

## **Introduction to Doncaster Secondary College's International Student Program**

Doncaster Secondary College is a co-educational school of around 1420 students who range in age from 13 to 18 and employ 123 staff. It is located in the highly desirable inner eastern Melbourne residential area.

The College was amongst the first schools in Victoria to offer the International Student Program which has now been running continuously at the College for nearly 20 years. We have therefore, developed a very high level of understanding of the needs of International students and the best ways to manage and support them with their welfare and academic progress.

### **Academic Results**

Our top student in 2015 achieved a ranking of 99.90 placing him in the top 1% of students in Australia. The top scoring International student achieved a rank of 98.5 placing her in the top 2% across Australia. The top 25% of local student's average score was 90, i.e., in the top 10% across Australia. The top 25% of International students achieved an average score of 96.

Our International students always perform very well. The 15 year average is 40% of our International students achieving over 80, i.e., in the top 20% in Australia. In 2015 40% of international students scored in the top 9% across Australia.

The most popular destinations for our students for 2016 were Monash University, Deakin University, RMIT and the University of Melbourne.

94% of all our students received a first round tertiary offer.

Our International students have been awarded Monash Engineering Scholarships. Many of our local students also win university scholarships. Academically the College performs well above State level.

### **Students Academic Programs**

The College has its own 'English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students' [ELICOS] catering for intermediate standard for students newly arrived at the College. The intensive course is not suitable for students who are beginners. Our students are assessed on arrival and if they do not meet intermediate language requirements, they will be referred to an English Language Centre. Having our own onsite ELICOS allows us to better cater for their welfare and academic needs and ensures a smoother transition into mainstream classes. Intensive language classes have an average of 16 students. Students work with a team of staff with the key focus being on the development of their English to prepare them to go into mainstream classes. Students also study with local students in a range of studies such as: Mathematics, Science, Art, Physical Education and Music. This means that the students also mix with local students in their elective classes which is not the case in standard ELICOS programs. Our students also have the opportunity to study Chinese as a language. Students take the language study a year ahead, so Year 11 International students will enroll in Year 12 Chinese. This provides an opportunity for them to complete 6 Year 12 studies, instead of the usual 5 for their university entrance score.

Students have a choice of over 27 VCE studies, university level studies and technically orientated studies. Senior Year 11 and 12 VCE classes are smaller and generally average 22 students per class. EAL classes are also usually less than 20 students. Students are provided with extensive support to assist them in choosing an appropriate VCE program.

## **How do we support students?**

We pride ourselves on our open door policy of student support. Students are encouraged to seek assistance whenever they need it: Year Level Co-coordinators, careers teacher, College nurse and College counsellor.

We also have an international team which comprises our EAL co-coordinator, EAL teachers, 2 support aides which work with the International Student Co-coordinator and her assistant. The International staff work in the same office as the management staff for senior local students. This arrangement means there is far better integration of our International students with local students and staff. Students may come to us for a range of issues; what subjects and university to select, through to advice about study and dealing with friends. International students have a range of issues which may range from Homestay issues through to being homesick.

The College also runs special homework clubs:

- for newly arrived International intensive language students with a staff ratio of 1 to 8 students;
- general homework club for Year 10 and 11 International students;
- general homework club for Year 12 students;
- International student accounting homework club for Year 12 students;
- English as A Second Language homework club for Year 12 students; and
- A general homework club for local and International students.

We also have two teacher assistants who attend some of the classes with senior International students and provide one to one assistance during class time.

Over the last few years, we have concentrated on improving the leadership skills of our International students. This leadership program includes special leadership training program, International student representatives on the Student Representative Council [SRC] as well as participation in special projects with local community organizations such as Rotary and the Salvation Army charity group.

## **Background**

### **Our Local Area and Transport**

The College is located approximately 14km from the Melbourne City Centre.

The College is centrally located within a strong highly desirable middleclass area of Melbourne. All the schools in this part of Melbourne have a very good reputation and are highly sought after. There is a major freeway five minutes from the College, allowing for access to central Melbourne in 20 minutes at peak hour. There is also a nearby major bus terminal servicing 40 bus routes across the Melbourne metropolitan area.

There are many local facilities: swimming pools, sports ovals, parks, major hospitals, and local libraries as well as tertiary colleges. We are 5 minutes walking distance from one of Melbourne's largest shopping centres.

### **College Physical Facilities**

The College recently underwent a major renovation of all its buildings at a cost of \$8 million Australian. The College is located on a 60,000sq m site.

We have state of the art facilities which include: general and specialist teaching areas such as Science and an Electronics laboratory, library, private study areas for senior students, careers office and extensive dedicated computer areas. Students also have wireless internet access from any location within the College grounds. There is also a large public theatre, music practice rooms, specialised Art rooms and more.

There are many recreational facilities which include synthetic surface sports oval, tennis courts, badminton, hockey, basketball courts, a traditional school gym, weights room and a state of the art multi court sport stadium with seating for 650 people.

## **We offer more than just an academic program**

We want our students to leave our College with more than just their academic results. We want them to develop life skills such as: leadership skills, teamwork, organisational skills and self-reliance. These skills are widely sought after by tertiary institutions and employers.

There are a wide range of sports, activities, camps, tours, special programs and competitions available.

The following are examples of a few of these programs and competitions:

Debating, chess club, orchestras, drama, theatre, interstate music performance tours, national competitions in Science, Chemistry, Mathematics and many student leadership development programs.

There are also programs to encourage social interaction such as: traditional board games club, open to all students, VCE club, community service club, and ESL Language club. We also have leadership training for International and local students to work together to promote greater interaction between International and local students.

Examples of Camps/Tours include: Italy tour, France tour, USA NASA space camp tour, Central Australia tour and a wide range of outdoor adventure activities.