

## PRINCIPALS MESSAGE

### Not all roads lead from A to B

I am often asked how I got into teaching and whilst the answer is relatively long, it has at its basis my journey through school and the years afterwards, the impact of my teachers and the advice I received along the way.

At school I would probably have described myself as someone with a lot of energy, who couldn't sit still for long, rarely slept, a bit mischievous and a passion for reading – today I would probably be diagnosed as ADHD, but back then it was 'go and play outside', which I duly did from dawn till dusk only coming home when the street lights came on.

As I got older my energies were pushed into sport, any and everything, although never mastering one of them due to my attention span, but always turning up and turning out – even on our darkest rugby loss of 68-0 in a hailstorm. Looking back, it was the belief that my teachers had in us and the time they gave freely afterschool and on weekends that later inspired me. Mr Morgan our science teacher, rugby coach needed a medal as we never won a game in 5 years, but boy did, we have fun along the way!

As I moved into the equivalent of Year 9 and undertook careers advice and pathways conversations with my teachers, my options seemed rather limited when the only thing they could think of was – did I like sea, land or air as they could only recommend the armed forces for me. Nothing else seemed to fit the profiling system they used so that was my lot in life, whereas today the fantastic advice and opportunities available to students these years are light years ahead of what was on offer back then.

With the start of Year 11 and subject selection I didn't listen to my teacher's advice – probably the one thing I should have done all things considered. I chose Physics, Specialist Maths, English, PE and History simply on the basis of I thought I could give it a crack and how hard could it be? Well, it turns out quite hard really!

I ended up leaving school with the equivalent of no formal qualifications having failed to demonstrate the required outcomes in 4 out of the 5 subjects. So, what next? Well, it initially didn't matter as I found another uniformed branch to have a go at, and I applied to become a police officer. Unfortunately, they deemed that I did not have enough life experience, so I ended up travelling for 12 months overseas in Australia, living independently and learning about myself.

I subsequently returned home, reapplied and got into the Force – lasted 12 months and then quit as it was and still is, probably one of the hardest jobs out there and what I saw and experienced was not the life I wanted. So, what next? As part of my time travelling overseas, I had spent time working with a NSW police force community officer and had been invited to attend a camp in the Blue Mountains working with disadvantaged kids. It was reflecting on these experiences and the satisfaction I got from building positive relationships and working with young people, combined with what my teachers gave me growing up that was the light bulb moment in my life.

I got a full time job as a lifeguard at a local pool, went back to night school to retake the subjects I needed to gain entry to University and finally started back into education 3 ½ years after I finished Year 12. I subsequently graduated with Honors as teacher of Physical Education having had an amazing four years playing more sport than I thought was possible!

Now 30 years on, the last 12 as an Assistant Principal, and now this year as Principal of Advance College, the message I want to pass on to our students is this:

It's ok not to succeed as long as you try. It's ok not to know where you're going and how you are going to get there (but listen to your teachers and parents, as generally they offer sound advice!) Don't be afraid to follow the road less travelled if you can learn from it, and it builds the person you want to become, and most importantly there is no time frame on that journey. Not all roads lead from A to B.

Don't be afraid to lean in – education is a door that is always open.

James Doble  
Principal Advance College



## DISABILITY AWARENESS SEMINAR

On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> of February we were fortunate to have Cade, Daniel, John and Terri-anne from Doable Disability Services, visit our VM 3,4 Classroom.

The seminar was a great opportunity to build our awareness of the many obstacles faced by people with a disability. It increased our understanding of how we can be part of the solution to decrease barriers to participating in the community.

Cade shared that he has an acquired brain injury, the result of having a stroke at 23 years of age. He spoke of his lived experience of the transition of being completely “normal” and living independently, to being a person with a profound disability and needing to depend on many people. He shared his wisdom, of how he stays positive and keep moving forward. He helped us understand, that is very frustrating for him is when people “pretend” to understand him, instead of asking to repeat himself. He said what is most painful is being treated like you are invisible, where people will address your support worker before even looking at you.

Daniel shared that he works as a Lived Experience Project Officer and is passionate about helping community members to see the person first and be willing to be brave enough to have the conversations with people with a disability and to ask the questions that can build understanding. Daniel was born with Spina Bifida, and attributes his resilience to the attitudes instilled by his parents and being his biggest advocates.

Daniel and Cade’s conversation will help our VM 3,4 students with their upcoming PDS project focused on inclusion strategies and ensures our learning is authentic and relevant.

Thanks Cade, Daniel and the team from Doable.



## LEARNING IN ACTION

Today we went to Dromana Community House to help out at the Community Pod Café. We used fresh food that had been rescued from local supermarkets and donated by SecondBite to prepare and serve a three-course meal, plus tea and coffee, for people in the community who needed a meal that day. We helped with everything from preparing ingredients and following food hygiene rules to serving meals and talking with guests, making sure everyone felt welcome. It gave us real experience in hospitality, like teamwork, food safety, organisation, and customer service. Tracey showed us what to do and explained how the community house runs, which helped us build confidence and learn new skills while also giving back to the community - VPC Hastings.



## PATHWAYS

We're excited to announce that VET classes are now up and running for our VCE VM and some VPC students.

Students have transitioned smoothly into their new programs and are settling in well to their classes. It has been fantastic to see such positive attitudes, enthusiasm, and commitment as students begin developing valuable industry-specific skills.

The Tools of the Trade program has had a strong start this term, with two students actively involved and enjoying the hands-on learning experiences. They have explored several trade tasters so far, with traffic management proving to be a standout favourite. It's been great to see their engagement and enthusiasm - well done to both students for making the most of this opportunity!

We look forward to supporting our students as they continue working towards their vocational goals throughout the year.

## WELLBEING

Wellbeing sessions have started strongly this term, with students engaging in a range of reflective and practical activities. Students have been finalising their Focus Plans, setting goals and identifying strategies to support their learning and wellbeing at school. Students have also enjoyed learning about ACE, our school wellbeing dog, including how he learns and supports students throughout the school day. These sessions have helped students understand the positive role animals can play in supporting wellbeing.

Another focus has been exploring comfort zones, where students discussed what feels comfortable, what can feel challenging, and the benefits of giving new experiences a go. We have also begun conversations around healthy habits, particularly the importance of morning routines and how they can set students up for a positive day.

It has been a positive and engaging start to wellbeing sessions this term, and we look forward to building on these foundations.



# ACE

## GET TO KNOW TASH



### What is your main role at the school?

I am the school Occupational Therapist. My role at Advance is to support students and provide strategies to enhance classroom engagement, emotional regulation, sensory processing, social skills and participating in activities of daily living. I work both within the classroom and one on one with students to complete various assessments.

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

I love getting to know the students and finding out what activities are most meaningful to them.

### What is your favourite pizza topping?

I love a plain old woodfire margherita pizza! Can't beat it.

### What is one hobby or activity you love outside of school?

I love going camping with my family. We get away as much as we can and I love nothing more than sitting around a campfire in the bush. In the winter I also love skiing up at Mt Hotham.

### Share one fun fact about yourself that people might not know.

I have skied in 5 different countries 😊



The 3,4s LOVING their new break out table!

## COMING UP

### Dromana Community House - Work Related Skills

23<sup>rd</sup> Feb - VPC Henry  
26<sup>th</sup> Feb - VPC Hastings  
2<sup>nd</sup> March - VPC Wilson  
3<sup>rd</sup> March - VPC Henry  
10<sup>th</sup> March - VPC Hastings  
17<sup>th</sup> March - VPC Wilson

### Chadstone Shopping Centre - Numeracy

19th March - All VPC

### Term 1 ends -

2nd April - Whole school

### Term 2 begins -

20<sup>th</sup> April - Whole school