

Issue 25— Friday 22nd August 2025

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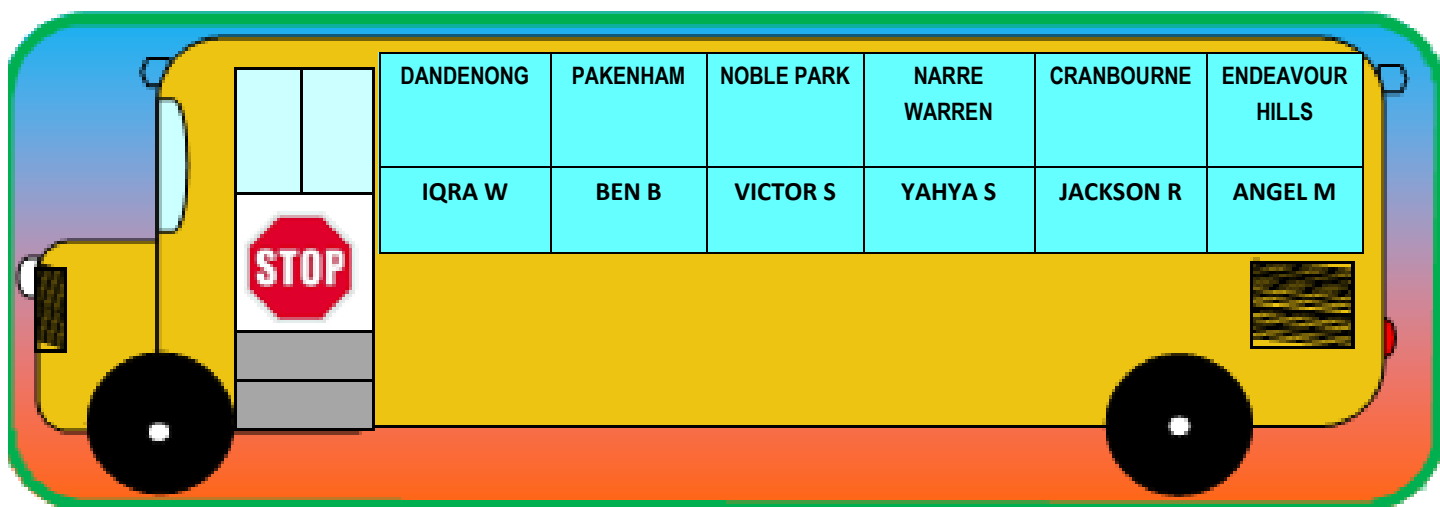
PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

On this coming Monday, 25th August, we will have a Curriculum Day. There will be no school classes for students, no buses or after school care on this day.

The content of our Curriculum Day will involve the new teaching and learning models that have been implemented by the Department of Education along with a review of our Literacy and Respectful Relationships programs.

Staff will also be involved in the preparation of our School Review which will take place in November of this year.

JOHN MOONEY Principal



DIARY DATES 2025

Monday August 25 - Curriculum Day—No school for students.

Friday September 19 - Last Day of Term 3.
School finishes 1 hour early

Monday October 6 - First day of Term 4.

VALUE OF THE FORTNIGHT

Kindness-Paying It Forward.

We continue studying the value Kindness next week.

Kindness is showing other people, animals and our environment, that we are concerned and care about them.

It allows us to feel connected to other people, animals and the earth. Kind people do not expect anything in return for their good deeds.

There have been many studies about the benefits of kindness, both on the person showing kindness, and the person receiving the kind gesture.

As the late Princess Diana once said: "Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you."

Below are some suggestions that I have downloaded from the internet to help you plan and carry out a project to 'Pay it Forward.'

Dianne Wright Campus Principal Middle School



KINDNESS *Pass it on!*

Give a flower Eat lunch with someone new
Listen with your heart Visit a sick friend
Clean a neighbor's walk Offer a hug
Give an unexpected gift Make a new friend
Pick up litter Say "hello" Call a lonely person
Open a door Help carry a load Plant a tree
Pass a kindness on Buy someone's meal
Cheer up a friend Thank a teacher Give blood
Read to a child Do one kind act every day
Leave a thank you note Offer your seat
Tip generously BE TOLERANT Let another go first
Bake cookies for emergency workers Tutor a student
Give a compliment Pay the next driver's toll
Lend a hand Give a balloon to a child
Offer a ride Celebrate the day Respect others
Encourage a child Walk a dog Do a favor
Forgive mistakes Drive courteously Share a smile



Emerson School showcased in award-winning film

Emerson School was recently in the Dandenong Star, reporting on the premier of the documentary, "Unlocking the Potential: The Vital Role of Specialist Education"

Below is the article and photos that were in the Star.

Big screen heroes

Dandenong-based Emerson School's success story is inspiring audiences overseas, with a multi-award-winning documentary.

A week after launching a state-of-the-art \$6.1 million technology wing, the school has launched a film *Unlocking the Potential: The Vital Role of Specialist Education*.

"The film highlights the 'miracles' that happen in transforming specialist students' lives, equipping them for fulfillment beyond school."

The documentary was two years in the making with an extraordinary compilation of interviews of parents, past and present students, principal John Mooney, school council, school staff, the Monash Krongold Clinic, lifelong partners and friends.

"If you're experiencing difficulties in your learning, where you may not be motivated or you might be marginalised - well, wouldn't it be lovely to go to a school where you'll actually be able to unlock, discard all their worries and fear?"

Mooney said at the launch on 6 August. His friend and retired principal Kevin Mackay now helps at the school.

"I think the most powerful thing about the film was the stories of the parents who would have been devastated without the support of the school."

Filmmaker Amel Tresnjic said he wanted the film to be a "blueprint" for other schools.

"Part of the film was for me to essentially investigate what makes the school very unique."

"The first thing I recognise, it's John - because John is the leader, his philosophies, his kindness, his ability to really see the best in people and cultivate that in really quite unique."

More on the story, turn to page 19



Phone: (03) 5945 0666 Trades & Classifieds: 1300 666 808

Tuesday, 12 August, 2025

Emerson School showcased in award-winning film

By Sahar Fofadi

Emerson School officially screened an international award-winning documentary *Unlocking the Potential: The Vital Role of Specialist Education*, leaving its audience deep in emotions.

The work by multi-award-winning filmmaker Amel Tresnjic captured the essence and importance of the Dandenong specialist school.

It was the first time the entire 110 minutes of the film was screened.

A shorter 75 minute version had won 13 international awards including Best Educational Film and Best Film on Disability at the Cannes World Film Festival.

The film provided crucial insights into the "miracle" transition of students from being potentially welfare recipients to independent taxpayers as well as their families who became part of the school.

A proud principal John Mooney OAM says they want more people to know that easier pathways through school and beyond can be achieved.

"You're experiencing difficulties in your learning, where you may not be motivated or you might be marginalised - well, wouldn't it be lovely to go to a school where you'll actually be able to unlock, discard all their worries and fear?"

He has been a long advocate of streamlining enrolments at specialist schools without barriers such as meeting thresholds of entry and scoring certain numbers on a test.

In doing so, he has changed lives of the students and helped families in easing their deep concerns for the future of their child.

The documentary was two years in the making with an extraordinary compilation of interviews of parents, past and present students, Mr Mooney, school council, school staff, the Monash Krongold Clinic, lifelong partners and friends.

The launch at Hoyts Chadstone on Wednesday evening 6 August brought together people from all walks of life, government departments, professionals along with the school's community including Emerson's school council, former students, staff and families.

Some of them didn't shy away to admit they had tears roll down their face.

Retired principal of Dandenong North Primary School, Kevin Mackay OAM also attended on the night, as one half of a longstanding partnership with Mr Mooney in running programs

dandenong.starcommunity.com.au



After watching the film's launch, the audience mingled and had photograph sessions. (Sahar Fofadi: 495105, 03)

The film was the stories of the parents who would have been devastated without the support of the school.

"John's just an inspiration. He didn't want the film to be about him, but it should be about him too because without him, it wouldn't happen."

Mr Mackay now works at Emerson School few days a week because he loves it so much.

Mr Tresnjic however, couldn't have truly portrayed the film without highlighting the incredible leadership of Mr Mooney.

"Part of the film was for me to essentially investigate what makes the school very unique and the first thing I recognise, it's John - because John is the leader, his philosophies, his kindness, his ability to really see the best in people and cultivate that in really quite unique."

"I thought it was really important being an educational film and essentially a blueprint of how

we can replicate something like this to help other schools develop certain strategies and cultures."

"I thought it was really important to recognise where John's motivation comes from, how that trickles down to the staff, to teachers, the students, how all of that affects everybody as a whole environment and that really is what allows everyone to thrive."

This is not the first time Mr Tresnjic has worked with the school.

He first met and worked with Mr Mooney in 2013 on the film, *SingStar: The Legacy of Music*, which highlighted the importance of music in education earning 18 international awards.

The documentary inspired another three documentaries at Dandenong North Primary School, *The Reading Factory at DNP's*, *Talk for Life: English as an Additional Language* and *Giving Back*.

Tuesday, 12 August, 2025 | STAR JOURNAL 19

NEWS

Success stories screened

By Sahar Fofadi

Some of Emerson School's former students watched themselves on the big screen for the first time at a premiere screening of an award-winning school documentary on Wednesday 6 August.

Bailey Milani, like many of the other parents and students, says he can't imagine being anywhere else other than Emerson School.

Mr Milani, who lives independently and works at Officeworks, watched the film *Unlocking the Potential: The Vital Role of Specialist Education*, along with his young sister Brooke Milani.

"It was very heart-warming, very beautiful and inspiring to listen to everyone of how they feel about the school - it's just absolutely beautiful."

"Personally, I think I'll struggle to much in a mainstream school, because I won't get as much support by all the teachers."

"I just feel so much more connected being in a special school where everyone feels loved, special, valued and respect themselves for who they are."

Bailey played a role in Brodie's life, inspiring her into working in a specialist environment with kids.

She says she sees her own brother in the little kids and protects them in that sort of way.

"It brings me closer to why I love kids with disabilities."

"Bailey especially, he's grown up in such an inconsistent sort of disruptive environment in terms of his personal life."

"Being involved in such a school that is so inclusive and connected - it makes me happy as his little sister, that he's happy, especially."

Former student Walid Khalil, who initially thought he "couldn't do anything" when he started at Emerson School, is now a successful business owner based in Endeavour Hills.

He is a social media sensation known as @flavourfulflavour, winning hearts and likes online through his dancing and fun personality.



A full house watched Emerson School's award-winning film, *Unlocking the Potential: The Vital Role of Specialist Education* at Hoyts on 6 August. (Sahar Fofadi: 495105, 03)

"I had all my cousins go to high schools. I didn't see that I needed this school until I realised I did."

"Teachers noticed I liked business, so I started doing business here (at the school) with a cat wash for the teachers."

"As much as I loved the school, as soon as I got my license, that's it."

Since then, he has been on many news channels and had articles written about his chicken dance in a bid to save his business Mum's BBQ Chicken and Salad Bar.

Another former student featured in the film, Judy Kelly says if not for Emerson, she wouldn't have gone to TAFE, secured a job at Myer and been there for more than 31 years.

Parents - who saw their children suffer in mainstream schools from bullies, lack of connections, isolation in classrooms and activities, lack of support and understanding for their child - find Emerson has been a "godsend".

There are a lot of "firsts" for the more than 360 students at Emerson School as a parent mentioned in the film. Their first time making friends, first time being invited to birthday parties, first day enjoying school, and the first time being excited to talk about school at home.

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WATCH NOW ON

YouTube

www.YouTube.com/BraveArcherFilms

TO HELP SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF THE FILM
PLEASE, LIKE, COMMENT AND SHARE THE LINKS

**Unlocking The Potential:
The Vital Role of Specialist Education**

*The inspiring story of Emerson School,
a shining example of specialist education
and the transformative impact it has on the lives
of students with additional learning needs.*

*This compelling feature documentary,
made by multi-award-winning filmmaker Amel Tresnjic,
reveals how unlocking human potential can transform
not only individual lives, but the very fabric of our society.*

WINNER OF 19 FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS
www.emersonschoolsc.vic.edu.au

UnlockingThePotentialDocumentary

IMDb Rate and Review on IMDb



**UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL
THE VITAL ROLE OF SPECIALIST EDUCATION**

*The inspiring story of Emerson School, a beacon
of specialist education, and its profound impact
on the lives of students with additional learning needs*

EMERSON SCHOOL AND DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY
SCHOOL PRESENT A SPECIAL EDUCATION MOVIE BY AMEL TRESNJIC
CREATIVE PRODUCED AND WRITTEN BY AMEL TRESNJIC
CASTING BY AMEL TRESNJIC
EDITING BY AMEL TRESNJIC
MUSIC BY AMEL TRESNJIC
PRODUCTION DESIGNER AMEL TRESNJIC
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS AMEL TRESNJIC
PRODUCED BY AMEL TRESNJIC
DIRECTED BY AMEL TRESNJIC
www.youtube.com/UnlockingThePotentialDocumentary
www.facebook.com/UnlockingThePotentialDocumentary

BraveArcherFilms www.bravearcherfilms.com UnlockingThePotentialDocumentary



Football For All — Gala Day —

**AUSLAN
INTERPRETER
AVAILABLE**



MELBOURNE VICTORY FC CLINIC

**SESSION 1: AGES 5 TO 12
11.00AM - 12.00PM**

**SESSION 2: AGES 13 TO 18
12.15PM - 1.15PM**

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST 2025

**THE HOME OF THE MATILDAS
SPORTS DRIVE, BUNDOORA 3083**

Come and join the All Abilities football clinic for children and youth with a disability or impairment, led by coaches from Melbourne Victory Football Club.

It's a fantastic opportunity to try football, learn new skills, and make new friends! The clinic is part of Football Victoria's Football for All Gala Day, which also features inflatables, face painting, activities, raffles, a quiet room and lots more fun. All participants will receive a certificate.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

For more information,
Selin Arpaci - All Abilities & Inclusion Programs Coordinator,
allabilities@footballvictoria.com.au or 03 9474 1824



**FOOTBALL FOR
ALL ABILITIES**

Jnr School

Student of the Week



SUPER STYLE

HA MY
JSA

EFFORT

DEANA B
JSB

GOOD LISTENER

RAHUL S
JSC

GOOD THINKING

ALICE S
JSD

LEADERSHIP

HENRY N
JSE

EMPATHY

LILY P
JSF

EMPATHY

JOHN S
JSG

SCIENCE

STORM E
JSH

POLITENESS

SALEH M
JSI

BEST WRITER

ASHHAL A
JSJ

MATHEMATICS

ANTHONY K
JSK

PARTICIPATION

JAY D
JSL



Middle School Student of the Week

MSA**NAKSH**

For showing kindness, being patient & understanding especially in challenging situations.

MSB**BRENDAN**

For always looking after his friends.

MSC**WILLIAM**

For always taking pride in his work.

MSD**TYLER**

For showing kindness to his peers.

MSE**SIENNA**

For showing excellent improvement in her handwriting.

MSF**INDEGO**

For displaying patience whilst waiting for assistance in humanities.

MSG**NGATUPUNA**

For always doing the right thing.

MSI**JASMINE**

For playing nicely with others.

MSJ**KAYLA**

For greeting people "Good Morning", without being prompted.

MSK**EMMA**

For working so hard on her Mental Maths challenge

MSL**AAREN**

For always going above and beyond for Middle School.

ARTISTS OF THE WEEK —

VICTOR MSJ, WALEED, MSJ, SADRA MSJ & HAIDER MSG.

WOODWORKER OF THE WEEK - CRUZ

For his courageous effort in using the wood lathe.

ESO LUKAS — ZAR

For always working to the best of her ability.

Milkshake Awards



Sports Stars of the Week

**JULIE C
JSA**

**DERREN S
JSB**

**RAHUL S
JSC**

**LATOYA C
SSF**

**ALEX H
SSS**

**JASPER M
SSS**

KINDNESS

GROCERY LIST FOR DONATIONS 'YOU ARE SPECIAL BAGS'

Small tins of tuna and corn
spaghetti

Up and go breakfast drink

Cans of soft drink, i.e. coke, sprite, fanta, etc

Small bag of chips or popcorn

Small packs of crackers
cuits

Baked beans and

Noodle cups

Fruit cups

Chocolate bars

Small packs of bis-



Compass for Parents has launched.

Parents and carers of Emerson school now have access to the Compass School Management app, two emails have been sent to all primary Parents and carers, one email contains your log in details and the second email contains a helpful Parent Guide on how to set up and use Compass.

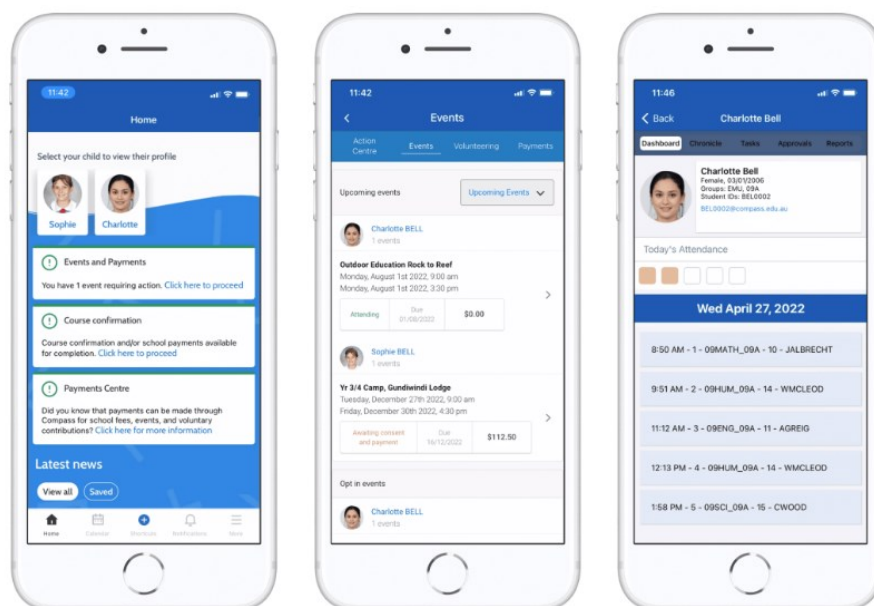
Please contact the school if you have not received either email or need assistance with logging in .

What is Compass?

Compass is a school management solution that allows parents and carers to access up-to-date and meaningful information about your school and your child's progress.

Emerson parents can now access the following features, further features may be rolled out at a later date.

- Monitor your child's attendance, and enter an explanation for absence or lateness
- Download and view your child's academic reports
- Pay and provide consent for events such as excursions and camps, and pay school fees



How do I access Compass?

Compass Apps

You can download the Compass App on Apple iOS and Android devices, simply search for Compass School Manager in the store.

Access the website via the Emerson School Website page.

Access the website by searching the following link in your browser,
<https://schools.compass.education/>



Emerson School
1430 Heatherton Road
Dandenong, VIC, 3175
22nd August 2025



Dear Parents, Guardians, and Members of the School Community,

In line with our dedication to excellence and ongoing enhancement, we are pleased to inform you about our upcoming school review. This review presents a significant opportunity for us to assess our accomplishments and identify areas for growth over the last four years.

To facilitate a comprehensive and meaningful review, we are reaching out to you, our esteemed school community, to share your positive experiences and cherished memories at Emerson School. Your insights and stories are essential in highlighting the strengths and achievements of our school, and we would be immensely grateful for your input.

We kindly invite you to contemplate the experiences of the past four years and encourage you to share any positive experiences you or your children have had at Emerson School. This may include an inspiring teacher or any other staff member, a successful school event, notable academic accomplishments, or personal story of growth and development. Your insights are valuable to us.

You can submit your contributions in the following way:

Email: Send your stories and experiences to ***jerome.jacobs@education.vic.gov.au***

We are confident that your input will provide significant insights and assist us in our ongoing efforts to foster a supportive and enriching environment for all students. We appreciate your continued support and engagement within our school community.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Mooney", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Mr. John Mooney
School Principal

Mr. Jerome Jacobs
Accountability/Review Coordinator