

30 May 2019

# Rejoice!



Chairo  
Christian School

*This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

**Psalm 118:24 ESV**

## KEY ISSUES FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Following on from my article in the previous edition of *Rejoice!*, I trust that you were able to rejoice that God reigns (even over governments), that He allows us to live in a democratic country, and that we have regular opportunities to wisely cast our votes and elect our representatives.

Now that the new government is elected, what are the key issues that we will focus on with our advocacy and engagement with the federal politicians? In essence, there are three key issues that we believe are really crucial for Christian schools: choice, funding and employment.

### Parent Choice

As you would know, a key belief that we hold at Chairo is that parents are responsible for the education and nurture of their children. It is not the job of churches, government or police. As parents, God speaks clearly in His word, the Bible, about having given this responsibility primarily to parents.

A basic way that parents can exercise this responsibility, is to have real choice about where they seek formal education for their children. In Australia, we have unparalleled choice. Having witnessed quality options for formal education in a number of other countries, we are truly blessed with our options!

Some parents choose to provide formal education themselves through various forms of home-schooling. Others choose from a range of quality schools across three main sectors—independent, Catholic and state schools.

This choice though, is strongly dependent on a number of decisions that federal governments make—particularly in relation to funding and employment law. Let me address these briefly in turn.

### School Funding

It is easy to join the cry that there is never enough funding. While Chairo could always do with more, we are extremely thankful for the funding that we receive from governments, and for the fees that we receive from families, that allow us to operate to the resource level that we do.

Due to generous funding from the federal and state governments (there are some countries where Christian schools receive no government funding at all!) we are able to maintain relatively low fees, thereby increasing the choice for so many families.

In our advocacy to governments, we ask for a number of things, including:

- **Base-level funding:** Basic government funding should be provided for all students, no matter what school they attend.
- **Equity:** Schools serving communities where disadvantage exists should receive additional funding over those who don't.

- **Incentive:** Governments should support students in a way that encourages, not discourages, parental investment in schooling.
- **Transparency:** The relative needs of schools should be assessed on reliable and transparent data.
- **Simplicity:** Funding arrangements should be simple to administer, with low administration costs for both government and schools.
- **Reliability:** It is important that there is a high degree of stability and certainty in school funding arrangements to assist schools with their financial planning and management.

In the next edition of *Rejoice!*, I will explore further the important matter of choice in employment.

**Simon Matthews, Executive Principal**

## CLAY TOPIC: DISCERNMENT

For the second half of Term 2, students will be looking at **discernment** in their classroom devotions. Having discernment leads to a blessed life (see Psalm 34:12–14).

Discernment is the ability to know, and to choose, what is 'good'—good doctrine, good actions, good attitudes, good decisions, good leaders, good Churches ... even good schools!

God requires discernment in all of His people. But how do we grow in discernment? There are no short cuts. We immerse ourselves in God's word, allowing it to shape our attitudes and decisions, and we live lives of holiness and purity.

As we do that, we will be 'transformed by the renewal of [our] mind, that by testing [we] may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect'. (Romans 12:2 ESV).

In other words, as we become people of the Word, we will become discerning whether we realise that's what is happening or not. Paul's prayer in Philippians 1:9–11 gives the ingredients required for discernment:

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

The ingredients, then, are love for God and others, knowledge, holiness and righteousness.

Ultimately, the discerning person is the one who looks to Jesus as their Ruler and Saviour, and who doesn't get distracted by this world's countless voices and choices. Perhaps the old song summarises it best:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.*

**Medon Loupis, Senior Chaplain**

## LEARNING TO QUESTION AND STRUGGLE – ‘THE LEARNING PIT’

In Romans 12, we are challenged with these words:

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

But how do we renew our minds? How do we test what we are told in order to see God’s good plan?

The answer comes in learning to struggle—to question, test, verify, predict, interpret, generalise, evaluate and define. In other words, to learn how to think, and to think about thinking.

These are all skills that build resilient learners—students who can go beyond memorisation and gain deep understanding. However, these are also transformational life skills that will enable our students to be discerning, and to be culture-shapers in God’s world.

The Learning Pit (by Challenging Learning) is one strategy that teachers have available to them that teaches thinking skills. It provides an interesting analogy of how and why we want students to struggle, outlining four stages that students move through as they grapple with a concept.

### Concept

*Teachers ask students tricky (‘essential’) questions about the topic—questions that don’t have simple answers, but will deepen thinking and have broad application. For example:*

- How do we use statistics?
- How do you define perfection?
- What is an odd number?

### Conflict

*Teachers present students with multiple ideas that they may agree with but are in conflict. For example:*

- Statistics are numbers and therefore factual/neutral *vs* use of statistics in advertising to provide ‘evidence’ and persuade
- Images in advertising/movies/social media *vs* consideration of what it means to be made in the image of God
- Odd numbers can’t be divided by two *vs* three cupcakes can be shared between two people

### Construct

*Students form a deep understanding and application of the concept that goes beyond facts and memorisation. For example:*

- With statistics, ask questions like, ‘What am I not being told? or ‘What is the underlying agenda?’ or ‘How were these statistics generated?’
- Gain an understanding of the pervasive influence of advertising/media/secular culture upon our thinking
- Show that dividing odd numbers by two creates fractions or remainders

### Consider

*Students reflect on how their thinking has changed throughout the lesson (i.e. thinking about thinking). For example:*

- How did this struggle with a tricky question force me to look deeper?
- What strategies did I use?
- How can I use these strategies in other situations?
- What other questions require a struggle through the learning pit?
- Can I apply this same struggle to my faith questions?

Hopefully, students find a ‘eureka moment’ where they come out of the pit with a deep, rich understanding of the concept that can withstand rigorous questioning.

Eureka means, ‘I found it!’. Eureka moments take hard work, courage and mistakes, but they are so much more exciting and formative than being provided with the answer.

As teachers, we want to create a ‘cognitive wobble’ in our classrooms. We want to provide intellectual dilemmas so that students are taught how to think through tricky questions.

It is our deep hope that this will assist in transforming our students into lifelong learners who seek to discern God’s good, pleasing and perfect will in all areas of life.

*For an explanation of the ‘Learning Pit’, you can view James Nottingham’s Learning Challenge animation at [youtu.be/3IMUAOhuO78](https://youtu.be/3IMUAOhuO78) or visit [challenginglearning.com/learning-pit/](https://challenginglearning.com/learning-pit/).*

## SIBLING ENROLMENTS

If you have younger children that you would like to enrol to commence at Chairo in 2020, 2021 or 2022—whether for Kindergarten, Prep or other year levels—please contact Tina Lewis on 5625 4600 (Drouin East and Drouin), Hannah Sollberger on 5942 5632 (Pakenham), Wendy Nyhuis on 5662 4355 (Leongatha) or Tonya Russell on 5173 0500 (Traralgon), or send an email to [enrolments@chairo.vic.edu.au](mailto:enrolments@chairo.vic.edu.au).

### Buy and Sell

Have you joined the Chairo Buy and Sell group on Facebook? [bit.ly/chairobuyandsell](https://bit.ly/chairobuyandsell).

### Contact Details

Has your address or any other contact details changed? It’s important that the school has current information for all families.



## AGM REPORT

Thank you to all of the parents and staff members who were able to attend last week's Annual General Meeting of the Chairo Association. It was a wonderful experience to meet in The Balfour within the brand new Chairo Cultural Centre at the Drouin Campus. Praise God for this amazing facility!



## Advocacy and Positive Action

Our guest speaker was Erik Hofsink, the Public Advocate for AACCS (Australian Association of Christian Schools). He is also the Principal of Emmaus Christian College in Canberra.

Erik spoke about how advocacy and positive action on behalf of Christian schools are vitally important tasks for peak bodies, school leaders and parents. Such advocacy and action should always be based on an expression of the value that Christian schools bring to local communities and why families want this choice—not on false ideas about our communities being exclusive and only for some.

Government funding and good legislation is also vital in ensuring that parents have a genuine choice about selecting the right school for their children. Given the current political climate in Australia, now is the right time to engage with local politicians, giving them an understandable experience of what it means to be in our school communities.

Erik highlighted that strong and supportive school communities such as Chairo have a key role to play in ensuring that politicians, and the community more generally, hear about the importance of Christian schools and what they seek to offer to Australian society.



## Finances and Projects

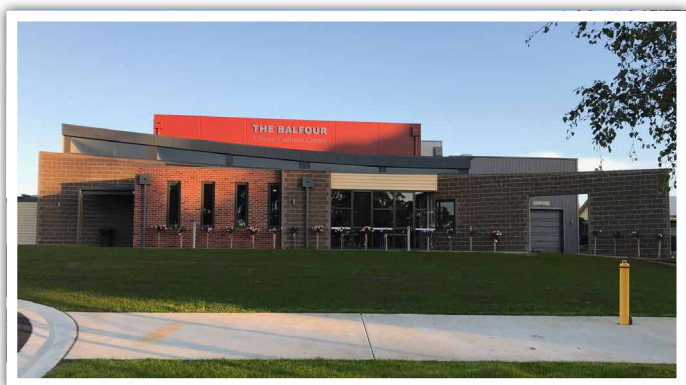
Roger Simons provided very interesting and positive news regarding Chairo's financial results for 2018, the budget for 2019 and capital projects.

In 2018, we had a total of 1502 students from Prep to Year 12 (plus 127 in kindergarten), with our debt per student being \$4666. We had a bank debt of almost \$7m and generated a surplus of \$416k for the year. Revenue from capital grants was \$657k and capital expenditure was just over \$6m.

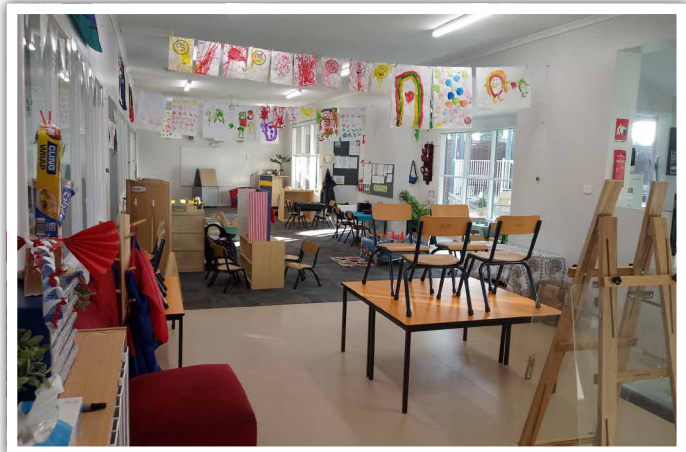
The budget for 2019 reflects a student population of 1551 from Prep to Year 12, with a further 151 in kindergarten, and a slightly reduced debt per student of \$4540. Bank debt is planned to be just over \$7m, with a cash surplus of \$507k. Revenue of \$7.89m is expected from tuition fees, with a further \$16.18m coming from the Commonwealth Government and \$4.57m from the State Government.







The Pakenham Library project was completed in 2018, while both the Drouin performing arts centre and the Leongatha kindergarten were commenced in 2018 and finalised early in 2019. A portable building was transferred from Traralgon to Drouin East at the start of 2019 and is now being used by two classes.



The scheduled capital expenditure for this year is approximately \$2.76m, which includes the freshly completed Stage 1 and soon-to-commence Stage 2 of the Pakenham Senior School Centre. A grant application has also been lodged for a Middle School classroom block at the Pakenham Campus.



### Operational Plans

Simon Matthews provided a report regarding our operational plans, which flow out of the strategic plan that was launched late in 2017.

The strategic plan, owned and developed by the Board, is communicated to the Association as a means of indicating the direction in which the Board will lead the school over the coming years. It is also used by senior leaders and their teams across the school to guide their operational priorities and decisions.

The Board is now receiving twelve operational plans from campus and team leaders across the school. These plans communicate to the Board the initiatives and goals that these leaders are pursuing over the coming twelve months that will lead to achieving the Board's higher level strategic intentions.

### Constitutional Change

A change to our Statement of Rules (i.e. our constitution) was also approved at the meeting. The qualifying period before an associate member can apply to become a full member (i.e. voting member) has been reduced from one year to six months.

Additionally, a kindergarten parent who chooses to apply to become an associate member (before this happens automatically when their child commences in Prep) is now able to apply for full membership after the qualifying period, rather than having to wait until they have been a Prep parent for at least six months.

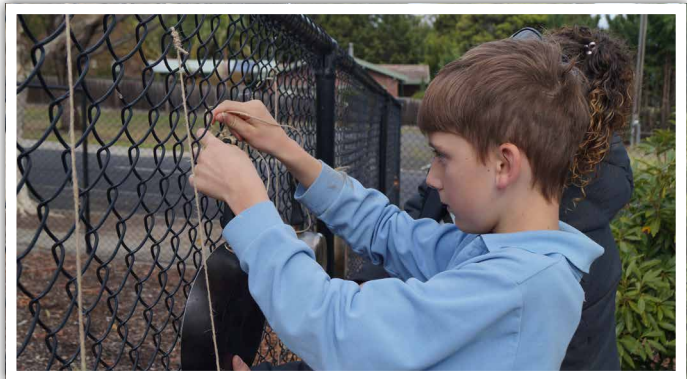
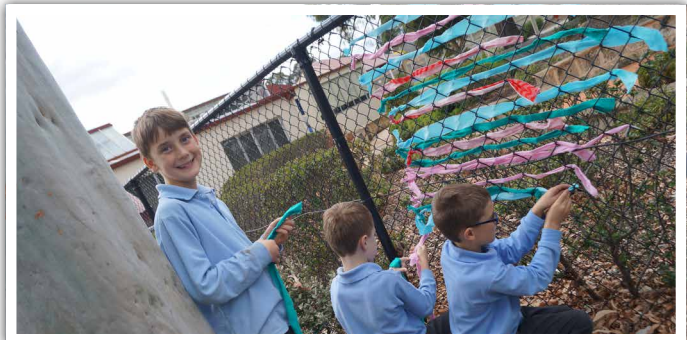
### Next General Meeting

The next general meeting of the Chairro Association will be held on the evening of Thursday 14 November. More details to follow later in the year.

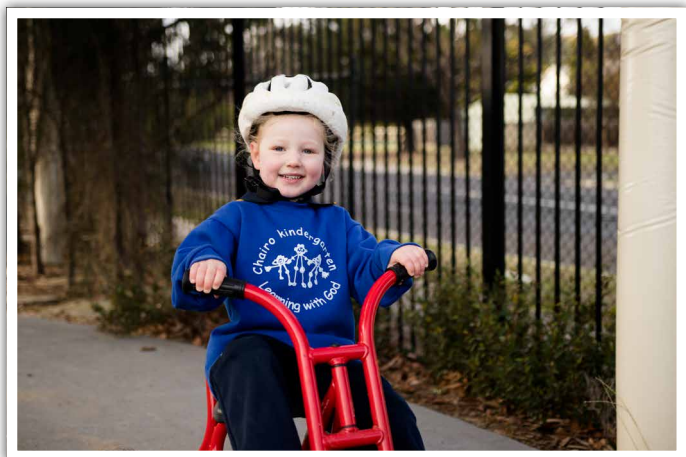
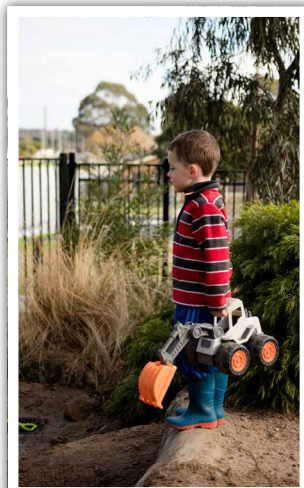
**Jeff Calway, Board Chairman**



TRARALGON







Chairo Christian School *Presents*

# Seussical JR.

**THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER**  
**6.30PM**

**CHAIRO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, TRARALGON**  
**2-10 LANSDOWNE RD**

Entry by donation

Music by **STEPHEN FLAHERTY**      Lyrics by **LYNN AHRENS**

Book by LYNN AHRENS and STEPHEN FLAHERTY

Co-Conceived by LYNN AHRENS, STEPHEN FLAHERTY and ERIC IDLE

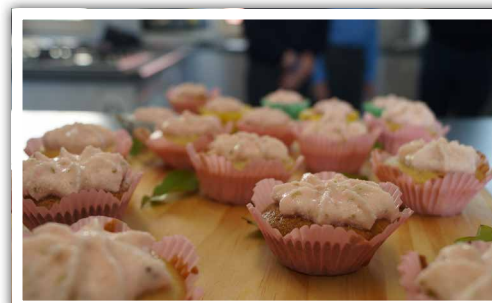
Based on the Works of DR. SEUSS

Licensed exclusively by Music Theatre International (Australasia).  
All performance materials supplied by Hal Leonard Australia.



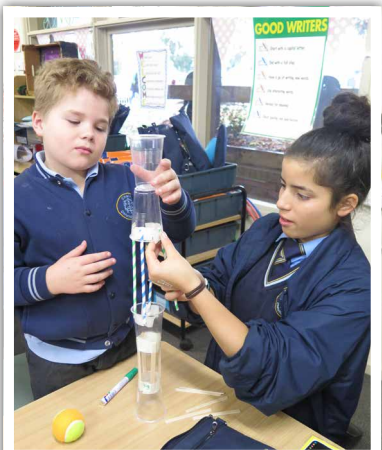
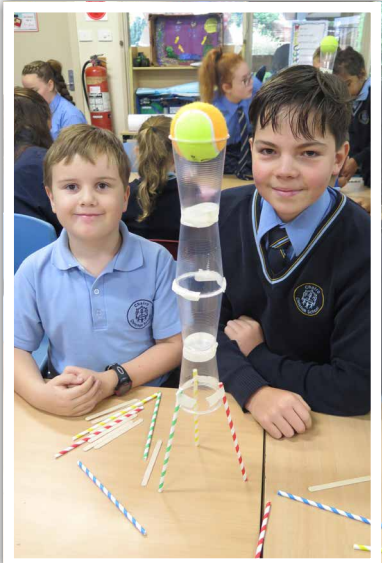








LEONGATHA

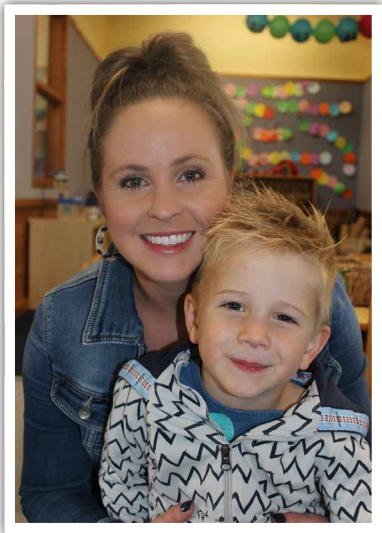
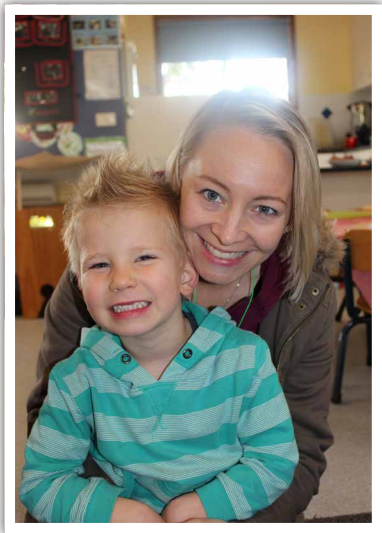




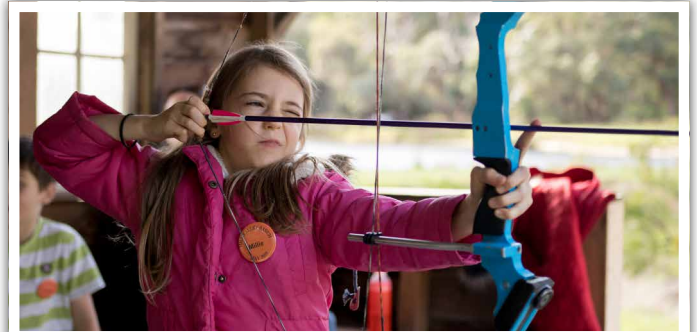
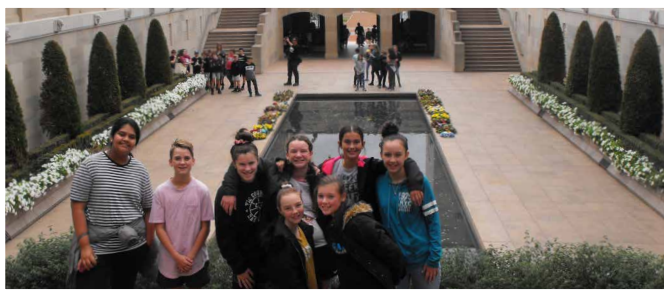




DROUIN & DROUIN EAST







## Canberra Camp

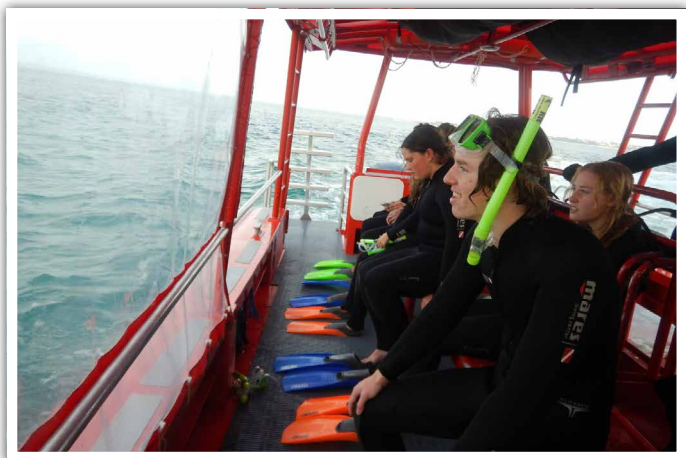
Students in Year 7 at the Drouin Campus recently travelled to Canberra, where they participated in a variety of educational programs with a focus on Australia's history, culture, heritage and democracy.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of all young Australians being able to visit the national capital as part of their Civics and Citizenship education. To assist with the camp costs, they contributed \$30 per student under the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate Program.

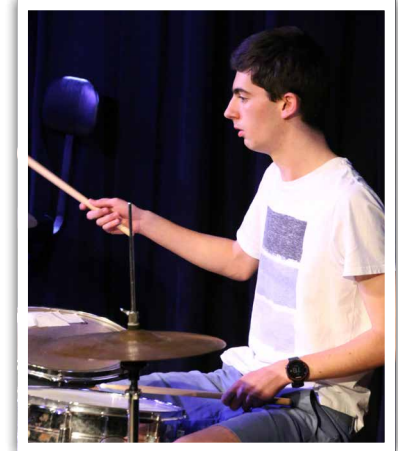
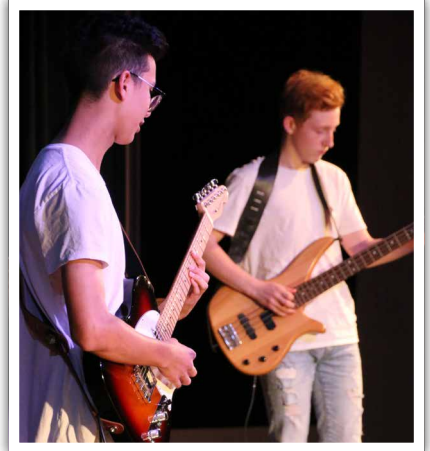
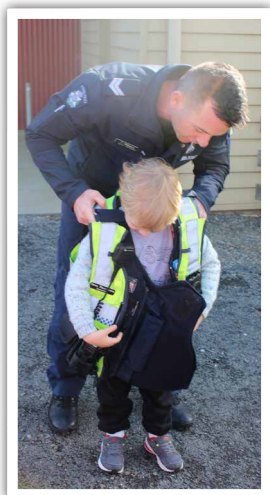
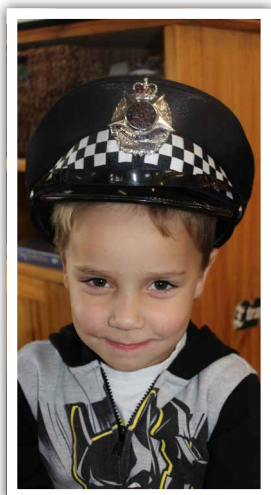
Places visited by the students included Parliament House, National Gallery, Australian War Memorial, Royal Australian Mint, Questacon, Australian Institute of Sport, Cockington Gardens, Museum of Old Democracy, Embassy Drive, and Telstra Tower on Black Mountain.

The group was even able to squeeze in a fun night out at Zone 3, playing laser tag and arcade games. It was a very busy, jam-packed program, but students were engaged and had great experiences.









Chairo Christian School presents

# OUT THERE!

Featuring music, drama, dance, media and art

27-28 June, 7.30 pm  
The Balfour Theatre, Balfour Rd, Drouin  
Tickets at [trybooking.com/BCVJM](http://trybooking.com/BCVJM)



PAKENHAM



**THE CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS**

Friday 21 June, 7.00 pm  
Cardinia Cultural Centre  
40 Lakeside Boulevard, Pakenham

Join our wonderful Chairo Pakenham Junior School students in this year's music celebration performance, as we adventure through Camille Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals*.

