

## THE EMMANUEL CENTRE: FROM A VISION TO REALITY

Emmanuel College Warrnambool celebrated twenty-five years of the Emmanuel name on November 18 2016 with the official opening and blessing of the Emmanuel Centre. The largest building project in the College's 144-year history, the 9.5 million dollar Centre received no government funding.

Like the Sisters of Mercy who arrived in 1872 with no supplies, land or building having been asked by Bishop Goold to set up a Mercy community and school, the College turned to the community for help. The community saw the need and responded generously, turning a

vision into a reality and contributing \$1.9 million towards the project to date. The generosity of the community demonstrates a strong vote of confidence in the College and its future as a leading provider of education in the district.

The vision for the project evolved from an in-depth look at the educational needs of students into the future after a period of extraordinary growth saw the student population of the College double in a ten-year period. Seating 1,500 people the Centre is the largest facility of its type in the South-West region. It is much more than an auditorium comprising: two sports courts, stage, mezzanine level for conferences or group training, commercial kitchen than can provide dinner for 800, gym, learning areas, staff areas and change rooms, first aid room and an Industrial Skills Centre below the auditorium.



ARIA Award winning past students Shane Howard and Marcia Howard joined Year 10 student Nancie Shipper on stage to perform *Solid Rock*. Backing vocals in Pitjantjatjara language from the award-winning Emmanuel Singers created a very memorable opening.

The opening ceremony included a play entitled *Journey* that roamed the auditorium and was shown on three large screens via live feed. *Journey* told the story of two young people trying to find a place where they belong and encountering some of the key characters in Emmanuel's history along the way. These included the founders of its predecessor schools (St Ann's and CBC) Mother M. Philomene Maguire and Brother Egan.

Written for the occasion, *Journey Song* followed the play. Written by a staff member, it was performed by the Emmanuel Singers and the 1993 College Captain Anna Lee (Robertson) Williams.





Bishop Paul Bird blessed the building while Emmanuel College Inspiring Alumni member Felicity Melican gave the opening address. Other speakers included: Principal Peter Morgan, Capital Appeal Committee Chairman Brian Callaghan and College Captains Isabella Mahoney-O'Donnell and Joseph Brady.

An excerpt of Principal, Peter Morgan's words from the opening of the Emmanuel Centre can be read below.

*Today, we celebrate two wonderful achievements, the 25th anniversary of the formation of Emmanuel College from its predecessor schools St Ann's and CBC, and the completion of this wonderful facility. The Emmanuel Centre is an investment in the future of this College, and indeed, our region. Costing \$9.5 million dollars, the Centre is the largest building project undertaken by the College. Like so many things, the Emmanuel Centre started with a small idea. By adding committed people, and many of them, plus careful planning and development, the end result is a multipurpose learning and recreational facility able to accommodate our whole school today with space for enrolments up to 1500 in the future.*



*Sitting as it does, juxtaposed against the truly beautiful convent building dating to the 1870s, this pair of buildings now make a statement to all who observe them. The convent, originally the home of Captain Ardlie until purchased by Mother Philomene on her arrival in 1872 and developed over many years by successive generations of courageous women, makes a statement, tells a story about who we are and from where we have come. The Emmanuel Centre makes an equally strong statement about who we are and where we are going. In other words, we may celebrate twenty-five years of Emmanuel College this year, but our history and our traditions span one hundred and forty-four years, and presently, our eyes are fixed firmly on the future. Our greatest strength comes from knowing who we are, from honouring our traditions and from moving with confidence into the future. "From little things, big things grow!"*



The finale was *Sing*, written by Gary Barlow and composer Andrew Lloyd Webber for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Concert celebrations. Performed by the Emmanuel Singers and cast members of the College's 2017 musical, it concluded with bagpipes leading a procession of invited guests out of the auditorium.

You can watch a short but dynamic video that gives a glimpse inside the building here on the Emmanuel Warrnambool YouTube channel here. <http://tinyurl.com/z3c3dfr>

*Jean Christie - Director of Marketing*

