



Building Futures, Honouring Past: A Timeline of Dandenong Primary School



Acknowledgement of Country

Dandenong Primary School is located on Country of the Bunurong people of the South-Eastern Kulin Nation. The school honours the Burong people's sovereignty and connection to Country as traditional custodians of the land on which we learn and teach. We pay our respects to their Elders, past present and emerging and extend this respect to all First Nations people.

Circa 1839

The first European thought to have set eyes on the Dandenong Creek was likely botanist Daniel Bunce in or around 1839. Cattle soon arrived to graze along the banks of the Dandenong Creek, followed by timber cutters (the excellent river gums were used to build structures like Melbourne's wharves)

1851

The first school in Dandenong is thought to have been erected in 1851 as a three-room tent on the Church of England Crown Grant in Langhorne Street.

1852

Dandenong begins as a township.

1855

A Church of England denominational school opens and remains operational until 30 April 1874 just before the opening of State School 1403.

1861

By 1861, there were 40 houses in the Dandenong township housing 193 people



1866

Dandenong Market commences trading on 10 October, selling livestock, fruit, dairy products and other farm produce.

1873

Dandenong Shire is proclaimed.

On 18 April 1873 a public meeting of Dandenong residents is held under the chair of Mr H. Sutherland, and a letter drafted urging the Minister for Public Instruction to open a State School in the township. The government agrees to the request and allocates a site on the corner of Robinson and Foster Streets. Residents were displeased with the small size of the proposed school and its proximity to hotels and livestock saleyards, as well as the lack of a railway line.

1874

Dandenong State School 1403 opens officially on 4 May 1874. Constructed of timber and measuring 60' x 20', it was built by local contractor Henry Powis for a tender price of £497. The first head teacher was Malcolm Macpherson, who formerly taught agriculture in Scotland. He had 195 children enrolled by 1875.

1877

Rail line opens on 8 October.

1878

The establishment of the rail line prompts parents to protest due to concerns about safety and the limited size of the original school site.

Two acres of land are purchased from William Masters, whose home was retained on the new site until 1955.



1880

In April, tenders for a brick school to accommodate 200 pupils and Thomas Corley's price of £1,444.80 is accepted.

1881

On 26 January, John Keys writes to the Minister of Public Instruction, Mr Collard Smith, inviting him to open the new school on 4 March. Smith accepts the honour, and is joined by M. Montmahou, Inspector-General of Schools in France. The design was presumably carried out by Henry Bastow who was then the education department architect. Consisting of two rooms and a cloakroom, the largest classroom was 36' x 25' in size, with the second slightly smaller, at 34' x 20'. A picket fence six feet high encloses the grounds, with the yards being divided into playing areas each for boys and girls.

MacPherson remains head teacher until 1888.



1888

A Diphtheria breakout in the community claims the lives of three students. Diphtheria would later become extremely rare in developed nations because of the widespread use of the diphtheria vaccine.

1889

Gustavus A. Swan commences as principal and leads the school through until 1899.

1890

The Dandenong Town Hall is built in Free Classical style as the combined Shire Hall, Courthouse and Mechanics Institute, at a cost of about 12,000 pounds.

1894

Hallam Primary School becomes an adjunct to Dandenong State School 1403 in 1894. This resulted in older students from Hallam Primary School attending classes at Dandenong.

1899

William White commences as principal and leads the school through until 1906.

1900-1901

By 1900 the school had become so overcrowded that classes are held in the old Church of England Sunday School hall in Langhorne Street until an additional brick room is added to the rear in 1901.



1904

Hallam Primary School is separated from Dandenong State School 1403. All Eumemmerring students then attended school in a new building on Hallam's Road.

On 15 June, 'old boy' Albert Hort presents the school with an engraved barometer.

1905

On 21 October, the school celebrates the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar which took place on 21 October 1805.

“The bell rang at the usual time on Friday morning, when we marched round, saluted the flag, and gave three lusty cheers for the brave deeds and victory of Nelson on that memorable occasion, in which England was made Queen of the Seas, a position that she has held ever since. In our classroom we decorated two pictures, one of 'Nelson' and one of The Battle of Trafalgar with flowers” (South Burke and Mornington Newspaper, 25 October 1905).

Circa 1905-1906

Sir John McEwan (born 29 March 1900), who would later become the 18th prime minister of Australia, begins his education at the school.

1906

George W. Talbot commences as principal, leading the school through the Great War and until 1919.



1909

Four more brick rooms are added behind the original 1881 building. The largest room served as an Infant Room for grades one and two, featuring a tiered gallery extending the length of the room for an unobstructed view of the blackboard.

1910

In about 1910 a timber Sloyd (woodwork) room is constructed at the rear of the brick classrooms, and boys from St Mary's (established 1912), Clayton State School 734, and Springvale and Noble Park areas travelled to State School 1403 for woodwork lessons. In 1920, the structure is moved to Dandenong High School, established in 1919.

In or around 1910, Francis (Frank) Field, who would later become the Deputy Premier of Victoria and Minister of Public Instruction, begins his education as a first-year pupil at the school. He continues his early education at the school before transferring to neighbouring St. Mary's upon its opening in 1912.

1915

Despite the depression of the war in Europe and the drought in Australia, the school holds its annual picnic on 26 February at the usual locale of Mordialloc. The Dandenong Advertiser reports that “a special train was chartered for the occasion. The train was a lengthy one, but every compartment was well filled and there must have been between 800 and 900 persons on board”.

1920

Herbert B. Williamson commences as principal, leading the school through until 1925.



1925

Percival F. Ewers commences as principal, leading the school through until 1927.

Dux of the School awarded to Irene Loone.

1926

Student Gertie Walden is recognised for having attended the school for six years without missing a single day.

Dux of the School awarded to Anthony Balmer.

1927

William E. Hall commences as principal, leading the school through until 1928.

Dux of the School awarded to Jack Green.

1928

Arthur A Besant commences as principal, leading the school through the Great Depression until 1939.

In July, the pupils of the Dandenong High School and of the senior grades of the Dandenong Primary Schools are shown a series of films of Australian and geographical interest at the Boomerang Theatre. These films included, among others, Australian timber and cattle industries and the scenic beauties of the Jenolan Caves and the Derwent River.

Dux of the School awarded to Adelaide Gaskett.



1929

As it is understood that the Government refuses to contribute to a £1 for £1 basis to assist in having the school piano repaired or a new one purchased, the Mothers' Club decides to raise the money itself by organising a series of 'socials'.

The Dandenong Journal reports that "The celebrating of Empire Day took place at the Dandenong East school on Friday afternoon, there being a fair attendance. The weather conditions did not permit of children saluting the flag, and the celebration was confined to indoors. Although the school inspector (Mr. F. Green) had been at the school for several days previously, the headmaster (Mr. A. Besant) and staff had everything in readiness for the occasion. During the morning the Inspector delivered a most interesting and inspiring address to the children. He gave an historical outline of the Empire, and firmly impressed upon the children that they were members of the great British Empire, and hoped they would grow up to be proud of the fact and stand to the great principles of justice, order and good Government".

On 5 September, the Dandenong Journal reports that the school's Vocational Guidance Committee had met "last Wednesday evening," with Principal Besant delivering an address on the "necessity of making provisions so that boys leaving school will be discouraged from taking on 'dead end jobs'."

On 29 June, the Dandenong Journal reports that the school committee and Mothers' Club held a very enjoyable euchre and dance at the school "last Tuesday evening", noting, "There was a large number present, and the floor was in excellent order for dancing".



On 12 September, the Dandenong Journal reports that the school committee had met the Monday evening before and adopted a resolution "emphatically protesting against the inaction" of the Education Department due to its failure to take steps to repair the school's playground.

On 26 September, the Dandenong Journal reports that, "Despite the biting cold of the rain and wind, there was a large attendance at the Dandenong East State school last Friday afternoon, when an Australian tea was held under the auspices of the Mothers' Club". Students reportedly entertained the adults with songs, physical culture displays, piano-forte solos, violin items, and dances.

1930

Student enrolments total about 360

Dux of the School awarded to Jean West.

1931

Dux of the School awarded to Jean Spark (1930 and 1931 saw a 'pair of Jeans')

1932

Dux of the School awarded to Marie Carter.

1933

The school celebrates 60-years with a large gathering held on 15 December.

Dux of the School awarded to Elsie Scott.



1934

Dux of the School awarded to Allan Weekes.

1935

Student enrolments total 386.

The school is awarded with an A.N.A prize for the best kept grounds and garden in its inspectorate, receiving a picture of General Monash.

Dux of the School awarded to Vera Clarke.

1936

Dux of the School awarded to Cherry Watson

1937

Student enrolments number no fewer than 400

A Melbourne infantile paralysis (as Polio was then called) epidemic begins on 21 June with confirmed cases in Dandenong resulting in the school being closed for a period from 20 August.

Dux of the School awarded to Merle McHenry.

1938

Dux of the School awarded to E.J. Smith.



1939

Richard J. Keddie commences as principal, leading the school through until 1941.

On 11 October, the Dandenong Journal reports that Principal Keddie announced that “all records in collection of eggs for the hospitals have been broken by the pupils of his school” with 227 dozen eggs collected in the last week.

Dux of the School awarded to Gwen Gunther.

1940

On 2 February, staff gather to bid farewell to Miss Kelly, who had been teaching at the school for some years but was resigning to get married. Principal Keddie presented Miss Kelly with two silver entree dishes and a dainty Royal Dalton jug. Miss Austin expressed good wishes on behalf of the ladies.

On 28 February, the Dandenong Journal reports the “wisdom” of the school’s picnic committee in “arranging for the presence at their picnic of four senior members of the Dandenong Life Saving Club was demonstrated on Saturday, when two children got into difficulties and brought ashore by the life-savers”.

The Dandenong Journal reports that Anzac Day services were held at the school on 24 April. Students sang *O God, Our Help* and *For England*.

On 7 May, the Dandenong Journal reports that students dressed as soldiers, sailors, Air Force personnel, and nurses paraded in colourful attire on Lonsdale Street the day before. The purpose was to advertise and raise funds for the school’s Patriotic Fete, scheduled to be held the following Friday.



In June, the Dandenong Shire Council leads a deputation to the Minister for Education, urging the purchase of adjacent land before it is developed. On 12 June, the Dandenong Journal reported, "Approximately 400 children attended the school - very often more, and of the two acres of ground, half an acre was taken up by buildings. So restricted was the area that the boys could not practise football or cricket without endangering the smaller children. An averaged-sized block for such an attendance is 4 acres"

On 18 September, the Dandenong Journal reports that the school had enrolled 40 new pupils in the last month and that student numbers at the school are "mounting so rapidly that accommodation will soon be taxed to capacity".

On 25 September, the Dandenong Journal reports that four students, "unaided by adults, and acting entirely on their own initiative," staged a successful concert in aid of the school's War Fund at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. de Graaf in McPherson Street on the Saturday prior.

The school is awarded the A.N.A prize for the best kept grounds and garden in its inspectorate, receiving a picture of the Australian parliament building.

Dux of the School awarded to Lindsay Rowe who beat his twin brother, Russell, by 5½ points for the honour. The previous year, Lindsay and Russell claimed the top two spots in the seventh grade, with Lindsay narrowly edging out his brother by half a point.



1941

Student enrolments total 402.

On 5 March, the school holds a picnic at Edithvale with four senior life-savers from the Dandenong Life-Saving Club in attendance.

The school initiates a Young Farmers' Club, which garnered 63 members upon its establishment. Through the club, children were educated on various agricultural practices such as tree-planting, grafting, and pruning.

On 24 May, Empire Day celebrations featured a brief story from the chairman of the school's committee, Reverend Hadley, illustrating the significance of belonging to such an Empire. Councillor Tharle of the Dandenong Shire spoke warmly about the students of the school, expressing pride in knowing that his own school days had been spent there.

On June 18, the Dandenong Journal reports that "Six Dandenong East School girls, Pam Saunders, Hazel Gasgoine, Ada Males, Hazel Cross, Gwen Holt and Ruth Males held a bazaar on the spacious lawns of Mrs A. Males' home" at 30 Clow Street, raising "the excellent sum of £5/13/3 for the School Patriotic Fund".

By October, the school community had already contributed the sum of £416 to the Victorian State Schools' War Relief Fund. In October it forwards about £40 more to the District Treasurer. Head teacher, Mr James. A Towner writes, "We were aiming at reaching £500 before the Christmas vacation. Can Ave do it? – Of course ye can!".



On 1 October, the Dandenong Journal reports that a number of students received a certificate from the Education Department for having raised at least £1 for the Patriotic Fund.

Dux of the School awarded to Betty Caithness.

1942

Student enrolments total around 425

Harold Hughes commences as principal, leading the school through until 1944.

Stocked by pupils, the Dandenong Hospital Auxiliary's June stall netted the pleasing sum of £12/13/8½ despite atrocious weather conditions which militated against it. Had the weather been kinder it is felt that this result would have been considerably improved upon.

As of August, no less than 106 students had raised a £1 each or more for the State Schools' War Relief Fund.

On 16 December, the Dandenong Journal reports, "Dandenong State School 1403 has the keen satisfaction of reporting a 100 per cent pass in its Merit Certificate class this year. Thirteen pupils sat, and the 13 gained their certificates.

Dux of the School awarded to Doreen Bending.



1943

Student enrolments total around 390, down on the previous year due to new restrictions on the admittance of younger students.

On 20 October, the Dandenong Journal reported that a 12-year old student was struck by a car on Canberra Avenue. Although he sustained a badly lacerated thigh and abrasions, his injuries were not considered serious.

1944

Charles A. Kilpatrick commences as principal, leading the school through the tail end of World War II and until 1949.

On 16 March, the school committee and members of the school host a social evening and presentation in the supper room of the Dandenong Town Hall in recognition of the many years Mr R Towner was stationed at the school, including as acting head teacher for a time, before he transfers to Colac.

On 24 August, the school's football team, coached by teacher Mr. Birchill suffers a defeat in a game against Noble Park. Final scores are: Noble Park 15.10, Dandenong 4.4.

Student John Crellin receives a Young Workers' Patriotic Certificate for having contributed £1 to the War Relief Funds.

In August, the Mothers' Club ball raises £32 with 200 attendees. The event aims to raise funds for sports equipment and books.



A big gathering of mothers attends the annual meeting of the Dandenong East State School's Mothers' Club, held at the school on 7 September, and another successful year was reportedly embarked upon. At the time, the Mothers' Club reported, "We have had a very enjoyable year, during which we have bought two basketballs for the girls, two footballs for the boys, seedlings for the garden, supplementary readers for Grade 1, library books for Grades 1 to 5 and we intend to provide library books for Grades VI, VII, and VIII as soon as books are procurable".

On 17 October, Grade 5 students organise a bazaar, each contributing by bringing vegetables, cakes, sweets, and groceries. Their efforts resulted in raising £3/10/15 for the School's Patriotic Fund.

On 22 November, the Dandenong Journal reports that with the help of parents Valma Sharkie and Victor Nelson, two students of Grade 2 held a stall in Stud Road, raising the "splendid sum" of £30 for the school's War Relief Fund.

1945

On 24 April, the school conducts an Anzac Day observance. Mr. Les Taylor from the local RSL addressed the students, highlighting the significance of Anzac Day. The school's wreath of laurels is placed on the flagpole, while wreaths from the Mothers' Club and parents are placed on a cenotaph established for the occasion.

On 16 May, the Dandenong Journal reports that the school has raised £1750 for the War Relief Fund, hailing it as "an excellent achievement which has been surpassed by very few schools of Dandenong's size, and reflects the wonderful support teachers and pupils have had from parents in their patriotic effort."



On June 6, the Dandenong Journal reports that the school's Young Farmers' Club has been provided with the use of a "building block in Walker Street" by Mr Bert Simon who "had it ploughed and put into condition for planting and has also promised to install a tap". Club members "plan to grow vegetables and flowers there as part of their handwork and science projects".

On 22 August, the Dandenong Journal reports that "Inspector D.J. Armstrong proceeded against Charles Sparks on five charges of not sending his son, Ian, to school regularly. The boy, according to the Inspector, had left the Dandenong East School of his own accord and had gone in and enrolled himself at the Hughesdale Technical School, and had attended there". Knowing how difficult it is to get pupils enrolled at the technical schools, "parents will chuckle over the story of how a Dandenong boy went in and attached himself to the classes and got away with it - for a time at least".

1946

On 25 September, the Dandenong Journal reports that "When the Hon. Frank Field, M.L.A. (Minister for Education) received a deputation from Dandenong last Wednesday urging the incorporation of a Youth Centre in the plans of the new Dandenong East School, the request held particular interest for him, for he told the deputants that he spent his early school days in the present school".



1947

From early morning on the last day of the school year, members of the school committee and Mothers' Club work tirelessly at the school, preparing for a school break-up party. They prepare hundreds of sandwiches and cakes, as well as sweets, fruits, ices, and drinks. At lunchtime, parents provide an excellent spread for everyone. After lunch, the school heads to Dandenong Park, where the school committee have organised a sports program consisting of nearly 40 events.

Dux of the School awarded to Gwen Ward.

1948

Over the course of several months, the 1881 building undergoes structural repairs and has its flooring replaced. On 3 March, the Dandenong Journal reports, "this modernising of the building will be much appreciated by staff and scholars alike, especially as the erection of a new school, long overdue, still looks a long way off."

On 8 December, the Dandenong Journal reported that Miss Bateson would resign from the Education Department to get married. Members of staff were entertained at an afternoon tea and wished her every happiness.

On 16 December, the Mothers' Club organises a school break-up event, featuring a spread of sandwiches, cakes, sweets, and soft drinks served onsite. Following this, an afternoon picnic took place at Dandenong Park, where children eagerly participate in races. The event concludes with the annual presentation of prizes to the most accomplished students in each grade.

Dux of the School awarded to Gladys Cope.



1949

Lindsay R. Smith commences as principal, leading the school through until 1952.

On 1 June, the Dandenong Journal reports that Councillor Terry attended the school's 24 May Empire Day celebrations. In an address to the students, Councillor Terry emphasised the need for "honesty in character building - the foundation of any great nation".

On 15 August, the Dandenong Journal reports that three students organised a highly successful stall for the School War Relief Fund. The students performed admirably, and with great pride, they handed over the £4/4/7 profit to Principal Smith.

On 18 August, the school hosts an open day with approximately 80 to 90 parents in attendance. The Dandenong Journal reported that the District Inspector, Mr. H. J. Weir addressed the gathering, speaking about the education system. He remarked, "Great changes have taken place, and what was good enough when parents went to school, is not good enough for the children of today."

The Victorian Director of Education, Brig. A. H. Ramsay, accepts an invitation to attend a gathering of parents in the school at 8 o'clock in the morning on Friday 2 December to officially hand over a newly installed Wireless Sound System

The School Committee's Cup for the Dux of State School 1403 is won by Mavis Marshall and is presented to her with congratulations by school committee member, Arthur Gibson.



1950

On 8 March, the Dandenong Journal reported that Councillor Terry pointed out that the children at the school had once again been unable to access drinking water from the taps during two recent warm days. He moved that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission be contacted again, requesting an improvement in the supply.

On 28 June, the Dandenong Journal reports that Ryland family hosted a backyard concert at their Grandview Avenue home on the Saturday prior with about 80 children attending and raising money for the “Starving Children of Europe” with student, Alan Robert, as M.C. and stage manager. The audience was treated to “sketches, songs, duets, recitations and a Puppet Show”.

In August, the Dandenong Journal reports that a recent school open day was attended by 100 mothers, who were amazed by the significant changes in teaching methods compared to "their days". Another open session was held at 7:30pm and was attended by about 50 parents, "including some fathers."

The Mothers’ Club organises a marvellous lunch including sweets, ice-cream and soft drinks at the school break-up picnic at Dandenong Park.

Dux of the School awarded to Margaret Norris



1951

The Education Department erects a Bristol prefabricated aluminium unit, and an additional five acres were purchased from the Masters family, bringing the total area of the site to seven acres.

On 6 June, the Dandenong Journal reports that “Last Thursday, the Dandenong East State School Mothers’ Club held a very successful tennis tournament,” raising nearly £9 for the Women’s Hospital Appeal.

On 15 August, the Dandenong Journal reports that “on August 2nd, the Dandenong State School (1403) Mothers’ Club arranged a trip to Maroondah Dam. Thirty-two members and friends comprised the party which left per bus at 9.30 a.m., and arrived back home at 3:45pm”

On 17 August, the school holds an open day for Centenary Education Week with displays of student work.

1952

Fawcett D. Head commences as principal, leading the school through until 1955.

Student enrolments total 478.

On 2 July, the Dandenong Journal reports that “Miss Austin, who has been a popular member of the Dandenong East State School teaching staff for the past 17 years, has retired from the Education Department. She will be greatly missed after such long and friendly service at the one school, and many former pupils will wish her well now she has relinquished her position”.



1953

Student enrolments total 574.

1954

Enrolment numbers swell to 613. Again, classes are held in the Anglican Sunday School hall.

1955

David W. Williams commences as principal, leading the school through until 1958.

Enrolments reach 700, a second unit of light timber construction was brought in.

1959

James E. Pask commences as principal, leading the school through until 1962.

There are 749 pupils with 17 classes held in 15 school rooms.

1960

Simon McKeon AO FAICD (born 19 December 1955) begins his education at the school.

Simon would go on to become a notable Australian lawyer, businessman, philanthropist, and sportsman. He has been chancellor of Monash University, and non-executive director of Rio Tinto, Spotless Group, and National Australia Bank. He is retained by Macquarie Bank Melbourne as a consultant and is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. On 25 January 2011 he is named the 2011 Australian of the Year.



1961

Dandenong South State School opens, providing relief for the overcrowded State School 1403 site.

The main 1881 school building is renovated, along with the school's shelter sheds.

The 'Rural Training School' (RTS) classroom is established, accommodating two boys and two girls at each year level from Prep through to Year 6 to provide comprehensive teacher training tailored for rural educational settings.

1962

John McLachlan commences as principal, leading the school through until 1964.

1964

Australian basketballer Mel Dalglish (born 24 January 1959) commences his education in the school. He would go on to compete in the men's tournament at both the 1980 and 1984 Summer Olympics.

1965

Roy W. Brown commences as principal, leading the school through until 1967.

The school's House System is introduced to “stimulate interest in school work, sport and general behaviour, and to promote the idea of team spirit and co-operation”.

The school produces a comprehensive 1965 Yearbook (available on our school website)



1966

On 6 April, Dandenong Primary School student, Stephen Cairns, reports being witness to an unidentified flying object (UFO) as he walked to school with his mother along Foster Street following a dentist or doctor's appointment. The object was observed by multiple individuals in surrounding areas, including students at Westall High School.

1967

On 19 December, former student, Sir John McEwan, is sworn in as the 18th Prime Minister of Australia

The oval is laid.

1968

Sydney Reed commences as principal, leading the school through until 1971.

1969

At 12.56 pm on 21 July, Australian Eastern Standard Time, pupils and staff gather around the school's black and white television to join 600 million people around the world to witness mankind take its 'one giant leap' as Neil Armstrong walks on the Moon.

1972

Thomas Houlihan commences as principal, leading the school through until 1978.

George Wilson takes on the role of Acting Principal.

1979

Desmond Walsh commences as principal, leading the school through until 1982



1983

In about 1983, a new student toilet block is constructed.

Peter Monk commences as principal, leading the school through until 1987.

The multi-purpose hall was officially opened by the State Treasurer, The Hon. R. A. Jolly MP on 2 December

1987

Following Peter Monk's departure, Ian Ferguson took on the role of Acting Principal.

1988

Kelvin Legg commences as principal, leading the school through until 1994.

1992

David Schmidt takes on the role of relieving principal for a period

1994

Following Kelvin Legg, Ursula Cahill takes on the role of Acting Principal for Term 2.

David Crozier commences as principal, going on to become the school's longest serving principal to date and leading the school through the turn of the millenia and until 2011.

Extensions to the multi-purpose hall are officially opened on 30 October to commemorate the school's 120th anniversary.



The 30 October celebrations to commemorate the school's 120th anniversary includes a morning dedication service at St James Church with formalities commencing later in the morning in the school's multi-purpose hall. Foramilities include an official welcome by Principal David Crozier, the unveiling of a plaque and the cutting of a birthday cake. The school community enjoys a picnic lunch.

1999

The school celebrates 125-years.

2011

On 25 January, former student, Simon McKeon AO FAICD, is named Australian of the Year.

As part of the implementation of the Australian Government's \$42 billion Building the Education Revolution (BER) program, two new permanent buildings are constructed. One building near to the school's oval and the other near to the Foster Street site boundary.

The school is recognised as a Victorian Education Excellence Awards finalist in the category of Partnerships with Parents and Community for its Community Hub and Dandy Pals Playgroup work.

2012

Christine Toth commences as principal, leading the school through until 2016.

2014

The celebrates 140-years



2015

In November an onsite kindergarten is established

2016

Daniel Riley begins his tenure as principal on 11 July and remains in the position to this day.

Census data reveals that over 70% of residents in the City of Greater Dandenong spoke a language other than English with more than half of the population born overseas, originating from 157 different countries, making the area the most culturally diverse in Australia.

2017

Year 6 student Ramin Kazimi receives the Victorian Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) MY Education Awards Outstanding Student award in 2017 for his integrity and leadership skills. The award was presented by the Minister for Education, The Hon. James Merlino. Ramin had only arrived in Australia in 2015 with limited English proficiency, yet within two years, he achieves the distinction of being awarded Dux of the School for 2017.

2018

Work commences on replacing the flooring in the staffroom and corridors of the 1881 building, as well as transforming an ageing quadrangle garden area into a new deck and outdoor learning space. The project was completed in February 2019.

The school is honoured with a Victorian Early Years Award in the category of Supporting Parents to Build their Capacity and Confidence in recognition of the impact of school's 'Dandy Pals Playgroup' and 'Step Into Kinder' programs.



2019

Simon McKeon AO FAICD returns to honour his beloved teacher, Mr. Neil Vague, by establishing 'Vague Square', a new synthetic sports field located between the 5/6 BER building and onsite kindergarten. This special area has become a vibrant hub of activity, where children eagerly rush to during playtime and lunchtime to engage in a variety of sports and games. An official opening ceremony is held on Friday 28 June and includes Simon McKeon, Neil, his wife and members of the extended Vague family.

2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a transition to remote and flexible learning was announced on 16 March with Term 1 coming to an earlier than scheduled end on 24 March

From the start of Term 2, Victoria's school system transforms itself to enable children and young people to undertake remote and flexible learning. Across the state, school leaders, teachers, families, students, and others that support them adopt new approaches to ensure the best possible outcomes within difficult circumstances. There are plenty of challenges, but also many successes.

Students return to onsite learning on 9 June but continue to transition between remote and onsite learning through the remainder of the year



2021

Victorian government schools continue to transition between remote and onsite learning in response to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

Long-serving Assistant Principal Anne Pereira assumes the role of Acting Principal from 1 April to 17 December while Daniel Riley temporarily steps away to lead Wooranna Park Primary School.

On 7 December, Dandenong Primary School is honoured with a Victorian Multicultural Award for Excellence in the category of Police Community Exemplary Award, recognising the school's contribution to fostering meaningful relationships between Multicultural Communities and the Victoria Police. Throughout the year, the school collaborated with local law enforcement to develop a series of educational videos. One set of videos focuses on addressing barriers to reporting family violence and promoting safety. Another set aims to raise awareness about youth support agencies and services available in the Dandenong area.

Dux of the School awarded to Donya Rahimi.

2022

On 25 January, the school completes work to transform a mound of dirt left behind with the construction of the 2011 BER buildings into the so called 'Anne Pereira Amphitheatre' which is located between the school oval and Vague Square

Students and staff return for a Coronavirus-interruption-free year.



The school community plants over 100 native trees around the perimeter of the school oval. Species included manna gums, sheoaks and wattle trees.

On 17 December, the school officially opens its newly constructed sand track of approximately 300 metres in length around the perimeter of the school oval.

Dux of the School awarded to Nidhi Nishanth Dhanya.

2023

The circa 1983 toilet block is refurbished

On 9 November, the Greater Dandenong Early Learning Alliance (ELA), comprising four schools and five kindergartens, including Dandenong Primary School, is honoured with a Victorian Early Years Award in the Continuity of Learning category. The alliance employs a multi-disciplinary approach aimed at enhancing language and literacy skills in children aged 3 to 8. A central tenet of this approach is ensuring seamless continuity of learning in language and literacy development from kindergarten to primary school. ELA has bolstered collaborative partnerships, fostered relationships, and increased engagement among educators, educational institutions, families, and communities through co-design initiatives.

Dux of the School presented to Abigail Tivendale by long servicing school council president and father of the recipient, Mr Knowles Tivendale.



2024

The school accommodates 431 children from Foundation (Prep) to Year 6, comprising four Foundation classes, three Year 1 classes, three Year 2 classes, five composite Year 3/4 classes, and four composite Year 5/6 classes.

Specialist classes include physical education (PE) and sport, science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), visual art, performing arts, and more.

The school maintains a specialised English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes and offers extra language and literacy support across all year levels.

In addition to learning and teaching staff, the school maintains a small team of highly dedicated wellbeing staff to support the health and wellbeing of children and families. The school also maintains a Victorian Early Years Award winning 'Community Hub', a welcoming place where families from diverse backgrounds, particularly mothers with preschool children, come to connect, share and learn.

The school's highly dedicated staff are almost as diverse as its student population, speaking a range of additional languages including Dari, Hindi, Spanish, French, Serbian, Albanian, Greek, Cantonese, Mandarin, Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Russian.

The school celebrates its 150-years anniversary on 4 May.

To be continued...