ST LAURENCE’S COLLEGE

A Catholic School for Boys in the Edmund Rice Tradition

Celebrating the Past, Living the Present,
Building the Future.
From the Principal

Welcome to the last edition of Lauries for the centenary year. 2015 has been an extraordinary celebration of our story.

The Southbank story was a unique expression of that story through the Arts. An audience of 800 were immersed in a jazz idiom as big bands, a choir of over 200 and premier jazz performances took the stage in ERPAC in August to tell the story and history of Lauries and Southbank.

During the year the College has reconnected with old boys all over the world. Michael Didyk is just one example of an extraordinary life. It is a highlight of the year that so many old boys shared their pride in their alma mater.

But the influence of Lauries is broad too, especially in Timor Leste.

The President, Taur Matan Ruak, of Timor Leste completed a visit to the villages of Deleso, Railaco Leten and Railaco Kriac earlier this year. These are the villages where St Laurence’s in collaboration with St Edmunds and St Patrick’s have built classrooms and a vocational centre. The President toured the villages and received details of the international support for the people in these countries. The President thanked the Edmund Rice global community for the work that it does in the villages of Railaco and asked especially to:

‘….please convey to the people and organisations in Australia my special thanks for what they are doing for the people here in Timor through the support of Edmund Rice.’

Thank you for your part in the Lauries Story for 2015.
On the cover . . .

Each Spring, and usually in time with the beginning of Term 4, the SLC Jacaranda trees bloom, lining our Stephens Road street frontage. A common flowering tree planted widely in Asia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Australia, the tropical flower’s colour is well known at Lauries with the day shirt ‘jacaranda blue’ worn by all students. The legend of the Jacaranda has it that if a flower from the tree drops on your head, you will pass all your exams. True story.

To ensure you don’t miss out, there are now more ways to stay up to date with happenings and upcoming events at Lauries. Follow us on our Facebook and Twitter official pages by clicking on the links, located on the top right corner, of our new College website slc.qld.edu.au.
fellows & Co., a Catholic magazine, teams and text books. McDonnell and
department stores. T.C. Reims, the

in 1899 three boys completed
English, Latin, History. Maths 1, 2,
Chemistry & Language made up the
McCabe and Dennison. Peter matriculated
became a solicitor. Twenty-three boys
became where the courses were

Junior Arithmetic, Algebra, Group

Chemistry and Bookkeeping. Twelve
Gary Stoner topped the results with 24

Sub Junior Class of 1948.
Events

As the celebratory year of events draws to a close, we acknowledge the final few special occasions which form the more than 30 additional centenary events for Lauries in 2015.
The Centenary Tennis event was held in August at the Queensland Tennis Centre in Brisbane.

The College took the opportunity of the day coinciding with the AIC Round of tennis games against Iona to play the First IV fixtures on Pat Rafter Arena and followed the fixtures with a cocktail function at the tennis centre.

The fixture against Iona was an excellent opportunity for our elite boys to play on the same court as such tennis legends as Roger Federer, Leyton Hewitt and Maria Sharapova.

The team played some very good tennis befitting the occasion. Before the function commenced, an opportunity for the younger boys in the tennis community to join in and play on the premier arena in Queensland tennis also occurred.

It was wonderful to see the snap shots into St. Laurence's tennis history that was on display around the function room.

Pictures and stories from the history of SLC tennis was on display. Supporting this was also a speech from current College Director of Tennis- Mr Gordon Balharry.

Gordon has been a member of the College staff for over 30 years. In this time he has filled the roles of First IV tennis Coach, Director of tennis and Sportsmaster and was able to outline the history of Lauries tennis to the crowd.

St. Laurence's have had many great tennis players come through its doors. The most famous is Ken Fletcher.

Ken won numerous grand slam doubles titles including the Australian and French Opens and at Wimbledon.

In 2012 Ken Fletcher was inducted into the Australian Tennis Hall of Fame.

The centenary celebration of tennis was a day to celebrate the achievements of Ken and other old boys of the College and to inspire the students of today to emulate these feats.

Thank-you to everyone in the community who made the day possible!
Eighteen hundred boys, more than two hundred staff, dozens of parents and even a few canine friends took to the pavement in Brisbane this year for the Centenary Walkathon.

An annual event for Lauries, this year’s Walkathon welcomed parents and friends to join as they formed a sea of yellow through South Brisbane, West End and the CBD.

It’s 46th year since beginning at the school, the 15-kilometre walk starts from the College grounds, meanders through West End, Southbank and the Brisbane River paths, over the Story Bridge, through the CBD and Botanical Gardens, over the Goodwill Bridge and then back up Stephens Road to the finish line at the College gates.

Students raise money each year for charities which this year included the AEIOU Foundation, Act for Kids, Bravehearts and MICAH Projects.

Principal, Ian McDonald, said the annual College Walkathon was a longstanding tradition for all students and staff who all generate a strong sense of social commitment to help those within the community needing support.

“With the assistance of the event’s major sponsors, Vision2Build and Canon, and the fundraising efforts of every student and family at the College, we aim to meet and beat all fundraising efforts from 2014, especially as we celebrate 100 years in 2015,” he said.

In 2014 Lauries raised $70,000 for charity. In the Centenary year, St Laurence’s College raised $79,296, beating last year’s results by almost $10,000. Congratulations to Primary students Antonio Arvanitagis (raising $1100), Ben Andrews (raising $763) and Noah, Samson and Rocco Cavallo (who all raised $606.30), raising a total of just over $4000 between them, and home-class 6 White for raising $3482.

This year’s theme for Walkathon was ‘Celebrating the Past, Walking for the Future’ was demonstrated as the College walked in their bright yellow t-shirts for the Centenary year.

Guest starter for the 2015 Centenary Walkathon event was member for Griffith Ms Terry Butler MP.

“As a College we look forward to many more years of walking kilometres for charity,” Mr McDonald said.
Walkathon.
In 1914 Archbishop James Duhig laid the foundation stone for the long sought after Catholic Boys School on the south side of the Brisbane River. He chose the scripture reference from Matthew’s gospel (17:4) when Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here’ as the theme of his speech.

His words resonated with the large assembled crowd who had long waited for a new ‘St Kilian’s’ and the arrival of the Christian Brothers to take charge of their school. To their surprise Archbishop renamed the school Laurence O’Toole School.

Today the Catholic secondary boys’ school atop St Kilian’s Hill is known as St Laurence’s College. This book is the story of that school over 100 years.

Ralph Waldo Emmerson wrote ‘there is no history only biography.’ It Is Good For Us To Be Here is the story of the people who are the Lauries story. As we look at them in their context over 100 years and see their story one can only be filled with admiration and gratitude. Their generosity and sacrifice have made the school that we have today. May God bless them all.

It is a social history which tells the story of a school which has remained faithful to its origins.

This was the sentiment of Professor Denis McLauglin from Australian Catholic University who launched the Lauries Story in October in the ERPAC foyer.

In 1915 the mission of Edmund Rice was lived and witnessed through the lives of the Christian Brothers and articulated through the Rule of the Congregation. In 2015 that ministry is lived through the lives of lay people and the Brothers but articulated through documents such as the Charter for an Edmund Rice School.

St Laurence’s College has been blessed with a long and talented line of Principals many of whom were men of their time who made significant contributions commensurate with their talent and experience. A few were largely misunderstood during their tenure. Their heritage can only be understood with the passing of time and an appreciation of the context of their leadership.

The last chapter of this history is brief. It is a summary of the highlights of recent years. There is not enough separation in time to critically consider this period of the school’s history.

A knowledge and understanding of the history of this school is an important part of any appreciation of the traditions and ethos of St Laurence’s College. This book contributes to that understanding.

The school has always be known as St Laurence’s but in abbreviated speech referred to as Saints, Lauros or Lauries. In this text Lauries is used which is the contemporary colloquialism.
The Southbank Story was one of the significant centenary concert events. It was described as a Groove Cantata from the lowlands to the dales of Cumbooqueepa.

Cumbooqueepa is the aboriginal name for the lands on which Mater Hill is a part.

The performance was directed by Pete Churchill, produced by Anthony Young, Ross Capern and Rob Anders using historical vignettes written by Ian McDonald.

Peter Churchill is the Professor of Jazz composition at the Royal College of Music in London and is famous for his major performances involving up to 2000 children at the Royal Albert Hall. He runs the London Vocal Project which has performed with Bobby McFerrin, is highly regarded as a composer and arranger and also co-wrote the
ABRSM Jazz syllabus. He has worked with our students on a number of occasions in Australia and overseas.

The choir sang some well-known pieces such as 'Irish Blessing,' 'Where to now?' and songs composed by Peter Churchill such as 'On and on we go,' 'Dig Deep,' 'Tapestry of Life' and 'Take a Moment'.

The songs and historical pieces narrated by Graeme Mellor were illustrated by images from Ian McDonald's book 'It is Good for us to be here' - the story of St Laurence's College.

The choir was a community choir with staff, students and old boys from Lauries as well as girls from Mount St Michaels, Somerville, Our Lady’s College, Brigidine, All Hallows and St Aidan’s and adults from local community choirs and schools.
Combining an array of coloured oil pastels and canvas paper from America, Kelly Southee is one visual artist that has an eye for creating colourful, contemporary masterpieces.

Working from her own purpose built studio in Annerley, Kelly works from her own photographs from places near and far, perfectly capturing a fresh take on images of the outdoors, landscapes and buildings using pastels, oil or acrylic paints.

With such dedication to the preservation of buildings, landscapes and times past through her pastel art pieces, Kelly Southee was commissioned by the College Principal to draw the monastery building in oil pastels from a photograph she managed to take in the afternoon sunlight while waiting for her son (a student at St Laurence's College) to finish sport training on Gair Field.

The result (right) perfectly captures the iconic landmark at Lauries and its surrounds as it now it now serves as the Monastery Reception Building on site.

The beauty of the building is emanated through her perfect choice in coloured oil pastels and natural talents to transform a photograph and building into a beautifully preserved art piece.

Kelly said she likes keeping her vision for pieces as fresh as possible, working on about four pieces simultaneously.

“To put something together like the Monastery Building it takes about two months (or two full days if I had to put it into hours), focusing on sections at a time and coming back to it later so I don’t overthink it all,” she said.

“I revisit the artwork with a fresh idea in mind and continue this way until the entire canvas is complete.”

After travelling the world and specifically working with oil pastels for more than 15 years, Kelly Southee shares no inclination of putting an end to her artistic passion.

Her 'Pool Studio' has been the venue for three of her exhibitions since opening in 2014 with plenty more expected in the years to come.

Check out more of Kelly Southee’s artwork and upcoming exhibition details via her website, www.kellysouthee.com
Beyond

the Classroom.

This year the Primary School has launched a new range of academic extension opportunities for the junior students. For several years now, Primary boys have been involved in problem solving days, external competitions and other off-site extension opportunities. In 2015 these opportunities have been extended with the development of a co-ordinated program. Throughout the year, half day workshops have been conducted across a range of subject areas and topics. The program has been led by Mr Adam Stokes, along with the input of some key teaching staff from the secondary subject departments.

The boys have been able to engage in some high level theory and practical learning. The topics covered have included:

- Biology: The boys prepared for two dissections, including the theory and prac write ups, before performing dissections on both a bull’s eye and an ox heart.
- Mathematics problem solving: The boys were given a thorough introduction to successful problem solving skills, before being presented with a range of real world problems to solve individually or as a group calling on the skills required.
- Chinese: An external specialist gave the boys a rich cultural and educational experience. The boys produced a number of pieces of writing and Chinese art work.
- Geography: The boys combined the theoretical knowledge gained to design and build a fully sustainable city using Lego. Consideration was needed in the planning stage regarding what services a city needs and how best to provide these services in a sustainable way.
- Philosophy: The boys were introduced to a framework of philosophy and developing a thinking community. They were then presented with real world situations and scenarios and needed to use the skills to discuss and look at different perspectives.

As well as these half day experiences, other initiatives to be introduced this year have included two Primary School teams being entered into the NASA Junior Space Design Competition for the first time. These boys worked with Ms Ruth Little and some senior mentors to put together a very thorough proposal for a space station, designed with technology at the forefront and sustainability as the selling platform. As well as this wonderful competition, boys have been exposed to an introductory course of computer coding. Mr Nick Hurford has run these sessions weekly, giving boys an opportunity to design and code a computer game of their very own. Computer coding is a very hot educational topic and has featured heavily in government conversations for schools to consider. The group have already developed some amazing foundational skills and will continue to build their skill set next year. It was very evident to see the high levels of interest and engagement in this project.

All of the opportunities for academic enrichment were well attended and expertly run. It is a foundation stone that will be built on in 2016 and beyond, with topics such as music extension, advanced photography, cartooning, literature study and writing and biomechanics just some of the topics to be explored for the future. There is a wonderful opportunity for boys in the Primary School with particular gifts to be challenged and extended academically. We look forward to the growth and development of the program into the future.
The Mini Vinnies team is made up exclusively of Year 6 students. The group are supported by Ms Kate Flanagan and in 2015 they have again worked tirelessly on a number of wonderful projects. The group lead the service aspect of College life in the Primary School and do an amazing job both raising awareness and also, collecting much needed financial support for chosen charity groups.

This year, the boys have co-ordinated and publicised the Caritas collection and driven the Walkathon fundraising in the Primary to support the school wide initiatives.

In terms of the Primary School specific projects, they have planned and managed the book swap initiative to raise funds and pass on quality literature to the Indigenous Literacy Fund, they have run the Xbox FIFA competition and Primary Superchef Series 3 was simply brilliant.

The boys have nominated "Wheel Chairs for Kids" as their charity this year. This organisation is run by a Christian Brother who works alongside volunteers to construct wheel chairs for children in disadvantaged countries. The organisation does a wonderful job and our boys realise how lucky they are in Australia and especially at St Laurence's. The connection to the brothers was an added bonus and a fantastic link to the past.

This year the boys were able to raise enough funds to purchase six wheel chairs for children they will never meet. The value in changing the life of another child is priceless, as is the growth in the hearts of our boys.

The boys have also attended and represented Lauries at St Vincent de Paul and Caritas gatherings and workshops this year. This has provided a platform for them to share their ideas with other students and to hear from presenters about issues that require their attention and awareness as they grow into young men.

The boys can be very proud of all of their efforts again this year. The difference they make within our own community is appreciated and valued, while the difference in the lives of those they support is liberating and life changing for some.
The Centenary Golf event had to be rescheduled after the original date in May was postponed due to torrential rain.

A beautiful August day greeted the 32 golfers and ensured that Brisbane Golf Club looked and played at its best.

The format of the competition was a four ball Ambrose event.

The 8 teams competed against each other for the prize of being the Lauries Centenary Golf Champions.

There were an array of skill levels on display, ranging from single figure handicaps to the proverbial weekend hacker.

The longest drive, nearest the pin and best approach kept all golfers interested throughout the competition.

It was wonderful to see a whole cross section of the Lauries community represented on the day.

Teams were made up of current students, Old Boys, parents and staff.

Thank-you to the Brisbane Golf Club for their hospitality on the day.

Brisbane Golf Club has been a proud supporter of Lauries Golf for a number of years, hosting numerous College Championships and the AIC Championships.

While this was a ‘social’ day it did allow for golf to be recognised in the centenary year.

Golf has had a strong tradition in the College. In fact the Associated Independent Colleges (AIC) golf tournament is called the ‘Balharry Shield’ named after current SLC staff member, Mr Gordon Balharry.

For the record the old boy team of Cameron Wigan, Andrew Lewis, Ben O’Callaghan and Matthew Yeates were victorious on the day.
Old boy Michael Didyk spent 25 years with the FBI at their headquarters in Washington DC before his retirement. He currently lives in Florida with his wife who is a practicing Infectious Diseases Pediatrician.

Michael left Lauries during Junior in 1958 and migrated to New York City with his parents and three siblings. Michael had arrived in Australia in 1950 as an infant refugee after fleeing Czechoslovakia which had come under Communist control. His family were offered refugee status in Australia and accepted.

After three years in migrant camps the family were able to establish themselves. His father had worked in many jobs including the Holden assembly line and on Moreton Island during seasonal whaling. The family achieved financial security when his father bought a grocery shop. The family eventually bought a home in Kangaroo Point and from here Michael and his brother Miro attended Lauries.

The Didyks moved to the US to reconnect with family and Michael completed high school in New York City in 1960 and went on to complete University studies in Physics in 1965. He joined the Grumman Aircraft Corporation where he worked for seven years at the Kennedy Space Centre on the Apollo Program. His responsibility was Lead Engineer in the Controlled Electronics Section of the Primary Guidance and Navigation System on the Lunar Module.

Michael had completed his Masters of Science by 1972 when a wind-down in the space program prompted a career change. He accepted a position as a Special Agent with the FBI working in the Technical Investigations Division, whose priority is to help in criminal and national security investigations. His area was in conducting investigations using technical covert physical surveillance technologies. He also testified as an expert in imagery (video, thermal-FLIR, Infrared) in Federal US Courts and State Courts. Over 25 years he was with the FBI, he was involved with hundreds of major cases that needed surveillance equipment. Some of these were Organized Crime (Mafia) White Collar Crime, Drugs, Domestic and International Terrorism, Kidnappings and Violent Criminal Organizations such as motorcycle gangs.

Michael’s two boys live in the eastern United States.
As the College continued with the calendar of special events for the Centenary year, parents, staff, relatives, friends and students enjoyed the array of celebrations to conclude the 2015 year. Pictured are guests who attended the History Book Launch for ‘It is good for us to be here’ by College Principal, Ian McDonald, and the Melbourne Cup event, both held at the Edmund Rice Performing Arts Centre (ERPAC) at the College.
JJW Bill Siganto was born on the 18 February 1936, at Spring Hill, Brisbane to William Alexander Siganto and Amelia Josephine Siganto. He was an only child to two middle aged parents.

Going to St Laurence’s had a profound impact on Bill. Being in huge classes of 60+ boys, playing lots of sport and getting the wonderful pastoral care provided by the Brothers was to fill a significant part of this childhood. His fondest regard was for Br Wilkes who was probably only about 19 when he taught Bill in grades 4 – 7.

Bill was the first of his family to go beyond scholarship. He was the first of this extended family to finish school and he was certainly the first to go to University.

In 1954, Bill started his engineering degree at UQ in a class of about 30.

Bill and Marie were married in January 1961 and so started one of the great partnerships. Bill went from only child to father of 6 in 10 short years.

Bill’s early time and education in airconditioning and refrigeration under the legendary Jim Murphy at Carrier had been the best. He left the family farm to start as state manager at Email in late 1963. In 1968, Bill saw that the major air-conditioning equipment companies were slowly retreating out of contracting and he grabbed the opportunity with both hands and formed Siganto and Stacey Pty Ltd and Mark Horn Services Pty Ltd.

“Do your own self you must be true”

~ BILL SIGANTO

His contribution to implementing some significant changes to trade and industry associations, particular to the air-conditioning industry, was also legendary.

He was passionate about further education especially trade-based training and served as Chair of VETEC the Vocational, Education, Training and Employment Commission and was later appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor of QUT after years serving on the colleges of advanced education and QIT right through to their amalgamation. His enormous contribution in this field was recognised when he received an honorary doctorate from QUT in 1995 and he became a Member of the Order of Australia in 1997.

Bill was an outstanding and loyal old boy to Lauries. May he rest in peace.

(An extract from Will Siganto’s eulogy to his father)
Reunions

The Centenary year offered a unique opportunity for more Old Boys than ever to reengage with the College and of course, meet up with fellow Lauries men.

2015 saw six Old Boys reunions being held throughout Brisbane including class reunions, Senior Old Boys luncheon and for the first time in the College's history, reunions held in both Melbourne and Sydney. Held at the Australian Club and Jones Day offices respectively, Laurie's men from all over the came together to network and remanence about their time at the College.

‘The comradery and meeting up again with some we had not seen since we left school was one of the reasons for the reunion’s success. Members of the 1963 Senior Old Boys, some of whom had not returned since their last day in November 1963 were amazed. They were absolutely astounded at what they saw – to see the tremendous development of new buildings, some old that they remembered and others that blew their minds.”

~ John Chandler, Class of 1963.

PHOTOS BY STUDIO KIRBY