College Principal’s Report

WELCOME BACK! TERM 4 IS HERE
This is a very busy term where achievements are celebrated and numerous events are planned. Attached to this newsletter is a parent calendar to put on your fridge so you don’t miss any important dates. Next week the Year 12 students finish their formal classes and a celebration is planned for Wednesday. The Formal is on Thursday evening and then the students will commence their final preparations for the exams. I wish them all success in the final stage of their education at Mill Park Secondary College. All students will be doing either exams or tests in the coming weeks so I have included some tips for study in this newsletter.

VALE – MR ROBIN WAYNE MCCOY
The school community was saddened to hear of the passing of former School Council President, Mr Robin Wayne McCoy, during the school holidays. Robin was a School Council member for 6 years, including 5 years as President. The school has made a donation to the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellbeing Centre in honour of Robin.

WOW - WHAT A SHOW!!! SONG AND DANCE 2013
Yet again another extraordinary production from Mill Park Secondary College! Song & Dance 2013 was slick and professional, packed with variety and talent, showcasing our amazing students.

The team make it look easy but I know that pulling it all together takes both talent and thorough preparation, and most importantly teamwork.

It was so rewarding to sit in a packed house and feel the support of the audience, particularly the students. I experienced goose bumps so many times as the performances were engaging. I beamed with pride to be a part of this community.

Thank you to the team – Shana Buriani-Gennai, Katie Weston, Wendy Nagel, John Collins, Renee Langerak, Brett Gaskell, Peter Simondson, Serge De Leucio, Andrew Laveglia, Rahda Claridge and Gina Palamara!

Also thanks to Sharon Polgar, Lisa D’angelica and Sue Hyland for the coordination of ticket sales.

X Factor, The Voice, Australia’s Got Talent all wrapped up in one fabulous performance.

ARTS FESTIVAL
A reminder that the Arts Festival will be held in Week 7, from Tuesday 19 November until Friday 22 November. Add this to your diary so you don’t miss another showstopper!

PREPARING FOR EXAMS
The best help you can give your child is by being encouraging, providing healthy refreshments and keeping the house quiet and peaceful. Well before exams, it is useful to sit down and agree on some ground-rules and strategies.

- Be organised. Have a revision timetable. Write down the dates and times of the exams. With your child, work out what needs to be done and by when, and draw up a timetable. Don’t let them leave the difficult subjects until the last minute.

- Target specific topics in the revision timetable, not whole subjects.
• **There is no correct revision method.** Find the way to revise that works best.

• **Make sure your child has a quiet space for revision.**

• **Help your children work out when they are at their brightest and most alert** - morning or evening – and adapt the revision timetable to suit them by placing their most challenging topics at their optimum times for study.

• **Most people have an energy low after lunch,** so suggest that they go for a walk then or relax away from their books. The optimum time to revise is after a break.

• **Forty minutes is about as long as a child can concentrate in one stretch.** The brain’s ability to concentrate drops after 35 to 40 minutes so it’s best to take a break at that point for five or ten minutes. The brain maximises beginnings and endings but not the middle, so this method effectively minimises that period. They can take a break for a drink and a snack like fruit or nuts. Be warned that if the break involves television or computer games, it can be hard to get started again.

• **Remind them that just staring at notes doesn't mean anything is going in.** They need to use strategies to ensure the material is being absorbed – writing it down, repeating it aloud, testing themselves.

• **Revise exam technique, using past papers.** Every question should be attempted and the answer planned out before starting to write. Keep jotted notes to hand as a crib sheet.

• **Don't interrupt revision if it is going well,** even for a family outing. If there is an important event coming up, factor it into the revision timetable but even teenagers have to accept that sometimes they must miss out.

• **Accept that children who are worried about exams will tend to be grumpy.** Remind them about stress-reduction techniques like exercise and calm breathing and make sure they are eating nutritious meals and drinking enough water. Reassure them that you value their efforts more than perfect results.

• **On the morning of an exam, avoid wishing them "good luck".** Talk of luck can raise anxiety levels. School exams are not a lottery, they are an appraisal of information already learned. Instead, say: "I hope everything goes well."

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**Trish Horner**

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**EQUUS 2013 Yearbook**

**This Year It’s Different!**

Pay for your copy at the General Office NOW! Only $17
Welcome back to term 4 as we head toward the pointy end of the year.

YEAR 12

Our Year 12 students will be finishing up their classes next week and participating in their Celebration Day on Wednesday 23 October. This day will include students dressing up in costume and participating in the now traditional Fashion Parade. A BBQ breakfast will be provided to all during the morning celebrations as well as prizes for best dressed and the final Year 12 video will be shown. At the end of the assembly students will collect their tickets for the annual Year 12 Formal which will be held the next night.

Year 12 VCAA exams begin on Thursday 30 October. From Thursday 24 October to Tuesday 29 October students are free to study at home. Their classroom teachers will, of course, be available during their regular class time if students wish to come into school to consult their teachers. If students do come into school at any time during the study break they must be in full school uniform. Students must also wear full uniform to each and every exam.

All Year 12 teachers have worked extremely hard throughout the year to give every student the best preparation for the exam period. I would like to acknowledge them and all Year 12 students for their outstanding efforts throughout the year.

GRADUATION & AWARDS EVENING

This year we are excited to announce that our Year 12 Graduation & Awards evening will be held at the Moonee Valley Racing Club. All Year 12 students have been provided with an invitation at their assembly last week. Students and their guests are asked to dress in semi-formal attire, with graduates in black and white. The evening commences promptly at 7.30pm and all graduates will need to arrive by 7.00pm to register and find their allocated seats.

The avenue address is:

The Celebrity Room
Moonee Valley Racing Club
McPherson Street (ENTER VIA Gate 1)
MOONEE PONDS
Free car parking is available in the members’ car park.

YEAR 11

Year 11 classes continue as normal until Friday 8 November. Year 11 exams will commence on Monday 11 November and continue for 2 weeks until Friday 22 November. All Year 11 students returning to Mill Park Secondary College in 2014 as Year 12 students will then be required to attend StepUp12 from Monday 25 November to Friday 29 November. They will commence their Year 12 subjects and booklists for 2014 will be provided.

YEAR 10

Year 10 classes continue until Tuesday 26 November. On Wednesday 27 November all Year 10 students have a Study Day to prepare for their exams which run over Thursday 28 and Friday 29 November. The following week commencing Monday 2 December, all Year 10 students who are eligible to progress to the next year level will participate in StepUp11 where they will commence their VCE or VCAL studies. Students will have their subjects confirmed and booklists for 2014 will be provided.

VCAL Bake Sale

On Thursday, 10 October the students in Year 12 VCAL held a fundraiser for The Smith Family Charity. Bianca Davitkova organised a bake sale that raised a total of $204.10 with the support of Dilhan Dodger, Amy Tonkin, Chris Kolef, Nessern Said, Georgia Kangalaris, Michael Stojcevski, Michael Brennan and Jayden Matthew. Special thanks to all the staff, students and parents who donated baked goods for sale and also to those who assisted with the duties on the day, notably Jan Platek. A donation will be made to The Smith Family Charity on behalf of MPSC.
Mill Park Secondary College Chess tournament

Congratulations to the following students for their fantastic efforts in the Mill Park Secondary College Chess tournament held in Term 3, 2013:

- Year 10 Champion: Josh Allen
- Year 11 Champion: Wenbo Zhan
- Year 12 Champion: Joshua Musolino
- Overall College Champion: Joshua Musolino

The tournament was held in the Senior Library over the course of Term 3. Students played a round robin to determine the year level winners. The year level winners then played off to determine who was to be the College Champion. A special congratulations goes to Joshua Musolino who has now won the year level prize in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and leaves us as College champion. Thank you to all students who participated in the tournament.

Victorian Philosothon – Mill Park Secondary College takes 3rd Place!

On the evening of Wednesday October 16 at Ballarat Grammar’s City site on Flinders Street, seven students from Mill Park Secondary College took part in the Victorian Association for Philosophy in Schools (VAPS) Annual Philosothon. They worked in groups of around eight students in what are called ‘Communities of Inquiry’, to robustly discuss philosophical issues such as poverty, identity, education and nature. Individuals were awarded points in their discussion groups for displaying critical thinking, creative thinking and collaborative thinking skills. The school teams with the most points in total were awarded the prizes at the end of the night. The team from Mill Park did a fantastic job in securing third place in the competition! Teams from Ballarat Grammar and Methodist Ladies College took out first and second place. Big congratulations to the following students for their enthusiasm and dedicated participation in the competition:

- William Colby (11F)
- Stephan Calabro (11G)
- Chris Kardaras (11G)
- Marvad Ahad (10M)
- Joel Moore (10B)
- Natasha Bay (9AE)
- Erica Moffat (8BR)

Ms Lorna Brooks & Ms Philippa McIlroy.

VCAL SUPPORTING MILL PARK SALVATION ARMY

This year the Year 12 Personal Development Skills VCAL class has teamed up with the Mill Park Salvation Army.

The students have been involved with the Red Shield appeal where one group organised a BBQ, another group ran a Coffee shop and Bake Sale and another a food drive. Several students also collected money at the local shopping centre. Recently the students were presented with an award for raising the most money in the area. Students have also volunteered to prepare and serve a Community Lunch on two occasions. They catered for about 40 people on both occasions and received rave reviews from those who ate.
It is essential for students to understand that in order to learn they must have the right attitude. Attitude is everything!

Exams are near! Get ready!
With Year 12 formal classes concluding next week, exams are on the forefront of everyone's minds! It's the final stretch now, with students needing to push themselves and maximise all of their effort. Over the next few weeks it is imperative students maximise their study time, set goals, stick to a plan, stay organised and stay healthy!

Tip 1 – Prioritise
Prioritising study is of utmost importance at this time of year – every minute needs to be spent productively, reviewing all the hard work that has been done all year – there is no time to waste! Here are some tips:

- Put aside other work or social commitments – these can be attended to after the exam period.
- There is not enough time to learn large chunks of information! Prioritise the topics within each subject that are challenging and concentrate on remembering this information. Plan a study timetable around this, and stick to it.
- Create small and achievable study goals that you can complete in a specific time frame; e.g. on Saturday, complete 1 full length practice exam for three subjects and review what was difficult.
- There is no need to go over information that is easy to recall, as this information has already been committed to memory.
- Be sensible at the Formal – have fun, but do not get sick and jeopardise your success.

Tip 2 – Organise your study space
Students should be recreating exam conditions when they sit down to study. This means that their study space should include a clear desk, a well-lit room and be free from distractions, such as phones, MP3 players, iPads, computers, or people continually disturbing them. They could be using walls in their room, or around the house to display mind maps or study notes to refer to, and aid recall. Students should keep the following in mind for their study space:

- Have everything you need within reach – textbooks, class notes, etc.
- Good seating posture: feet on the ground, spine straight, chair lower than desk (not on the bed or floor)
- Food and drink (water bottle, snack)
- Stationery – pens, pencil, paper, highlighters, calculator
- Good lighting, not in the dark with one bright light – no shadows (also, use natural light as much as possible, to assist later sleep)
- A neat and organised work space with only one school subject in view at a time
Tip 3 – Practice Exam Questions
Students should be completing practice exam questions now!

- Aim to complete an exam for each subject according to the time allowed for the real exam – set a timer!
- Look at worked solutions or examiner’s reports to assess responses and to add extra information that has been missed.
- A good technique to see what information that still needs to be rehearsed is to write the missing information from the solution in a different coloured pen when marking answers. This way, the information that still needs to be revised will stand out. Multiple past exams for all VCE subjects, as well as examiner’s reports with solutions are available at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/examsassessreports.aspx

Tip 4 – Keep yourself healthy
Students need to keep their energy levels high, rest, eat well and try and relieve stress over the next few weeks, to ensure they are healthy for exam day! Students should not be skipping meals or hours of sleep over the next few weeks. They should try and get some exercise, sunshine and do some form of relaxation e.g. stretching, deep breathing or meditation, to prevent themselves from wearing themselves thin or getting ill. Encourage positive self-talk to keep their frame of mind positive.

On the day of your exam:

- Avoid talking to other people before and after your exams – you can become more anxious than you need to be, particularly if they tell you something about the subject that you don’t know.
- Relax and focus on your own paper, not what anyone else is doing around you.
- Use reading time effectively – think about each question by labelling it in your head. This question is about...
  Plan a response or an essay outline in your head. Remember not to mark your paper in any way during reading time, as you can be penalised if you do so. This includes marking multiple choice questions with your fingernails!
- When writing time begins, read each question through again, ask yourself where each mark should be allocated to, and highlight key words. Ensure your answer is suitable for the question type (analyse, evaluate, define, etc.) and for the marks allocated.
- If you come across a difficult question, star it, and move on to the next question. Make sure you come back to it at the end, and attempt it no matter what. Writing nothing guarantees you 0 marks, but writing something will potentially get you marks!
- Remember to express yourself as clearly and simply as possible – the more you mindlessly elaborate, the less likely your examiner will be able to find marks to give you. Don’t just write down everything you know about something – direct your answer towards the exact question being asked.
- Don’t stress – your exams are an opportunity to show what you have learnt in your subjects – they are not designed to torture or trick you.
- Stretch in your seat – rotate your shoulders, wrists, and ankles; shake out any tension.
- If you finish early, ensure that you go back to any questions you were unsure of and re-do as many questions as you have time for – this will increase your chance of success. If you remember something outside the exam room, it will be too late, so do not leave early!

REMEMBER
Your teachers are still available to assist students either during their normal timetabled class, at a prearranged time, or via email. Do not leave any questions unanswered, especially now! Make the next few weeks count. Do your best, and don’t have regrets; that’s all you can ask of yourself. On behalf of the Exam Excellence Team, we wish you all the very best with your exams and your future endeavours.
Welcome back to Term 4! The term has started busily with an incredible production of Song and Dance. Congratulations to all of those involved especially our Instrumental Music staff and our Dance teachers. Coming up in Week 7 is the launch of our Annual Arts Festival, which will be opening at Plenty Ranges on Tuesday 19 November. All are welcome to attend.

I hope all parents and guardians have had the chance to discuss Interim Reports with their child to ensure that they are on track for this final term. Year Level Co-ordinators will meet with students who are at risk to discuss strategies to ensure a successful completion of the year. Reports can be downloaded and printed via the parent portal on the school website. Please contact the front office if you have difficulty accessing them.

Melbourne Cup Day will be in Week 5 on Tuesday 5 November. The day is a public holiday and students are not required at school.

Year 8 Tasmania Camp – Key dates
Camp Indemnity and Confidential Medical forms will be distributed soon and must be returned to the General Office.

Please note that the final payment of $125 is due on Friday 25 October.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact Jack Williams on 9407 9700.

8BE has had work displayed in our local community at Thomastown Library, Epping Plaza, Andrew Giles’ Electoral Office and Lily D’Ambrosio’s Electoral Office, to promote a “Week without Family Violence” October 14-20.

Pastor of Plenty Valley Church – Craig Anderson approached Mill Park Secondary College and asked us to participate in The Clothes Line Project

The Clothesline Project (a worldwide project) started in 1990 in Cape Cod, Massachusetts USA. A group of women inspired by the AIDS quilt got together and came up with the idea of hanging t-shirts on a clothesline to signify their feelings and issues regarding domestic violence.

8BE and Technology Fabrics teacher Mrs Tracy Allender worked through a design brief to design and submit a painted / dyed t-shirt with a strong message about Family Violence - that it is serious, prevalent and preventable.
End of Year Tests/Exams for MYC Students – Week 6/Term 4

After twelve months of consideration by the Curriculum Leaders Team, a decision was reached in 2012 to introduce end of year tests/exams for core subjects for Years 7, 8 and 9 students in 2013 in Week 6 (Term 4).

The purpose of the end of year tests is to expose the students to the process of studying for exams, as well as teaching them how to apply their knowledge and skills under timed conditions. Feedback collected from staff and students have revealed that all parties believe that early experience to tests/exams enable the students to cope with the demands of later years and VCE, as they get better at applying their skills if given the opportunity to practise.

The exams are NOT designed to rank students or be the main measure of their learning of the year’s work. They are designed to enable all students to demonstrate what they have learned and provide a summative assessment tool, to enable teachers and students to reflect on key skills developed or how students have been able to interpret questions. The content for every exam will only be taken from what all students have covered throughout the year at their level.

Teachers will be reviewing for the tests during Week 5 (Term 4) and preparing their students in relation to what to expect from their exams as well as appropriate study skills. Students requiring assistance with their normal classroom learning will be provided with additional assistance during the exams if required.

A timetable of test locations, room changes and detailed instructions will be distributed by Week 4.

Parental/guardian support is essential for this initiative to be most beneficial for all students. The reality is that students demonstrate improved skills if they have numerous attempts at doing something and are provided with appropriate feedback that is meaningful. End of year testing creates an opportunity for students to practise essential skills necessary for continued success at school.

Please see below the breakdown of subjects into year levels that will be tested and the expected duration of the tests.

**Year 7**

**Timed Exercises**

**Tests in classroom**

- Maths – 90 minutes
- English – 90 minutes
- Humanities – 45 minutes
- Science – 45 minutes
- PE – 45 minutes
- Italian – 45 minutes (SEALs 90 minutes)

**Year 8**

**Timed Exercises**

**Tests in classroom**

- Maths – 90 minutes
- English – 90 minutes
- Humanities – 90 minutes
- Science – 90 minutes
- PE – 45 minutes
- German – 45 minutes
- Italian – 45 minutes (SEALs 90 minutes)

**Year 9**

**EXAMS**

- Maths – 90 minutes
- English – 90 minutes
- Humanities – 90 minutes
- Science – 90 minutes
- PE – 45 minutes

Mrs Leesa Mereos
MYC Curriculum Innovation
**Understanding Gifted Children – Parent and Teacher Evening**

Mill Park Secondary College hosted a parent evening on 19 September, specifically suited to members of our community who have children who fall into the ‘gifted or talented’ category. In an effort to bring all members of our learning community together, parents of local primary schools and teachers were invited to come together with members of our own school community in the pursuit of learning more about these children.

Hosted in the MYC library, two guest speakers presented their knowledge of current gifted education research and provided advice and suggestions on how to support gifted children through their educational journey. Gail Byrne presented an excellent discussion on ‘The Well-Rounded Child’ and after a short break that involved conversation and refreshments, Amanda Sironic spoke on the topic of ‘Perfectionism’. Both experts in the psychology field, these ladies provided insightful and highly beneficial information into how gifted children behave and what parents and teachers can do to support them during a sometimes problematic process.

Enormous thanks to all members of our community who attended the evening, from parents of our current SEAL students, to parents of gifted students from our local primary schools, to the dedicated staff who attended and made themselves available for discussion and SEAL girls from 8BR who greeted parents and assisted all evening. Special thanks to Valerie McGowan who assisted with refreshments and the organisation of the library.

Gail Byrne’s contact details:  [gail.byrne@exceptionalchildren.com.au](mailto:gail.byrne@exceptionalchildren.com.au)

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**FUNDRAISER TO SUPPORT A STUDENT**

This coming Tuesday, 22 October a fundraiser will be held at lunchtime for one of our returning students Kyle Buselli of 9CE who has spent the past 11 weeks in the Royal Children’s Hospital. This fundraiser is in aid of gaining funds to support Kyle through his rehabilitation process.

At lunchtime there will be a sausage sizzle, drinks, cupcake stall and many activities that friends and classmates of Kyle have organised. All food and drink will be sold for $2.

Many students, teachers and families need to be thanked for being very generous in donating towards this worthy cause.

In particular we would like to thank:
- D&M Meats in Thomastown who have donated over 100 sausages.
- Katelyn Peschel 9AR who raised $200 by busking for several weeks.

If you wish to donate or participate in the fundraising please contact Courtney Faull, Year 9 Co-ordinator. Students are encouraged to come along and participate in the activities organised for this day.

*On behalf of 9CE, Year 9 Coordinators and Miss Hill.*

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Leesa Mereos  
SEAL and Enrichment Coordinator
Talking About Childhood Asthma
Live From The Airways
Presented by The Asthma Foundation of Victoria and Royal Children’s Hospital

Sunday 27th October 2013
4pm - 6pm
FREE!
Ella Latham Auditorium, Ground Floor, Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne

Ask questions, gain advice on: medications, diagnosis and asthma management from top Respiratory Specialists:
A/ Prof Sarath Ranganathan
Prof Colin Robertson
Dr Jo Harrison

Light refreshments will be served and tickets are limited, therefore registrations are essential. Attend the event at the Royal Children’s Hospital OR watch the LIVE Webcast online
Register at www.asthma.org.au or call 1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462)
Volunteers Wanted in Yarra Plenty Region – FREE Courses!

Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers and Students,

ELTHAM College will be hosting free courses as part of a research study being run by The University of Melbourne, titled ‘First Aid Training for Parents of Teenagers’ (TPOT study). The project aims to teach parents the skills to recognize and respond to mental health problems in teenagers and to help a teenager if they should require first aid.

Past research has shown that mental health problems tend to emerge in adolescence and that teenagers often turn to parents and friends when seeking help. However, many adults have limited skills in recognizing the early signs of a mental disorder. This study offers parents two types of courses and will assess whether the skills taught to parents help a teenager’s mental or physical health, over time. A brief overview of the study appears in a video on the trial website at www.tpot.net.au.

To register:
Parents with a teenager aged between 12-15 years are invited to take part (one teenager and one parent per family). Registration is done online in pairs at www.test.net.au.

Parents will receive a 2-day course for FREE in one of the following:

- 14-hour Youth Mental Health First Aid (usual cost is around $400)
- 15-hour Apply First Aid (usual cost is around $220)

Both of these courses will be held in separate rooms on:
Saturday 16th and 23rd November 2013
From 9am – 5pm at ELTHAM College, 1660 Main Road, Research VIC 3905

Online registrations close 10 November 2013

Please note that parents will be randomly placed into one course or the other via computer, at the time of online registration (teenagers do not attend the training).

Before the parent can attend their free course, a brief telephone survey needs to be completed by both the parent and teenager. The phone surveys are done separately and can be looked at a time that suits individual. Parents will be asked about their knowledge of mental and physical first aid, while teenagers will be asked about their knowledge of mental health problems.

The study has ethics approval from the University of Melbourne’s Behavioural and Social Sciences Human Ethics Sub-Committee (ID: 1335/079) DEC00 (2012_001480) and the Catholic Education Office of Melbourne (CEOM) ID: 1877. It is funded by an National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australia Fellowship to Professor Anthony Jorm.

The project is likely to empower parents to better deal with a teenager’s emerging mental health problem or a physical injury needing assistance. I encourage you to take part in this important study. Please direct any queries to the Trial Manager, Julie-Anne Fischer on Tel: 9035 6770; Mobile: 0401 772 648 or email: jfischer@unimelb.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Julie-Anne Fischer
First Aid Training for Parents of Teenagers (TPOT study) www.tpot.net.au
The University of Melbourne
Level 6, 207 Bouverie St, Carlton VIC 3053

Volunteers Needed!
TRAINING FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGERS (TPOT study)

Who is running the project?
The Population Mental Health Group at The University of Melbourne.

Who can take part?
Parents with teenagers aged between 12-15 years within Victoria (one parent and one teenager per family).

What are the aims?
The project aims to teach parents the skills to assist a teenager, in the event that they develop a mental health problem or a physical injury and to evaluate the training offered.
We are interested to see if the skills taught to parents are used on adolescents and whether this has a long-term health benefit for adolescents.

What types of courses are offered?
The study offers a FREE 2-day course to parents, in either Youth Mental Health First Aid or an accredited Red Cross Apply First Aid course.

During online registration at www.tpot.net.au parents will need to select both courses but a computer will randomly place them into one course or the other.

What’s in it for me?
Parents receive their training course, the accompanying training materials and a certificate of completion for free.

Note: To be eligible, you must not have undertaken training in the previous three years in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), Youth MHFA or physical first aid.

This study has received ethics approval from The University of Melbourne’s Behavioural and Social Sciences Human Ethics Sub-Committee (ID: 1335/079) DEC00 (2012_001480) and the Catholic Education Office of Melbourne (CEOM) ID: 1877. It is funded by an NHMRC Australia Fellowship to Professor Anthony Jorm.

For more info & to register:
www.tpot.net.au
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Please remember that family holidays during the school term are counted as unapproved absences from the College. These can significantly impact on a student’s ability to achieve satisfactory outcomes in their subjects.