

**THEME** The Asian connection

## Will your students be 'Asia capable'?



**Kathe Kirby is the Executive Director of the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) and Asialink at The University of Melbourne**

Grace Lutheran College in Queensland has exchange agreements with schools in Tokyo, Shizuoka and Hakata in Japan. Luther College in Victoria has a partnership with SMP Negeri 9 in Palembang, Indonesia. These two Lutheran schools are among many responding to the need to equip their students with Asia capabilities.

In 2013 Australians find themselves in new strategic circumstances. The Asian region is predicted to be the geo-strategic centre of global power by 2025. A major education response is required if we are to equip our young people and our nation for success. This response is overdue. Five year olds who start school in Australia today enter the workforce in 2025, just as China and India become the global top economies and the world's largest market for goods and services.

Here's one example: Australia welcomed more than 2.4 million visitors from Asia in 2010 with total export earnings of \$12 billion. The Tourism and Transport Forum tell us that this is an increase of forty per cent compared to 1999, while growth in export earnings from non-Asian source markets was up only two per cent over the same period. The Tourism Forecasting Committee expects that Asian source markets will account for 55 per cent of the nearly \$10 billion increase in real export earnings from international visitors to Australia over the 2010 to 2020 period, with Chinese visitors to account for half of this growth.

And it's not just about economics. Knowledge and understandings of Asia enrich our social

fabric and increase our capacity to work cooperatively with our region on the major global issues that connect us all, like climate change, food security and the movement of asylum seekers.

Australia's engagement with Asia in trade, tourism, migration, education, research and humanitarian assistance has been growing at a much faster rate than with the rest of the world combined for two decades.

### Why has it taken so long for many of us to recognise this in our schools?

Australia needs a major step change in responding to the opportunities and challenges of the Asian century. Research by Asialink, the Australian Industry Group and the Business Council of Australia shows a strong correlation between business success in and with Asia and the presence of Asia capabilities in the workforce.

The 2012 Government *Australia in the Asian century white paper* sets out an ambitious roadmap to ensure we achieve an Asia capable skill set and mindset for all our young people by 2025. The white paper positions learning about Asia as business as usual in all schools. Its objectives include that all children from the start of primary school will have the chance to learn about Asia including its languages, histories, geographies and cultures through the new Australian Curriculum; and all Australian schools are to be linked to a school in Asia to support language studies and to forge friendships with young people in China, Indonesia, India, Japan, Korea, Thailand and across the region.

The *white paper's* school education objectives are written into the National Plan for School Improvement – the Gillard Government's action on school funding. They would appear to have bi-partisan support. Coalition policy calls

for a massive scale up of young Australians studying a foreign language in year 12, setting a target for forty percent of students within a decade. That will take strong commitment to achieve. Currently a scant eleven percent of all year 12 students study a foreign language, with half of these (or 5.5 percent) studying an Asian language.

Bi-partisan support is vital. Past experience demonstrates that there is no short-term fix for Australian schooling to be able to achieve Asia capabilities for all young Australians. It requires substantial investment from all levels of government and a long-term plan in place.

### What does Asia capability look like in schools?

Luther College is part of the Asia Education Foundation's Australia-Asia BRIDGE project that connects over 240 schools across Australia,

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*With gratitude to Malcom Bartsch*



Photo courtesy of Faith Lutheran College, Tanunda SA

China, Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand. Alan Lawson, Principal of Southern Christian College in Tasmania, says that through BRIDGE 'our students are increasingly internationally-minded. They are aware of the broader context of our region and they take this understanding home to their families and communities'.

The new Australian Curriculum's cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia aims to result in all students exiting schooling with both foundational and deep knowledge and understandings of Asia. But achieving an Asia literate curriculum in schools will require building up the Asia capabilities of Australia's teachers and school leaders. Most Australian teachers have had minimal opportunity to develop Asia knowledge and understandings through their own schooling, during their teacher training, or since becoming a teacher. A recent research project on Asia Literacy and the Australian Teaching Workforce, undertaken for the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leaders (AITSL) by researchers from Deakin University, draws on a survey of 2,000 Australian school educators to define the features of an Asia literate teacher and school leader.

The AITSL report underscores that current teacher education is not contributing to an Asia capable workforce. The report found that a majority of teachers (sixty per cent) had completed their undergraduate studies without addressing teaching and learning about Asia.

Leaders in an Asia engaged school are guided by an ethical, futures-oriented perspective. They acknowledge that Asia capable students will be successful learners, capable of making sense of their world, who appreciate cultural, social and religious diversity, and relate well to others – a national goal of Australian education.

*By ensuring that we equip our young people with Asia capabilities, educators are shaping the future of every young Australian and building the strength of our nation to make the Asian century a winner for all Australians.*

If you need convincing, just think of a five year old starting school today.

*Kathe Kirby is the Executive Director of the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) and Asialink at The University of Melbourne. Asialink is Australia's largest Australia-Asia centre that works across business, the arts, health and education. The AEF is engaged in transformation of Australian schooling to ensure all young Australians (and our nation) are equipped with the knowledge, skills and understandings to thrive in the Asian century. Kathe has a background in education. She has worked as a teacher in schools and universities, and in policy with the Department of Education, Victoria. Kathe is a Board Member of Foundation for Young Australians and the Australia Malaysia Institute. She is a well-known media commentator on Asia in Australian schools.*

*The AEF is a joint activity of Asialink at The University of Melbourne and Education Services Australia. It receives core funding from the Australian Government to promote and support Asia literacy in Australian schools.*

# Project X



**Allan Dallas is Deputy College Principal at Grace Lutheran College and founding Head of the Caboolture Campus**

Project X is the fond title Grace Lutheran College (GLC) students have given to a long-term partnership begun in 2006 with a single Indonesian secondary school and a single secondary student, Miss Jumi Silalahi. Now officially called Project Indonesia Exchange, the partnership has expanded in a variety of surprising and interesting ways. At the heart of the partnership is a sister-school relationship between GLC and Sidikalang School, of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) church. Like a growing tree, this partnership has developed many branches and become a wonderful journey that is about education, prayer, faith, participation and potential.

The seed for this partnership began when Pastor Rob Erikson of Living Faith, Murrumba Downs, held a short term lecturing position in Indonesia in the early 2000s. After hearing about his visit, congregational members were inspired to sponsor students to attend GLC for year 11. Every second year for six years, Sidikalang School sent a student to attend the college. Teaching staff from Indonesia visited for periods and worked in a primary setting. The partnership between the local congregation and GLC was strengthened.

A humble shoot began to emerge from the seed: could university sponsorship be part of the exchange? As these Indonesian exchange students developed skills, Living Faith people organised for a university scholarship to be available upon return to Indonesia. The second student to attend GLC in 2008, Rianaldo Limbong, was the first to graduate in Accounting from Universitas Nommensen in April this year. I was privileged to be present at this graduation ceremony with Ria's family, an Aussie home-stay 'dad', Graham 'Grumpop' Donges, and the principal of our neighbouring Lutheran primary school, Anton Prinsloo. During the ceremony we sat alongside Jumi, our first Grace student, who had worked tirelessly to arrange for us to attend. Jumi graduates in October along with two of the first graduates from Lawe Sigagala School (HKBP) Tanah Alas.

The emerging shoot began to branch and grow even stronger. The Lutheran Church of Australia Queensland District (LCAQD) has a district to district partnership with the HKBP

Tanah Alas District in central southern Aceh. To date, three GLC leaders, three staff and six students have visited this remote Indonesian church district on three occasions and visited schools and kindergartens. Most exciting of all, SMK HKBP Sidikalang School has taken the initiative and organised an internal Indonesian partnership so we now have a three way school partnership emerging. Grace's first students, Jumi and Ria, were a vital link in orienting two students from Tanah Alas as they embarked on their university course to become teachers. 'Ria's encouragement and support to the girls from Tanah Alas has meant a great deal to us. It is like watching the blessings of God multiply!' said Pastor Noel Noack, Bishop of LCAQD.

Our partnership tree continues to blossom and flower. Indonesian teaching staff, school and church leaders visited GLC in 2012 to build the next partnership phase – a three way student camp with students from Sidikalang, Lawe Sigagalaga and GLC held in September, 2012 at Berastagi, North Sumatra. Back in Australia the GLC students visit my office frequently, full of ideas: 'Sir, can we still be involved even after we finish school?', 'Mr D, we've worked out the plane fares and the best time for students to come here for a camp, what do you think?'. It is these Grace students who are now the student leaders of Project X.

Many are watching the fruit of our partnership tree develop with thankfulness in our hearts. Through Project X we hope to re-seed the partnership in ways that are sustainable,

relevant and mutually beneficial. In the spirit of service learning our work includes careful planning and reflection. In the spirit of partnership we deeply believe that we can learn from each other and respect each other's gifts, talents and skills.

Our exchange thus far has focused on sharing our Christian faith journeys and developing our Bahasa Indonesian and English language skills. Building and sharing our culture and musical talents continues to deepen friendships. The use of mobile phones has ensured that friendships have strengthened. As we again find ourselves discussing how exchanges might look, how sponsorship to university might look and how all of our learning links with our planning for the future, we invite your prayers and encourage you to consider whether or not you, too, could play a part.

This partnership is about education, prayer, faith, participation and potential. God's love and blessings are like the sun, soil and rain that nurture our partnership tree. I am so thankful for the opportunities and blessings of this partnership and for the people it has brought into our lives.

*Allan Dallas is a Lutheran educator who has served in Lutheran secondary schools since 1980 in a variety of leadership positions. At present he is Deputy College Principal at Grace Lutheran College and founding Head of the Caboolture Campus. He is a strong advocate for 'learning by doing', 'teachers as leaders', 'authentic tasks' and 'Christianity, the normal life'.*



Many are watching the fruit of our partnership tree develop with thankfulness in our hearts

# Responding to the Asian century at Banksia Park



**Brooke Garrett teaches ESL, Intensive Secondary English, Visual Art and Design at Banksia Park International High School**

Banksia Park International High School (BPIHS) is a public secondary school located in North East Adelaide. The school offers a comprehensive international program and is accredited by the Council of International Schools. The school has numerous sister school relationships in the Asia region spanning Japan, China, Vietnam and Korea. Through these relationships, local people are involved in Asia literacy in diverse ways. Students and families host international students in their homes through the largest independent home-stay program in South Australia. The school offers Japanese and German as languages on site and other languages off campus. Subjects such as International Studies and Tourism are offered in the school and reflect subjects where Asia based themes previously featured most

prominently. There is a buddy system in place where local students support visitors from overseas and the Global Citizenship Award is a highlight of our year 12 program. Whilst these credentials are impressive, they were not enough to bridge many social and cultural factors impacting relationships or deep understanding between international students, local students and community.

The school hosts students from overseas arriving from over twenty countries of origin, in both short and long stay programs. Over 90% of international students arrive from Asia region contexts. In a survey of international student perspectives from 2012, 97% of students cited 'learning English', 'understanding Australian culture' and 'excellence in education standards' as rationales for studying in Australia and in the school. Whilst BPIHS delivers on all fronts, the local student population revealed little engagement in studying Japanese beyond middle years, and studies of Asia needed to become fundamental literacy initiatives embedded in all learning areas. It was a clear anomaly that our school was blessed

with such a diversity of learners and cultural perspectives yet did not always take full advantage to mobilise these as learning resources for local students.

## Literacy in the 21st century

Literacy is viewed as a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups, yet as society and technology change so too does the complexity of literate environments. Twenty first century literacies demand that all citizens in literate communities possess a wide range of abilities and competencies from reading magazines through navigating websites, whilst also comprehending links with particular histories, life possibilities and social trajectories of individuals and groups. In part this requires that schools and learners be engaged in building relationships with others in order to solve problems collaboratively and cross culturally and to design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes (NCTE 2008). Hence Asia literacy emerged as a significant opportunity for local community literacy enhancement, previously untapped to its highest potential.

## L21C schools

In 2010 Principal Lyndall Bain participated in the Leading 21st Century Schools Forum, which raised pertinent questions linked to schooling in the Asian century including: what strategies support curriculum change in school communities? what links with Australian professional standards for teachers? and what strategies are required for implementation where vision, communication and planning may result in community input and engagement? Ms Bain invited teachers from BPIHS to attend the forum, resulting in collaborative links between school leaders and teachers in our cluster and the development of a shared vision for engaging with Asia. The outcome of the forum was a comprehensive proposal for the Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools (BALGS) program, awarded in 2011.

## BALGS

The BALGS proposal was developed through clarifying a shared purpose across stakeholders who could respond to different curricular guidelines and transitional links between schools and curriculum learning areas. Our goal was to engage students, parents, business and community in Asia literacy and intercultural understanding through shared learning with international students and



Intercultural garden

professional colleagues from the Asia region. We applied innovative approaches to resources and timetabling where primary settings could collaborate with secondary settings and student centred approaches could be shared. It was essential to develop ICT strategies to support goals and to review current research which could guide transition and change. Whilst age and stage transitions were common, additional shared learning and assessment opportunities posed potential. Place Based Education theories have demonstrated that connecting classrooms and communities holds significant merit in linking economic and environmental sustainability with increasing academic performance (Sobel 2004). ICTs are crucial to literacy in contemporary life and offered a platform that could support cross curriculum, inter-site, age/stage resourcing approaches. The BALGS proposal included two key iterations: a comprehensive audit of current Asia resources in the schools and community and the development of a community learning space also responsive to cross curriculum and inter-site learning needs. This space emerged as an intercultural understandings garden, foundational to shared knowledge building futures.

### Strategies used to build Asia literacy

#### Engaging with ICTs in developing Asia resources

Whilst Asia resources were available across sites, they primarily amounted to books on shelves with low borrowing rates, hence new approaches to Asia resources were developed. iPads and Kindles were purchased where student expertise, knowledge and interests were foundational to purchases resulting in texts such as language and translation websites and apps, games, television series, ebooks and more, spanning early learning through teacher professional development outcomes. Students were proactive catalysts for developing what we now enjoy as a rich 'cybrary' of cluster accessible resources. The language translation apps, for example, allowed for conversations in real time between local and international students who did not share a common language, which in turn enabled relationship development, friendship networks, fascination in common and different perspectives and where schoolyard semiotics altered significantly from distinct separation toward shared space.

Texts such as 'Asia Counts' allowed subjects like Maths to develop important links across curriculum, where teachers were able to connect numeracy concepts with The Arts and

PE within an Asia focus, as in understanding Chinese landscape painting perspective, Asian number systems in timing ping pong tournaments and exploring growth measurement of 'Buddha Belly' bamboo growing in the intercultural understandings garden. The garden also presented opportunities for CAD design, Science (Biology), Maths (quantities and measurement), English and The Arts (fairy tales and sculpture collaboration). This site has continued to act as an inter-school and community learning location.

#### Place Based Education: intercultural understandings garden

The garden plan attempted to respond to all priorities of the Australian Curriculum and to all curriculum learning areas. Pivotal to the outcome were the generosity, investment and engagement of local business and community. The development phase of the garden was linked with Science, Maths and English via classroom learning episodes, resulting in Science being recognised by Australian International Education Services as an exemplar of Asia literacy in curriculum.

International students worked closely with local teachers and students in designing the garden, aligning plants from Chinese currency to the site, symbolism and cultural artefact design like the Yin Yang (China) and Zen Garden (Japan); and all students worked together to develop sustainable conditions for plants responding to the climate and conditions of the local area. Indigenous plants were included in our bush tucker garden and Home Economics developed the herb garden including Asia region recipe supplies alongside others. English and ESL worked with visiting teachers from Thailand in exchanging folk tales such as the 'Golden Goby'. Teachers and students worked together, often using language translation apps and 'cybrary' resources, in order to develop ideas for the garden site, resulting in the Golden Goby sculpture on site. All plants are flourishing due to the shared garden management initiatives of SSO staff, local suppliers, students and the Science learning area. Asia inspired seating, lighting and garden arrangements also connected with practical skills taught in our trade training centre and were the result of school, community and business collaboration. The Ikebana society has taught lessons and has contributed a fish tank hosting a real 'Golden Goby' whilst numerous community groups, businesses and government agencies have been involved in activities utilising the garden site in the months following its opening in 2012.



Yin Yang

#### Achievements

Ongoing commitment to Asia literacy and intercultural understanding is the main achievement of these initiatives, yet the reality is significantly broader. Place Based Education approaches allowed for inter-site, inter curriculum age/stage and context exchanges including childcare centres and universities. Exchanges between all contexts were regular features of the project, where international students were pivotal to development of language resources and intercultural understanding. This in turn resulted in friendships and mentoring outcomes. Primary settings developed international student programs, childcare centres developed Asia focused language and literacy initiatives which also supported international and secondary school curriculum and work placement outcomes. Asia literacy days continue as shared initiatives across sites. As a result of these Asia focused programs, teachers in all sites have engaged in professional development and in-country exchanges. Whilst local student investment in languages and Asia literacy are still emerging, there is a reinvigorated engagement. Engaging with Asia has for this community become an authentic motivational vehicle for engaging with each other toward global futures.

*Brooke Garrett currently teaches in ESL, Intensive Secondary English, Visual Art and Design at Banksia Park International High School. Brooke recently completed a Master of Education with a Literacy and Language specialisation, was Project Leader on the Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools project and presented a conference paper on Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia at the International Conference for Australian Studies in Chengdu, China in 2012.*

# Engaging with Asia at Faith Lutheran College



**Roseanne Madden is the Director of Student Learning**

As we prepare our students to live and work in the 21st century we know that they need to be better informed, more able to adapt, adopt new ways of thinking and be true global citizens. In 2010 Australia's education ministers signed the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians, which included the goal that 'all young Australians needed to be active and informed citizens' and defined this as being able to relate to and communicate across cultures, 'especially the cultures and countries of Asia'.

We cannot escape the facts – Australia is inextricably linked to Asia. China and India are predicted to be the world's major economies in the near future. Already China has tripled per capita income in less than a generation. India is home to four of the world's top 20 billionaires, while 200 million Indians earn on average more than the average Australian. At Faith Lutheran College we recognise that in preparing our students for the future we need to equip them with the skills to be collaborative citizens on a global scale. This means they need to have a deep intercultural understanding so that they are able to work with and learn from other cultures in both work place and social spaces. Subsequently we have ensured that there is an Asian focus in many areas of our college academic and extra-curricular programs.

At Faith Lutheran College all students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to undertake a continuous course of study of Japanese throughout their years of schooling. Our English curriculum embraces a range of Asian literature which helps our students understand personal, cultural and national identities and the contribution of Asian cultures, peoples, histories and traditions to Australia's past, present and future. In Drama our students create Asian inspired masks and there is a focus on Asian architecture and artwork in our Art/Design curriculum. Study of Asia is also an integral part of our History curriculum and our students are given the opportunity to participate in a Habitat for Humanity trip every two years.



**Ev Leske is the Habitat for Humanity Coordinator**

## Habitat for Humanity

The Lutheran Schools Association (SA/NT/WA) program of connecting its schools through a joint service learning activity involving a team of house builders working overseas is now well developed and has operated biennially since 2005. In that time it has sent students from across the year 11 cohort in SA Lutheran schools, as well as staff and tertiary level youth mentors, to the Philippines and Cambodia to build houses in partnership with local families in poor communities under the auspices of Habitat for Humanity. Close to 200 team members have now participated in the five missions so far. The concept of this trip has very sound developmental, spiritual, community-building, awareness-raising

and leadership building purposes. But the connection with Asia was almost accidental. The trip concept was inspired by the address of Bishop Noko, the African-born secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, at ACLE in 2004 but the link with Asia only came later.

However, it has become a natural fit and now awareness of Asian culture amongst our near neighbours is one of the key ingredients of the house building experience. Invariably, students have made a comment like this when they return from a build: 'I couldn't believe how happy the people were with their lot. They seemed so satisfied with so little.' The discovery that our own materialist western culture is not the be all and end all of existence is fundamental to developing empathy for Asian people and their way of life. Secondly – and importantly for Lutheran schools – it has given much scope for religious dialogue. Worshipping in traditional Filipino Catholic churches or singing Christian songs at orphanages and house dedications has been part of the spiritual component of this trip.

Finally, our very basic efforts at learning the local language, whether Cebuano or Tagalog in different parts of the Philippines or Khmer in Cambodia, have also been critical in building empathy and making a real connection with the home partners and villages we work with – and isn't that what an Asian focused cross curriculum priority is all about?

This cultural awareness impacts students' consciousness and affects their values and attitudes. It comes out in chapel devotions and students express it in their lives, not just in the classroom. Two simple examples illustrate this: every build since the first has involved students from a previous trip returning as youth leaders, even though they have left school and started work or tertiary study; and one of these students from the 2007 and 2009 groups is now pursuing Development Studies at university and is about to return to the Philippines with another Christian aid organisation as an intern.





**Michelle Schwarz is the History Coordinator**

## History

The possibilities of incorporating an Asian focus into the History curriculum are endless. With the advent of the Australian Curriculum we changed our year 8 course to include a focus on Shogunate Japan. We chose this over the other topics because Japanese is one of the languages taught at Faith and it was not covered anywhere else. Students have enjoyed looking at the Samurai and the boys have loved the warfare aspect. A major assessment task gives students the chance to choose their

own focus; many chose to design their own Zen Garden!

The year 9 course provides an opportunity for students to look at an Asian focus within the main topics. The Industrial Revolution, The Making of Nation and World War One can all include an Asian focus: for example, Japan's role in World War One and the Treaty of Versailles negotiations.

In World War Two, one of the main topics in the year 10 course, we focus on the war in the Pacific. A study of Japan and their role in the war and global relations connects well to Australia's experiences in World War Two.

Our year 11 course offers the most flexibility in topics and we have taken advantage of this in choosing different and challenging topics which are not taught in other year levels,

but still prepare for year 12 Modern History. We have chosen to study the Chinese Revolution and the rise of communism in China as well as Gandhi and his role in Indian independence. The students have really enjoyed these topics and the opportunity it provides to learn about political and cultural struggles in Asian countries.

History has the ability to open the eyes of students to different places, times, people, cultures and events that have shaped our world. Considering our geographical location and relationship with Asia it is crucial that History teachers take this focus opportunity.



**Kirsty Rosenzweig is the LOTE Coordinator**

## Studying the Japanese language and culture

Faith Lutheran College's relationship with Japanese language and culture began in 1986 when Elizabeth Eckermann was employed as the first Japanese teacher. Since then, courses and textbooks have changed, students and staff have come and gone, but the aims of the Japanese teachers at Faith have remained constant: to inspire a love of language learning, to awaken and feed a curiosity to explore the world and to offer students the opportunity to explore different ways of thinking and being.

Learning the culture of any country purely from a textbook or video will only take our understanding a small way. Meeting and living with the people and learning from them humanises our similarities and differences. Being able to discuss ideas, values and beliefs in a conversation feeds the respect between peoples and builds relationships. How much more productive is this for our students than reading or watching from a disconnected viewing point? Our sister school relationship with Seibo Gakuen, in Saitama Prefecture gives our students the opportunity to participate in a biennial, reciprocal short term home-stay program, undertake a ten month formal student exchange and to interact

with the many reciprocal exchange students we have hosted here at Faith. In addition, for the past ten years our staff and students have benefited from an agreement with Naruto Education University. Each year, a second or third year student is hand selected and sent to us as an assistant language teacher for ten months. These student teachers are hosted by Faith students, staff and families, giving the wider school community the opportunity to learn about Japanese lifestyle and culture from a Japanese person's perspective.

These real world relationships, together with the classroom learning experiences in both

language and culture, have been instrumental in capturing the imagination and curiosity of our students. At last count, nine Faith graduates were qualified and practising teachers of Japanese across South Australia and two recent graduates are currently undertaking their studies to join us in the field. Other graduates have gone on to live and work in Japan on various short and long term programs. And still others have gone on to transfer the skills and love of learning they first found in our classrooms to other languages and cultures throughout the world.



# Chinese connections



**Rob Rohde is the Deputy Principal at Cornerstone College**

Should Lutheran schools either individually or collectively have Asia as a focus? Do Lutheran schools have a role in outworking government initiatives to engage with Asia? Are student outcomes in our schools enhanced by involvement with Asia? The proposition of this article is that the answer to all these questions is YES!

The *Australia in the Asian century white paper* asserts that Australia is located at the 'right place at the right time' in relation to the Asian century which implies that our country can be part of economic, technological and educational reforms sweeping Asia. Asia has the largest population in the world with a rising middle class. Asia is the largest producer of goods and services, and is also the largest consumer of these. All this is occurring at a time when education in Australia is undergoing transformation and where technology has enabled students and teachers to more effectively operate as global citizens.

Our Lutheran schools connect with Asia in many ways including through internationally

accredited curriculum and through having international students. Cornerstone College currently does not have either of these programs but through the teaching of Chinese language has developed a program involving a sister school in Beijing.

The relationship with the Beijing Hai Dian Foreign Language Shi Yan School began when a delegation from this school visited Cornerstone College in 2005 after a search by South Australian government agencies on our behalf. A visit to the school's website [http://www.bjfiles.com/Category\\_177/Index.aspx](http://www.bjfiles.com/Category_177/Index.aspx) will give some appreciation of the philosophy and magnitude of this independent school – with 4,400 boarding students from R-12 and 800 staff.

During the first visit of Cornerstone College students and staff to our sister school in 2006, five pillars of interaction were proposed. Some of these have been developed whilst others are at various stages of development.

## **Pillar 1: The integration of students and teachers from our sister school into the Cornerstone College community**

Since 2006, students and teachers from our sister school have visited Australia, spending at least one week in our community. A real strength of this visit is the home-stay arrangement for students with their families and teachers with Cornerstone staff and their

families. A large amount of informal learning occurs in these situations for all participants, students and adults, relating to language, culture, religion, customs, environment and the future. Families can often offer unique experiences to their guests.

A typical program for such a visit involves Chinese students participating in regular classes, attending special English classes, visiting universities, sampling local produce and experiencing beaches and our wildlife. Close bonds often develop, even in this short time, which potentially develop into lifelong friendships.

A feature of this week-long visit is China Day when all students in the school wear something red, dancing and music fill the plaza at lunch and Chinese food is available to all. The participation of visiting students in such a day quickly builds rapport and breaks down barriers. On this day our Chinese visitors sell trinkets brought from China and the total money raised is donated to a less well-off school (and students) sponsored by our sister school in China.

## **Pillar 2: A biennial visit of Cornerstone College students and staff to China**

To be immersed in the Chinese language and culture is a powerful experience for our Chinese language students. To live in the boarding facility at our sister school is to experience school life in an authentic way



2006 visit to Australia - planting a commemorative tree



Cornerstone students at our sister school

through early morning exercises, meals in a three storey dining hall, lessons with hosts and special lessons embracing aspects of Chinese culture. The one hour 'siesta' after lunch was quite appealing to us! Excursions to significant places in Beijing also were a feature.

Home-stay for a weekend with a Chinese family was truly a unique learning experience for our students. Special care needed to be taken to manage risks associated with students being away from direct teacher care.

For part of the visit to China, the Cornerstone group travelled independently to significant places such as Xian (Terracota Warriors) and Shanghai. Of course the Great Wall had to be experienced.

### **Pillar 3: A short term two-way teacher exchange program**

For two or three weeks following a student visit, a teacher remained in the host school to learn and contribute. To engage professionally with teachers in our sister school in a very different country to Australia has been enlightening. Whilst the practice of direct instruction with associated rote learning still features in our sister school there is a real sense that more contemporary pedagogies are interesting to Chinese teachers.

The Beijing Hai Dian Foreign Language Shi Yan School is very active internationally with a number of visits and exchanges with countries like England and the USA. In this environment Chinese teachers are learning about other education systems and approaches with a goal of learning to improve.

The warmth of relationships developed contributes to an understanding that we all as human beings have similar aspirations, emotions and needs. Many of our Chinese guests have shown a natural interest in Christianity, asking questions, attending worship and being very aware of Christmas and Easter.

### **Pillar 4: Learning facilitated through student to student communication**

To utilise technology effectively so that students can share and learn through direct contact is a goal we have targeted for development to a greater level in the near future. Imagine the questions and insights which students from different cultures could share as part of their learning!

### **Pillar 5: Longer term student exchanges including taking international students**

Lutheran schools with boarding facilities are best placed to accept international students

although home-stay arrangements can support these programs. An approach has been made by our sister school for groups of students within an international stream to spend an extended time studying with us, emphasising that possibilities exist for exploration.

It has been interesting to note the intent of old scholars to rekindle relationships with Chinese friends gained via reciprocal visit programs.

Opportunities for service learning through supporting programs in Asia have been a focus at Cornerstone College. These include:

- » involvement with Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) supporting a community in Cambodia to build a community Health Centre – this was a Lutheran Education Adelaide Hills (LEAH) initiative
- » students travelling with peers from other Lutheran schools in Australia to visit ALWS projects in Cambodia
- » involvement with Habitat for Humanity and other South Australian Lutheran schools to build houses in Cambodia and the Philippines
- » partnering with our sister school to support Sichuan earthquake victims and local Beijing schools in need

The perspective and enhanced world view gained through such experiences allow students to develop values promoted in Lutheran schools and an opportunity to reflect on their own faith.

Through the Australian Curriculum the question is asked, 'Why is learning languages important in schools?' The response '... for all students, learning to communicate in two or more languages is a rich, challenging experience of engaging with and participating in the linguistic and cultural diversity of our interconnected world.'

The number of Australian students studying an Asian language and Chinese in particular through to the end of secondary schooling is extremely low despite encouragement by governments. Although to speak English is often an aspiration of Chinese (and Asian) people, it is acknowledged that to participate in the Asian century it is powerful and respectful to use the language of those with whom we might interact. This was emphasised by the leader of a recent South Australian delegation to China. At Cornerstone College students beginning middle school study Chinese and German in their first year before choosing to follow one of these languages in following years.

Further to the focus on languages in the Australian Curriculum, another level of engagement relates to 'Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia' as a cross curriculum priority. Engagement of our Lutheran schools in Asia through a sister school relationship similar to that of Cornerstone College will go a long way to achieving the desired learning goals for our students. The network of schools under the jurisdiction of the Asia Lutheran Education Association (<http://alea.lcmsworldmission.org/school>) also provides many opportunities for Lutheran schools in Australia to connect with schools in Asia which have similar values, Christ-centre and purpose.

Students currently in Lutheran schools are increasingly being challenged as global citizens. This trend will only increase as the nature of work evolves at an increasing rate. Issues like environment, resources, food production and health, which may have been localised in the past, will take on an increasing global focus in the future. To engage with Asia now enables our students a vehicle for developing 21st century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving (and problem finding), decision making, communication, collaboration, information literacy, citizenship, life skills and personal and social responsibility.

To answer the questions posed at the beginning of this article we hope that Lutheran schools will engage increasingly with Asia. Many opportunities are presented to our schools through government initiatives to engage with Asia. The National Conference of the Asia Education Foundation to be held in Melbourne August 12-14 will provide a real opportunity for schools and/or school systems to develop thinking in this important area. To understand, identify and share with our Asian neighbours provides for the possibility of hope and peace in the future. We are all God's children.

*Rob Rohde is currently Deputy Principal at Cornerstone College. He has developed a deep interest in giving students the opportunity to connect and learn in a global context. He was responsible for establishing and helping develop the relationship with the Beijing Hai Dian Foreign Language Shi Yan School. A significant aspect of his current role involves the professional learning of staff and hence his interest in developing the teacher exchange concept with their sister school.*

## Regional news: Lutheran Schools Association (SA/NT/WA)

### Connecting with Asia through service learning – adventure and reward

#### The concept

As an emerging school with much to develop the time had come for us to work on a service learning concept for our senior school students. As we had reached year 11 in 2012 we felt that we needed to give our students an experience beyond South Australia, possibly beyond Australia. Our dilemma was exactly how we were to go about this.

After emails, meetings with Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) and the Board for Mission and many prayers we decided on Gereja Kritsen Protestan Simalungan (GKPS) School in Pematang Raya, Indonesia. It was a secondary school and, in addition, we added the Margaretha Orphanage in Pematang Siantar as somewhere we could also possibly provide support, and in doing so learn much about the culture and life of the area.

This idea presented exceptionally well with the way in which we integrate our curriculum and excursion/camps. Not only did this fit well with a whole school focus for Christian Studies, allowing students across the school to assist with raising much needed funds for GKPS and the making of gifts to be presented, but the integration of SOSE, English and Languages are all possibilities in the future.

This experience we felt would be of great benefit to us as our students would be able to learn much about Indonesian culture, traditions and way of life. Additionally, the staff and students of GKPS would be able to learn about Australian schooling and our version of best pedagogic practice but more so about the

idiosyncrasies of Australian traditions we take for granted. Our hope was for our staff and students to interact in such a way that we would all learn from each other about each other.

#### The reality

There was much apprehension behind our trip when the reality of taking ten students overseas came to the fore; however, the cohort of students was such that we hoped they would rise to the challenges before them. Many of them had little or no idea of what was about to happen as we were not really sure of the exact process in each place. There could be misunderstanding because of language differences and the possibility that each of the places we were to visit might have a different belief about what we were going to do. Sure there had been discussions through email, but even these can be subject to an element of misinterpretation.

From the Navigator College students' side there were varying reasons why they wanted to go. The astute ones suggested they wanted to 'make a difference' but through later conversations with them some just wanted an overseas experience. None of them knew what was in store and some even struggled to fully understand the definition of service learning – serving God through serving others and learning from and with one another. We could explain the simple facilities, suggest there would be early mornings and later nights, even suggest no hot water for showering and squat toilets, but nothing prepared them for the

change from the creature comforts of home. Still, the positive attitude was one I was more than impressed with.

We stayed initially in Pematangsiantar. The Sunday morning was spent in worship with the GKPS church and talking with the youth, after which we wandered to town seeing the sights and absorbing the atmosphere in the markets. Later that day we went to the BKM Orphanage where we met the children, ranging from four to nineteen years old. This was a great opportunity to get to know them all with gifts, games, sports and general sharing. We spent the next two days at the orphanage, teaching English and Aussie Rules football to the children and generally helping out with gardening, fishing and other chores.

But it was the relationships that were built between our students and the children there that were amazing to see. There is something special when children meet children. Barriers are broken down more easily and relationships develop more readily. There were many sad histories that had resulted in the children finding a home at BKM, from parents missing after the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, parents feeling their children had a better life at the orphanage and stories of abuse. All of them touched the hearts of our students as these children seemed to make the most of their situation and reach out to them with love. Every night as we debriefed the day and finished with devotion we thanked God for the incredible work of so many who make such a difference to the lives of the children there. It was a very emotional time for our Navigator



Teaching English to students of SMA GKPS school



Learning traditional cultural dance



Students from SMA GKPS making a line of honour

students but it was also a time to feel blessed that we had become a part of it.

One of the many blessings that we received was the privilege of living in the SMA GKPS girls dormitory. We were witness to God's work and the people who work to his glory in this place. We witnessed commitment to him, devotion to his word and a strong desire to do his will. Even now as I sit here writing this piece I am finding it hard to describe my experience to give it true justice. The routine was tough and I doubt our Australian students would cope with such a routine long term. Yet the love they received from each other and from their supervisors showed God in all that was done for them. The staff expected the children to work hard, study hard, pray hard and play (sing) hard but in everything they did it was to his glory. One night we were treated to a presentation of traditional dancing and singing by the girls. It was wonderful to witness. However, I was drawn to tears when the next night we were presented with a sarong each as a direct result of a passing inquiry into the sarongs the girls wore. These people have next to no money yet they made sure we had something special that we had an interest in. This is a gift I will treasure.

These people's main goal is to learn to speak English as well as they can and so part of our students' role was to teach English to classes of up to fifty students. To learn English means doors will be opened: to university,

to better jobs and better opportunities. The students had a drive and passion to improve their position and to make the most of their situation. All this at such a young age. We learnt that many of even the brightest students will never be able to make it to university. There are very few scholarships and students who cannot get a scholarship have to rely on the finances of their family. There are no deferred payments in Indonesian universities and many families just cannot even consider university for their children. It broke my heart to think of the academic potential that will be left untapped just because of circumstance. We are still struggling to find a solution, as these students deserve more.

The final days were spent at Lake Toba in workshop sessions, reflecting on what we had done and in devotion to thank our God for the amazing learning we had encountered. I must say the responses from our students left us as leaders speechless: wanting to stay and support the Orphanage and high school students; considering teaching as well as mission work for future vocation possibilities; wondering if they might revisit in their gap year; and comments suggesting the experience was life changing and one they will never forget. We knew and hoped they would be affected by their visit but never realised the extent to which they wanted to change their lives for the better. The culture shock reversal was one that led them to realise

the importance of family relationships, to appreciate the blessings they have in their own lives and to want to make a difference in the lives of those who are not as fortunate as they are. We could not have imagined the results of this endeavour would be as purposeful as they had been.

I cannot express how proud I am of these students. All our year 11 students were offered this opportunity and we were prepared to take every person. Some of these students paid their own way, others paid part, whilst other families took on extra jobs. We were happy for any student that wanted to join us to participate. What we got was a group of students who wanted to be there and were prepared to go out of their comfort zone to make a difference to the lives of others. These students ate food they could never have imagined eating, took risks they would never in ordinary circumstances have considered taking and worked harder than I have ever seen them work. And in all of this they had fun. Their attitude was incredibly positive, their enthusiasm energetic and their empathy real. They blessed the hearts of so many and in doing so changed lives in the process. What an amazing experience! I thank God for the privilege of being part of it.

**Kaye Mathwin-Cox**  
Principal  
Navigator College  
Port Lincoln, SA

## Regional news: Lutheran Education South Eastern Region



The opportunity to engage with the school in a relaxed, warm and friendly environment has been welcomed.

### Preschool story time at Victory Lutheran College

This year, in conjunction with our Parents and Friends Association, the college has started running preschool story time sessions. This provides an opportunity for parents or carers to bring their preschool children to our library to read stories and participate in movement and learning activities.

The morning sessions have been a large success with an average of 20 students attending the sessions. Led by our librarians, Mrs Trish Wild and Mrs Wendy McFerran, the children are able to experience a 'school' library in the lead up to preparing for school. For current families this provides an additional opportunity for them to engage with the school community and for prospective families it provides them with an initial experience of our college.

The Parents and Friends Association provide morning tea to the parents and are able to support and provide information to parents about the college. The opportunity to engage with the school in a relaxed, warm and friendly environment has been welcomed.

The opportunity for visitors to see the college staff and parents working together to engage the wider community is also of great benefit to the brand and image of the college. It is of course also a means of subtle marketing as we promote the college through this event and provide enrolment information where appropriate.

#### Cain McDonald

Principal  
Victory Lutheran College  
Wodonga, Vic



*It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree and the birds perched on its branches.*

Luke 13:19

### Community gardening

St Paul's community garden is a buzz of activity these days. It wasn't always this way – just last year the garden was an unproductive paddock. Now it is a place full of enthusiastic students, many interested local community members, and lush, healthy produce. It is a creative place too – not just in the variety of plants that can be found growing there, but also in the signs that designate a student's garden. Some students share a garden, others have their own.

Gardens are about seeds and the idea of the garden started as a seed too – an idea from a parent passionate about community gardens (Mrs Cheryl Paech), a community member and some assistance from a local TAFE coordinator with a passion for sustainable living. Mrs Paech spent hours visiting other community gardens, discussing the concept with horticulturalists and using this information to plan, design and 'break ground' allowing the seed to grow from a dream to a reality.

On Friday mornings when the working bee is in session, local volunteers come adorned with cakes, biscuits, tea and coffee, and the tree that was once the only living thing in the yard now shelters the volunteers and students as they converse together and discuss ideas and dreams about the garden's future.

At St Paul's, staff, students and community members take great pride in the community garden. It is a place of beauty and abundant produce, a wonderful teaching environment, a place where students love to learn in a different way, a community where old and young work respectfully together and, most importantly of all, the possibilities for its growth and for the growth of all who work in it are endless.

#### Pastor Mark Doecke

Principal  
St Paul's College  
Walla Walla, NSW

## Regional news: Lutheran Education Queensland

### Supporting students of diversity

When people think 'private school' they often envision rich, well behaved, pampered children who will grow up to be the politicians, doctors and lawyers of tomorrow. For Bethania Lutheran School, however, the picture is vastly different. Our students may well grow up to be the politicians, doctors and lawyers of tomorrow but getting them there involves a community of support.

Bethania Lutheran School has a huge 42% of our school population accessing learning enrichment services at our school. This number is made up of students who are ESL, physically impaired, intellectually impaired, speech/language impaired, ASD, and a host of general learning difficulties non-specified. Couple this with an intake of 63% of students in prep who on the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) are reported as 'developmentally vulnerable' on one or more domains, and you get a very different picture to the one above. Life is a challenge for many of our families financially, emotionally and socially.

Yet, having said that, talk to any of our staff and they will tell you how rewarding it is to work in this environment. Achievement and success are something we strive toward for all of our students, irrespective of the point at which they have begun their educational journey. Success is hard fought and won and we celebrate personal achievements on a daily basis. Our students are supported by a vast array of learning enrichment approaches including one on one and small group tutoring, in class support, reading rescue, individualised programs, outside therapy services and collaborative teaching support. It is common to walk into the staffroom and hear a teacher gushing joyously about the latest DRA result or Maths achievement of one of the students they have been working with. The reward of knowing that you have made a significant difference to a child in need cannot be measured.

*Achievement and success are something we strive toward for all of our students, irrespective of the point at which they have begun their educational journey.*

The learning enrichment team is made up of two specialist teachers, six teacher aides and a host of volunteers. Our volunteers come from all walks of life; we have parents, congregational members, friends from the local retirement facilities and even a couple of university students with some spare time on their hands. When you consider that we are only a small school of approximately 230 students, we are so blessed to have so many wonderful people supporting our students and teachers. The African proverb, 'It takes a village to raise a child', is never more true than in a place like our school. Parents, teachers, support staff and volunteers join together to shape the hearts, heads and lives of a very special group of children.

### Suzanne Jessen

Deputy Principal  
Bethania Lutheran School  
Bethania, Qld



Achievement and success are something we strive toward for all of our students



Our students are supported by a vast array of learning enrichment approaches



Growing together side by side...

### LORDS – growing together side by side

Lutheran Ormeau Rivers District School (LORDS) is the newest Lutheran school in Australia. LORDS opened in 2012 and currently has 217 students from prep-year 9. LORDS Little Wonders Kindergarten is also located on site and has a current enrolment of 40 students.

It is a once in a life time opportunity to be part of something that is new. I admire parents and families who step out in faith and join a new school community. When I have asked parents in enrolment interviews why they have chosen to consider coming to LORDS the responses have reflected so many people's positive experiences of Lutheran education, either as students themselves or because they have heard so much about the sense of community that can be found in a Lutheran school.

In an ever changing world where families are transient and moving interstate or overseas, having a community or a place to call home is essential. Developing culture and community is a challenge: this means you need a firm understanding of who you are, what you stand for and whose you are. The LORDS bible verse, *'We are the Lord's'* (Romans 14:8), is a constant reminder of whose we are.

Our vision is for a community that focuses on:

- » learning for life
- » serving with hands, head and heart
- » developing relationships with God, others and self

At the heart of the LORDS community is a strong sense of service. In our curriculum we are developing units of work that have a service learning lens.

*'He has told you what is good... to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'* (Micah 6:8).

We journey alongside students and staff as we learn and grow together in community. The importance lies in nurturing the individual in such a way that people can identify their God given gifts and talents and seek to do their personal best and use these gifts in community to serve God, their family, each other and the wider and global community.

**The key question is: what does the world need and what gifts and talents do I have to meet that need?**

At LORDS our approach to service learning allows students and staff to explore and

answer that very question. At its heart service learning focuses on:

- » a real problem that needs to be solved in the community or globally
- » authentic links to the curriculum
- » benefiting both community partners and the students involved
- » active and ongoing reflection (what have I learnt about myself, others, God and the world from this experience?)

Developing real partnerships with local community organisations and global organisations is a feature of a LORDS education. We want students to understand their role as citizens of not only Australia but the world, through working alongside people and 'getting their hands dirty', understanding the needs of another and standing up for others in a knowledgeable and caring way.

*You are never too young or old to make a difference in the world or someone's life.*

#### Jodie Hoff

Principal  
LORDS  
Ormeau, Qld

# With gratitude to Malcolm Bartsch



Stephen Rudolph is the Executive Director of Lutheran Education Australia

Malcolm Bartsch commenced his life in Lutheran schools as a young man starting at Immanuel College, Novar Gardens, in 1962. His journey in education proceeded through Adelaide University and secondary teaching with the South Australian Education Department before he commenced study at Luther Seminary to become a pastor. After serving in Papua New Guinea as a school chaplain and leading curriculum development at Goroka Teachers College, Malcolm returned to Australia via congregational ministry in Canberra and then in 1983 to Lutheran Teachers College (Luther Seminary and Australian Lutheran College)

in Adelaide. As a result of his rich and varied educational experiences and ongoing learning, Malcolm has been a key contributor to Lutheran education for many years.

Malcolm's legacy to Lutheran education will be seen in the many students he taught over the years as well as the significant body of writing that will continue to influence thinking and understanding of theology and education well into the future. Malcolm has a clear understanding of the Lutheran school and its relationship to the Church. His theological insight and expertise are evident in his writing contribution to Lutheran Education Australia. He wrote the *Theological Notes* that accompany the *Christian Studies Curriculum Framework* and the *Pathways* program, as well as the publication *Why a Lutheran school?*

In July 2012, and having now retired, Malcolm presented the inaugural *Fritzsche Oration* for the Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics (ALITE), the newly established research centre for Australian Lutheran College. The topic of Malcolm's oration was *Fifty years of Lutheran schooling: achievements, opportunities (missed opportunities?) and challenges*, and in it he outlined not only his own experiences and insights into the recent history of Australian Lutheran schooling, but was also able, with great effect, to absorb and include the contributions of educators and theologians across the LCA to the history of Australian Lutheranism.

In Malcolm's latest book, *A God who speaks and acts: theology for teachers in Lutheran schools*, he has been again able to capture and include not only his own wisdom and rich experience in Lutheran education, but has intelligently and effectively included the thoughts of several significant Lutheran educators and theologians. People such as Zweck, Koch, Hauser, Hebart and Jennings – deep thinkers in the Australian Lutheran context – add to Malcolm's writings and provide a most worthwhile and thorough theological journey for teachers in Lutheran schools to venture into. Even more so, Martin Luther's writings on Lutheran education and theology are inexorably intertwined into this well written dialogue. This enables the reader to be taken deep into Lutheran theology and, in the case of the Lutheran teacher, to identify their own and their school's *raison d'être*.

I commend this book to all in Lutheran schools as you daily offer Lutheran education in your communities, as diverse as they may be. On behalf of all involved in the education and theology of Lutheran schools, past and present, I also wish to acknowledge Malcolm Bartsch as a key and distinguished contributor, thinker and leader of Lutheran education and theology. As God has blessed us through his writings, so Malcolm has been a blessing to the Lutheran Church of Australia through his service and leadership.

Lutheran Education Australia is offering Malcolm Bartsch's latest book *A God who speaks and acts: theology for teachers in Lutheran schools* for **FREE** in ebook form. Hard copies for \$10 each are also available.

Thank you, Malcolm, and all who daily serve in Lutheran schools

**Stephen Rudolph**  
Executive Director  
Lutheran Education Australia

## A God who speaks and acts:

theology for teachers in Lutheran schools

Malcolm I Bartsch

You can access your books at:  
[www.lutheran.edu.au/publications-and-policies/printed-publications/](http://www.lutheran.edu.au/publications-and-policies/printed-publications/)

A full list of references for the articles in this issue is available from the LEA office.