



Our students represent the VSL at the Greek National Day Parade at Lakeside Stadium, Albert Park



Dear Parents, Carers and Staff,

It's been an exciting term here at the VSL, with students and staff settling into the regular routine of study and working towards their end goals. Our VCE students have completed Units 1 & 3 of their language studies, and our F-10 students are showing considerable resilience as we move into the colder winter months. Our Distance Education staff have embraced continuous reporting this time in order to provide more timely feedback to students and parents/carers and all staff have been working diligently on preparing end of semester reports. I encourage you to take the time to read your children's reports with them, and raise any concerns you may have with their teacher.

Next term we will begin our gradual roll over of all Centres into Compass. Many of you will be familiar with the program through your home school – it will provide the VSL community with a much easier form of communication and we are excited by the ways in which it can be used. In the first instance, parents and carers may not notice a difference as we will be using it primarily for attendance. It's a massive undertaking, as we have over 17,000 students studying at the VSL! We will keep you advised when the Centre your child attends will roll over to Compass. We expect parent access to be available after the initial phase has been completed for all centres. Should you have any enquiries, please direct them to your Area Manager. Thank you for your support during this process.

We have been very excited by the news this month that 22 VSL students are to receive Premier's Awards this year, following their outstanding results in 2022 in the following languages: Bosnian, Chin Hakha (x2), German (x2) Greek, Hindi (x2), Hungarian, Indonesian Second Language (x2), Italian (x2), Japanese Second Language (x2), Macedonian, Persian (x2), Sinhala, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese Second Language. We are extremely proud of our students, and our wonderful teachers, for this result. The VSL remains a leader in the field of language provision. We hope to bring you more news of these students and what they are doing now in subsequent issues of our Family & Staff Bulletin. The Premier's Awards ceremony will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on 27th July.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Regards

Judi Benney
Acting Principal

Area Activities

Telugu New Year Celebrations at the Werribee Centre

On Saturday 18 March, Telugu classes at the Victorian School of Languages Werribee Centre celebrated Telugu New Year. As part of the celebrations, students wore their traditional costumes, learnt about the significance of the cultural festival and played traditional indoor board games. It was a delightful celebration enjoyed by all!



Vaijyanthi Yarravajhala
Telugu Instructor

Greek National Parade 2023

On Sunday 19 March 2023 at Lakeside Stadium (Albert Park) our VSL Students studying Greek at various campuses (Glen Waverley, Carwatha, Doncaster, South Oakleigh, Keilor Downs) and at Distance Education came together to honour and celebrate the 202 years of Greek independence.

Our students, parents and teachers had the opportunity to experience a cultural event “parelasi” that is also celebrated all around Greece. They were able to connect with the wider Greek Community and have

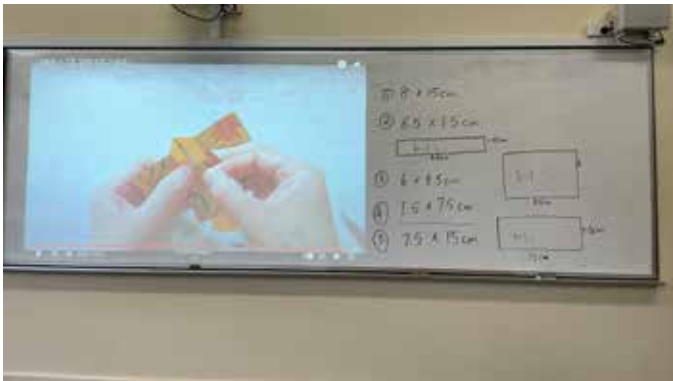
a deeper understanding of the history related to Greek Independence Day.

Irene Kodoudakis
Greek & Spanish teacher



Chinese Culture at the University High School Centre

Chinese culture is important, as it plays a major role in defining every aspect of Chinese life.



Learning about Chinese culture enriches students' learning stimulating much interest and enthusiasm. As one of the most important parts of Chinese culture, Chinese traditional clothing has been introduced to our year 5-6 Chinese students.

Chinese clothing includes the traditional hanfu and garments of ethnic minorities, as well as modern variations of indigenous Chinese dresses. Traditional clothing showcases the traditional fashion of Chinese cultural traditions.

The unit commenced with a brief introductory video about the history of Chinese clothing. The key features of Chinese clothing were demonstrated, such as the colours, patterns and styles. Students also had a chance to review their knowledge about colours and numbers in Chinese.

After the introduction, students started to make the costume bookmarks by following my instructions in Chinese. Students were also required to measure and cut the paper into different rectangle and square shapes using their geometry and maths skills.

Students were highly engaged and worked collaboratively in small groups learning from each other. Collaborative learning encourages the development of interpersonal skills, boosts confidence and motivates students to participate more actively in the learning process.

Mr Charles Xia
Chinese Teacher 5-6, University High School Centre

Gary Maas MP at the Hampton Park Centre

On April 29 we had a visit from the State politician, Gary Maas MP at the Hampton Park centre. His Facebook profile published the following:

"I recently visited the Victorian School of Languages at Hampton Park Secondary College school hosts over 500 students on Saturdays, teaching many languages including Punjabi, Arabic, Chinese, French, Khmer, Japanese, Malayalam and Sinhala.

Students are encouraged to wear national dress when they attend. It perfectly represents what our multicultural community is all about and the importance of connection and harmony that comes through education.

A big shout out to the hard working leadership, staff and students who contribute to successful outcomes each and every Saturday."



Winners of 2022 German Competitions at the University High School Centre

Once again, students of the German class at the VSL Uni High Centre participated in a range of competitions in 2022, winning a number of prizes by creating short films, podcasts, writing pieces, puppet plays, poems and art pieces.



Top to Bottom: Aoife and Quinn, Edward, Esther and Georgia

These competitions represent a wonderful opportunity for students to take the German skills they have learnt in the classroom out into the

world and experience the practical applications of being proficient in another language.

The enthusiasm and diligence which they bring to these tasks each year are a wonderful testament to their commitment and hard work.



Top to Bottom: Owen and Paul

Winners, Year level and Category are as follows:

Aoife (Grade 5) and Quinn (Year 8) - won 1st Prize in the Puppet Show Competition together

Aoife (Grade 5) was also a State Finalist in the Art & Poetry Competition

Quinn (Year 8) was also a State Finalist in the Writing Competition

Edward (Year 10) was a State Finalist in the Writing Competition

Esther (Year 9) was a State Finalist and 3rd Prize Winner in the Writing Competition

Georgia (Year 10) was a State Finalist in the Writing Competition and a 1st Prize Winner in the Podcast Competition

Sabine (Grade 3) was a State Finalist in the Art & Poetry Competition

Owen (Grade 4) and was a State Finalist and 1st Prize Winner in the Art & Poetry Competition

Paul (Year 8) and won 1st Prize in the Film Competition which was also mentioned in the newspaper of the town he described in his film

*Elisabeth Hill, German Teacher
University High School*

Sinhala and Tamil New Year in Area North

Sinhala and Tamil New Year is celebrated around mid-April of each year. The date is determined by the auspicious alignment of planets in the solar system. According to astrology, the New Year is considered to be the transition of the Sun from the House of Pisces to the House of Aries. This has originated as a festival connected with harvesting of rice and other crops, major fruiting season of mango, cashew, banana, jackfruit and other fruits and the age-old practice of sun worship. The New Year celebration denotes a time for a new beginning of every sphere of activity.



Celebrating with great favour, this cultural extravaganza marks the dawning of a New Year, symbolising unity and harmony among diverse communities. Families come together to engage in traditional customs and rituals, such as the auspicious lighting of the hearth, exchanging gifts, and partaking in delicious traditional sweets and to enjoy fun activities and traditional games at the same time.

The students at VSL Epping and Roxburgh Park centres were able to participate in celebrating Sri Lankan New Year at class level on 26 March 2023. On the day, students came into school in colourful cultural attire such as jackets and lungi, sarong and shirts, half saree, frocks and skirts. The class activities started by introducing New Year customs to students via short video clips, songs and enabling them to actively participate in those activities such as lighting oil lamps, exchanging gifts, respecting elders by offering betel leaves, etc.

Students brought special new year food such as milk rice, *lunu miris*, *konda kavum*, *mung kavum*, *kokis*, *aluwa*, milk toffee to share with others in the class. Class teachers organised games to suit their class level and it was clearly evident that it was the most popular activity among the students. They participated in games such as tug of war, placing the eye on an elephant, eating donuts, sack race, taking an Easter egg on a spoon, filling a bottle with water using hands, dressing up for the New Year prince and Princess pageant, etc.

Teachers organised gifts for individual students and also for the students who became first, second & third in various events. By taking part in New Year celebrations students learn the values of sharing things, working in harmony by supporting each other, admiring the success of others and enjoying in a collective manner. In secondary classes students also got the opportunity to organise the activities within the class level that enabled them to learn leadership and negotiation skills and gain experience in working as a team to achieve a common goal.

Kannada Class Mother's Day Celebration at the Glen Waverley Centre

On May 13, the VSL Kannada class organised a special Mother's Day celebration to acknowledge the contribution of all Mums and highlight the value of parents to the students. We had a great turnout of mothers, grandmothers and mother figures (aunts, older sisters, etc). Students presented their mothers with the greeting card they had made in class containing special messages written in Kannada. The celebration included cake cutting, songs and other activities by the students as well as snacks and coffee for all. Mothers and their children sat together and were given games to play. It was valuable time spent together! Thank you to everyone that helped make this a successful event.



Savitha Krishnappa

VSL School Policies

We update all the VSL school policies according to compliance guidelines and requirements of the VRQA and the Department of Education & Training. The policies have been contextualised for our school setting and are central to the effectiveness of our school. All our policies are available on our school website: www.vsl.vic.edu.au

It is important for us to communicate our policies to the VSL School Community so please take the time to read the policies at your convenience and do not hesitate to provide feedback.

The policies in this Term's Bulletin relate to the operational guidance that applies to Victorian Government schools in addition to some that have been recently updated.

POLICY	PURPOSE
Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety Plan	The VSL celebrates the culture, knowledge and experiences of First Nations Peoples. We are committed to creating and maintaining a school environment that empowers Koorie students to feel valued, respected and culturally strong.
Administration of Medication Policy	Processes the VSL will follow to safely manage the provision of medication to students while at school or school activities, including camps and excursions.
Complaints Policy	Provides an outline of the complaints process at the VSL so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school.
Critical Incident Procedure and Policy	Provides guidelines to action if the VSL may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event.
Curriculum Framework Policy <i>*updated</i>	Ensures that the school has in place a guaranteed and viable language curriculum program accessible to all students, from Foundation to Year 12 (VCE) in both its Centre classes and Distance Education classes.
Enrolment Policy	Provides an efficient process of enrolment that satisfies the needs of both students and the school.
First Aid Policy	Ensures the school community understands our school's approach to first aid for students.
Health Care Needs Policy	Ensures that the VSL provides appropriate support to students with health care needs.
Inclusion and Diversity Policy	The VSL's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity.
Parent Dispute Policy	Explains how the VSL will approach disputes that may arise between parents in relation to decisions about a student's education.
Personal Property Policy	Explains the VSL's policy in relation to personal property and to ensure that special or valuable items of personal property are not brought to school.
Photographing, Filming and Recording Students Policy	Explains how the VSL will collect, use, and disclose photographs, video and recordings of students.
Respect for School Staff Policy	Ensures that members of the VSL community understand the expectations for appropriate interactions with school staff.
School's Privacy Policy	Explains how Victorian government schools collect and manage personal and health information, consistent with Victorian privacy law and other associated legislation.
Statement of Values and School Philosophy	Outlines the values of our school community and explain the vision, mission and objectives of our school.
Sun Protection Policy <i>*updated</i>	To encourage behaviours at the VSL to minimise the risk of skin and eye damage and skin cancer.
Visitors Policy	Provides a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to the VSL.
Volunteers Policy	Processes that the VSL will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.
WWCC Register Procedure Policy	Ensures compliance with the requirements of the Minimum Standards for school registration, including the Child Safe Standards, the VSL maintains a register of all employees, volunteers and visitors (including contractors) Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) details.

Angela Natoli
Assistant Principal / Child Safety Coordinator

Distance Education

Seminars

Learning and teaching in a virtual school can feel isolating at times. While there is plenty of contact between teachers and students – through chat, videoconferencing, feedback and other modes – there are relatively few opportunities to engage with other students and teachers face-to-face. This is just one of the reasons our teachers offer seminars to our VCE learners.



Spanish Distance Education students at our face-to-face seminar

Seven face-to-face seminars have been held for a range of languages in May, among more than 20 so far this year, and there are many more to come across the remainder of 2023. In recent seminars, students have learnt skills to prepare for SACs and exams, practised conversation, conducted peer and self-assessment and worked in groups on tasks ranging from mind mapping to hands-on sentence construction to cultural dancing!

But what is it that our teachers and students value the most about these seminars? It's not just the day away from their normal programs at school, or the activities our teachers so carefully prepare. It's the connections they make with other students. Interacting with others and collaborating on learning activities is a key pillar in the learning experience we offer to our students, and

we know how highly valued it is. We encourage all students who are able to keep an eye out for their next seminar and choose to come along. Our teachers, and your fellow students, would love to see you there!

Mike Atkinson
Acting Manager - Distance Education

Professional Development

In Term 2, our Distance Education teachers have been working on an action research project with a view to collaborating with each other to share and bring about improvements in their instructional practices. The approach we are using is called the Problem of Practice (the practice being our teaching practice). Our groups or professional learning communities consist of 4 teachers from different faculties and together we have used a range of information including student survey responses, to identify areas needing improvement in our work. More specifically, these are related to Student Learning and Student Well Being. From this, the groups pose questions and discuss strategies that they will use in their lessons. The group focus areas for improvement are as follows:

- Accessing student prior knowledge in oral lessons
- Improving Vocabulary Recall
- Teaching the skills needed for Interpretative Communication in VCE
- Opportunities for students to meet and work together
- Making worksets and oral lesson feedback count
- Facilitating student reflection and engagement through student choice
- Student Wellbeing



Distance Education teachers working together on the Problem of Practice

Our groups are still at the planning stage of the project looking at data and setting goals. Once this is done, they will further break up into pairs to develop ideas for classroom activities. They will then coordinate their reciprocal peer observations of either a part of an oral lesson, a face-to-face seminar or a webinar. This is a common practice in day schools and we look forward to also making this part of our professional development so that we can further improve our instructional practices and share the wealth of knowledge that our experienced and more recently trained teaching staff have to offer.

Patricia Herr
Learning Specialist

VCE Top Students from 2022

We congratulate all of our 2022 VCE students who completed their VCE language studies. The following students received the top mark in Victoria in their respective language. In the following pages they reminisce about their experiences during the school year.



Aleksander Petkov - Macedonian

Studying Macedonian at the VSL has enriched my understanding of the Macedonian language, history, and culture, and equipped me with many life skills. What I found most rewarding was the opportunity to experience what it is like to learn in such a multicultural and diverse environment. Each Saturday I would witness people of all nations, both teachers and students, working together and eliminating language barriers to learn from each other. Seeing so many different individuals collaborate has led me to the conclusion that language is what connects us. To understand each other's unique cultural backgrounds, we must further strengthen our own and of course, the best way to do this is to learn our nation's language. The highest study score I received was for Macedonian. This boosted my ATAR and allowed me the opportunity to enrol in my preferred university degree.



Tara Najibi - Persian

Studying Persian gave me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of the language and to keep my connection with my Persian heritage and culture - particularly the rich history of Iran and Persian literature which I have always been interested in. The main challenge was finding a balance in the time I spent on each subject, and specifically for Persian as it involved both an Oral and a Written component to master. I approached both exams with confidence as I had developed a clear understanding of the requirements. However, due to the spontaneity of the oral exam, it was the more stressful component for me as I couldn't fully prepare for the questions I could be asked. I found that practicing my topic and getting feedback from my teacher helped as I became more familiar with potential questions relating to my topic and areas I could improve on. I would advise younger students to use every opportunity that comes their way to go beyond the scope of the VCE course and explore the culture and language they are studying, and to seek feedback from their teachers to constantly improve. I am currently studying Medicine at Monash University. I believe studying Persian will allow me to better communicate with patients of different backgrounds in the future and to better connect with my community.



Natalia Najder - Polish

Polish is not only part of my culture but my identity. While it is supposedly my second language, the time I have spent speaking and studying it has allowed for it to become second nature, making my VCE years significantly easier. Through pursuing Polish not only have I formed a solid form of communication with my immediate family here in Australia, but I now also feel more comfortable corresponding with extended family in Poland. I have been able to strengthen relationships while learning about my parent's motherland. To younger students – you are going to want to give up. I did too. Many, many times over the years. Although I dedicated the last 13 years of my life attending language classes, many Saturday mornings I will never get back, I wouldn't change any part of it. I never imagined I would have achieved the study score that I did and that is truly so rewarding. My advice is to work hard now and reap the benefits of the improved study scores, ask for help when you need it from teachers and speak your language as often as possible (this will help significantly improving your oral skills). In the short term I am working on achieving a 90+ ATAR and I am thinking of studying overseas, possibly in Poland. I do hope to attend university but I'm currently dreaming about travelling through Europe and Asia.



Vanessa Marcon – Italian (50)

I enrolled at the VSL (Distance Education) at the start of Year 11. My Italian teachers were incredibly supportive and were always there for me. They nurtured my passion for the language, and, because of their years of VCE experience, come exam time, I felt prepared and knew what to expect. I will always be appreciative of their efforts and the support they gave me in my two years at the school.

VCE Top Students from 2022



Yvette Alexandra Thompson - Indonesian Second Language (50)

I decided to study Indonesian (SL) at the VSL to obtain a deeper understanding of my maternal heritage. The biggest challenge I encountered was understanding its broad history and the way it affected the language. Bahasa Indonesia has been modified with the progression of time and, encompassing that complexity into my work was my biggest challenge. My biggest takeaway from my time at the VSL are the cherished bonds and friendships that I made. The relationships built blossomed into teamwork, support, and united resilience in times of adversity. Through learning a language, one can gain insight into a culture's history that is unteachable in textbooks and it isn't just about vocabulary and grammar. It is essential to understand the inner complexities of a language, such as the way native speakers communicate, and the difference between the use of the language by different groups. Learning a language is very difficult, but its rewards are unparalleled. In 2023, I will be finishing my VCE studies, and look forward to continuing developing my cultural understanding of Indonesia.



Peter Liptai – Hungarian

I'd been studying Hungarian from P-10 at the VSL, and both my siblings also attended VSL, so it was natural for me to complete the VCE course. I found the main challenge was expanding my vocabulary and remembering sophisticated language. As it is sometimes difficult to think of words in Hungarian, I overcame this by practicing at home with my family and took every opportunity to speak Hungarian. I approached both the oral and written exams confidently as I knew that my teacher had prepared us well, especially with the numerous practice exams we completed in class, and I knew that I had worked hard over the years. I believe that language study challenges you to think differently, and the complexity of your ideas is increased when you can express and communicate them in a different language. My biggest piece of advice for those studying a language is that a little work every day goes a long way and will pay off in the end. You must work hard and approach the language with the same dedication as you do any other subject. It is also important to take every opportunity you have to practice speaking in class, with friends or at home. In the future I plan on studying a design course which can potentially lead me to working or studying overseas. Regardless, studying a language has enhanced my communication skills which are invaluable in any workplace.



Gabriela Maria Ponce Moya – Spanish

Studying Spanish at VSL enabled me as a daughter of a Spanish-speaking family to be closer to my community and culture. My main challenge was organising my time and finding a balance between all my subjects as well as my social life. As a student, you always expect loads of work, but when I was amid SACs it was hard to not feel pressured to meet the deadlines successfully. As a STEM student studying a language, I found great contrast between most of my subjects and Spanish; studying Spanish was a game-changer as it helped me integrate different thinking strategies across my other subjects. I encourage younger students that study a language at VSL to not always keep the subject in the classroom, but to take it into other environments; this could be by talking with native-speakers or use creative and analytical styles on your other subjects (this made my writing stand out at my local school!). I plan to find a casual job as an interpreter and teach younger children in my chaplaincy of the language; I am happy to say that learning the language and culture of Spanish-speakers was a worthwhile VCE experience.



Gustavo Rubin David – Portuguese

Gustavo Ruben David was a student of Portuguese at the VSL in 2022. He appreciated the opportunity to learn more about his Brazilian culture and also the culture of all the Portuguese-speaking countries. He learnt important language study skills which will help him to learn other languages, such as French, which he is studying this year. He was able to practise and perfect his Portuguese speaking abilities while at the same time making friendships which will continue into the future. He plans to study nursing and hopes to do an internship in Brazil.

VCE Top Students from 2022



Adam Crnogorac – Croatian

I studied Croatian at the VSL to further understand and explore my own culture. By studying at an advanced level, I was able to communicate better with my family members, read texts and understand videos and news broadcasts in Croatian, opening me up to a greater understanding of Croatia and its people. The main challenge I faced was juggling the workload with all my other school subjects and responsibilities. Taking on an extra subject requires extra time and commitment. Given that I was in Yr11 and doing an accelerated Unit 3/4 subject, I had to work significantly harder to do my best across the board. My oral exam was the first VCE exam I have ever done, so I was very nervous leading up to it. It is also very different from every other exam that I had. I felt significantly more confident going into the written exam. Learning a language is honestly one of the best things a person can do for their learning, so I would encourage students to just proceed gradually, slowly but steadily, and to enjoy the process! I plan to study in Europe so that I can experience different cultures and lifestyles and knowing Croatian can also provide me with a stepping stone to learning other languages while abroad. The skills I have learnt at the VSL can really help me in my life, giving me varied opportunities and advantages for the future!



Dah Eh Paw – Karen

I studied Karen because I wanted to remain connected to my heritage. I found practicing listening and oral presentations to be one of my challenges. The benefit of learning a language is that we can educate or pass it on to future generations and so as to not forget our culture, language, and history. The advice I would like to give to younger students is not to skip class and to practice speaking their language as much as they can outside of the classroom. I'm hoping that one day I'll be able to help Karen people who have difficulties understanding English by using my language abilities.



Dhanika Nanayakkara – Sinhala

I studied Sinhala at the VSL to stay connected to my motherland in Sri Lanka, whilst preserving the cultural and traditional values together with broadening my knowledge of the language and the rich history which it encompasses. The main challenge for me was balancing school, sport and other extra-curricular activities on a Saturday with my classes together with finding ways to study and remain fluent in the language. There are numerous benefits you gain from being bilingual, especially being able to communicate in your motherland as well as having a lot more knowledge on different aspects of the language. I hope to move back to Sri Lanka one day, and knowing the language of the country will assist me in my day-to-day activities as well as with meeting Sri Lankans all around the world. Learning Sinhalese will also assist me in understanding and interpreting my religion of Buddhism.



Jay Trickey – Japanese Second Language (50)

Studying Japanese (SL) opened many opportunities for my learning and VCE studies. Although the subject itself was not so hard, getting from my home school in Caulfield to Glen Waverley, in limited time, was a struggle. Another challenge was to stay focused for the full three hours of class time after a normal day at school, ending my day with a 8 to 9 hour study time. However, along with all these struggles I found that I enjoyed attending VSL, for not only to try and excel in my subject, but to spend my time learning with the new people that I met at the school. After studying and preparing for the final exams over two years, all that was left was to complete the exam. The beginning of remote learning proved helpful for me. I was able to discover that this form of learning suited the way I studied and allowed me to get more done compared to that of the pre-lockdown. Social implications took a toll, causing me to have some trouble with my mental health but I found that exercise helped to clear my mind. I would like younger students to know that the time and effort you put into your study does pay off and is a skill you keep for life. With my Japanese that I learnt at home and the VSL, as well as the French that I am currently studying, I plan to go on exchange studies and expand my connections. And finally, a thank you to all the teachers that supported me at the VSL. Your timeless effort and hard work towards students like myself, really have an impact on how we choose to use these skills later on in life.

VCE Top Students from 2022



Laura Donea – Romanian

I studied Romanian, because I've always dreamt of being able to communicate better with my relatives - especially my grandma. Romanian, as a subject, is taken by a relatively small number of students and I found it difficult to find many VCE related resources and resorted to looking at the Romanian Baccalaureate study resources. Not only do you have a diploma that may make you more eligible for an exchange program there - but you also get to meet other Romanians - and share jokes, laugh at each other's hilarious mistakes. The skills for learning a language can be applied to many other languages. Treat VCE Romanian the same way you would treat any other subject - it's not easy because it is held on a Saturday. Also, expose yourself to Romanian news channels for better listening skills. I hope to possibly visit Romania for study, through an exchange program.



Ngun Bor Cin Kheng Lot – Chin Hakha

I chose to study my native language Chin Hakha because I was drawn to learn more about my culture and history. I found learning my mother tongue through formal education as a way to preserve my personal identity and cultural heritage. A challenge I faced in 2022 was readapting to in-person classes. As difficult as remote learning was, I found transitioning back to the norm equally challenging. I was more nervous for the oral as it was at a different, unfamiliar environment and involved conversing with two examiners. I approached the written exam with more confidence because it was autonomous. I think pursuing a language study fosters empathy and enhances cross-cultural understanding between different backgrounds – an asset in both personal and professional relationships. The advice I would give to younger students studying Chin Hakha is to immerse yourself in the language. Listen to music, watch movies, or read books in Chin Hakha, and most importantly, attend cultural events to gain a deeper understanding of Chin Hakha customs, values, and beliefs. I strongly encourage you as a student to supplement theoretical knowledge with practical experiences. As I hope to become a nurse in the future, I believe that I can use my language skills to communicate with and support patients and families whose first language is Chin Hakha. I see this as an opportunity for a career in bilingual healthcare settings where I can advocate for communities facing linguistic barriers.



Clara Nayeli Hunold – German (50)

I decided to study at VSL as my high school did not offer German and I'd heard great recommendations for this school. I'm not saying that it was always easy, definitely not. Studying a language is already challenging on its own, but then also completing the course online adds a whole new set of difficulties to the list. I don't want to discourage anyone though as all the teachers and staff were definitely one of the friendliest and accommodating I've ever had. Being able to speak multiple languages opens so many doors for you, whether you plan to use the language in a career, to travel or just to have another skill under the belt to brag about! I personally just completed the official Goethe Institut C2 German exam which allows me to study or work in Germany if I wish to in the future, especially as I am planning to travel there later this year. A little tip I would give is alongside your study, listen to music or watch a movie with subtitles and just actively immerse yourself in your respective language as that will add even more exposure for your brain while you get to do things you enjoy! Especially for online students, getting help can sometimes be a little daunting so I truly encourage everyone not to be afraid to send emails or ask for tips and be open with your communication about the workload. Teachers will always understand and help you. Remember to take care of yourself.



Malik Cosic – Bosnian

Being challenged is inevitable, being defeated is optional. Just as the weekend was approaching, the thought of having to attend class on a Saturday morning was daunting and tiresome, but I never regretted getting out of bed while everybody else was sleeping and connecting with likeminded people. VSL Bosnian has given me the opportunity to connect and be a part of the community, further enhancing my communication and social skills in an environment like no other. To all people deciding whether to set out on the VSL journey, I can't recommend it more.

VCE Top Students from 2022



Sophia Vlachou – Greek (50)

I continued with Greek in Year 12 for two main reasons: I just love the intricacies of the Greek language and during this very demanding year I gained a deeper understanding of the language itself. I am always fascinated by the flexibility and unique richness of this language. There are so many words that you can say in Greek but somehow cannot translate directly into English. Secondly, learning Greek at the VCE level provided me with the opportunity of practicing the language so that I can communicate with family and friends. I'm so glad I did VCE units 3-4 Greek this year at the South Oakleigh VSL centre. I enjoyed the content and learning as well as the real-world topics of Greek migration to Australia and the refugee crisis. I felt so comfortable with my classmates and teacher, Ms Irene Kodoudakis who guided me to success! Ms Irene Kodoudakis somehow made lesson time so interesting. My future plans are now more of a reality than a dream. I hope to pursue law with a focus on international relations and human rights.



Gursimar Singh Kalsi – Punjabi

I initially enrolled in Punjabi to stay connected to my culture my mother tongue, however, the main reason behind my decision to study Punjabi at a VCE level was because I wanted to accelerate and complete one subject before year 12. This was the best decision I could've possibly made. Not only did I increase my fluency as well as my understanding of the language and its nuances, but I was also able to excel with a fine score. Learning a language has numerous benefits such as improved communication with members of your community, cultural enrichment, lifelong mates, and better career prospects to name a few. Overall, language skills are a valuable asset in both personal as well as professional contexts and can enhance your ability to communicate, learn and connect with others. Thank you to all the teachers who supported me, my parents, my mates who I worked with throughout the year and good luck to all emerging candidates.



Mehra Mumtahina – Bengali

I studied Bengali to help me boost my ATAR and the VSL was the only place where Bengali was offered as a VCE subject. The distance was a big challenge for me as I am based on the east side of Melbourne, so it would take me about an hour to get to my class. I would tell the young fellow students to enjoy the subject and try to learn about the rich history behind the language. I am currently doing Bachelor or Psychology at Monash University, and in the future, I would like to be a psychologist. Because of my language skills now I can also help my Bengali patients and make them have a sense of belonging by speaking to them in Bengali.



Ananaya Mittal – Hindi

My language learning journey began at the VSL because I was interested in the school's classroom model. I really liked that students from different grades could interact in one Hindi class and it provided me with the opportunity to learn from older peers and those of varying levels. The main challenge was making time for learning Hindi. Initially, I struggled to divvy up my time effectively between Hindi and other VCE subjects. However, throughout the year I worked conscientiously to do a little bit of Hindi every single day and practise consistently. I've always been a keen debater and public speaker, so my natural proclivity was towards orals. I enjoyed speaking and engaging in classroom discussions as well as our "role-play" based SACs. I also spoke Hindi at home with my family, so this allowed me to get oral practice on a routine basis. To enhance my writing and reading skills, I tried to complete a little bit of writing every day. This enabled me to approach both exams with a similar degree of confidence. Pursuing a language has innumerable benefits. Personally, my study of Hindi encouraged me to explore the historical and cultural significance of Indian traditions and folktales. Being bilingual is a wonderful quality to have in our increasingly globalised world, it can open many new doors for us career-wise but can also keep us connected to our roots. I'm not entirely sure of what the future holds for me, but what I am certain of is that it will involve working with people from various cultural backgrounds.

School Updates

Key Dates Term 3, 2023

July 10	Term 3 begins
July 27	2023 VCE Premier's Award Function
August 5	Area Professional Development Day (no classes)
August 29	Distance Education Parent Teacher interviews
September 9	Last day for F-10 students (Centres)
September 15	End Term 3
September 16	VCE only class / Unit 4 VCE Progress Report distribution (Centres)
October 2	Term 4 begins



VSL Turkish/Syrian Earthquake Appeal 2023 update

We would like to thank everyone on behalf of the VSL and VSL School Council for your care, support and participation in the Turkish/Syrian Earthquake Appeal. The total amount raised so far is \$4972.

In response to the recent tragic earthquake in Türkiye and Syria, the VSL Area Northwest Teachers' Meeting initiated an earthquake appeal on the 11 February 2023. The appeal was endorsed by the VSL Leadership and School Council. This involved participation from VSL Area Northwest and all VSL centres, including teachers, parents, and students, as well as other schools (Keilor Downs weekday School and Kardinia International College - Social Justice Committee)

The VSL community has been deeply affected by this natural disaster. Across the Turkish and Arabic languages, far too many families and teachers know people who have been impacted, both directly and indirectly, by the earthquakes and their aftermath. One of our VSL teachers lost many members of her family, and some VSL families have travelled to Türkiye and Syria to support their homeland communities.

Generous contributions continue to be made for our VSL Northwest staff member who has been directly impacted by the earthquake. The other earthquake campaigns that the VSL endorsed for our earthquake appeal, as outlined in our 'Türkiye-Northern Syria – Fund-Raising Campaign Letter' are as follows:

1. Australian Red Cross: Donate to the Red Cross Türkiye-Syria Earthquakes Appeal <https://www.redcross.org.au/earthquakes/>
2. Embassy of the Republic Of Türkiye – Canberra Disaster Relief Fund : Turkish Embassy Disaster Relief Fund <https://bit.ly/3VtsN16>
3. AHBAP Association: AHBAP Association Disaster Relief <https://ahbap.org/disasters-turkey>

For anyone wishing to contribute, we encourage you to show your support if you are able to do so.

Sadik Cagdas
North West Area Manager

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn and would like to pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.