



MATER DEI MATTERS





A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO/PRINCIPAL

If you look closely at the Mater Dei logo you will notice that it highlights the word "peace". It is displayed all over our site and is clearly visible on student and staff uniforms. Recently I have been reflecting on the meaning of "peace" as I begin to develop the next strategic plan for our Organisation.

Peace is something that all of us yearn for. It implies tranquillity, harmony, restfulness and calm. Some of my fondest memories are of times when I felt a deep sense of peace. Genuine lasting peace, though, is much more than a passive state. Martin Luther King once said, "true peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." Peace will be temporary or false if there is injustice or unresolved inequity. Through its Benedictine tradition, Mater Dei stands for inclusion for all people, love of neighbour, compassion, stewardship and service. We believe in creating a world of acceptance and dignity for all people, especially those with an intellectual disability. These are contributors to creating a just society, and justice for each individual. The fruit of advocating for this kind of a world is genuine peace. Harmony between all people and fullness of life for each individual.

Next time you see the word, "peace" on a Mater Dei logo, know that it means much more than passively enjoying quiet and tranquillity! It signifies that we are actively pursuing a just society so that enduring peace will be experienced by our children, young adults and families.

Mark Raue
CEO/Principal

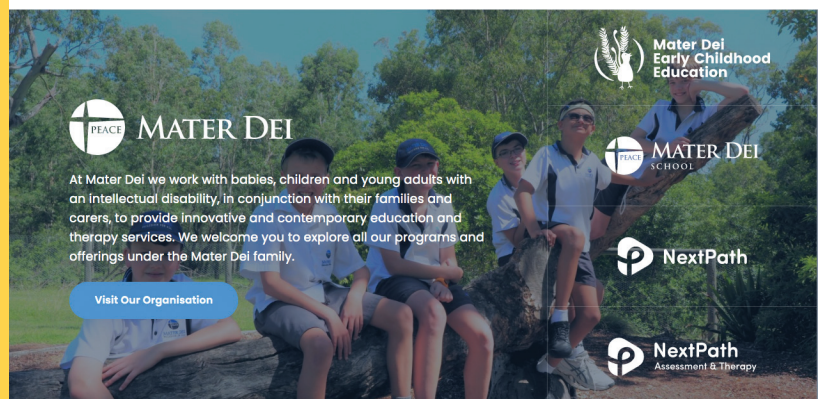
100 DAYS OF KINDERGARTEN

On 4 August, K Samaritan celebrated a big milestone... 100 Days of Kindy! Each year, this very important celebration has a theme. The 2020 theme was superheroes! The class had a big day of lessons themed around the number 100, and even made their own hero masks - all while dressed in their very best superhero attire. Such joy wouldn't be possible without the creativity and organisation of their classroom teacher, Mrs Gallagher, and Teachers' Assistant, Linda. Thanks also to all the parents and guardians who assisted their superheroes to mark such a super day!



NEW WEBSITE

After months of development, our brand new Mater Dei website has now been live for about two months! If you haven't seen it already, visit www.materdei.org.au to check it out. We're excited to be able to connect better with our community through a modern, user-friendly site. Thanks to our good friends at Greenhouse Creative (formerly Solutions Outsourced) in Camden for making it a reality!



Cover: National Tree Day 2020



SARAH'S GROWING INDEPENDENCE

Looking back on the past 30 years, our journey raising Sarah has, at times, been challenging, and at other times been so amazing it has brought tears to our eyes. So many times Sarah has made us so proud. No matter what challenges are in front of her, she does the best she possibly can and has achieved things that have amazed us.

Sarah left Mater Dei School in 2008, and after trying two other post-school programs, I found out about Mater Dei's NextPath Continuous Learning program through a friend at the Mater Dei Country Fair. We were third time lucky. I have never been afraid of asking questions and insisting Sarah has every opportunity available to her, so Sarah and I met with a NextPath Coordinator and discussed her needs and plans for the future. We very soon realized that NextPath was going to be able to offer Sarah the individualised program that we had been searching for since she left school 12 years ago.

Within six months of Sarah starting at NextPath, she was offered paid work for the very first time. After 10 years, we had finally cracked the paid workforce for Sarah. She was also able to secure more work in a café at Narellan eight hours a week while attending her work experience at Mount Annan Botanical Gardens Melaleuca House Café. Unfortunately, this all came to an end with the COVID-19 outbreak. While she was upset to discontinue her jobs, she was excited to be moving into a more independent life.

As a family, we decided we needed to help Sarah grow into her independence. So, we extended and added an additional storey to our house for Sarah to call her own. We are helping Sarah learn how to budget, shop, clean and make decisions on her own. She decides daily whether she wants to eat meals with us downstairs or if she will look after herself. This is working extremely well for Sarah who loves feeling independent.

NextPath Continuous Learning has also been supporting Sarah with the skills she needs for her new independent lifestyle. Her favourite day is Thursday, when her group at NextPath participates in the Healthy Living Program (HLP). She loves cooking the healthy recipes and helping wash up afterwards. Sarah's program has an independence capacity focus - working on time management (i.e. when she needs to wake up), cleaning and maintaining her independent space, meal planning, shopping lists and budgeting. She's looking forward to her next focus on meal planning.

In Sarah's new place, she has her nephews come and stay with her and even makes them breakfast in the morning! Sometimes we'll go and visit Sarah for a coffee. A downside for Sarah is that she now complains that everybody eats her food... because she now has to buy her own!

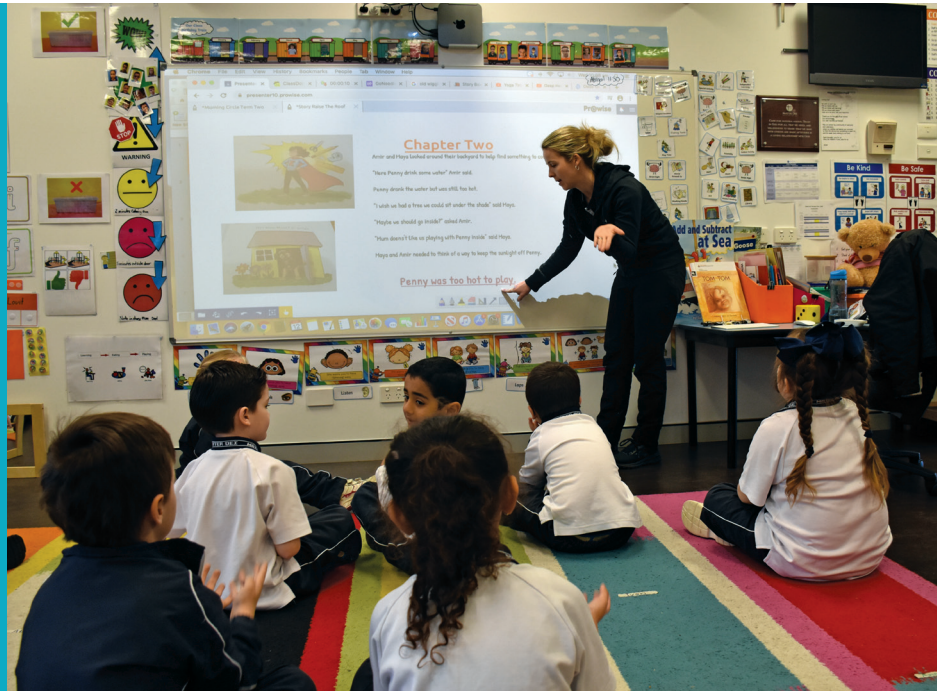
Sarah is a confident, chatty, happy young lady. We couldn't ask for more.

Written by Debbie Farrell, proud mother of Sarah.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

K SAMARITAN - KATE GALLAGHER

I have been using an adapted text in my Science program for our Engineering unit of work 'Raise the Roof'. Some of the ways I have adapted the original story include creating a shorter text with relevant visuals and using repeated storylines. Each page has a repeated storyline which reinforces the main idea for the chapter. Students engage with the repeated storyline by chorally responding while also using Key Word Signs. Using an adapted text has been successful as it is highly engaging for all students and provides them with opportunities to actively participate in the lesson.



1/2 BENEDICT - REBECCA HANRAHAN

As part of the In-Class Therapy Model, I have been collaborating with the speech and occupational therapists to embed students' therapy goals across all Key Learning Areas (KLAs). This means that all members of the class team (the teachers, teacher's assistants and therapists) know each of the students' individual therapy goals and the strategies that are being used to develop skills and work towards achieving their goals.

An example of how we are embedding therapy goals is through our small group work in Mathematics. Currently, each small group works with a member of the class team on different areas including number, time, multiplication and division. As the group works together towards building Mathematics skills and understanding, students are also working individually on their therapy goals such as pencil grip skills.

7/8 GREGORY - GEMMA CROFT & KELLIE ANDERSON

One of the areas that we have been working on is using different strategies to build communication skills. Some of the strategies we have been using include the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices, visual response options, response cards and Key Word Sign (KWS). Using AAC devices, visual response options and response cards provide students with the opportunity to respond non-verbally by selecting the appropriate image to communicate. We also encourage all students to use KWS for focus words during lessons. These strategies have been successful because they encourage all students to participate and also build students' confidence as it gives them a variety of ways to share their responses.





11/12 GIBBONS - SID CONTE

Teaching key vocabulary is an instructional strategy that assists students to build prior knowledge and understanding of the important words that will be used during the lesson. One way to ensure all students' access to expressing the key vocabulary words is through signing. One way I achieve this is by introducing each word verbally and in written form as well as with the relevant sign. We utilise the Auslan Signbank website to search for our key vocabulary words and then watch a video that demonstrates the sign/s for these. As a class we read and sign the key vocabulary words at the beginning of the lesson and throughout the lesson as needed.

9/10 POLDING - MICHELLE CHARLES

I have been using Graphic Organisers with 9/10 Polding as a way to help students organise their thoughts and ideas to assist with answering questions as well as a way for students to visually display information.

In Geography we have been learning about the human and physical features of places. While listening to a learning story about these features, students use a visual list to identify when they hear specific information in the story. This ensures students are engaging with the story while it is being read and also builds their skills in identifying and recording key ideas. Students then make connections to the story and use a visual worksheet to assist with making and communicating their connections with key features including the population and climate as well as the economic and political systems. Using these Graphic Organisers assist all students with recording key information during lessons and provide all students the opportunity to express their understanding of the content.



NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

ENGINEERING DAYS



Mater Dei School students dived right in to the 2020 Science Week theme - Deep Blue: innovations for the future.

K-3 students had to design and create a floating raft. Their success criteria (an important part of the process) was that the raft must float, and the person must not fall off.

Students in years 4-12 had to design and create an aquaculture fish farm. Their success criteria included that the top must float, the fish must stay wet, and predators like seals must be kept out.

All students worked as Ocean Engineers in small groups, and followed the Engineering Design Process:

1. ask questions
2. draw plans
3. imagine ideas and possible materials
4. create, and
5. test, improve and re-test to achieve the success criteria

The day was a great success. All the students were actively engaged and followed the Engineering Habits of Mind:

I try and try again to make things better;
I am a problem solver;
I investigate the properties and uses of materials.

Well done Ocean Engineers!

WHAT'S NEXT FOR NEXTPATH?

How well do you know this facet of Mater Dei?

You may have already heard of NextPath's two programs: NextPath Continuous Learning and NextPath Assessment & Therapy. But how much do you really know about them?

NextPath Continuous Learning began in 2018, and in just two years has grown from an initial enrolment of 6 Young Adults to 44 Young Adults in 2020.

NextPath Assessment & Therapy was officially formed as a brand and as part of NextPath in 2019. However, many members of our vibrant, skilled therapist team have been working at Mater Dei for years as part of what was once known as the Mater Dei Early Intervention Program.

So, what makes these programs so special?

Continuous Learning offers a post-secondary school process of self-determination and empowerment for Young Adults with an intellectual disability. At the start of each Young Adult's enrolment in the program, NextPath sits down with them to establish a goal plan. Goal Facilitators and Job Coaches rally around our Young Adults to facilitate them in reaching these goals, evaluating them, and setting new ones. They can be anything! From building job-readiness skills, to getting their L's, to honing in on independent living skills.

Assessment & Therapy provide Allied Health Services to all ages with a range of disciplines, including Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology and Physiotherapy. Our team of therapists have access to remarkable facilities, resources and opportunities for collaboration that make our work unique to other service providers. Assessment & Therapy run a range of group therapy programs for all ages with a transdisciplinary approach that integrate key goals from other therapy disciplines in a single group session. In total, the program runs approximately 25 groups within any given fortnight. Therapy is also available to school students via a best-practice, in-class setting, and is embedded into the everyday classrooms of Mater Dei School. This year, our therapists were even included in Parent-Teacher Interviews.

COVID-19 was a major obstacle across Mater Dei as an organisation, but NextPath were nimble (as were all our programs!). Continuous Learning switched to online learning and staff quickly developed 11 subject options for online groups, home program activity packs, 1:1 virtual sessions and phone call check-ins for all Young Adults. Assessment & Therapy were quick to develop telehealth solutions that are now a permanent part of the programs repertoire.

What's next for NextPath?

The Assessment & Therapy team is growing. The team currently comprises of six Occupational Therapists, four Speech Pathologists, a dedicated Allied Health Assistant and a star Physiotherapist. We have a new Speech Pathologist starting in September and potential to continue adding to our team to accommodate the programs huge waitlist. Continuous Learning can also expect to continue the growth we've seen in the past two years, and empower even more Young Adults to reach their self-determined life goals.





OUR FIRST CUSTOMER

Mater Dei Preschool in conjunction with their new team of baristas and chefs (A.K.A our preschool children) are thrilled to announce their new Café Beans is 'open for business'.

Noah, Logan and Daniel were excited to welcome CEO/Principal Mr Raue as their first customer when he popped in recently for a cup of coffee, cake and lunch.

Logan quickly took out his paper and pencil to record Mr Raue's order and stated that the coffee would cost \$5, as Logan moved to the cash register to find change for Mr Raue. It was then Noah's turn to prepare the coffee in our new Café Beans whilst Daniel was busily using tongs to make a delicious sandwich for Mr Raue and advising that we must always wash our hands before making lunch.

After Noah had made a second cup of coffee at Mr Raue's request, he hung up his chef's hat and apron on the uniform stand and relocated to Mater Dei Preschool's outside learning environment. Logan called out to Mr Raue ("Come Raue!") and led our guest outside to show him their vegetable patch whilst Daniel was enjoying a ride on the red bike and Noah was relaxing in the hammock after a hard shift at the Café.

Anyone for coffee?

Note: Due to the unprecedented amount of interest in Camden's newest brunch spot, Mater Dei Preschool's Café Beans is operating on a reservation-only basis. The waiting period is subject to change, depending when Noah is finished on the hammock.

PROUDLY MATER DEI

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mater Dei Early Childhood Education children, educators and staff members are delighted to have their new uniforms and library bags after many months of consideration, planning and preparation.

From our very first discussions, we were unanimous with our decision to centre our logo on the lyrebird (Wirid-Jiribin), the principal totem of the Dharawal people of the great south-western Sydney area on whose country we gather each day.

The lyrebird's foot prints on the back of our children's t-shirts symbolises the journey of our parents, guardians and families until each child walks on from us to the next stage of their educational journey.



THANK YOU SUPPORTERS

MAJOR DONATIONS

\$10,000 Bradcorp Holdings Pty Ltd

The Mater Dei Foundation is also very grateful for recent donations from:

Campbelltown Catholic Club Employees payroll giving	\$965
Specsavers Narellan	\$448
David & Meg Southwell	\$2,000
Paul & Margaret Wakeling	\$5,000

NEWSLETTER SUPPORTERS

Thanks also to contributors to this edition of Mater Dei Matters: jenny bartholomew graphic design, Tony Wolf & Son Quality Printers and everyone who provided stories and photographs.

For information on any of these events please contact Sarah Ryan on 4655 7481 or sarahr@materdei.org.au



MATER DEI TREK FOR OPPORTUNITY 2021 3-9 APRIL

SEE YOU IN TASMANIA



YOU CAN STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE. YOUR WAY.

It's not too late to sign up or to sponsor somebody!

Together we can make a difference for kids and young adults with an Intellectual Disability.

Visit moveit4materdei.raisely.com

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY IS OPEN UNTIL 21 OCTOBER!

DONATE - BE PART OF SOMETHING WONDERFUL

Your donation is 100% deductible

Issue 3/2020

I wish to make a tax deductible donation of \$ _____

Direct Deposit: A/c Name: Mater Dei
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Please charge my Mastercard VISA AMEX

_____ / _____ / _____ CCV _____ Expiry _____ / _____ Signature _____

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Your support will help us achieve and continue the good work of Mater Dei, making a daily and practical difference to the lives of our students, young people and their families. **THANK YOU!**