

As a foundation parent, and a board member since 1989, it is amazing to think that we have just celebrated the end of the College’s 29th year of operation. Even more amazing for me is that I am still here after all this time: I am sure that makes me one of the oldest ‘parents’ at Overnewton!

I reflect on my first involvement at the College and the changes that have occurred since. All of these changes resulted from a community of people who – in keeping with the 2015 College theme – were prepared to ‘think first’ and then take action.

It started in 1985 when the Anglican Church purchased the site in Keilor.

Thinking first about the families in the area, the Church determined to help provide a sound yet affordable education for their children, backed by good values and a strong Christian ethic.

The announcement created something of a stir. Whether it was simply the thought of having a new, independent school right in the heart of Melbourne’s north-west, or the philosophy of contribution and community behind it, news of the Church’s plans spread like wildfire.

Thinking first about informing the community and seeking their feedback and interest, the Church organised a meeting. At the first public meeting interest was high and, on that night, parents registered their children to attend the school. The challenge for the school’s founders was to harness the community’s enthusiasm and consider the practicalities of where and how to house all of the students.

Thinking first about providing a safe, comfortable and efficient learning environment for students, we set to work on bringing together a vision and a plan for the site.

From the start, I have been involved in helping to co-ordinate the development of the sites and the building of facilities. In those early days, we were working on a very blank canvas. The area on which the Keilor Campus sits was little more than paddocks, and the foundation parents all did their fair share of digging trenches, pouring concrete and cutting back hundreds of thistles. It took countless weeks and months of planning but, eventually from the mud and the dust, the school began to take shape.

Thinking first about keeping to the values of affordability and quality, the College started as a simple collection of portable classrooms, surrounding the now-familiar ‘haystack’.

The facilities were not state of the art, but they provided a comfortable teaching and learning environment for the staff and students. The students came to school in their rubber boots and changed to slip-on-footwear when they entered the classroom. Those were the days when you had to think first before entering a classroom!

Today, the Keilor Campus has grown to include Junior School, Middle School and Senior School facilities, a Library, an administration building, the Penman and Richardson Centres, the Sports and Performing Arts Building, Visual Arts Centre, offices and even the College Shop.

In 1996, Overnewton College opened its second campus at Taylors Lakes.



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