

VICTORIAN SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

FAMILY & STAFF BULLETIN

ISSUE 2 / JUNE 2024





WELCOME

Dear Parents, carers and staff,

It's with a great sense of humility that I am able to write to you this term as the Executive Principal of the VSL, following my official appointment to the position earlier this term. The long history of the school, and the work of many people before me, do not go unrecognised, and in particular I thank once again retiring principal Frank Merlino for his custodianship of the school for many years.

The Victorian School of Languages is now positioned to move into a new era, and you will have already noticed from this Bulletin that we have a new logo as the symbolic representation of our school. With this new era comes the opportunity put information systems into place which will support the scale of our work, and to better reach our vast community. Late last year we developed a four year strategic plan which provides us with the focus of our work, and we have already seen great inroads into our improvement agenda.

We are committed to joining together our collective knowledge and the expertise of many teachers across our school, so that we can benefit from their wisdom. Across our 42 centres around the state, we have begun to meet and learn together in language groups and to develop a continuum of language learning for our students in all the languages we teach at the VSL. This work is complex given our scale, but we know that with the dedication of our staff we will be able to achieve our goal to have completed this continuum from Foundation to Year 10 by 2027.

Our work will focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning at the VSL to ensure that our young people have the best opportunity available to them to excel in their acquisition of their language of choice. Once again, we can be proud of our VCE achievements, with 19 students to receive Premier's Awards next month. It is an outstanding outcome, and indicative the quality work of the VSL teachers, our students and the families who support them. Further information regarding our VCE Premier's Award recipients will be available in next term's Family & Staff Bulletin.

Earlier this term, I was pleased to meet with the Portuguese Consul, Nino Godinho who distributed iPads to all students studying Portuguese at our Collingwood Centre. It was a very exciting morning for the parents of the students lucky enough to be in receipt of this technology while they are studying at the VSL, and we are grateful to the Consul for their support.

In addition, we were visited at our Keilor Centre and our Head Office by Mr Cem GENCOGLU, Turkish Vice-Consul (Education) , who expressed their desire to support our school and encourage the continued provision of Turkish across the VSL.

It is with a great sense of humility that am able to write to you this term as the Executive Principal of the VSL.

JUDI BENNEY, EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

After some disruption this year due migration of data, Compass is again active in our school. Our work over the next few months will be to look at how we roll the many features of Compass out to our parents and carers to enable improved communication between them and their child's teacher. You will appreciate that, due to the large volume of families, we will need some structures around how we manage this effectively.

Another critical piece of our work is the introduction of EduPay (Department of Education's payroll system) to all our Centre staff, which will come into effect from Term 3. This will enable our valuable staff to be paid each fortnight and accrue entitlements, as well as self-manage their personal details. All staff have been moved onto education email addresses for this purpose, and are currently receiving their "onboarding" emails to commence access. This is a very exciting move and I thank all staff for their patience as the access unfolds across our entire centre workforce.

As we approach the end of Term 2, I thank in particular our amazing teachers and support staff for their dedication to the young people in their care. They have prepared the end of semester reports to provide parents and carers with the chance to see the progress of their child/children, and I encourage you to talk with them around their language learning this term.

I look forward to working with you all to continue the fine work of the Victorian School of Languages.

JUDI BENNEY, EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Judi Benney'.



AREA ACTIVITIES



PUNJABI VAISAKHI CELEBRATION AT HAMPTON PARK



GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE 2024

On Sunday 14 April 2024 at Lakeside Stadium in Albert Park about 50 VSL students from Centres and Distance had the opportunity to experience a Greek cultural event.

Students studying Greek at Keilor Down, Glen Waverley, Carwatha, Noble Park, and South Oakleigh Centres as well as VSL Distance came together with teachers and family members to commemorate the Greek Independence Day with the traditional “parade”.

This allowed the students to connect with the wider Greek Community. It was wonderful for our students to interact with the community and connect with other students also studying the Greek language.

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IRENE KODOUDAKIS, GREEK & SPANISH TEACHER
-DISTANCE EDUCATION





CRAIGIEBURN SRI LANKAN NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

On the 1st April, the VSL held an information stand at the Craigieburn Sri Lankan New year festival.

Despite it being a windy and a rainy day, the staff from both our Epping and Roxburgh Park Centres

participated, including several parents and students.

We appreciated the help provided by parents in setting up and packing up the stand, organising displays and bringing students on time and ready for the performances.

The students did a great job on the day and contributed to the presence of the VSL Sinhala faculties on the day.

We are sure it expanded the Sri Lankan community's awareness of the VSL language learning opportunity.

LILANGA BALACHANDRA



PUNJABI VAISAKHI CELEBRATION AT VSL HAMPTON PARK

On Saturday 27th April, VSL Hampton Park - Punjabi celebrated the Vaisakhi Festival. With 19 Punjabi classes from Years 1 – VCE, our Punjabi students and teachers celebrated Vaisakhi event with cultural and religious activities.

A special thanks to Manpreet Grewal and Jagdeep Kaur Gill as Coordinators of Punjabi at Hampton Park, and thank you to all the teachers and students for their hard work.

PUNJABI, HAMPTON PARK





VIRTUAL CONFERENCE FOR VCE BOSNIAN STUDENTS



On Friday the 17th of May, VCE Bosnian students attended a virtual conference, with Bosnian meteorologist, Master of Science, Nedim Sladić. We had the pleasure of our Area Manager, Felix Siddell, joining us once again on this occasion.

Sada Makaš, the student's teacher, organised this event to be via Zoom. With the intention of preparing her students for their future exam, she contacted Nedim to ask for this opportunity.

Through this experience the students learnt of Nedim's high expertise about climate change. Nedim spoke on

a variety of topics including the connection between Earth and humans, global warming and how young people can prevent the future degradation of planet Earth. Towards the end of the meeting students had the opportunity to ask Nedim questions on anything they were curious about.

This was a great way to help the students for their exam preparations and to give them a greater understanding on planet Earth.

AMILA MURATAGIC, VCE BOSNIAN

HARMONY DAY AT VSL WODONGA

On March 19th, at the VSL Wodonga centre, teachers and students took part in the Harmony Day celebrations. Students and teachers celebrated the diverse cultures and languages offered at the centre and what this means to the local community. Students took part in activities that fostered respect and inclusiveness. They immersed themselves in engaging outdoor activities.





VSL WODONGA PUNJABI CLASS AT THE GRIFFITH SHAHEEDI TOURNAMENT

The Wodonga Punjabi class excelled at the Griffith Shaheedi Tournament, held in Griffith on June 8-9, 2024. Participating in the Punjabi language quiz competition named “Gurmukhi Vehra,” they proudly secured the 2nd prize. The competition consisted of

five challenging rounds, where the students showcased outstanding performance, surpassing teams from Victoria and NSW.

During the tournament, which occurs every June long weekend, the Sikh community gathers for a two-day celebration in Griffith. Alongside the quiz competition, participants enjoyed traditional Indian cuisine throughout the day and engaged in various activities such as soccer, tug-of-war, kabbadi, and athletic events for children. This cultural extravaganza is widely popular, drawing thousands to Griffith to partake in and witness the games, as well as to revel in the festivities.

Congratulations to the VSL Wodonga Punjabi students for their achievement!

AMANDEEP SAMRAO





VAISAKHI CELEBRATION AT VSL BERWICK

Some images from our VSL Berwick Centre celebrating the Vaisakhi Festival.



VSL DONCASTER AND BLACKBURN AT THE 2024 KOREAN FESTIVAL

On Saturday May 10, the students from Doncaster (Thursday) and Blackburn Centres performed at the 2024 Korean Festival at Federation Square. Our students attended the Korean classes in the morning then participated in the festival afterwards. We would like to congratulate the dedicated group of students who put on an amazing performance. A big thank you to parents and teachers for their support.

KERRY LAW, AREA MANAGER - EAST 1 (DONCASTER, BOX HILL, BLACKBURN)



“CARNIVALE” CELEBRATION AT VSL MATTHEW FLINDERS

On Saturday 25th May, a beautiful sunny autumn day, the VSL Geelong Centre held its inaugural “Carnivale”.

The students rotated around 7 different activities celebrating cultural events in their language groups.

Each teacher explained the significance of the festival or activity being taught as the students rotated through the activities.

Many beautiful diya were created to symbolize prosperity during the Diwali festival in the Punjabi activity. In French, students learnt to ask for their crepe toppings before sampling some crepes. The Origami was a huge hit with students making chatterboxes and some challenged themselves making cranes. In the Italian session, it was delightful to hear the students learning and singing a fun song. The significance of the German Spitzbuben biscuit was discussed and students iced mock biscuits whilst a traditional recipe was included in their passport. In Spanish, the students learnt about the flamenco and practiced twirling the beautiful scarves. Our Chinese teachers displayed their hidden talents during the demonstration of the Chinese lion dance and students young and old loved taking turns being the head.

Morning tea was a huge array of yummy food from the various language groups and students loved explaining

to each other what the food they had made and brought was. Needless to say, not a morsel was left!

With a huge thanks for all their hard work to the staff, Simanpreet, Solene, Lisa (and volunteer Rina), Nadia, Dorota, Carmen, Katie, Da and Helen in taking the activities and to our AO extraordinaire, Katica for all her hard work behind the scenes in putting the day together.



HINDI STUDENTS AT VSL WODONGA

Classmates from the Hindi class celebrating the last day of the Term 2 with some friendly banter while enjoying some snacks and treats.





DISTANCE EDUCATION

EXCURSIONS

Experiences are a vital part of any learning, as they help to contextualise knowledge and skills taught in the classroom – or in our case, online. In a vibrant and diverse city such as Melbourne, we are increasingly conscious to offer a range of cultural experiences to our students. We are also lucky enough to have access to many such opportunities.

Term Two has seen our senior Greek students visit the Hellenic Museum in the Old Mint building on William Street, while some of our Japanese students have visited Melbourne Zoo, and our Spanish students have taken in a film as part of the Spanish Film Festival. We have also had a number of languages run seminars with a specific focus on collaboration between students. This usually involves some kind of preparation in advance online, so that students are able to get straight down to business when they meet together in person.



Experiences are a vital part of any learning, as they help to contextualise knowledge and skills taught in the classroom - or in our case, online.

MIKE ATKINSON, ACTING MANAGER - DISTANCE EDUCATION



GERMAN LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

The VSL is privileged to once again be a part of the Language Assistant Program, supported by the Victorian Department of Education. Language assistants are usually native speakers of one of the languages taught in Victorian schools and provide crucial support to teachers to develop students' speaking skills, create resources, and much more. But this is not just a one-way relationship. Language assistants are often aspiring teachers in their home country, and they come to Victoria to gain experience in a different context, while also being part of a school community and learning about a new culture.

This year we have been joined by Lucas Adam, a German language assistant, who hails from a village called Haustadt in the tiny German federal state of Saarland. After arriving at the beginning of Term Two, Lucas has already proven to be a valuable asset to our distance education German team, supporting students with oral work via videoconference, and teachers with the preparation and execution of face-to-face seminars. He has also begun to spend some Saturday mornings in our centre classes, working with students at the University High School centre from Year 1 through to Year 12. Other centres will no doubt see Lucas during Term Three.

Welcome, Lucas! We hope you have a great time as a part of our team at the VSL, and of course we wish you a wonderful stay in Australia. With two current members of our teaching staff in the German faculty having been previous participants in the program, who knows what the future holds?!

KEY DATES

TERM 2/3 2024

JUNE 29	VCE Only Classes F-10 PTI/Report Distribution
JULY 15	Term 3 begins
AUGUST 3	Professional Development (no classes)
SEPTEMBER 19	VCE Only Classes (Thursday at McKinnon)
SEPTEMBER 21	VCE Only Classes (Saturday classes)

