

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE
AND THE OPENING OF THE EMMANUEL CENTRE

As I write for the Newsletter this week our College community is on something of a high. Last week concluded with the opening of the Emmanuel Centre, an amazing occasion attended by 1400 students, staff, parents and guests and more than 200 supporters of the Capital Appeal who enabled the College to complete the Centre to the standard achieved.

Bishop Paul Bird blessed the Centre and spoke about the ways in which it would enable Emmanuel students to develop their individual talents and to excel. Inspiring Alumni Felicity Melican spoke about her educational journey, including her years at St. Ann's, and the importance of ongoing learning in our lives before declaring the Centre officially open.

The opening is without doubt one of the proudest moments in my four years at Emmanuel, not because we opened a building, but because of the quality of the performances we witnessed during the ceremony. The music and performance from our students and our alumni was inspirational and indicative of the enormous potential of the Emmanuel Centre to be a place in which we recognise and celebrate student's success and by doing so encourage the next generation of young people to aspire to succeed and achieve. As Principal of Emmanuel College I am driven to provide Emmanuel students with the same calibre of learning as their city peers. To do this we know we need to grow student's learning confidence and confidence comes from witnessing the value placed on succeeding in every aspect of school life. With the Emmanuel Centre we now have much more than a building, we have a place befitting our desire to promote and celebrate success in all its many forms.

I would like to share with you my words from the opening of the Emmanuel Centre. They will make this report longer than usual but are important for everyone to hear.

"From little things, big things grow!"

Most of you will be familiar with these words. Written by Paul Kelly in 1991, the words are most often used today to describe significant achievements that had humble beginnings. This phrase could well describe the achievements of the Sisters of Mercy and the Christian Brothers who brought Catholic education to Warrnambool in 1872 and 1902 respectively. Sometimes I wonder if Mother Philomene or Brother Egan could possibly have imagined how their first steps into the unknown to establish schools for young boys and girls of this district would lead to us being here today? Could they have imagined that the seed they planted would grow and give us the Emmanuel College we know today? I think not. But I do think their faith and their belief in what they were doing enabled them to lay the foundations upon which we now stand and continue today. From their actions we take inspiration to have confidence in the future and the courage to take risks. For without confidence to move forward and courage to act, nothing is achieved. Whether they understood what would grow from their work or not, we can take from them, all these years later, the message that truly wonderful things can grow from humble beginnings.

Today, we celebrate two wonderful achievements, the 25th anniversary of the formation of Emmanuel College from its predecessor schools St. Ann's and CBC, and the completion of this wonderful facility. The Emmanuel Centre is an investment in the future of this College, and indeed, our Region. Costing \$9.5 million dollars, the Centre is the largest building project under taken by the College. Like so many things, the Emmanuel Centre started with a small idea. By adding committed people, and many of them, plus careful planning and development, the end result is a multi-purpose learning and recreational facility able to accommodate our whole school today with space for enrolments up to 1500 in the future.

Sitting as it does, juxtaposed against the truly beautiful convent building dating to the 1870s, this pair of buildings now make a statement to all who observe them. The convent, originally the home of Captain Ardlie until purchased by Mother Philomene on her arrival in 1872 and developed over many years by successive generations of courageous women, makes a statement, tells a story about who we are and from where we have come. The Emmanuel Centre makes an equally strong statement about who we are and where we are going. In other words, we may celebrate 25 years of Emmanuel College this year, but our history and our traditions span 144 years, and today, our eyes are fixed firmly on the future. Our greatest strength comes from knowing who we are, from honouring our traditions and from moving with confidence into the future. "From little things, big things grow!"

The Emmanuel Centre would not have been possible without the work, the effort, the commitment and passion of many people whom I thank. In particular the Capital Appeal Committee Chaired by Mr Brian Callaghan is to be commended. Through them and their communication with the community \$1.8 million was contributed towards the development of the Centre. Emmanuel has rarely requested the community dig so deep. I thank the community for taking this cause to heart and for supporting it and therefore supporting the young people who will benefit from it. I wish to thank the members of the College Board of Management, in particular its Building and Finance Committees, whose courage and conviction has not faltered since making the decision in November 2012 to proceed with planning for the Emmanuel Centre. From that decision, to this opening... "From little things, big things grow!"

This Centre is the new heart of our school. It belongs to all of us. It is a place in which we will learn and play. It is a place where we will recognise and celebrate success. It is a place in which to be inspired to become more than you are today by witnessing the achievements of other students, both present and past, like Inspiring Alumni, Felicity Melican who will soon speak. Emmanuel College wants each one of you to have the best education we can provide and many hundreds of people have contributed financially to this project to help make that possible. Your school, and now the Emmanuel Centre too, is a place where you can Belong, Believe and Achieve. And, if you doubt your ability to succeed, always remember, "From little things, big things grow!"

Peter Morgan | Principal