



# COMMUNITY REPORT

2024

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## BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

**E**ach year, CREST selects a theme that encapsulates our vision, guides our collective efforts, and inspires our community. For 2024, the theme was 'Hope', and Jeremiah 29:11 expressed that God has a good plan for us, one that gives hope in an uncertain world. The theme reminded us that we can trust God is working for our good, in our studies, on the sporting field, in our music or drama performances and in our broader School community. While we may have faced numerous obstacles during the year, we have consistently seen the favour of God, and that gives us Hope to overcome any challenges.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my fellow Board and sub-committee members, who volunteer their time to support the mission of CREST. It is with great pride, that we share our 2024 Community Report, which provides a snapshot of the incredible accomplishments that happen daily in our CREST colleges. This report outlines quantifiable success in key areas of enrolment growth and strong financial results, which are a result of our shared commitment to high quality Christian education – we recognize and are grateful for the valuable roles our CREST staff play in delivering these achievements.

In 2024 we were successful in embedding the new leadership structure and team, and this important work positions CREST to deliver innovation and improvements over the coming years. Additionally, the completion of works on the CREST Senior Learning STEAM project delivered another high quality facility to broaden and enhance the pathway opportunities for all Hillcrest and Rivercrest senior students.

Our schools are places of wonder and joy, accepting of all, where every child has a chance to realise the unique plan God has for their life. We pray that God will continue be the source of Hope for all at CREST as we co-labour and face the challenges and opportunities of an uncertain world.

**Amelia Munso - CREST Board Chair**





# EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT

**W**e had much to celebrate at the end of 2024, our year of 'Hope'. As a school we continued to see a strong and growing roll, exceeding budget expectations, and with continued development around the school, our enrolment future appears very strong indeed.

One of the most significant highlights of the year has been the completion, and opening, of our CREST Senior Learning Centre and Precinct. Twelve months ago, our Hillcrest senior students were still based in classrooms designed for a different age of learning, and our Rivercrest senior students were in middle school classrooms. The transformational experiences that were to come to our students through the Senior Learning Centre were still perhaps an unknown quantity to them. It was an idea of how we wanted to be, but it was yet to be experienced at CREST.

Seeing the great success that has been the first semester in the SLC, we now wonder how we could ever have lived without it. The paradigm change that has taken place in our senior schooling experience is the "game changer" we promised it would be. It has enabled us to pursue the highest of aspirations in Christian senior education. That is:

- To equip our young people with the knowledge, skills and values to thrive in a world that is increasingly complex, fluid and uncertain.
- Focus on the God-given potential of each learner and the importance of realising that potential.
- Build our systems around the learner rather than have the learner trying to fit our system.
- Change the roles of learners and teachers as they work together to generate new solutions to complex problems.
- And, with the Stage Two STEAM Centre open we will now even more be able to: Develop new kinds of partnerships and relationships as learners work with real challenges in a range of real-world contexts.



To a degree, the SLC represents a fulfillment of an aspiration, first expressed in 2019, that this is how we respond to the challenges of creating a Future Focused school. Now we have started this journey, we are rapidly going to make further progress. It is a great time to be at CREST.

As we conclude 2024 therefore, we do so with a deep sense of gratitude to God for what we have been able to accomplish this year, but also with great anticipation for the future. I would also like to express my great appreciation to all members of the CREST Board for their unfailing support throughout the year.

Relentlessly committed to Christian excellence, we now have an opportunity to take our school forward into the brightest of futures, a future of hope and of purpose.

*"For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11*

**Mr Brendan Kelly - Executive Principal**



# LEARNING & TEACHING

## Primary & Secondary Academic Achievements

Across both Rivercrest and Hillcrest, 2024 marked a major shift in literacy instruction through the adoption of the MultiLit suite based on Konza's Big 6 model. Programs such as InitialLit, SpellEx, and MacqLit were introduced with high levels of teacher engagement. Parent information sessions were well received, and foundational literacy outcomes have already shown early gains. A collaborative implementation plan ensured consistency in instruction and resource use.

In terms of academic data, NAPLAN scores at both campuses demonstrated steady improvement across most domains and year levels. Notable highlights include Rivercrest's Year 5 Writing scores increasing significantly from 475 to 492 and Hillcrest's Year 9 Numeracy scores reaching 578.

## Secondary Learning & Teaching Innovations

The Secondary schools introduced CREST-wide lesson observation protocols and rigorous assessment reform. Examination structures were embedded into the Middle Years to improve academic readiness, and the STEAM building was officially opened, providing state-of-the-art facilities.

New curriculum leaders were appointed and mentored to drive the vision of learning excellence, ensuring that staff development remained a central focus.

## Learning Diversity

The BRIDGE program operated across all campuses, supporting high-needs students through flexible, individualised learning plans. The embedding of ILP processes within Schoolbox and refined NCCD declaration processes significantly enhanced compliance and support structures.

## Research & Inquiry

Record student engagement was reported in the refurbished libraries at both Hillcrest and Rivercrest. Initiatives such as "Read to Me!" and student-led book reviews were introduced. A new digital library platform was launched, improving access to academic support resources. Strategic pilots of AI-based tools, including custom GPTs for exam support and inquiry learning, were successfully trialled.

## Learning Technologies

An EdTech audit led to streamlining platforms used across CREST. A 1:1 device program expanded into primary and secondary years. Real-time dashboards tracking behavioural, attendance, and academic data are now informing learning interventions and school improvement planning.

**Mr Andrew Hindle**  
CREST Deputy Principal - Learning and Teaching



# CAMPUS OPERATIONS

## **CREST Senior Secondary**

The opening of the CREST Senior Learning Precinct in 2024 marked a significant milestone, providing a state-of-the-art pre-tertiary environment for Hillcrest and Rivercrest Year 11 and 12 students. Academic culture was further enriched with the launch of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma cohort alongside VCE and VCE-VM pathways.

Key highlights included the Europe Study Tour, the Victorian Careers Expo, and the introduction of the CREST Scholars Awards recognising academic excellence.

## **CREST Early Years**

Rivercrest's Early Learning Centre received an "Exceeding" rating under the National Quality Standards, while Hillcrest's Early Years strengthened Reggio Emilia-inspired practices. The Bush Kinder Program and strong allied health partnerships fostered a holistic environment for the youngest learners.

## **Hillcrest Primary & Secondary**

Hillcrest Primary emphasised STEM excellence through the VEX Robotics program and wellbeing via the Grow Your Mind curriculum. Community campaigns such as Jump Rope for Heart and Hoodie Up for Autism deepened social responsibility.

Hillcrest Secondary focused on student leadership expansion, with new peer mentoring programs and community service projects. The Secondary Timetable Review in 2024 will lead to enhanced curriculum delivery in 2025.

## **Rivercrest Primary and Middle Years**

Rivercrest Primary celebrated the successful PYP Self-Study and PYP Exhibition, highlighting strengths in inquiry learning. Sustainability initiatives were woven into the curriculum.

Rivercrest Middle Years introduced "IB Week" and critical thinking curriculum mapping, developing key collaboration and problem-solving skills. Leadership opportunities were expanded in the House, STEM, and Arts domains.

**Mr Jonathan Shrapnel**

**CREST Deputy Principal - Campus Operations**





# STAFF & STUDENTS

## Performing Arts Achievements

CREST Performing Arts flourished in 2024. Over one hundred and fifty students undertook private instrumental lessons, while Primary productions and concerts brought the community together. The Secondary production of Mary Poppins was a major success, involving over ninety students. Additional highlights included Twilight performances, participation in SIS Cultural Events, and the Schools on Stage showcase at Bunjil Place.

## Sporting Successes

The inaugural CREST Cross Country Carnival and debut of the CREST Swim Team at SIS Championships was a highlight of the 2024 sporting achievements. Hillcrest celebrated an undefeated Junior Boys Soccer season and a State Championship in Primary Basketball. Four CREST teams competed at the Australian School Championships, achieving two national titles.

## Outdoor Learning

Students attended camps across diverse locations such as Phillip Island and Baw Baw which enriched experiential learning. Outdoor education programs fostered resilience, leadership, and environmental stewardship, with strong Indigenous cultural partnerships enhancing the curriculum.

## Wellbeing Initiatives

2024 saw a strengthening of student support structures with new leadership appointments, including Deputy: Staff and Students and a CREST Psychologist. Wellbeing reviews informed updates to enrolment, transition, and discipline policies, set for rollout in 2025.



CREST Staff underwent expanded training in Child Safety, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Consent and Respectful Relationships, and Berry Street Education Model practices. Secondary students now benefit from daily Pastoral Care periods, while refreshed wellbeing curricula ensure age-appropriate health and relationship education.

Parent engagement initiatives were prioritised, including cybersafety and digital wellbeing sessions. These efforts established a strong, student-centred foundation for 2025 and beyond.

**Ms Nicole Rietveld**  
CREST Deputy Principal - Staff and Students









# VCE RESULTS & TERTIARY PLACEMENTS

**T**he results of our senior students continue to be consistent every year. Ninety-two students completed Year 12. Eighty-two students completed their VCE, with three students registered as Certificate Only (Unscored) and seven students completed the VCE VM pathway. The VCE completion rate was 100%.

## Dux & Proxime Accessit

The top ATAR for 2023 was 98.35. The top three students achieved ATAR scores of 98.35, 96.85 and 93.15. Our VCE Dux for 2024 was Shaelee Skeggs, who achieved an ATAR of 98.35. Emma Lindsay was our VCE Proxime Accessit with an ATAR of 96.85.

There were eighty-two students who achieved an ATAR. This is 11 (13.4%) more than last year. Our lowest ATAR rose from 32.1 to 43.65.

There were 15 study scores of 40 and over (3.38%). This was one more than in 2023. The highest study scores obtained were:

- 48 - English (x2)
- 46 - History: Revolutions
- 44 - English
- 43 - Biology
- 41 - Business Management and English (x2)
- 40 - Business Management (x2), Visual Communication & Design (x2), Applied Computing: Software Development, General Mathematics, and History: Revolutions.

## VCE Vocational Major

2024 was the second year that the college offered the full VCE Vocational Major certificate, and the fifth year since the initial VCAL program began. There were 7 students who commenced their VCE VM Certificate and Ashlyn Breen received the VCE VM Excellence Award for 2024.

## VTAC Outcomes

Of the 2024 Year 12 cohort, we had seventy-nine students pay for and submit preferences on VTAC. All students but one received an offer in the first round. Thirty-seven students (47%) received an offer for their first preference. Nineteen students received an offer for their second preference (24%). By the end of the second offer round, all students had received at least one offer.

Offered courses in order of popularity:

1. Business
2. Engineering
3. Arts
4. Information Technology
5. Psychology
6. Law and Criminology
7. Health Science
8. Nursing

We had a great diversity of interest areas include Teaching, Sports and Exercise Science, Fashion, Film and Television, Architecture, Paramedicine, International Relations and even Zoology and Animal Science.

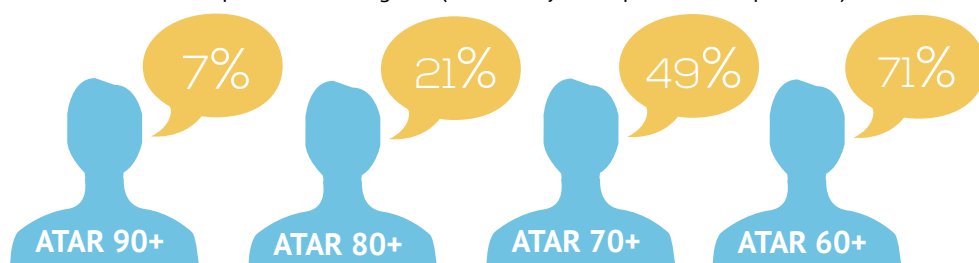
Offers by institution:

1. Monash: 26%
2. Deakin: 23%
3. Swinburne: 17%
4. RMIT: 16%
5. La Trobe: 5% and Victoria: 5%
6. Federation: 3%

Institutions where only a single offer was made include The University of Melbourne, COLLARTS, Torrens University, Holmesglen, and Australian Catholic University.

For our seventy-nine students who submitted and paid for VTAC preference we had 101 offers made. From those offers made we had:

- 14 double degrees
- 14 bachelor's degrees with honours
- 13 guaranteed pathway programs
- 2 professional degrees (include a year of paid work experience)





# ATTENDANCE FIGURES

**A**ttendance rates have traditionally been strong and above the national average. The CREST Colleges use the Synergetic Student Management System for attendance monitoring. Attendance is formally collected twice a day (am/pm) and, there is an expectation that teachers keep a record of attendance, in each of their classes. Absence lists are generated and sent to all appropriate staff.

The parent or guardian of any student who is absent without appropriate reason or notice, are contacted by the College on that day. If attendance is becoming problematic, interventions are in place to ensure parents are informed of the situation, and that appropriate supports are enacted to minimise further non-attendance.

## HILLCREST

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Prep	90.77
1	90.66
2	90.08
3	92.28
4	90.76
5	92.51
6	91.69
7	90.67
8	87.36
9	88.28
10	86.41
11	87.87
12	91.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>89.76</b>

## RIVERCREST

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Prep	90.40
1	88.36
2	90.13
3	91.90
4	92.11
5	91.57
6	90.56
7	90.02
8	90.87
9	87.61
10	88.62
11	88.65
12	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>90.29</b>



# AYR HILL EQUESTRIAN CENTRE

**A**nother wonderful year of equestrian studies for our Hillcrest Years 5-9, Rivercrest, and VETiS (Units 1-4) students. After School Riding and School Holiday Programs remained popular extracurricular activities for both our students and the wider community, while Grayling Primary School continued offering equestrian to their Year 5 & 6 students.

We welcomed visits from the ELC, Junior Primary, and Rivercrest Chinese classes, where students toured the facility, patted horses, and watched rider demonstrations. The 22513VIC Certificate III in Equine Studies attracted enrollments from across Victoria, with new home schools joining us for the first time. Trainer Nicole O'Shannessy transitioned to 1st Year trainer, Deborah Webb oversaw 2nd Year students, and Emmi Hoefchen taught 1st & 2nd year students from the Northeast.

The new 22647VIC Certificate III in Equine Studies was added to our registration, ready for 2025. Current students in the 22513VIC course will complete it in 2025, with new enrollments starting in the 22647VIC course. On 25th October, we held an Interschool Jackpot Dressage Day with riders from 30 schools. Nine CREST students competed, with six on school horses and three on their own, preparing for the competition by washing, plaiting manes, and cleaning gear the day before.

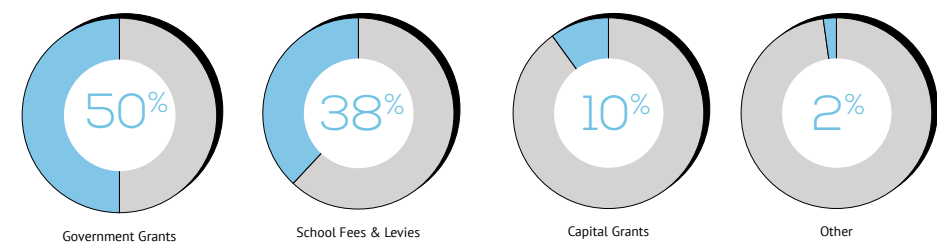
Ayr Hill has been home to Berwick Riding Club since 2020, and in 2025, we will welcome Berwick Pony Club as well. Both clubs, formerly at Akoonah Park, will reunite here.

**Michelle How - Equestrian Centre Manager**

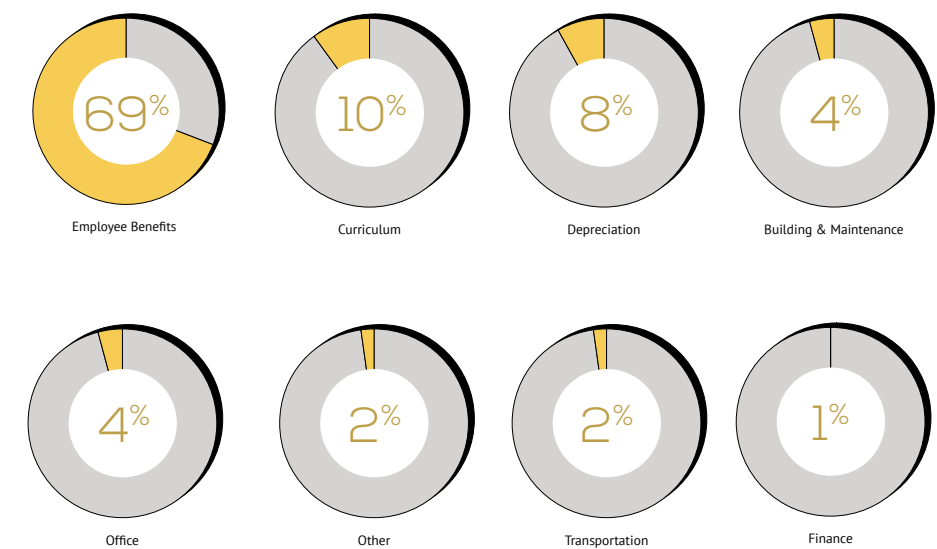
# FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT

CREST Education is a not-for-profit organisation, and we adhere to contemporary commercial business and governance practices to ensure that finances are managed in an effective and efficient manner. All end-of-year surpluses are applied to facility development and/or repayment of borrowings. CREST has also been successful in maintaining school fees at an affordable level that are amongst the best value in this area. The major sources of income and expenditure for 2024 were:

## income sources



## expenditure focus



**Senior Learning Precinct**  
In the recent history of CREST, 2024 has delivered us the most strategic capital works achievements. The completion of Stage 1, and the near completion of Stage 2 (STEAM building) at the CREST Senior Learning precinct, clearly demonstrated our commitment to invest in high quality facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing school communities.

Over the next few years, the continued development of the Senior Learning precinct will a key focus of our Capex spend, with works expected to commence in mid 2025 on a three court Gym complex.

**Rivercrest Developments**  
At the Middle Years Campus, we commenced work on upgrading the car park and access road.

**Hillcrest Developments**  
We have commenced work on the staged upgrading of our Hillcrest Library and the early success in student attendance and borrowing rates is encouraging.

**Masterplanning**  
The ongoing development of the Crest Senior Learning precinct continues to give focus on the masterplan for the balance of the site, and the Board continues to strategically explore a range of opportunities.



## TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

At CREST Education, we are proud of the high calibre of our teaching and support staff. All teaching staff hold recognised tertiary qualifications, with the majority having completed a Bachelor of Education. Many of our staff have pursued further study, holding postgraduate qualifications including Graduate Diplomas, Master's degrees, and other specialist certifications across a range of educational and professional fields.

This commitment to ongoing professional learning reflects our dedication to excellence in teaching and student support. Our team's diverse qualifications contribute significantly to the rich learning environment and the delivery of quality education across all year levels.

## SATISFACTION SURVEYS

In late 2024, CREST Education conducted surveys of its Parent, Student and Staff communities using the MYP Corporation survey tool. Overall, we achieved solid response rates and the survey results have been assessed by the school leadership and Board, with results analysis showing performance against other schools and previous surveys.

The feedback is being used to inform our annual and strategic action plans and to track improvement performance. CREST provides feedback to the various communities on an ongoing basis to support a healthy relationship focused on improving levels of satisfaction.







## CHILD SAFE STATEMENT

*CREST has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.*

## CONTACT US

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## VISION

To be a leading provider of quality Christian Education, delivered by Christian staff, equipping students for a life of faithful service.



CREST Education is a leading provider of quality Christian education to the Casey and Cardinia communities of South East Melbourne. Our magnificent 138 acre property serves as a precinct for two Colleges, Hillcrest and Rivercrest, an Equestrian Centre, Agriculture/Horticulture precinct and Environmental Centre with a significant area set aside for waterways, and reclaimed bush bordering Cardinia Creek.