



VSL Acting Principal, Judi Benney, with award winners Dhanika Nanayakkaram (Sinhala) and Peter Liptai (Hungarian).



Dear Parents, Carers and Staff,

I was privileged this term to attend the VCE Premier's Awards, where 22 students from the VSL were recognised for their outstanding achievement in languages. It was a day of celebration for the students and parents, as well as recognition for our hard-working teachers. Later in this bulletin, you will hear what the students are doing this year, and some reflections on their time at the VSL.

This term the VSL has undertaken our four-yearly Strategic Review, which is a Department of Education requirement. We were pleased to have a panel that consisted of Jane Warren (Valad Solutions – an experienced and endorsed reviewer), Bruna Pasqua (our School Council President), Mel Quin, (Director - Literacy, Languages and Student Excellence Division) and Trevor Strolla (Principal, Brunswick South Primary School – a multi-lingual school). The review totalled 5 days, including three days of “field work” which included visits to centres, observations of lessons in our Distance Education and Virtual New Arrivals programs, and consultation with parents and students. Thank you to all who contributed to this important work. The result is the development of a new Strategic Plan for the next four years, which is in the process of being finalised. Once completed you will be able to find it on our website at www.vsl.vic.edu.au.

Parents will have noticed that our roll-out of Compass is underway, and we hope that it will provide a stronger communication channel for you. Like any newly introduced technology, it can take some time to adjust but we are working through methodically to ensure that we have a consistent approach across all centres.

Our enrolment process for 2024 will commence early in Term 4. Current students will be given the opportunity to enrol into classes **prior to them being opened to the general public**. With the pressure of places in many of our centres, I encourage you to enrol as soon as you are able to ensure your child can get the class of their choice. An individual link will be provided to all current students and students on the waiting list next term so they can enrol for 2024, so please check your emails and our website regularly. Should you have any concerns or queries about the enrolment process, or need support to complete the enrolment, you should contact your centre supervisor or area manager in the first instance

Finally, I advise that I will be taking Long Service Leave between 1st and 15th September, and Joe Tosic will be acting in my place. Thank you as always for your ongoing support.

Regards

Judi Benney
Acting Principal

Area Activities

Telugu New Year Celebrations at the Werribee Centre

On Saturday, August 12th, all three Telugu classes celebrated Indian Independence Day at VSL Werribee. Students and teachers participated in various crafts and activities, such as creating a variety of Indian flags with colour papers, listening to patriotic songs about freedom fighters, learning about the importance and design of the Indian flag, parading with flags, and concluding the session by singing the Indian national anthem with pride.



Vaijyanthi Yarravajhala
Telugu Instructor

Numeracy in the classroom: Berwick Kannada

A very important part of implementing the Victorian Curriculum (Languages) in VSL classrooms includes developing numeracy and literacy skills during a language lesson.

Following professional learning at the South East PD Day on Saturday August 5, the Kannada 1-4 class at VSL Berwick incorporated the numeracy component with a lesson about currency. Led by teacher, Sudhindra Holla, students learned about conversion, totalling the currency and value of AUD and INR (Australian dollar and Indian Rupee).



Indian and Pakistan Independence Celebrations at VSL South East

Over two Saturdays, August 12 and 19, South East centres celebrated Indian and Pakistani Independence Day. Students learned about the historical and cultural background of the independence struggles, and the celebration of the modern Indian and Pakistan states in 2023.

Hindi, Kannada, Urdu, Malayalam and Punjabi classes across the Berwick, Dandenong and Hampton Park centres all prepared activities to celebrate this important date in their national and cultural calendars.

VSL South East thanks the teachers for their hard work to prepare for this event and students and families for their very positive participation in concerts and classroom activities.



Heather Rae
Area Manager
South East (Dandenong, Berwick, Hampton Park)

VCE-Punjabi Students celebrating the 'Area of Study - Fairs and Festivals' at the Thomastown Centre

On Saturday 22 July, VCE Punjabi students at VSL Thomastown celebrated their learning of the sub-topic on 'Fairs and Festivals' under the theme 'The Punjabi-Speaking communities' by getting involved in the festival type atmosphere in their classroom and got to experience and celebrate traditional day. Students learned about the native months, different festivals and fairs we celebrate in our Punjabi culture in their learning on this topic. Most of the text types used to explain and understand fairs and festivals were Poems so that the students learn understanding the deeper meanings of the information given in poems/poetry.



On this day, students got the opportunity to proudly showcase their Punjabi culture by wearing traditional Punjabi attire in many vibrant and beautiful colours. Girls looked beautiful in Punjabi suits and boys looked great in Kurta Pyjama and turbans. A new native month, 'Saawan', started on 16 July, which is the month of dancing, singing, eating delicious sweets, and spreading happiness throughout the month of rains. The activity started with the teacher explaining the meaning of two following lines to the students.

ਸਾਵਣਿ ਸਰਸੀ ਕਾਮਣੀ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਸਿਉ ਪਿਆਰ ।।

ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਰਤਾ ਸਚ ਰੰਗਿ ਇਕੋ ਨਾਮ ਅਧਾਰ ।।

(In the month of Saawan, the soul-bride is happy, if she falls in love with the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Her mind and body are imbued with the Love of the True One; His Name is her only Support.)

A highlight of these celebrations were the performances showed in the class, where all the students performed on something related to the beautiful and rich culture of Punjab. Their performances created

a positive and enlightening atmosphere, which engaged everyone's attention. Some of these performances were Punjabi poetry, show-and-tell of traditional objects and Punjabi folk dance- gidda. Whereas two students got their traditional musical instruments 'Dilruba' and sang a shabad (sikh devotional music) to the class in Raag Malaar, a raag which is sung during the month of Saawan. The other pair of students sang and danced on the folk songs which lifted the energy of all the students up.



From the last 2-3 years, there was no cultural activity organised at the centre due to the COVID restrictions. Students were slightly reluctant to wear their traditional attires but after the event they are more confident and motivated about their traditions. This day helped the students to understand the beauty of their culture, roots, and identities. It was an amazing experience and it made them proud to be who they are. Everyone enjoyed that day and felt the strong connection to their roots and a deeper appreciation for the rich heritage.

Overall, the traditional celebration day was a heartwarming and enlightening experience that helped the students to further reinforce the importance of cherishing and preserving our cultural heritage. It is important for students to learn that living in such a modern society we may not always have time or the opportunity to dress up and show off our culture. So, they should never fear wearing their own traditional clothes and should always shine out be bright like the stars in the dark stary night whenever there is an opportunity. Hopefully the future Punjabi students also get to enjoy these celebrations as much as these students did and immerse themselves into Punjabi culture.

Rajwant Kaur
VCE Punjabi Teacher, VSL Thomastown



Indonesia's 78th Independence Day Celebrations at the Glen Waverley Centre

To commemorate Indonesia's 78th Independence Day, on Saturday 19 August, students studying Indonesian at the VSL Glen Waverley Centre enjoyed participating in cultural games. Games included the spoon and marble race, the amusing 'cracker eating' competition (makan krupuk), where no hands are to be used, the chocolate game and the traditional congklak game.

The Indonesian faculty also put on a delicious morning tea for the staff. All had a great morning.

Clare Bradbury

Year 9 Indonesian Teacher, VSL Glen Waverley



Kerry Law

Area Manager, East 1



Korean Performance Contest - Blackburn and Doncaster Centres

The Korean Education Centre in Sydney hosts the Korean Performance Contest (KPC) each year. KPC is open to all Kindergarten to Year 12 students participating in school-based Korean learning. There are two main categories - Artwork and Performance.

This year, we have had quite a few entries across VSL Blackburn and Doncaster Centres and are pleased to announce the following winners who have placed in the top three!

- VSL Blackburn Year 1 class placed 3rd in the Artwork category.
- VSL Blackburn Year 3 class placed 1st in the Performance category.
- VSL Doncaster Prep student placed 3rd in the Artwork category.
- VSL Doncaster Prep class placed 2nd in the Performance category.
- VSL Doncaster High School students placed in the 1st Performance category.
- VSL Doncaster Year 7 class placed 2nd in the Performance category.

Punjabi Celebration in Mildura



On Saturday 20th August, Sunraysia Punjabi Association held their annual cultural event "Teeyan Mildure Diyan" in which our students Sheranpreet Kaur Gill, Yasmin Gill, Dilpreet Kaur, Komalpreet Kaur, Manreet Atwal, Shivreet Kaur, Manpriya Atwal, Gurman Singh, Gurfateh Singh, Avraj Singh, Riyan Singh, Mehar Atwal, Manmeet Kaur, Mansirat Kaur (Prep), Virasat Chahil, Anumanat Chahal, Anahat Kaur Sidhu and Aileen Kaur participated and did very well. We are very proud of these students for their efforts and dedication to staying connected with their culture.

Gagan Kaur

Punjabi Teacher

Wodonga VSL Hindi class performance at AWIAA

On 13th August, a selection of students from the VSL Hindi language class, Wodonga, performed at the Indian Independence Day event organised by Albury Wodonga Indian Australian Association (AWIAA). VSL Hindi students recited a Hindi language poem/song, and the language teacher, Deepshree, spoke about the language classes run by the VSL in Wodonga. The students were confident and presented it very well.



VSL Students that performed, from left to right: Tashvi, Yash, Ishaana, Kush, Alivia, Divyansh, Virraj & Saiyam.

Note: India got its Independence on 15th August 1947, but the event was celebrated on 13th August.

Indian Independence Day at the Dandenong Centre

VSL Hindi Dandenong celebrated Indian Independence Day on 19th August 2023 with great joy and pomp. Throughout the celebrations, a sense of happiness and pride could be seen on the faces of all the students and teachers.

The program started with the Hindi teachers reciting the National Song of India, Vande Mataram. Students sang several patriotic songs. Other activities included a quiz, poems, patriotic songs Hum Honge Kamyab, Tiranga Jhanda Ucha rahe humara, Main Naye Bharat ka Chehra hu, a PowerPoint presentation, skit, and poetry recitations. Students dressed up in cultural dress and fancy dress. The celebration concluded with the singing of the national anthem. Special thanks to the teachers for their hard work preparing for this important event in the Indian calendar: Saloni Surawala, Upma Mittal, Manju Agarwal, Anjali Gupta and Shally Khanna.

Heather Rae (Area Manager VSL South East / Dandenong) thanked and expressed appreciation to the Hindi teachers and students for their successful event and effort.

Indian Independence Day is celebrated to commemorate India gaining its independence in 1947. Every year, the 15th of August is celebrated as the day of happiness and pride as India gained independence from British rule. Independence Day is a significant day in Indian history. It would not be wrong to say that it is the birthday of a new and free India. The celebrations remind Indians to be grateful and humble and give respect to all the people who contributed to this free India. It is also important to keep the love for the country

alive in the hearts of the young children. Indian Independence Day has great significance as it fills Indian hearts with pride and patriotism and infuses them with the zeal and determination to do something for their nation. It also reminds us to remain grounded and not forget our roots.



Shally Khanna
Hindi Coordinator, Dandenong

Ahdia Haidari: My Journey

**Persian Student (VCE Units 1&2) at VSL Dandenong.
Ahdia's teacher is Sayed Quraishi.**

My name is Ahdia Haidari. I am from Afghanistan, and I am a year 11 student studying in Victoria. I am an 18-year-old athlete who has played for the Afghanistan Women's National Football Team (AWNT) for almost five years.

I started playing soccer in 2018 with one of my friends, and I had to keep this secret from my dad. It was really difficult for me to hide this from my father. In the beginning I told him I couldn't continue my goals at that time. Then I started playing professionally in 2019 for the U17 Women's National team.

When I started playing soccer, lots of people around me said, "You can't play soccer because you're a girl and playing soccer is just for boys, not for you". This is the opinion of people in my country. I asked why girls can't play sports. They had no good reason as an answer; however I didn't listen to them. Instead, I told myself I could play and achieve my goals. It was always trying to find a solution for all the hardships I had experienced, but finding a solution at that age when there was no possibility was really tough. Sometimes I had no hope for my goals and dreams.

It was really challenging and I spent hours, days, months and years thinking about what to do to reduce all these problems and I always told myself that I could, but life was getting harder every day and I had less faith that I could solve these life problems. Life is never easy. I have seen many hardships and problems in my life, and I have learned many things.

The most valuable thing in my life is my mum and my older sister. My mother told me to be independent in my life, because getting married is really simple to do in this country and she didn't want me to be that kind of woman. My mum wants me to become a strong woman to fight for my goals and my dreams. She always gives me hope that I can do it. My mum said to me, "Tough times create strong women. Strong women create easy times. Easy times create weak women. Weak women create tough times". She told me, many will not understand, but you always need to keep going. Always! No matter what happens, because it's life. For my mum's sake, I will try harder to be the best that I can to make her proud and make her life a little easier.

I came to Australia when I was just 16 years old. I didn't know how hard it could be living without family and living in a different country to learning a new language. I came here with no English and I studied English here. It was really difficult for me to learn a new language and still, every day is challenging for me. I promise I will never give up. I will try my best in everything.

Now, I play for Melbourne Victory (AWT) after my country Afghanistan fell in August 2021. I remember, we hid in one room for almost 2 weeks. I was really scared because the Taliban like to fire guns to scare people. There were nights when I could not sleep or eat properly. The thing I did most during that time was crying and crying. I had no hope for living. Also, it was the first time in my life I saw adults were scared and shocked, and everyone tried to fight just to live.

When the Taliban took over it was really dangerous for me and my family to continue living there. It was impossible for me to continue my soccer and my education in Afghanistan. It's been close to two years in my country that girls can't go to high school, university, work or exercise because of the Taliban not allowing them. The Taliban do not respect the girls and women in Afghanistan. I couldn't take the valuable things from my room like medals or jumpers that represent my first trip to another country. How hard I tried to get one of those to represent my country and show the people who said that girls can't make it. I couldn't take even one of them. We just left everything behind.



Ahdia Haidari (top), and with her teammates from Melbourne Victory FC

I wish one day I can play again for my country and raise the flag of my country, because everywhere I see lots of flags from different countries, but I don't see the flag of my country and that makes me feel so sad for my country. I will never forget all of the things that happened in my country. My role model in football has always been Cristiano Ronaldo. He is an amazing player in the world. He had a really powerful story about how challenging his life was, but he never gave up on his goals. He makes everyone smile and gives people motivation to keep going. I hope in the future I can meet him.

I hope I can help people in my country and people around the world who need help. It doesn't matter for me which country they are from or what colour their skin is, the important thing for me is that they are happy and healthy.

I want to share my story with all people in the world one day and give them positive thoughts about everything.

Today the thing I'm really happy about is that I didn't have to give up on my goals, but every day is difficult for me to tell the people around me that girls can be a role model for those who are struggling to achieve their goals. Girls can do whatever they like to do.

The big thing is that I changed my dad's mind about playing soccer as a girl. It was very hard to do this, but nothing is impossible. You just need to focus and believe in yourself to achieve your goals and dreams. Now he is really happy that I made it.

I want to give all girls hope that nothing is inconceivable. Doing this means a lot for me.

Contact Us

Our relationship with our parents and families is important to us, and we are taking steps to improve our communication with you. Please find below a handy reference guide to enable you to contact your relevant centre when necessary.

You can also find further information on our website, www.vsl.vic.edu.au

Centre Locations and Contact Details

Altona North (Bayside S.C.) 1 McArthurs Road, Altona North	☎ 9689 1166 📞 9392 8602	Keysborough S.C. (Banksia) 8-20 Janine Road, Springvale South	☎ 9558 5566 📞 0411 074 060
Ballarat High School Sturt Street West, Ballarat	☎ 9689 1166 📞 0499 695 034	Lalor North Secondary College 114 Childs Road, Epping	☎ 9464 0848 📞 0428 450 116
Bendigo South East College Curtin Street, Bendigo	☎ 9474 0562 📞 0456 742 453	McKinnon S.C. McKinnon Road, McKinnon	☎ 9547 3780 📞 8520 9053
Berwick Secondary College Manuka Road, Berwick	☎ 9791 9289 📞 0488 004 281	Melton (Staughton College) 26 Wilson Road, Melton South	☎ 9474 0575 📞 0436 642 201
Blackburn High School Springfield Road, Blackburn	☎ 9840 0082 📞 8804 6490	Mentone Girls S.C. 175 Balcombe Road, Mentone	☎ 9558 5566 📞 9558 5566
Box Hill High School Whitehorse Road, Box Hill	☎ 9840 0082 📞 9878 7287	Mildura Senior College Deakin Avenue, Mildura	☎ 9802 4326 📞 5021 2911
Brentwood S.C. Heath Street, Glen Waverley	☎ 9558 5566 📞 9561 5228	Noble Park (Carwatha Coll) Browns Road, Noble Park North	☎ 9802 4326 📞 0447 712 946
Broadmeadows (Hume) 62 Blair Street, Broadmeadows	☎ 9364 3201 📞 9302 6028	North Geelong S.C. Separation Street, North Geelong	☎ 5277 9833 📞 5277 9833
Brunswick S.C. Dawson Street, Brunswick	☎ 9348 1720 📞 8673 6731	Parkville (University H.S.) Story Street, Parkville	☎ 9348 1720 📞 9348 1720
Caroline Springs (Creekside Coll) The Crossing, Caroline Springs	☎ 9474 0575 📞 0429 047 129	Point Cook Senior S.C. Cnr Boardwalk Blvd & Bergamont Drive, Point Cook	☎ 5277 9833 📞 8366 1203
Clayton South (Westall S.C.) Rosebank Avenue, Clayton Sth	☎ 9547 3780 📞 9547 3780	Roxburgh College Donald Cameron Drive, Roxburgh Park	☎ 9464 0848 📞 9930 8100
Collingwood College McCutcheon Way, Collingwood	☎ 9348 1720 📞 9416 0641	Shepparton (Greater Shepparton S.C.) Hawdon Street, Shepparton	☎ 9474 0562 📞 0436 925 661
Craigieburn (Mt Ridley Coll) 2-30 Hampton Street, Craigieburn	☎ 9364 3201 📞 8339 6414	South Oakleigh College Bakers Road, Oakleigh South	☎ 9547 3780 📞 0417 579 729
Croydon (Melba College) Croydon Road, Croydon	☎ 9474 0562 📞 0436 925 660	Sunshine (Sunshine Coll Nth) Northumberland Road, Sunshine North	☎ 9689 1166 📞 9474 0593
Dandenong High School Princes Highway, Dandenong	☎ 9791 9289 📞 9791 9289	Taylors Lakes S.C. Parmelia Drive, Taylors Lakes	☎ 9364 3201 📞 9390 3130
Doncaster S.C. Church Road, Doncaster	☎ 9840 0082 📞 9840 0082	Thomastown S.C. Main Street, Thomastown	☎ 9464 0848 📞 9464 0848
Epping S.C. McDonalds Road, Epping	☎ 9464 0848 📞 9401 2599	Traralgon Grey Street P.S, Traralgon	☎ 9558 5566 📞 0439 653 766
Footscray H.S. (Barkly Campus) 298 Barkly Street, Footscray	☎ 9689 1166 📞 9689 1166	Truganina 55 Clearwood Drive, Truganina	☎ 9474 0575 📞 0427 145 809
Geelong (Matthew Flinders GSC) Cnr Fenwick & Myers Sts, Geelong	☎ 5277 9833 📞 9474 0594	Werribee (Suzanne Cory HS) 225 Hoppers Lane, Werribee	☎ 5277 9833 📞 0438 047 581
Glen Waverley S.C. O'Sullivan Road, Glen Waverley	☎ 9802 4326 📞 9802 4326	Wodonga M.Y. College Mitchell Street, Wodonga	☎ 9474 0562 📞 0447 423 975
Hampton Park S.C. Fordholm Road, Hampton Park	☎ 9791 9289 📞 0437 265 461		
Hume Central S.C. 62-70 Blair Street, Broadmeadows	☎ 9464 0848 📞 9302 6028		
Keilor Downs College Odessa Avenue, Keilor Downs	☎ 9364 3201 📞 0447 824 626		

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☎ Phone number used outside of class time

📞 Phone number used when classes are running

2023 Premier's VCE Awards

22 Victorian School of Languages students received a Premier's VCE Award for their exceptional study outcomes in 2022.

Victoria's best performing VCE students have been recognised at the Premier's VCE Awards, celebrating their outstanding academic results in 2022.



(Above) VSL student, Ngun Bor Cin Kheng Lot, receiving her award for excellence in Chin Hakha. (Below) Greek & Spanish teacher, Irene Kodoudakis, with award winner Sofia Vlachou (Greek) and South 2 Area Manager, Venetia Kefalianos.

Minister for Education Natalie Hutchins congratulated the high achieving students,

"Our top performing VCE students deserve enormous congratulations for their commitment and hard work – receiving outstanding academic results and making Victoria proud."

"Supporting students to achieve their full potential is part of how we're making Victoria the Education State – and these award winners demonstrate the commitment, adaptability and excellence of Victorian students and schools."

Victoria's top performing VCE students received their Premier's VCE Awards during a special ceremony on the 27th July.

The annual Premier's VCE Awards recognise the top-performing students in the state. This year, 300 students across 88 subjects were recognised with awards for their outstanding results.

The entire VSL community would like to congratulate the students on being the recipients of such a prestigious award. We wish them every success.

To view the full Honour Roll and to read more about the Premier's VCE Awards, visit: <https://www.vic.gov.au/premiers-vce-awards>

"Congratulations to our VSL Students who received a Premier's Award and an extended congratulations also to their teachers that contributed to their outstanding result."

Angela Natoli
Assistant Principal

The VSL students who received the 2023 Premier's Awards are:

- Malik Cosic – Bosnian (Caroline Springs)
- Ngun Bor Cin Kheng Lot – Chin Hakha (Croydon)
- Mery Lin Zathang – Chin Hakha (Sunshine)
- Eva Hegarty – German (Distance Education)
- Clara Hunold – German (Distance Education)
- Sofia Vlachou – Greek (South Oakleigh)
- Ami Aggarwal – Hindi (Glen Waverley)
- Ananaya Mittal – Hindi (Blackburn)
- Peter Liptai – Hungarian (Dandenong)
- Christabel Sutanto – Indonesian Second Language (Distance Education)
- Yvette Thompson – Indonesian Second Language (Glen Waverley)
- Vanessa Marcon – Italian (Distance Education)
- Joshua Walker – Italian (Distance Education)
- Aya Hocking – Japanese Second Language (Distance Education)
- Jay Trickey – Japanese Second Language (Glen Waverley)
- Alexander Petkov – Macedonian (North Geelong)
- Seyedeh Tara Najibi – Persian (Box Hill)
- Iden Nasibi – Persian (Box Hill)
- Dhanika Nanayakkaram – Sinhala (Hampton Park)
- Gabriela Ponce Moya – Spanish (Distance Education)
- Ela Esenkaya – Turkish (Dandenong)
- Han Mai – Vietnamese Second Language (Footscray)



Malik Cosic (Bosnian), with teacher Sada Makas and Area Manager Felix Siddell



Minister Hutchins with student Eva Hegarty (German)

Additional Premier's VCE Awards Winners

The selection of the VCE Awards winners is managed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The number of Awards in each study is calculated using the enrolment base in that study. Hence there are more awards in larger studies.

Thirteen of the Award winners were profiled in the last *Family & Staff Bulletin*. Here, three of our Premier's Award winners, Mery Lin Zathang (Chin Hakha), Ami Aggarwali (Hindi) and Han Mai (Vietnamese Second Language), were available to be profiled.



Mery Lin Zathang – Chin Hakha

Chin Hakha is not only my native language; I also see the importance and value in knowing more than one language and keeping the tradition and culture alive. My main challenge during 2022 was balancing school with my personal life. I know I needed to focus on getting good results, but at the same time, there is a part-time job and other commitments. Trying to balance all of these was challenging; however, at the end of the day, these challenges shaped us into who we are today: stronger and more resilient. I wanted to do well in my oral and written exams, so I did a lot of preparation. I practised with friends and family and looked at all the past exams. Being able to speak and know more than one language, especially your native language fluently, is something to be proud of. Going to school on Saturday is a hustle, especially when there are other fun things to do, but the sacrifice and the extra effort pay off. I want to pursue medicine, and with the language that I have acquired, I want to be able to comfortably and intimately communicate with my Chin people and hear their concerns regarding any health issues as a lot of the time, due to the language barrier many people are unable to communicate their conditions effectively, and this is something that I have noticed and would like to minimise and help through in the future.



Ami Aggarwal – Hindi

As I immigrated to Australia from India, I didn't want to lose touch with my mother tongue. The VSL offered a way to stay in touch with Hindi and enabled me to improve my knowledge further. Fortunately, the VSL centre was on my secondary college campus. While I found learning Hindi enjoyable, the experiential learning, guided by my teacher, Mrs Thethi, added to the experience. The biggest challenge was learning to apply theoretical knowledge of Hindi for practical purposes creatively. In other words, writing a simple letter, essay, or story is easier, but it is challenging to write it creatively, demonstrating advanced skills in Hindi. I am lucky that Mrs Thethi guided me to overcome this challenge. My advice to younger students can be summarised in the quote - "The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones". Taking small steps and practising regularly will help you achieve your goals. I want to pursue a career in helping people through science and technology.



Han Mai – Vietnamese Second Language

I chose to study Vietnamese at VSL to learn more about my Vietnamese heritage and better understand the language. I appreciated the opportunity to do this as a VCE subject as well. The main challenge I faced during the year was balancing the work in Vietnamese with the other subjects I was doing in year 11 simultaneously and being able to travel to Footscray every week for the classes. I approached my oral exam with much less confidence than the written exam because it felt so much more intense being face-to-face with the assessors. I was still pretty nervous about the written exam, though. Learning a language forces you to learn and use skills you might not have otherwise learned in other VCE subjects. It's also a subject that will help you with your plans after high school. The advice I would give is to start doing practice exams under timed conditions as early as possible because I feel like Vietnamese is a subject where there's not as much specific content you need to learn to be able to do the exams. It's more about practising your skills. I remember being overwhelmed by the exam towards the beginning of the year, and honestly, I could not imagine how I could do that many things in only 2 hours, but the practice helped so much. Also, during the year, do as much writing practice as possible and get feedback from your teachers – I wished I had done more of last year. I'm hoping to pursue a career in law and commerce, and knowing Vietnamese would hopefully help me work in Vietnam or Vietnamese communities.

Distance Education

Supporting Your Year 12 Language Learner

And just like that, we are rapidly approaching the conclusion of VSL studies for yet another cohort of Year 12 language learners. Some will have joined us this year and wrestled with the challenges of distance learning juxtaposed with the pressures of Units 3 and 4. Others have been with the VSL for almost six years and be suddenly preparing for an oral exam with someone other than their distance education teacher. Either way, or somewhere in between, we recognise that each student faces their own individual difficulties and stresses in the ever-shortening run up to final exams.

While a little bit of stress often brings out the best in us, we know that students are likely to perform at their peak when they are feeling a certain calm and quiet confidence. But where does this come from? How can we help our young people to feel most at ease as they approach a significant period in their lives? I think we can take advice from elite athletes, musicians, and other performers about the power of preparation. I think that preparation can take many forms and is a much broader activity than simply reading over class notes or textbooks.



1. Practice Makes... Better.

No matter what the area of life, the more you practise it, the better you get. Exams are no different. Completing regular practice exams is a great strategy for all your subjects, but especially for languages. This practice could take the form of a mock oral exam with the VSL or a practice written exam with teachers patrolling between single desks in the school gymnasium. But it could also be selecting an exam section and completing it at your desk at home under exam conditions. The written exams for languages

often have unusual topics, so that students are all on the same level with the tasks and questions, so completing lots of past exams as practice can be the key to exam success. It can help learners get used to the different question types and what to look for when giving responses. I can guarantee that you will find plenty of practice in our distance education courses too.



2. Balancing Act

If you want to help students to get the best out of themselves in their preparation and then in their exams, balance is one of the most vital pieces of the puzzle. Think about it like this. If you were training for a marathon, you would do a lot of running. But it wouldn't be the only thing you did. You would still catch up with friends, read a book, watch the latest episode of your favourite show, walk the dog, and eat a meal with your family. But you probably wouldn't watch a season of your favourite show in one go. And you probably wouldn't get an extra dessert at the restaurant. To avoid FOMO, help your child plan preparation around some of their normal activities to help them stay focused when they need to most.

3. Healthy Habits

If they're going to be sharp at the pointy end of this year, students will need to make sure they're not just mentally in the zone, but physically too. There are many little things we all should do, but maybe we don't always stick to them. There's a bit more motivation as students approach exams, so encourage them to think about picking up some new habits. First, they should try to make sure they're well rested. A good night's sleep helps the body repair itself, so encourage them to keep a good sleep routine, preferably one that can work both on school days and weekends. They should also drink plenty of water and eat healthy foods that will give them enough energy for study. Fast food won't help here! And they could consider learning some breathing exercises or how to meditate (try YouTube!) – these skills will stand students in good stead come exam day and potentially heightened nerves.

VSL Year 12 students especially - but to all our students – we wish you all the very best for the rest of the year, and every success in the assessments, sports finals, job interviews and other tests that lie ahead in 2023.

Mike Atkinson
Acting Manager - Distance Education

School Updates

Key Dates Term 4, 2023

September 9	Last day of Term 3 classes for F–10 (Centres)
September 14	Distance Education Professional Practice Day
September 15	End Term 3
September 16	VCE only class / Unit 4 VCE Progress Report distribution (Centres)
October 2	Term 4 begins
2 October–15 November	VCE Oral and Written Examination Period
7 October	First day of Term 4 - Centre Classes Begin (3 October - Bendigo/Wodonga, 5 October - Ballarat/Doncaster/McKinnon, 10 October - Glen Waverley)

Compass Transition

The VSL is thrilled to announce that we will be transitioning to Compass Education, the widely used School Management System (SMS) many parents would already be familiar with.

For those unfamiliar with Compass, many government schools use it for school-related matters, such as marking attendance, keeping student records, writing reports, enrolments and communicating with families.

With the VSL's current number of students sitting at around 20,000, the transition to Compass is a big operation, but one that has been taken on board with enthusiasm and patience. Still in trial phase, we will continue to roll out new features in the next few months, and we will let you know when it is accessible to all families.

On Saturday 12 August, VSL centre staff started marking their Compass rolls.

Professional Development

On Saturday 5th August VSL teachers held their Professional Development sessions.

Below are photos of the West 1 (Altona North, Ballarat, Footscray, Sunshine) teachers' on the day.

The sessions were filled with learning and great collaboration.



Vietnamese Primary Professional Development



West 1 Professional Development - Anaphylaxis Demonstration

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.