call or email the school before 8:50 AM. Teachers take attendance electronically each morning, submitting it by 9:05 AM. If a student is marked absent without explanation, the school office will contact their parents, usually within 45 minutes of attendance being taken.

Students with Special Needs/ESL

Students with special needs have been well catered for by a team of very competent teacher aides who have assisted the teaching staff address the range of needs typical of an inclusive classroom situation. Mrs Kari Hunt is in charge of this area along with Mrs Jane Crawford, who serves as Learning Support Teacher. They coordinate the teacher aides (assisted by Mrs Tahnee Powell) and ensure resources have been allocated to meet needs as these have been identified.

The National Collection of Consistent Data (NCCD) is also under Mrs Hunt's jurisdiction. The team worked closely with classroom teachers to ensure Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) were updated and evidence of adjustments captured. A focussed study support group operates for those students in Years 7/8 needing special help to organise their workload and ensure assignments are completed by the due date. Adjustments are made to learning tasks and assessments for those students identified as needing additional support. Tracking of all students has been maintained and students with special needs identified and helped. The NCCD is subject to occasional audit by government agencies, and requires accurate records of evidence of adjustments made for a student to be retained over a ten week period prior to the census reporting in August each year.

Student Activities

We were very pleased to have a specialist guest speaker, Susan McLean of Cybersafety Solutions, who gave a comprehensive presentation to our students in Years 5-10 on Tuesday 18th February. In 2026 we will be holding sessions for our Years 5-10 cohorts, as well as an online parent session and a presentation to teaching staff using ySafe, one of Australia's leading cybersafety education providers.

Students from Year 9 and 10 at Covenant were awarded leadership badges in recognition of their contributions to the school community. These student leaders play an important role in the school, including leading their respective House teams and serving as role models. The Student Representative Council (SRC) provides a platform for students to share their ideas and contribute to school life. All student leaders are supported and mentored by Mrs. Lyons.

Primary student leadership positions are also functioning well – these students have been active in supporting teachers in such areas as award presentations and fundraising. Mrs Crawford as Head of Primary provides mentorship and guidance to these young leaders who provide a number of supports to staff and encourage their fellow students to do the right thing.

The 3-day Years 7-8 cohort camp in 2025 was held at again CRU Galston Gorge which was able to provide a comprehensive and soundly Christian programme for our students. This was held in May. The separate Years 9-10 camp was held 28-30 April at Shoalhaven.

The Year 10 cohort had their partially subsidised Sydney excursion at the end of Term 3. The excursion was a 4 day trip and was provided by the Urban Challenge organisation. This was a very successful event. We are working towards this being the only overnight experience for Year 10 starting in 2026.

Our CARE Ministries raised \$1,034.61 (net) in 2025. The fundraising effort was spearheaded by senior students under the guidance of Mrs Lyons. This was raised for our 'Compassion children' (Melaku and Alisson) and also for a diaconal relief organisation (Middle East Reformed Fellowship).

Students in both primary and secondary school participated in a variety of service projects, both within the school and in the broader community. Primary students, for example, helped with groundskeeping by clearing autumn leaves and worked on school vegetable gardens. Secondary students dedicated their service week to on-campus projects and also raised funds for the school's Compassion sponsor children throughout the year. These activities reflect the school's commitment to a holistic education that nurtures both academic and spiritual growth. They offer students valuable opportunities to address real needs, experience the joy of serving others, and express their faith through action.

Students were involved in a number of performing arts activities during the year such as a Talented and Gifted (TAG) Quest and we were able to resume the Evening of the Arts – many of these were held in the COLA and were well-received by the school community.

Students were also engaged in activities that involved developing and wearing a costume –the Living Literature Day in August gave students the opportunity to dress in a favourite character from a work of fiction. For the first time we were involved in an inter-school debating competition set up between the ACT Christian schools. It was held at Emmaus Christian School and was a challenging event and a lot of fun for our students. A Soccer Gala Day was held in August and a Futsal Gala Day in October. These activities formed a break from the normal routines of study and allowed a diversity of students to shine.

The Years 9-10 elective structure in 2025 consisted of 3 lines of courses each semester which gave students a wide variety of subjects to select from. The number of courses being offered is increasing to cater for the bigger cohorts in Years 9-10 coming through. This was reviewed and in 2026 each line will have 6 periods a fortnight instead of 5 and the number of lines will reduce to 2 . This was to accommodate introducing a focus on English composition and speechmaking (rhetoric) in Years 9-10 starting in 2026.

Extension activities are offered across the school. These include but are not limited to the Ethics Olympiad (Junior and Middle School), Mathematics Olympiad and Interschool Spelling Bee.

Other important school activities were:

- Various sports carnivals as part of our inter-House competition – athletics, swimming, and cross-country were held in 2025.
- Year 6 Dinner was held in the school Library on the evening of Thursday, 10th December.
- Year 10 Graduation Dinner was held at the Woden Southern Cross Club premises on the evening of Friday 5th December.
- The annual awards and prize-giving gathering (Thanksgiving) was held during the day on Friday 12th December as a whole school assembly. Rev Doug Watson of the Reformed Church of Canberra gave a well-received message during the Thanksgiving assembly. The ADF awards (Long Tan Leadership Award and the Future Innovators Award) were presented on behalf of the Australian Defence Force by Air Commodore David Houghton.

The 2025 "Collage" yearbook beautifully captured the diverse activities and events of the school year. Mrs Sarah

Collins, under the guidance of Mrs. Elizabeth Coleman, expertly compiled and edited this comprehensive record of school life. The yearbook's high-quality production continues to impress.

Benchmarking

NAPLAN testing was carried out in 2025 using an online assessment platform.

Covenant Christian School has been officially recognized by ACARA as a "School Making a Difference" for 2025. While many awards look at top scores, this recognition is special because it focuses on student growth. It highlights schools where students are making "above-average" progress in Reading, Writing, and Numeracy compared to their peers across Australia.

The following tables show the proportion of the cohort who sat the NAPLAN assessment who achieved results at or above the expected level of achievement for their Year group (this changed to 'Strong' and Exceeding' in 2024). Please note that small cohort sizes can cause large swings at times when results are averaged over the cohort.

Percentage of students at or above expected level

NB: 2024 and 2025 figures are a total of 'Strong' and 'Exceeding' categories in a new style of reporting.

Grammar & Punctuation

	2023	2024*	2025*
Yr 3	89%	67%	63%
Yr 5	100%	85%	85%
Yr 7	96%	79%	69%
Yr 9	100.	70%	81%

Numeracy

	2023	2024*	2025*
Yr 3	100%	92%	84%
Yr 5	100%	92%	85%
Yr 7	96%	87%	69%
Yr 9	100%	83%	88%

Reading

	2023	2024*	2025*
Yr 3	95%	85%	84%
Yr 5	100%	86%	90%
Yr 7	100%	82%	73%
Yr 9	100%	84%	88%

Spelling

	2023	2024*	2025*
Yr 3	100%	70%	68%
Yr 5	100%	86%	85%
Yr 7	96%	87%	88%
Yr 9	100%	81%	94%

Writing

	2023	2024*	2025*
Yr 3	100%	93%	95%
Yr 5	100%	81%	90%
Yr 7	92%	82%	62%
Yr 9	100%	65%	61%

Common entry points into Covenant are Kindergarten and Year 7.

While the school continues to provide a sound academic programme, our focus is on cultivating our students holistically with a particular emphasis on Christian character. The school'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 worldview in all disciplines of life," is what matters. The School's Mission and Vision Statements developed in 2018 illustrate this:

VISION:

In dependence on God's grace, Covenant Christian School will nurture and equip students with a heart to glorify God by serving Him and living according to His Word.

MISSION:

Covenant Christian School is a safe, caring and loving community. In partnership with parents we cultivate Christian character in our students and equip them to joyfully serve God and contribute positively to society.

This is achieved through a Christ-centred approach where the gospel is central. God's Word is applied to all areas of learning and experience. Students and staff are challenged, encouraged and supported to love learning and pursue excellence to the glory of God.

We are thankful for the opportunity to provide an education founded on God's Word as the foundation of all knowledge.

Our **Profile of a Graduate** is a more detailed exposition of turning our Mission and Vision into reality and is being used to guide our curriculum development to be intentional about how we develop and maintain a transformative education that honours Christ. Our growing focus on implementing classical Christian pedagogy derives from this.

PARENTS

We held the annual Spring Fair in October 2025 under the new approach which has the COLA as a central part of this new look for the event. The Fair was coordinated by a committee of parents under the leadership of Mrs Annie North. We were very encouraged by the significant number of people from the community who attended the Fair. Once again this activity proved to be a very popular event which provides our families with the opportunity to serve the community and also showcases the school for those interested in what we do.

A Primary School Parent Information Evening was held in February 2025 which is a new initiative designed to facilitate parent involvement in their children's education.

A Secondary Subject Selection Evening was held in August to assist students in making elective choices for the 2026 academic year.

Parent/teacher interviews were held in late Term 1 and early in Term 3. Due to increased numbers, the secondary interviews were split between Years 7-8 and Years 9-10. Comprehensive Semester reports were distributed to parents at the end of Semester 1 and Semester 2 in 2024. The reports are 'plain English' report cards with A – E grades.

Regular communication with parents is via the Communicator newsletter (once a fortnight). It is distributed on Thursday afternoon by email using Adobe InDesign cloud-based software. The FACTS Student Management System is used to facilitate sending messages to parents by both email and SMS as appropriate. Teachers are increasing their use of Google Classroom and this has a useful guardian email digest feature which many parents have found valuable. Other online systems are used in preschool (StoryPark) and junior primary grades (ClassDojo) to facilitate parental involvement in their children's education in these early years.

GENERAL

Chaplaincy

The School Chaplain position has been ably filled by Mrs Nancy Groves, was appointed mid-2024. In 2025 we supplemented the Chaplain position with a part-time Student Wellbeing Officer, Mr Isaac Walters.. Funding for the Chaplaincy position is through a special grant which is provided by the Federal Government. The school is directly funding the Student Wellbeing Officer role as we believe it is an important contribution to maintaining student wellbeing and pastoral care.

Mrs Groves and Mr Walters have been able to provide pastoral advice and counselling to students as required. Overall, the school community has reflected positively on the Chaplaincy and Student Wellbeing services in surveys and general comments.

Surveys

Annual surveys are carried out with the main stakeholder groups in the school community to get feedback on the performance of the school during the year. Students from Years 3-10 are included in the group of stakeholders surveyed. The Council Chairman's report gives a detailed breakdown of key findings from these surveys.

Overall, there continues to be a generally positive perception of the school and its programme. The results suggest that the school is meeting the expectations of the major stakeholders in providing a Christ-centred, quality education in a safe and caring environment.

ICT developments

All student computing continues to be based on the Chromebox/Chromebook devices utilising the Google Workspace for Education platform, a cloud-based set of basic software tools such as Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides and Google Classroom. We subscribe to the Education Plus version which gave us significantly improved functionality and storage.

The main computer room and the school library provide two places where there are sufficient devices for a class to use. In addition, these are supplemented by four mobile trolleys with Chromebooks which are taken into a classroom as needed. A fifth trolley is being ordered for 2025. Internet is provided through a fibre-connection to the NBN which has given the school more stable and reliable access. We have found the NBN Enterprise Ethernet service has greatly increased the capacity and stability of our internet connection.

Ipads are used in the ELC, the junior primary classes, and also in Music to supplement the learning activities in the classroom.

At our school, we are committed to creating an intentional learning environment that prioritizes deep connection and students directly engaging with what we are studying. To support this, we have chosen to remain a non-BYOD campus. Our educational philosophy is guided by research suggesting that balanced screen time is vital for healthy development; therefore, we reserve technology for purposeful, teacher-led moments. By keeping personal devices like smartphones safely tucked away during the day, we ensure our students remain fully present with one another, fostering the social and academic skills that flourish best in a focused, low-distraction setting.

Legislative concerns

Recent revisions to the ACT's anti-discrimination legislation pose a potential challenge to the school's ability to employ staff who align with its Christian ethos. While no direct impact has been observed as yet, the school recognizes the possibility of future challenges arising from these legislative changes.

We continue to monitor legislative changes which may affect us through our membership of the advocacy body, the Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS). Where needed, one or more representatives from Covenant Christian School have joined Mrs Vanessa Cheng, the AACS lobbyist, at various events at Parliament.

CONCLUSION

In 2025, our school continued its six-year trend of increasing enrolments.

In 2024, the ACT Government awarded the school a grant of \$1 million towards the construction of four secondary classrooms and additional staff amenities which is now completed. In 2025, the school was awarded a grant of \$748,000 by the ACT Block Grant Authority to build a student amenities facility in the now developing Secondary precinct. These amenities will start construction mid-2026, Lord willing.

We thank the Lord for His continued mercies to the school and we look forward to His continued guidance and blessing for the 2026 school year.

Yours in Christ

Martin Keast
Principal