



Christ Church
Grammar School

Headmaster's Report

April 2015

Attachments

- Bond University Platinum School Partnership
- Bond University Scholarship offer letter
- Summer Sports Results
- Article - Vertical tutor groups in the Primary years
- Article - Ascent of the robots has begun, and it's not good for humankind
- Media clips

**Old Boys' Association
Parents' Association**

FROM THE HEADMASTER'S DESK

I have just received confirmation of the following programme outline for the Council Workshop with Dr Yong Zhao on **Friday 10 April**:

- 9.00 Thoughts on World Class Learners?
Summarising the context and update the group with new research.
- 10.00 Autonomy and personalisation workshop
- 10.45 Product orientated learning workshop
- 11.30 Break
- 11.45 Globalisation Campus workshop
- 12.30 Conclusion and Summary
- 1.00 Lunch

It is anticipated that Council would have done appropriate pre reading of Dr Zhao's book *World Class Learners* which was distributed at the Council Meeting in March prior to their attendance on this day. As indicated earlier to the Council this workshop will be followed by a Strategic Risk Register workshop led by the Council itself.

In addition, in consultation with the Chairman and our Strategic Consultant I confirm that I have engaged on behalf of the School for a second provocation seminar on the afternoon of Monday, 11th May, Dr Fiona Kerr. Details of Dr Kerr can be found [here](#). Dr Kerr will present between 4pm and 6pm, join the Council and Executive for a light dinner 6pm to 6.30pm and then lead a conversation between 6.30pm and 7.30pm. Members of Council are asked to prioritise this event in their calendar.

I have included for Council's interest a number of attachments that give background to a number of matters that have been discussed over time at Council level. The latest version of the School's Organisational Chart is also attached.

STUDENTS

THE LW PARRY PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Academic

The beginning of year standardised assessments are now complete. The Learning Development Centre and Director of Studies (Prep Centre of Excellence) have created intervention, support and extension groups from these assessments, teacher observation and class performance. Data collected will be compared to data collected at the end of the year and become part of the picture of each boy's academic development.

In response to the past two MMG Surveys, **Mr Richard Wright**, has introduced 'Open Classrooms' in all Prep classes. This initiative is to counter the perception of a 'disconnect' between parents and their boy's learning. The Open Classroom provides the teachers to showcase their excellent work with the boys and their positive class environments. There is a standing invitation to parents to come and join in class activities, however, the more formal invitation and common time has produced an excellent response. The majority of parents in the younger years have attended and over 70 parents attended the Year 6 Open Classroom.

The Head of the LW Parry Preparatory School received the following email correspondence from parents:

Good Evening Richard

I thought I'd take the time to email you to say thank you.

I really enjoyed today's open day. It was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with Theo, meet the other students and be involved in his learning. We don't often get the chance to connect with our boys in the classroom. I think Theo was pleasantly surprised that I actually knew a little bit about our democracy, I learnt off him too. I couldn't believe what good IT skills he has. He initially didn't want me to come as he thought I'd be the only parent there and embarrass him. It was also good to see you, Garth and Brad. This reinforced to Theo that it was appropriate that I attend. That was a lovely touch that meant a lot to Theo (even if he didn't communicate it that much).

Often as parents of the school (and I do volunteer at the school) it is felt that we are hands off our boys learning once they enter the grounds and not welcome into the classroom. Today demonstrated it is not the case. It would be great to have more open days during the year.

I know that we are invited into the classroom for the learning journeys, today I felt the experience was a lot more interactive which and was really beneficial.

Thanks again

Regards

Hi Richard,

I wanted to thank you for giving us the opportunity to participate in the classroom today. As a parent it is lovely to get a glimpse into our son's school life and see how engaged the boys are in their education. I'm sure the many other parents who attended will have felt the same way.

Kind regards

Mr Brad Hilliard, Director of Studies, and **Mrs Holly Miller**, Co-ordinator of Pre-Primary to Year 2, met with the creator of the Brightpaths Writing Assessment Program. **Mrs Miller** has provided feedback to the developers of the program that have been implemented to ensure we, and all Primary Schools, have a user-friendly and efficient assessment tool.

Mr Hilliard also attended the ACARA Australian Curriculum Forum at Penrhos College. **Mr Hilliard** ensured the School's position on the Australian Curriculum and its implementation was heard. It is expected ACARA will adjust the content and expectations of curriculum in the near future.

Pastoral Care, Planning and Co-curricular

The Year 6 Parents attended the annual Year 6 Sundowner, hosted by the Parents' Association, and doubling as a Canberra Tour information evening. Over 150 parents were in attendance and to hear from the Head of the LW Parry Preparatory School, **Mr Richard Wright**, the Director of Pastoral Care, Planning and Co-curricular, **Maria Hodges** and the President of the Parents' Association, **Mrs Susan Montanari**.

The 104 boys and 14 staff are presently on the annual Canberra Tour. During the tour the boys will attend the closing at the Australian War Memorial, Parliament House, Government House, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Film and Sound Archives, AIS and Questacon. The boys have focused on Australian Civics and Citizenship during their Term 1 studies and the tour will further embed this learning. **Mrs Maria Hodges** has organised this outstanding experience for the boys.

During Week 7 the Preparatory School celebrated Access Asia Week. **Ms Chantal Hockey** and **Ms Li Liu** co-ordinated the events of the week that included: Indian Dance Workshop, Indian Storytelling (by our parents), a Japanese movie, Chinese board games, Malaysian Music performance, an Indonesian incursion and a whole school lunch, specially ordered Asian inspired lunch, and Assembly. This week provides all boys with a rich appreciation of what Asian cultures and individuals have brought to our nation.

Giles House, co-ordinated by **Mrs Sally MacKinnon**, has conducted fundraisers in support of ICEA. **Lockie Cook** spoke at Assembly to outline the background and work of ICEA and why it is such a worthy charity to support. The Giles fundraisers not only raised funds, but also asked families to donate used sporting equipment to remote indigenous communities. As would be expected the community has responded in a very positive manner.

Mrs Maria Hodges article pertaining to the trial and implementation of Vertical House Groups in the Prep School has been published in the journal, Education Today. The article can be found at <http://www.educationtoday.com.au/flip-book/ebookET-15-1-2015/> and attached. This achievement provides further acknowledgement of the value and effectiveness of this initiative which was the outcome of an International Boys School Coalition action research project.

SENIOR SCHOOL

Academic

Attendance at the recent information evening on 'Beyond WA for university' indicated that this option is again being considered and pursued by a significant proportion of Years 10 – 12 students. We were grateful to Adele and Paul Swan for attending and speaking about the process of applying to Cambridge and Simon's experiences since he started there in September 2013.

The Academic Review process is complete and monitoring of the boys involved has been resumed by tutors and Heads of House. Testing for Year 10 Allwell data and the OLN has concluded.

The Parent/Teacher/Student interview afternoons for both Year 11 and Year 12 students ran smoothly and effectively and feedback from parents and boys was positive. The Studies Office is trialling the use of Basecamp, a scheduling app, and we will share this with other parts of the school next term, as it has been very helpful in keeping us on track with all of our processes. Teachers are currently preparing Term 1 reports for Years 7 – 12 students.

Mrs Margaret Brophy attended a presentation at Hale School on the IGCSE courses and the Academic Committee will consider broadening our current offering of the Global Perspectives subject to the Year 10s as a consequence. Margaret was also invited to a symposium on languages and eligibility at SCSA and we continue to advocate strongly on this issue. Margaret has also been visiting classrooms to observe Heads of Departments' teaching and they in turn have been doing the same for their teachers. The subsequent conversations about pedagogy and practice are always fruitful and thoughtful.

The boys are completing the latest round of assessments; generally speaking, they are settled and working well, and we are particularly pleased with the focus and purpose that is suddenly evident in the Year 12 cohort.

The Academic Committee of the Senior School for some time has been considering in great depth the **Strategic Project 1.1.2**

Explore timetabling models and subject orientations that may enhance the capacity of boys to become more self directed and creative learners in areas of personal interest, while not compromising that which is needed for successful post-school related outcomes, i.e. ATAR.

This consideration began in 2014 when Assistant Director of Studies **Mr Matthew Kameron** visited schools in Melbourne and explored that implied by the project outlined above. Since then a sub-committee of the Academic Committee has considered a variety of options and the final considerations are now being taken by the committee with regard to change, especially focused on the *Phase of Learning*, years 9-10 - Choice and Challenge. This contemplation has been informed by both our exceptional results at Year 9 level in our most recent MMG survey regarding the academic programme and the visit in October 2014 of Columbia University. A final recommendation from the committee to me and the School Executive will be forthcoming at the beginning of second term.

Pastoral

The senior students have been very active in areas of leadership early in the school year. There are 69 Year 11 Peer support leaders who engage regularly with the new Year 7 boys. In Year 12, the school has now appointed 23 School Prefects and 43 House Prefects. These boys are responsible for maintaining the tone of the school by performing supervisory duties and supporting their Houses in a wide range of competitive activities. The School Prefects have recently attended a leadership workshop held at the school where they considered their areas of responsibility and set some goals for the coming year.

The Student Welfare Committee which comprises the two school psychologists, the Director of the Residential Community and the Head of Senior School have dealt with a higher than usual number of student withdrawals this year. The main issues being school refusal, fractured family structures and substance abuse. The school is pursuing opportunities to engage with colleagues from neighbouring schools to discuss these issues and explore strategies to deal proactively with these behaviours.

Planning and Co-curricular

GENERAL

House Chapels at Christ Church Church have been initiated and seem to have been well received. Without the School Chapel and with the capacity of the Church being below 300 seats a rotational system where we repeat House Chapels twice on a Thursday morning for two Houses at a time is working well. Some AV equipment has been transferred to the Church for student reports, Hymns etc.

A Whole School ANZAC Day service is planned for Thursday 23 April prior to the ANZAC weekend that commemorates 100 years of ANZAC.

Mr Paul Dillon from ADARTA, visited and spoke to all Year 10, 11 and 12 boys during the first part of the month. He presented talks tailored to the respective year groups on the consequences of drug and alcohol use and the practical techniques to assist in harm minimisation when drug and alcohol abuse is confronted.

TOURS

All the Service in Action (SIA) programs are provisionally staffed and there are enough staff in reserve should issues arise as the year unfolds. As yet the Burringurrah trip has not departed, as scheduled, because of the unseasonal thunderstorm activity some weeks ago which cut the town off for over two weeks and made the trip untenable. It is rescheduled tentatively for Departure on the ANZAC weekend next term.

SIA Yipirinya trip has been cancelled due to political turmoil in the school in Alice Springs. With the Headmaster and other key staff being locked out the perceived risks are too high for a student trip. We are currently awaiting details about an opportunity in Malaysia, through a school family, in regards of a possible replacement trip for the Yipirinya experience for Year 9 and 10 boys. Most likely this will be scoped in September 2015 for consideration in 2016.

Planning around the SIA Cambodian trip to CCF with **Rev Richard Pengelley** and **Mr Patrick Loudon** is well underway. **Richard** is keen to attend and maintain his involvement with this program, at least in 2015. The relationship with SMAGS is continuing. Much discussion around fundraising and the associated selection procedure will unfold in Term 2.

The CCGS Art and China Tours depart to destinations overseas later this week and next week respectively.

SPORT

PSA summer sport is nearly over. Two main PSA carnival events are concluded, swimming and rowing.

The School Swim team came a credible third to Trinity and Hale respectively on the night of competition. Unfortunately disqualifications in relays resulted in us falling 0.5 points behind Trinity, something to work on for 2016.

At the Head of the River our rowers finished fourth behind Scotch, Guildford and Aquinas. In the Hammer Cup we placed fifth. The highlight of the day was the winning 2nd VIII.

Both Tennis and Waterpolo are contenders for their respective championship in the fixture against Aquinas in the final round.

ARTS

The last month has seen the start of many co-curricular programmes including SCRAM, Chess, Debating and Mock Trials.

Rehearsals for 'Teechers' is well underway and it comes to stage in Week 2 of Term 2. Casting for Cloudstreet, the major senior production in August, at the Heath Ledger Theatre is nearly complete.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Year 7 Camps are half-way through. These four day experiences in House groups have been very successful. These camps are about building relationships and challenging the year 7 boys with some new outdoor experiences. Importantly it rounds out a range of activities as part of the Year 7 Transition program.

Preparation for the Year 8 Outdoor Education program on Leeuwin is well underway, as too is the Year 9 Koorungal based program.

KOORINGAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

This month the Director of Planning and Co-Curricular, **Mr Mark Morrissy** and the Director of Koorungal/Outdoor Education, **Mr David Anderson** along with the Director of Finance, **Mr John Price** met with the School's Planning Consultant **Mr Erwin Roberts** to commence coordination of infrastructure development at Koorungal. Significant in this planning is a survey of the entire property and the location of a new ropes course. It is intended to build the new ropes course in preparation for Koorungal based programmes in 2016 but to do so in a locality that in no way compromises long term flexibility of the site's development.

STAFF

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Appointments:

Mrs Joanne Wheeler has been appointed as the Director of Communication and Engagement. Joanne has an extensive track record in strategic and operational management of communication, marketing, and engagement activities. Her most recent position was with the State Library of Western Australia where she was employed as the Manager Communications & Marketing.

TEACHING STAFF

Internal Appointments:

Dr Holly Rose has been appointed as Acting Head of Science effective immediately

Mrs Katy Brooks has been appointed as Acting Head of Subject – Physics effective immediately

Resignations:

Mr Darren McPartland has resigned from the position of Head of Moyes House/ Physical Education Teacher. Darren joined the School in 2005 taking on the position of Head of Health and in January 2013 was appointed to Head of Moyes House.

Miss Amanda Fernihough has resigned from the position of Teacher, Special Needs in the Senior School PMC. Amanda joined the School in 2011.

SUPPORT STAFF

Appointments:

Miss Jaye Hunter has been appointed as an Education Assistant working within the Senior School PMC. Jaye recently completed her Bachelor of Preventive Health at Notre Dame University, her most recent position was a Trainee Health Promotion Officer at the City of Cockburn.

Mrs Vanessa Reside has been appointed within the Communication and Engagement team as a part-time Communications Officer. Vanessa's most recent position was a Research Officer with The Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Digital Content Creator and Enabler's (DCCE)

This project continues to progress with the digital curators attending a very productive workshop combining Apple educators and staff from CCGS, St Peter's College, MLC & Walford Anglican Girls School held in Sydney. Presentation scheduled for start of Term 2, 2015.

Head of Department Professional Development

Members of the Academic Committee attended a highly successful internal professional development day that included:

- A Headmaster's presentation on leadership styles
- Kim Chute presenting on 'Crucial Conversations'
- Teaching resource management systems.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Mitre and Impressions publications will be printed and delivered to all recipients by the conclusion of Term 1.

The Centre for Ethics programme this month had an evening at which I presented 'About the Boys'. This was both affirming and complimentary, some of the comments from parents who were predominately from Christ Church are included below:

Hi Frank

*Great to get such a good turnout. Garth's talk was wonderful, I find myself thinking about bits of it on and off each day. We are so lucky to have him at CCGS.
cheers,*

Dear Garth

*I just want to belatedly say how much I enjoyed your parent talk about boys last week. I was very impressed by what you had to say and the manner in which you expressed it. In particular I was pleased to hear you speak about the importance of creativity, and I like the way you are frank with parents about parenting. Even though I still sometimes struggle with the 'in Year 10 - home by 10' rule!
I appreciate your dedication to educating boys (and their parents!) - it is a job worth doing and really makes a difference.
Kind regards*

Dear Garth

*I never got to chat to you after your talk last night but wanted to thank you for a wonderful presentation. I was discussing it with [REDACTED] afterwards and we were reminded that being a parent is not easy or intuitive; and we keep needing new skills and inspiration to keep focused on that outcome of growing a great grandfather.
You were very kind to share your personal experiences and this made the presentation very real and accessible.
Kind regards*

A primary goal of CCGS marketing and public relations is to keep the pipeline of students strong and at the date of this report, thirty three families have attended School tours, with another six families attending tours before the month's end.

Of interest please find below recent feedback received from a School Headmaster's tour. These tours are conducted throughout the entire year on a 2 to 3 week cycle:

Dear Sarah

[REDACTED] and I very much enjoyed the tour on Tuesday. Not only was it informative but the pride, passion and enthusiasm Garth has for the School was evident.

It was particularly impressive when boys were stopped and asked a question and at the spur of the moment were able to give such eloquent responses about their schooling and sporting achievements.

The tour re-affirmed our decision to continue on the waiting list and hope a place for [REDACTED] at Christ Church becomes available in Year 7 (2018).

Many thanks and regards

On Thursday 26 March an event to strengthen connections with and seek feedback from parents of three or more boys was held at Christ Church House. There are 27 such families at the School. This is the third of these types of events that I have hosted. The objective of the evening is to reach out to parents who have more than three boys in the school community. This is done with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of their experiences of the school as they live the experience of 'a great school serving the needs of the family'. The three questions asked at the evening were:

What does Christ Church do well?

What do you think Christ Church could change or do better?

What would you like to see introduced at Christ Church?

A significant amount of feedback was captured, with a couple of recommendations such as, improved communication with parents regarding their son's use of the iPad and a focus on building resilience, common to the group. Throughout the year there will be other opportunities for parents to contribute. As we move into our strategic planning phase, informal feedback and information from last night's conversation combined with the comprehensive MMG surveys will ensure we have an informed strategic discussion.

Other community engagement events this month include year group sundowners, Parents' Auxiliary and Association meetings, Year 13 mothers meeting.

ICT

In March much of ICT efforts focused around the maintenance, development and investigation of options for various ICT services offered. The following provides a snapshot of activities conducted within these areas.

Synergetic

The upgrade of Synergetic to version 66R1, unfortunately did not resolve all the issues introduced in V66. Having escalated the issues with Synergetic's upper management, all but two issues were resolved earlier this week.

Online friendship lists presented via the Parent Portal, seem to have progressed successfully. The support requests from parents predominantly consisted of queries surrounding the loss of passwords and/or instructions. A number of personal contact detail change queries were also addressed as parents adjusted their details for online list sharing.

Currently a number of development platforms are being evaluated in terms of their integration suitability with Synergetic. Once identified this platform will facilitate maximum penetration of the central database within the school, especially in non-critical areas such as StudyLab records, HR Workflows etc. Systems being investigated include Filemaker, Sharepoint, Wordpress and Django.

Learning Field

Learning Field is the School's primary digital textbook platform for years 7 – 10 and will be upgraded to a new version at the end of Term 2. The upgrade will require teacher/student re-training as the new version is somewhat different in look and feel. The new version promises intuitive, modern interfaces with speed optimisations and double page layouts on iPads (a coveted feature for maps).

Special provisions have been made to secure an enterprise version of the iPad apps, in order to minimise the distribution issue caused by the Apple app store and the current student iPad restrictions.

Exchange Upgrade

The Exchange server is a critical piece of IT infrastructure which the school employs to deliver enterprise grade email to staff. The current version of Microsoft Exchange, version 2007, will reach its 'end of life' in 2017. The upgrade of this server to version 2013 has been scoped and scheduled for implementation on the 9th and 10th of April 2015 (week 1 of April school holidays). During this period there will be an interruption to this critical email service offered to staff.

Upgrading to version 2013 benefits the school in two ways. Firstly it provides up-to-date features and functionality (e.g. enhanced web-mail capabilities). Secondly it upgrades mailboxes to be more compatible with cloud solutions like Office 365.

Cisco / Telstra

The Cisco Live event was held in Melbourne over week 3 of March. This 5000 delegate event was attended by Director of ICT Services, **Dr Geoffrey Alagoda** and was used by both Cisco and Telstra to launch into a strategic partnership offering next generation cloud and infrastructure solutions to businesses and schools. The highlight of the event was a couple of keynotes which introduced the concept of 'The Internet of Everything' and the creation of two Centres of Innovation in Perth and Adelaide.

Cisco is predicting that everything will be eventually on the Internet hence the term 'The Internet of Everything'. As such both Cisco and Telstra intend to jointly build a platform which provides security, connectivity and a universal application development framework to handle the "Big-Data" output of such a connected space. A significant component of this connected platform is to offer a seamless choice between vendors for managed infrastructure and computer/data platforms. Implementation of this platform will be launched via their Centres for Innovation.

Digital Curators visit and PL

During the third week of March, the school sent 6 teachers to Sydney to engage Apple in a professional learning (PL) activity surrounding the design of engaging iBooks, Apple's primary digital resource format. Apple Education Australia invited 4 schools to attend this session. Christ Church Grammar School, Methodist Ladies College, Walford School for Girls (Adelaide) and St Peters College (Adelaide).

The PL activity was conducted over two days offering 5 keynotes from Apple specialists. In between the keynotes attendees were offered time to collaborate, share and request help from these design experts. The keynotes provided exposure to the top level of iBook design and what that could look like, the use of keynote software to perform simple animations/interactions within iBooks, the use of iAd producer to activate complex and programmatic animations/interactivity within iBooks, key philosophies of engaging design and finally guidelines for appealing video capture and framing.

CCGS staff work on iBooks were the only demonstrations offered during these sessions as they were considered to be the furthest down the track. Council are reminded that this project is a part of funding secured through the School's Foundation in 2014 for years 2015, 2016 and 2017.



Bond University Platinum School Partnership Program March, 2015

The Platinum School Partnership Program was introduced by Pro Vice-Chancellor, Pathways and Partnerships Catherine O'Sullivan as part of the University's Strategic Plan 2013-2017 to establish a deep and meaningful, mutually-beneficial partnership with a discrete number of key secondary schools globally who align with Bond University in ethos, values, mission and student profile.

The title of Platinum School Partner is regarded by Bond University as an honour and invitations are strictly limited to schools of high standing, who have distinct points of excellence; who are respected educators within their own regions; and whom desire the opportunity to be actively engaged with Bond University for the benefit of their own school community. Platinum School Partners are appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor with on-going liaison through the Offices of Pathways and Partnerships. It is a formal, non-commercial association with a typical term of three years (although this can vary) with an annual review.

The Partnership facilitates information exchange, student experience and professional development opportunities between Bond University and School communities including Principals, School Boards and Chairs, Deputies, Heads of Year, Heads of Pastoral Care, Heads of Sport, Heads of Boarding, Careers Advisors, Teaching Staff, Students and Parents.

BENEFITS - The title 'Platinum School' carries with it the following benefits:

- Use of the title of Bond University Platinum School Partner
- Presentation of a certificate recognising your title and association with Bond
- Invitation to participate in the Principal-in-Residence Program
- Professional development opportunities for staff (EMBA) both school-based and campus-based
- Opportunity to deliver University Preparation Program in your school
- Introductions to academics for the purposes of research collaborations and projects
- Introductions to Bond's corporate ambassadors including University Fellows & Industry Advisory board members
- Invitations to participate in City Leaders Round Tables, Industry Advisory Boards and Forums
- Invitations for students, parents, and leaders to exclusive partner events (ie Wallabies Test Match, Sir Bob Geldof lecture)
- Invitation for students to attend and/or host Bond Leadership Programs
- Access to a limited pool of scholarships, exclusive for partner schools
- Access to University facilities including meeting rooms, accommodation, library and sporting fields for camps, at partner rates
- Access to Bond's extensive corporate and alumni database for speaking opportunities at the School

In addition, the following activities are also offered:

- Interstate Experience events for students to travel to Bond to see 'first hand' what is on offer
- Principals breakfasts/lunches, hosted by the Vice Chancellor in key capital cities and also attended by Faculty Deans/Associate Deans, Alumni and other key University staff
- An open invitation to activities including Open Day, Headstart Days, Quiz Competition, Experience Days, Mooting Competitions, Law Court Days, HSM Laboratory workshops, Bond University Film and Television Association competitions
- 'Student for a Semester' programs

- Career Advisor breakfasts/lunches held at the beginning of the year
- Blue Sky Lectures with Academics and Alumni
- Bond University attendance at Platinum Partner School Awards evenings
- Parent engagement evenings and face-to-face discussions with all applicants (scholarship and non-scholarship) to discuss tertiary education and procedures, specific Bond University courses, accommodation and housing alternatives and other 'Bond' opportunities.

Platinum School Partners are recognised in relevant University marketing material including website and collateral. A Platinum School Partner representative is invited to suitable University events and the annual recognition function providing an opportunity to interact with other Platinum School Partners, University Fellows and Senior Executive, external partners and the University community.

In return, as a Platinum School Partner, the Principal and School leaders are asked to support Bond as an ambassador and to actively connect members of their school community with Bond through conversations, events, networks and joint-projects. The intricacies of each partnership are developed in collaboration with the partner school based on what they would like to contribute or feel would deliver the most value to their community.

This is a strategic initiative of Bond University that will provide the opportunity for partner schools to experience deeper, more meaningful engagement with a tertiary provider for the benefit of their school community.

The Platinum School Partnership Program is vitally important to Bond University and we strive to continually add benefits that will advantage our partner schools.

Mr Garth Wynne
 Headmaster
 cc. Jodie Wynne - Careers Advisor
 Christ Church Grammar School
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23 March 2015

Dear Mr Wynne

As one of our valued Collegiate Partner Schools, I am writing to inform you of an important change to the scholarships offered through the Collegiate Partner Program.

Our scholarships formerly named the Collegiate, Collegiate Leadership and Collegiate Dux have been consolidated to form the Bond University Collegiate Scholarships. These scholarships will continue to reward your best and brightest students with 50% tuition remission for any single or combined degree (excluding Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery). This year Christ Church Grammar School will have the opportunity to award up to two Collegiate Scholarships.

Applications for our 2016 scholarships open on Wednesday, April 1. Enclosed you will find a copy of the 2016 Bond University Scholarship Brochure, which highlights further details about the Collegiate Scholarships as well as other scholarships available at Bond for the students from Christ Church Grammar School to apply for.

A full list of all scholarships available, including the eligibility criteria for each can also be found at bond.edu.au/scholarships. Applications will close online on July 31.

Your Manager for Schools and Community, Jennifer Latorre will work with you following the close of scholarship applications to discuss all applicants, and confer on who may be awarded the scholarships from your school. Jennifer is available to discuss any questions you have about the Collegiate Partner Program by phone on 0437024134 or by email at jlatorre@bond.edu.au.

Bond University is committed to awarding the best and brightest students through its scholarship program. We look forward to continuing our partnership with your school through the Collegiate School Partner Program.

Best wishes,

Prudence Berry
 Director Domestic Recruitment

CCGS

Live Sport Analysis



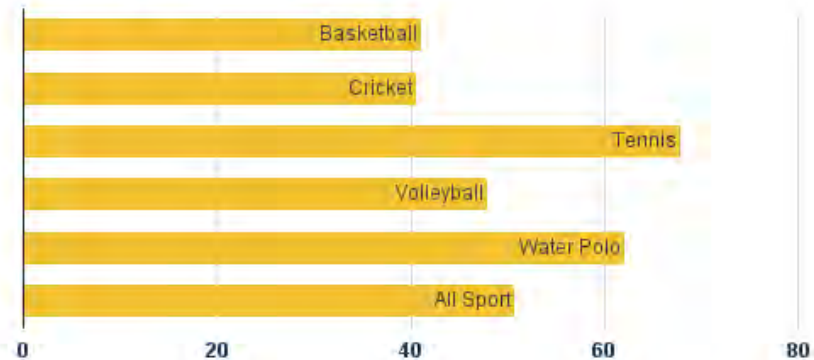
Latest 1st Team Stats

	<i>Games Played</i>	<i>Win</i>	<i>Loss</i>	<i>Draw</i>	<i>Win %</i>	<i>Ladder Position</i>
Basketball	6	0	6	0	0	7th
Cricket	6	2	3	1	33	5th
Tennis	6	6	0	0	100	1st
Volleyball	6	4	2	0	66	2nd =
Water Polo	6	4	2	0	66	3rd

Term 1- Win : Loss : Draw (all sport)



Term 1- Win % (by sport)



teaching

Vertical tutor groups in the primary years – boys and character education

Maria Hodges

*I have noticed a great divide in the relationships between the boys
in Year 4 and those in Years 5 and 6*

A Year 4 boy once said to me, "I really don't like playing on the oval, the older boys scare me, they take up all the space and yell at us to get out of the way so I keep away from them." This comment marked the start of my research project, leading me to question why in one school, with boys just a few years apart in age, some boys would be afraid of and deliberately stay away from others, when our school places so much emphasis on boys displaying virtuous behaviours and we want them to care for each other. I began researching the impact the introduction of a vertical tutor group might have on boys in Years 4 to 6, to assess whether this might improve the way the boys demonstrate how they care for each other, and enhance the relationships between them.

The evidence from my study suggests overwhelmingly that boys in vertical tutor groups, given the right opportunities and assistance, can grow to care for boys outside their immediate cohort. This was clearly demonstrated through the reflection of one of the boys who stated, "It was great being in the vertical tutor group. The older boys showed a lot of responsibility and tolerance to us younger boys. We did fun activities and went on fun outings together. I really got to know boys I would never normally play with and who I used to be scared of. They were nice and they cared about me. It was probably the best thing ever!"

Increasingly important in our rapidly changing world is the need for schools to teach boys values that in our parents' era were predominantly taught at home. Schools have taken on this societal expectation, and the resulting emphasis on character education has become of key importance. As Johnson (2002) notes, "for schools in general, character education is about finding some way to help students develop good habits or virtues" (p.13).

Having heard from the boys in my classroom about how they sometimes feel fearful of the

older boys in the school, I wanted to see if I could find a way to improve their relationships. I have taught many of the older boys they referred to, and I knew that this fear was more a problem of perception and logistics as opposed to intent. This is why I embarked on this action research project, aiming to bring the boys together in small group situations and develop core links in trust, friendliness, and most importantly, in learning how to care for each other. This led to my research question: *How might the introduction of vertical tutor groups foster caring between boys in Years 4 to 6?*

At the outset it was important for me to unpack exactly what I mean by the term 'caring'. To care is to 'feel concern or interest; attach importance to something' (Oxford Dictionary, 2010). It was this definition that I sought to explore in my research; to encourage boys to see that other boys in the school, younger or older, are important and need to be treated with concern and interest for how they are feeling. Caring could be as simple as learning their names, or allowing them some play space rather than running straight through their game. Caring could also be demonstrated by simple acknowledgement of each other in the playground or outside of the school grounds, or even just knowing something about someone else – for example, knowing something about what they like to do or eat. Although caring can be demonstrated in many ways, it was this ability to show concern or interest that formed the focus of my project.

I have noticed a great divide in the relationships between the boys in Year 4 and those in Years 5 and 6. This divide is particularly evident during recess and lunchtime. There are frequently complaints from the Year 4s that older boys are bullying them. The lunchtime sporting games on the oval are exclusive of the '4s' and if they ever try to join in, the ball is not passed to them or they aren't made to feel part of the team. When questioning the Year 4s



about which boy hurt them or which boy made a comment to them, they never can give names, as they do not know the boys by name.

Meetings held with the boys to discuss this issue have not seemed to make any inroads in addressing or improving the care shown by many of the older boys towards the 4s. In fact, it became apparent from conversations I had with the older group that they were oblivious to how the 4s felt.

One factor that appears to contribute to the 'isolationist' issue between year groups is the logistical placement of the year groups. Building limitations can physically locate year groups away from each other. Another factor can be that entry year cohorts, (often Years 4 or 5) need help in learning how to socialise and familiarise themselves with their new surroundings. They find it difficult to set common games as they have come from schools where certain games were played, e.g. one school may have been a soccer playing school and another an Aussie Rules school. Coming to a new school, boys try to work out social systems and establish where they fit in. This is compounded if the new school is large. They often require help, but do not know where to find it.

Vertical tutor grouping is not new and there is much research available on the topic. What is new is introducing this system at a much younger age. Most of the literature available on the topic concerns itself with vertical streaming from Year 7 or above. The effect of introducing streaming much earlier was the action, or intervention, that this research project investigated. Action research was my chosen methodology as it allowed me to participate in the research in a hands-on way, rather than being purely an observer (Stringer, 2013). I was able to act and reflect on the process while carrying out the research. It is a process that allowed engagement with the research, and also encouraged reflection on which strategies best suited the research question I was investigating.



Using action research also helped participants acquire important lifetime habits and skills while they were actively involved in the process.

In the view of Milton Mayeroff (1971), caring plays an enormous role in our lives, greater than we might perceive. Mayeroff states: "to care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualise himself" (p.1). He goes on to establish caring as an essential characteristic to build into the character of boys through education, understanding and, importantly, practice. Caring is about more than a moment of showing 'care'; it is a long-term process where trust is developed and bonds are formed. Mayeroff explains further that by showing the characteristic of care, "a man lives the meaning of his own life" (p.2). Teaching boys to help others grow and actualise helps prepare them for their future lives and relationships with others, both personal and professional. In light of these claims, would I be foolish to proclaim that caring underpins all the other core virtues to which we aspire?

"Character development involves caring for and respecting others as well as caring for and respecting oneself" (The Jubilee Centre, 2013, p.1). Therefore, to develop one's character, knowing how to care for others needs to be taught and practised. Too often care is shown by a momentary question such as, "Are you OK?" or "Would you like help?" Such questions do not demonstrate long-term commitment to another, but are merely passing phrases of little importance that, for many boys, is how they learn to demonstrate caring. The Jubilee centre (2013) notes, "character education is about helping students grasp what is ethically important in situations and to act for the right reasons, such that they become more autonomous and reflective (p.2). So that this can become embedded in the school's culture, students need to be taught explicitly how to care for each other. This is where I honed my focus for project.

Noddings (2007) argues that "there is much to be gained, both academically and humanly, by including themes of care in our curriculum"

(2007, p.1). Caring for others needs to be taught as we teach literacy and numeracy. Boys finishing school literate and numerate will not achieve their full potential if they cannot build caring relationships with others. "All humans can be helped to lead lives of deep concern for others ...they can be led to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to make positive contributions, regardless of the occupation they may choose" (Noddings, 2007, p.2).

Caring underpins all positive relationships, as outlined by Seligman (2012, p.20.), who explains that very little that is positive is solitary. Teaching boys to interact in a positive manner with each other, building caring and positive relationships is essential for them to go on and have productive, positive lives, in meaningful relationships with others. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Values (2013) states: "schools should aim to develop confident and compassionate students who are effective contributors to society, successful learners and responsible citizens" (p.1).



Vertical tutor group

The vertical tutor group operated one to two times per week during the initial Form period of the day (20 minutes). The participants came together and undertook activities, some of which were planned and structured, while others were free, ensuring time was spent together. The participants also spent much of the time, with me as the group leader, getting to know each other and being involved in practical, written and social activities to foster bonds between them. Some examples of activities included: finding out about foods boys in the group liked or disliked and then going to a café and ordering for someone else in the group by picking a name out of a hat; teaching a group member to play a sport he did not know how to play or could not play well; helping a younger group member with a homework task or something he had identified as being difficult; and making lists of similarities and differences between group members and themselves.

The activities were primarily focussed on helping the boys grow and

actualise themselves through developing caring relationships (Mayeroff, 1971, p.1). Participants were often paired or grouped to ensure that the three different year group levels were mixed and boys were forced to interact with boys from different year levels to themselves. The boys completed a reflection each week where they could make observations about others who they had come to know, or about themselves, and how they were feeling or what they were experiencing during this time. As the group leader I also had an opportunity to observe and reflect upon the development of relationships between the participants as well as how my own relationship with the group was progressing. The building of these caring relationships between the participants, as Noddings suggests (2007), needs to be taught and nurtured through our curriculum and schools, and it was this exact opportunity that was being extended to the boys in this group.

By reviewing all of the data collected a clear picture of the effect of vertical tutor groups on the participants came to light. The boys who participated in the research group all found it to be an enjoyable experience. They were happy and motivated to attend the sessions and one of the mothers wrote to me to let me know that her son, on the mornings he knew he would be attending the group, was eager to be on time for school. "He wakes up very excited every morning of the day that he knows he has some activity with you and the rest of the group. It is nice to see him act responsibly and independently in order to assure that nothing and nobody delays him for school."

Placing the boys into House groups proved to be a positive way to find a commonality with the other boys in the group. "Membership in a House provides students with a second, and more intimate, identification in the school" (Reichert & Hawley, 2010, p.133). Boys instantly made a connection with other boys, their common purpose being that they belonged to the same House. By having them in a vertical relationship, they were able to build upon that one area of sameness. This was crucial in setting up the vertical tutor group.

Overwhelmingly, my research found that having boys involved in a vertical tutor group encouraged new connections, friendships and a real sense of caring for others that would not normally happen. Reflecting on my definition of 'care', interest in another person can be identified by a simple acknowledgement of their name or having the confidence to greet a peer. This theme resonated throughout the boys' reflections and was evident in my observations, especially at the commencement of the group sessions where the boys would bounce into the room greeting each other and having conversations and cracking jokes, thus creating connections between them that only a few weeks prior would not have been possible.

The boys grew substantially in confidence and this was evident in all of their reflective journal pieces. For example, a Year 4 boy with a history of social problems, and whose teacher, just days prior to the commencement of this research, had described him as lacking in confidence, said, "I am more confident to talk to other boys now thanks to the vertical tutor group." This growth in confidence was also manifest in the changed behaviour of boys who had to be introduced to each other in the first session. By the end of the research period they greeted each other by name and with high fives.

All participants knew each other by name at the end of the project and could identify other boys' personal details, such as their favourite activity or drink. One participant reflected, "I learnt that Joe doesn't like Diet Coke and Peter likes playing sport such as footy. I feel great that I know this about them."

I observed a Year 6 boy, who was known by staff to be 'too cool' to go out of his way to help others or demonstrate care within his own year group environment, take the time to show an awkward, socially lacking, younger boy how to hold a tennis racquet. The feeling of success that both boys gained from that small interaction gave them a common link in each future session they had together and removed barriers that would, in a normal setting, have never allowed these two boys the time or place to interact.

In their journals, the boys documented many happenings outside of the vertical tutor group. One participant wrote that he learnt one of the younger members of the group lived close to him, and spoke about seeing him walk to school and how they had made plans to meet up and walk together on a regular basis. "It felt really good to care about someone else,"

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he wrote in his journal, "I could chat to him about what he was going to do that day and he could tell me if he was having problems." The participant went on to describe the confidence that he gained by helping someone else. Linking back to Mayeroff's (1971) point made earlier, this connection helped both participants to grow and actualise themselves, building their character by practising care for each other.

The impact of this new-found confidence in the younger boys became clearly evident to their class teachers early on in the research. Teachers commented to me formally and informally about how the students who had demonstrated social inadequacies and lacked appropriate interaction skills with their class peers seemed to have found a new level of comfort with themselves, and this became evident during classroom cooperative experiences. One teacher formally wrote to me about the immense change she found in her research participant: "I have noticed a huge change in class. He is not as worried when things are not going well and bounces back a lot quicker, rather than staying upset for a whole lesson when something/someone has upset him."

The participants developed new connections and placed importance on relationships with boys they had previously not known. The boys repeatedly noted in their reflections that they had never felt that talking to a boy from a different year group was something that they would do, especially talking to boys in younger years. They found that these interactions were enjoyable and that the younger boys had a lot to contribute and were able to engage appropriately with them. They exited the research feeling that, by having these connections with younger boys, they were better off and felt more a part of the whole school. One participant stated, "I have learned things about other people in other years that I wouldn't have learned without this group. One thing I learned is that the younger boys are a very humorous bunch of kids." Another boy noted, "I talked to people I would never normally talk to," while another commented that he learnt "to care for people in younger years, meaning [he could] make relationships with other people."

At the commencement of the research, all of the participants in this project from Year 4 played with boys from their same year group

during break times. By the end of the research, all the boys had improved their ability to identify boys from the other year groups. What was really interesting was that the greatest improvement in being able to do this came from the boys in Year 6. They named boys from both the years below them and included many names of boys who were not part of the research group, but were from Year 4 or 5. They had taken it upon themselves to get to know many more boys, not just the research group. It seemed to become more acceptable that they could associate with the younger boys and they were doing this outside of the tutor group sessions.

At the conclusion of the research, the Year 4 boys were very confident in naming boys from both the older year groups. The questionnaire indicated that during break times, they still preferred to play with boys from their own year level, however, they now viewed the older boys in a 'happy' way and they were no longer as worried about them. One participant stated, "I enjoy playing on the oval now as I know a lot of the older boys. If our ball gets kicked into their game, I'm not scared to get it back, the boys even pass it back to me and smile." They had experienced successful interactions with boys from older year groups and were comfortable in dealing with them socially.

The research clearly indicated that incorporating a vertical tutor group system into a primary school setting encouraged boys to develop and maintain relationships with boys they would otherwise not have known. The boys grew in confidence and felt that they had a new group of peers who cared for them. Incorporating into the school curriculum the theme of care and implementing a programme which teaches boys ways to form caring relationships with others they would not normally interact with, proved rewarding for all participants involved in this project. Confidence was the key outcome reported for the majority of participants, and acting with care and interest towards other boys was self-rewarding for the group members.

The younger boys felt increasingly secure and able to interact in a safe environment with, or in close proximity to, the older boys.

The surprise was that the older participants felt that they were the group of boys who gained

the most out of the experience. This 'cool' group of boys was there to help the younger boys and act as mentors to them, yet the boys finished the research by overwhelmingly talking about how much they enjoyed getting to know and relate to the younger group.

What happened next is what really excites me. Colleagues were really interested in what I had discovered. Once I presented the research and the findings, teachers were passionate about becoming involved and working with their own vertical tutor groups. There was an astounding demand to begin a whole school trial of these groups, which is what we did, and we are seeing positive outcomes. These positive outcomes are reason enough to implement vertical tutor groups into a primary school setting. As the future project develops and expands to include even younger boys, the challenge will be to adopt activities that relate to the age of the boys as well as targeting the specific outcomes being pursued.

This has been a journey I would recommend to any educator who wants to try to make a change, big or small. How thankful I am to work in a school that supports and encourages these projects, has a progressive and open-minded leadership team, and is part of an organisation such as the International Boys' Schools Coalition, which supports, scaffolds and encourages such research to happen. An everyday teacher can make a difference!

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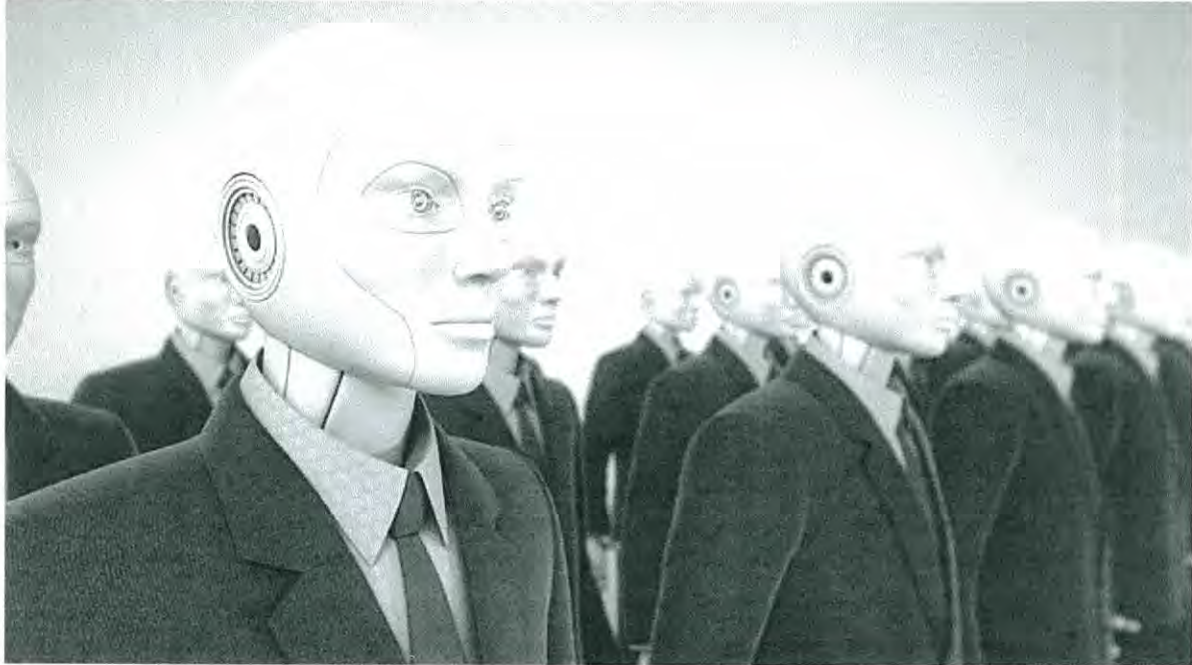
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THE AUSTRALIAN

Ascent of the robots has begun, and it's not good for humankind

ANDREW KEEN THE TIMES FEBRUARY 27, 2015 12:00AM



It's the most skilled workers who will be most vulnerable in the second machine age. Source: Supplied

RECESSION is when your neighbour loses his job. Depression is when you lose yours, Ronald Reagan quipped. Catastrophe, Reagan might have added, is when you, your neighbour and half the other people in your street lose their jobs too.

We are, I'm afraid, on the brink of such a catastrophe. A 2013 study of 700 professions by two Oxford researchers, Carl Frey and Michael Osborne of the Martin School, warned that 47 per cent of all jobs in the US and Britain are at risk because of computerisation.

The race against the machine has begun. And we are being outrun, outgunned and outflanked by today's increasingly widespread network of digital devices and algorithms.

"It is an invisible force that goes by many names," wrote Derek Thompson, of the magazine *The Atlantic*. "Computerisation. Automation. Artificial intelligence. Technology. Innovation. And, everyone's favourite, robots."

Or maybe we should just call it big data. "We identified several key bottlenecks preventing occupations from being automated," Frey and Osborne noted ominously. "As big data helps to overcome these obstacles, a great number of jobs will be at risk."

"The robots are coming and will terminate your jobs," warns the normally cheerful British economist Tim Harford in typically forthright language. Harford is right. The robots are

indeed coming, and computerisation, automation, artificial intelligence and big data are about to destroy many of our livelihoods.

SPECIAL FEATURE: My Mechanical Friend (<http://media.theaustralian.com.au/poweringaustralia/robotics/index.html>)

You've probably heard this warning before. But this time it's different. This time there are billions of reasons — about 50 billion reasons within the next five years, to be precise — why we should all be terrified of computerised artificial intelligence.

I'm not alone in my fears, which The Wall Street Journal columnist Daniel Akst calls "automation anxiety". Some of our leading scientists and technology entrepreneurs are taking this anxiety to an apocalyptic conclusion.

Stephen Hawking, Britain's highest profile living scientist, for example, warns that what he calls "full artificial intelligence" could "take off on its own" and "spell the end of the human race". Things could get so bad, Hawking fears, that we may need to "expand our horizons" to another planet if, indeed, "we are to have a future".

Elon Musk, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur who is chief executive of Tesla electric cars, is equally fearful, warning artificial intelligence is "summoning the demon" and, being "more dangerous than nukes", represents humanity's "biggest existential threat".

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates concurs with Musk and admits he does not understand why more people are not concerned about the impact of artificial intelligence on jobs.

Google's executive chairman, Eric Schmidt, told the 2014 World Economic Forum in Davos that the "race between computers and people" will be the "defining one" for the next quarter-century.

The study of this imminent techno-apocalypse has now captured the attention of leading Oxbridge boffins. Cambridge recently opened a Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, funded by the Skype co-founder Jaan Tallinn, which studies risks to our entire species with a particular focus on artificial intelligence.

Oxford's Future of Humanity Institute has published a study envisaging the ways in which the world could be destroyed. The probability of artificial intelligence bringing the world to an end was estimated at as high as 10 per cent.

The Oxford study — like Hawking's prediction that a disaster to our planet will be a "near certainty" in the next 1000 or 10,000 years — was speculative, perhaps even science fictional. But robots aren't just inchoate threats, a distant horde of mechanical orcs on the theoretical horizon.

As Frey and Osborne warn, not only are they at our gates, but they are also in our gates, in our homes, in our cars and, most eerily, in our pockets. Like so much else about our hyperconnected and technologically saturated world, the reason for this lies with Moore's law — the prescient 1965 observation by Gordon Moore, the co-founder of Intel, that the number of transistors on a processor of a given size will double every two years.

Moore's law has enabled the ubiquity of network computing, driving our reliance on desktop

computers, then laptops and increasingly powerful mobile devices. Today Moore's law is creating what in Silicon Valley is described as the "internet of things": a networked world in which increasingly intelligent inanimate objects — from cars to clothing to buildings to cities — are connected.

By 2020, according to Swedish telecommunications giant Ericsson, there will be 50 billion connected devices in the world. These are the 50 billion reasons we should be terrified of computerised artificial intelligence.

In their bestselling 2014 book, economists Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee have called this epoch The Second Machine Age. We are on the brink today of the age of thinking machines, of a networked society in which everything and everyone will be connected on a ubiquitous global electronic grid.

"The exponential digital and recombinant powers of the second machine age have made it possible for humanity to create two of the most important one-time events in our history," Brynjolfsson and McAfee note. "The emergence of real, useful artificial intelligence and the connection of most of the people on the planet via a common digital network."

Brynjolfsson and McAfee argue that each of these changes in its own right has a profound historical significance. But when combined, they explain, "they are more important than anything since the Industrial Revolution, which forever transformed how physical work was done".

The problem may not be quite as full of cinematic drama as Hawking or Musk fears. We are not on the brink of "singularity" — that moment when machines become more intelligent than humans and, as if in a digital remix of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, reinvent themselves as our master.

It might not yet be time to flee to another planet. Particularly since it's not clear what the employment situation is on Mars or Jupiter for the accountants, legal experts, technical writers and other white-collar occupations that, according to Frey and Osborne, will be most vulnerable to digital destruction.

The transformation to the second machine age is dominated by the shift from an economy based on human expertise to one dominated by intelligent machines. The human meritocracy of the 20th-century information economy is being replaced by a machine-centric capitalism.

Marc Andreessen, co-founder of Netscape and a prominent Silicon Valley venture capitalist, boasts that "software is eating the world". But, in truth, software is eating many of our jobs and failing to replace them. "The prevailing methods of computerised communication pretty much ensure that the role of people will go on shrinking," notes influential American technology critic Nicholas Carr in his latest book, *The Glass Cage*.

Carr describes a digital age in which attorneys, business executives and doctors are being usurped by algorithms. He explains that legal firms are using software from companies such as Lex Machina that replaces the expertise of the senior litigator with algorithms able to predict the outcome of patent lawsuits.

"Society is shaping itself to fit the contours of the new computing infrastructure," Carr warns.

“The infrastructure orchestrates the instantaneous data exchanges that make fleets of self-driving cars and armies of killer robots possible. It provides the raw materials for the predictive algorithms that inform the decisions of individuals and groups. It underpins the automation of classrooms, libraries, hospitals, shops, churches and homes.”

Brynjolfsson and McAfee echo some of Carr's concerns. It's “not implausible”, they say, that “Dr Watson”, the medical version of IBM's Watson — the “cognitive system” that participated in the US television quiz show Jeopardy! — “might one day be the world's best diagnostician”. What becomes of the human doctors who are replaced by Dr Watson? What becomes of diagnosticians replaced by an IBM cognitive system?

Oddly enough, it's the most skilled workers who will be most vulnerable in the second machine age. This irony — known as Moravec's paradox in homage to Austrian robotics expert Hans Moravec — is based on the disconcerting reality that what we once considered “high-level reasoning” requires little computational sophistication to replicate.

“The main lesson of 35 years of AI research is that the hard problems are easy and easy problems are hard,” Canadian cognitive scientist Steven Pinker explains. “As the new generation of intelligent devices appears, it will be the stock analysts and petrochemical engineers and parole board members who are in danger of being replaced by machines. The gardeners, receptionists and cooks are secure in their jobs for decades to come.”

But despite Moravec's paradox not all unskilled jobs are safe. Automated, self-driving cars will replace cabbies and delivery drivers. Machines are already replacing workers in factories around the world. Foxconn, the gigantic Chinese electronics manufacturer, has said it will replace a million workers with robots.

Jeff Bezos, Amazon's chief executive, is pioneering robots in his distribution centres and promised investors he would be “employing” 10,000 robots by the beginning of this year. “Amazon's warehouse jobs are gradually being taken over by robots,” warns George Packer of The New Yorker, thereby completely “eliminating the human factor from shopping”.

Bezos is also experimenting with automated drones that would make tens of thousands of delivery drivers redundant. “I know this looks like science fiction,” he says, “but it's not.”

What really looks like science fiction is the future of labour. “You'll be paid in the future depending on how well you work with robots,” according to Kevin Kelly, Wired magazine's “senior maverick”. But for every “senior maverick” able to work with computers there will be a legion of teachers, lawyers, accountants and diagnosticians whose skills will be increasingly redundant in the age of the intelligent machine.

The political ramifications are particularly troubling. Financial Times economist Martin Wolf warns that intelligent machines will hollow out traditional middle-class jobs, compound income inequality, make the wealthy indifferent to the fate of the rest of society and make a mockery of democratic citizenship.

“Average is over,” notes American economist Tyler Cowen about a new world in which the “key divide” is between 10 to 15 per cent of people who can “manage computers” and everyone else. Cowen describes this new elite as a “hyper-meritocracy” of people who can

work effectively with artificially intelligent machines.

In today's increasingly automated economy, the relative egalitarianism of our industrial age will be replaced by a social order more akin to feudalism. "We can expect job growth in personal services," Cowen predicts. "This will mean maids, chauffeurs and gardeners for the high earners." It will be a world of "billionaires and beggars".

Cowen's feudal vision is replicated in the broader networked economy. The network effect has created a winner-takes-all economic system in which a tiny proportion of Silicon Valley companies such as Google, Facebook and Amazon are dominant.

The real race today in Silicon Valley is to control this new robot economy. In 2012 Amazon paid \$775 million for Kiva Systems, the maker of intelligent machines for servicing warehouses, whose robots it is also using in its own distribution centres. Facebook, too, is aggressively pursuing opportunities. In 2014, for example, it acquired Oculus VR, a virtual reality company, and British-based pilotless drone company Ascenta.

Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg has also invested in Vicarious, an artificial intelligence company that, according to its founders, will "learn how to cure diseases, create cheap renewable energy and perform jobs that employ most human beings". What isn't clear, however, is what exactly we humans will do all day when every job is performed by Vicarious.

It is Google, the dominant technology company of our networked age, that has been the most aggressive in controlling the robot economy. In the second half of 2013, Google acquired Boston Dynamics, a producer of militarised robots, as well as seven other robotics companies. At the beginning of 2014 it paid \$500m for DeepMind, a British company with a strong focus on AI. Last year Google also acquired the leader in smart home technology, Nest Labs, for \$3.2bn.

Then there is Google's championing of self-driving cars as well as its \$250m investment in Uber, which, some speculate, could be used as a global transport platform for automated vehicles. As a company with a \$550 billion market cap that employs fewer than 50,000 people, Google's core value is based on its algorithm rather than its labour force. It may not represent the planet's biggest existential threat or spell the end of the human race, but Google exemplifies the way ordinary working people are losing the race against the machine.

"Don't fear artificial intelligence," says Ray Kurzweil, Google's director of engineering and an evangelist of robot technology. He believes AI is making the world a better place by improving the diagnosis of disease, developing renewable clean energy, cleaning up the environment and providing high-quality education to people.

"We have the opportunity to make major strides in addressing the grand challenges of humanity," Kurzweil argues. "AI will be the pivotal technology in achieving this progress."

Kurzweil is wrong. Rather than saving the world, the automated economy is provoking a crisis of unemployment and inequality. In 1930 economist John Maynard Keynes wrote: "We are being afflicted with a new disease of what some readers may not yet have heard the name, but of which they will hear a great deal in the years to come — namely technological

unemployment.”

Today, technological unemployment is back — only this time there are no world wars to give people work. As Keynes’s biographer, Robert Skidelsky, has warned about the contemporary capitalist system: “Sooner or later we will run out of jobs.”

Kurzweil argues that we have a “moral imperative” to realise the promise of artificial intelligence. But in today’s increasingly automated networked economy the real moral imperative is to create a world of full employment. There can be no progress when we are being outrun, outgunned and outflanked by the machine. There can be no progress when it appears that we have finally run out of jobs.

The Sunday Times

The Internet is Not the Answer, by Andrew Keen, is published by Allen & Unwin.

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LinkedIn ([http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/technology/ascent-of-the-robots-has-begun-and-its-not-good-for-humankind/story-e6frgax-1227240560838&title=The vision of a lazy, automated tomorrow is giving way to a much darker prospect](http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/technology/ascent-of-the-robots-has-begun-and-its-not-good-for-humankind/story-e6frgax-1227240560838&title=The%20vision%20of%20a%20lazy,%20automated%20tomorrow%20is%20giving%20way%20to%20a%20much%20darker%20prospect))

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Life in the Golden Triangle, as seen by the PGW

BY RHIANNON SHINE

We still don't know the Peppy Grove Wanker's identity, but the POST can reveal he says is a mid-20s Grove-dweller who works in investment finance and wouldn't be caught dead on public transport.

If you are not on Instagram or Twitter, you might not have heard about the PGW.

On his anonymous social media accounts, the PGW describes himself as a "Peppy Grove scion, living it up unabashed in Perth's Golden Triangle. Drives a Range Rover (and) brunches too often."

His tongue-in-cheek posts are about life in the western suburbs.

His first Instagram post, 12 weeks ago, said: "I'm all for development of the Scarborough beach foreshore. Anything to draw the perpetual swarm of non-locals from Cottesloe."

Since then he has accumulated more than 4000 followers.

A recent post said: "Sculpture by the Sea is probably the cultural highlight of the Cott beach blow-in's year."

The PGW declined a face-to-face interview with the POST.

"Not a single person knows the identity of the PGW and I'd like to keep it that way - anonymity

is what keeps people talking, so I can't risk that," he said.

But he agreed to a Q&A.

What suburb do you live in?
"Peppermint Grove, of course."

How old are you?
"I'm in my mid-20s; old enough to know better, young enough not to be bothered."

What do you do for work?
"When I'm not brunching, SUPing (stand-up paddle-boarding), shopping or Down South, I'm working in investment finance. The family company, of course."

Where did you go to school?
"Christ Church Grammar School and the University of WA. I hold a bachelor of commerce."

What inspired you to create the PGW online persona?
"Perthites have this view of the Golden Triangle as an insular, stuffy and nepotistic playground for the state's truly affluent, where the gates are big and the houses behind them even bigger. There's a city-wide fascination of what goes on here."

So there I was, reading a newspaper late last year when I came across an article about the monstrous Taj on Swan. I thought: Why not give the people of Perth something to really talk about, an insider's look at life in the GT?"

Why do you think so many people have connected with the PGW?

"I think that people, Golden Triangle locals and not, connect with the PGW because of the way I capture everything they themselves have thought about the GT lifestyle in a sarcastic, ironic and cleverly offensive manner."

Do you think Golden Triangle dwellers are offended by your posts?

"I think that the locals see my observations for what they are - tongue-in-cheek self-deprecating and satirical. I am yet to receive any complaints."

Where must a Triangle dweller never be seen?

"In the Mosman Park ghetto, on public transport, Shenton College, Red Rooster in Peppermint Grove and Matisse Beach Club. Although Scarborough as a whole is pretty avoidable. Of course, no one wants to be seen spending any serious amount of time outside of the GT."

Where should they be seen?

"Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club, The Boatshed Market, shopping on Napoleon Street, and their obligatory Dunsborough, Eagle Bay or Yallingup beach house."

Where are your favourite places for breakfast, coffee and shopping?

Brunch at Gill Street Café & Deli (Mosman Park) or John St Café (Cottesloe). Zafferano (Crawley) on Sundays. Coffee at Vans (Cottesloe), Gill Street, John Street, May Street Larder (warning: this is in East Fremantle, outside of

the Triangle) or Cimbolino Espresso (Cottesloe). Shopping at (Cottesloe's) Napoleon Street boutiques and Claremont Quarter - Parker & Co and David Jones.

Does the PGW read the POST?

Of course!



the PGW read the POST? Of course!

Adam Sudlow (Year 9)



The winning team is, from left, Adam Sudlow of Mosman Park, Emma Warburton of Claremont, Jenna Brown of North Fremantle and Sam Harlick of Fremantle.

The Post 14/3/15

Hard slog for Rotto winners

Swimmers from UWA Swimming Club – one 14-year-old and three 15-year-olds – were the fastest in the mixed team category in the Rottneest Channel Swim.

Emma Warburton (15) was the only team member to have competed in the swim before.

This year's crossing was marked by strong southerly winds, creating havoc for both swimmers and support boat crew. Even before the race

had started, two support crew and one swimmer in the UWA Swimming Club team were seasick.

They swam four-minute legs until the 12km mark, when seasickness struck a second team member with a vengeance.

With only three swimmers available, one having fought seasickness throughout, the recovery periods reduced and their speed began to drop.

It was at this point that the training the swimmers had com-

pleted with the national squad of the UWA Swimming Club started to pay dividends.

After five hours and six minutes, the team crossed the finishing line in front of the welcoming Rottneest crowd.

Greeted by open-water swimming legend Shelley Taylor-Smith with microphone in hand, the young team explained to the crowd some of the challenges they had faced.

They won a \$1000 prize for their efforts.

(old boy 1974)



Good prognosis ... Peter Leedman in the lab with researcher Rik Brown.

Researchers rejoice

While the federal government has dropped the Medicare co-payment, news that it will support the “transformative” Medical Research Future Fund has delighted researchers in Nedlands.

Professor Peter Leedman, director of the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, said the co-payment argument had buried discussion of the future fund.

But he said he was incredibly pleased that the need to safeguard the future of medical research was now openly on the table.

Last year he said the main source of funding for researchers, project grants from the National Health and Medical Research Council, were at a record low, with a 14.9% success rate.

“It’s a tough career path for our PhD students to tread,” Professor Leedman said.

“I have my own students in the Perkins laboratory for cancer medicine and I acknowledge

that it’s going to be hard for these very talented young scientists to get established.”

Professor Leedman said that while scientists were now able to produce faster results due to new technology, this also meant that research had become more expensive, while funding had stayed the same.


There were also fewer grants available for medical researchers because many research projects were now funded for five years, rather than the traditional three.

“The pass rate is getting lower and lower,” he said.

“However, this is a great day because we know the future fund has support.

“In WA, it will help us to reverse the brain drain and bring the best and brightest to the Perkins.”


Professor Leedman said that Medicare co-payment was only one component of the MRFF and there were still funds available from the Health and Hospital Fund as well as healthcare savings in the sector.



Christ Church Grammar School

About the Boys:
helping them become
young men of character

Headmaster Garth Wynne



Wednesday 18 March
Senior Staffroom
7.30pm
RSVP 9442 1705

The Post March 14/3/15

The Post 4/3/15



Eliza and her creator, sculptor Tony Jones. (old boy 1962)

Eliza dresses up for Tony

The first “officially sanctioned” dressing up of the famous Eliza sculpture at Crawley was supervised by artist Tony Jones to promote his rainchild, Sculpture@Bathers, at will showcase 70 WA artists

more than 100 times since she was installed in the Swan River in 2007, promoting footy clubs and events, celebrating birthdays and so on.

But this was the first time Tony, her creator, has initiated the changes to his work.

at will showcase 70 WA artists Freo’s Bathers Beach from arch 14 to 29. Eliza has been dressed up

Roel Loopers Stokes Street, White Gum Valley

The Post 21/3/15

Western Suburbs Weekly 17/3/15



Grove has doubts over PGW

The Peppy Grove Wanker has brushed off accusations that he is not who he claims to be.

After last week's story ("Life in the Golden Triangle, as seen by the PGW"), some POST readers raised questions about whether the social media personality's answers were truthful.

One local said most Peppermint Grove residents would not shop at Claremont Quarter and would also never call it "Peppy Grove".

When the POST put this to the PGW, he said: "I shop at the David Jones Claremont Quarter store for essentials [such as] Ralph Lauren and Tom Ford fragrances."

"As someone with a penchant for Tod's loafers I also visit Parker & Co's Claremont Quarter store on a somewhat regular basis," he said.

"An in-and-out CQ visit is acceptable, I wouldn't be caught dead aimlessly perusing though."

The PGW said he would have

• From page 25

called himself The Peppermint Grove Wanker but Instagram's character limit on user names meant he had to adopt Peppy Grove instead.

"I don't like it but I have no choice," he said.

The POST asked Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club members if they knew of

any 20-something Christ Church old boys who lived in Peppermint Grove, but no one had any ideas.

The PGW said: "I won't discuss RFBYC any further; it's too small a pond for me to give any additional clues."

When asked whether he had been honest in his interview with the POST, the

PGW said he was deliberately general and vague to ensure his anonymity.

In a bid to prove he lived in Peppermint Grove, the PGW said he "adored the Cliffe renovation" and "despised the red bear on View Street".

"And lament the days when bin service was a two-way affair," he added.



Charlie Paganin with event coordinator Bill Kirby.

Picture: Andrew Ritchie d434625

Swim for a cause

CHARLIE Paganin will make a splash and raise funds when he competes in the 2015 GMP Team Sprint Cup.

The 17-year-old Christ Church Grammar School student, who has autism, will swim alongside about 50 teams of students from years 5-12 in the relay race for Autism West.

Former Olympian Bill Kirby will be MC at the event and present

THE ESSENTIALS

WHAT: 2015 GMP Team Sprint Cup swimming challenge

WHEN: March 28 at 2.30pm

WHERE: Christ Church Grammar School

the cup to the fastest school team.

"What sets the event apart from the average swimming event

is that it has a really strong family and community tie," Mr Kirby said

"Because there are no individual superstars it's all about doing well in their team, having fun with mates and raising money.

About \$900,000 has been raised for autism services since the event started in 2008.

For more information or to donate, visit www.autismwest.org.au.

THE CARROT



Photography Ellis Parrinder

By Megan Lehmann

HIS SHTICK

HE'S PROFANE AND PROVOCATIVE, NAUGHTY BUT NICE. TIM MINCHIN'S TALENT HAS TAKEN HIM ALL THE WAY FROM ROCK 'N' ROLL NERD TO SUPERSTAR

S

trip away the rock-star regalia, the adoring global audience, critical hosannas – *Genius! Phenomenon!* – and the nice new house in the Hollywood Hills, and Tim Minchin is just another guy who likes lolly

snakes. He's sitting here, in an ornate nook of the heritage-listed Chauvel Cinema in Paddington, Sydney, tearing the head off a red one with his teeth. World domination is tiring and he needs the sugar hit.

It soon becomes clear that beneath the demented shock of carrot hair, chemically straightened, back-combed and hair-sprayed for the full wasted-diva effect, a large intellect is fraying slightly at the edges. Fatigue sends him off on tangents that his perfectionist streak would not normally indulge. For instance, the acclaimed musician, comedian and composer spends rather a long time fruitlessly denying he's a redhead.

As a fellow follicular one-percenter, I can't pass up the opportunity to reference his song *Prejudice*, which, ludicrously, equates being a redhead with the burden of being black and has the line: "Only a ginger can call another ginger, ginger."

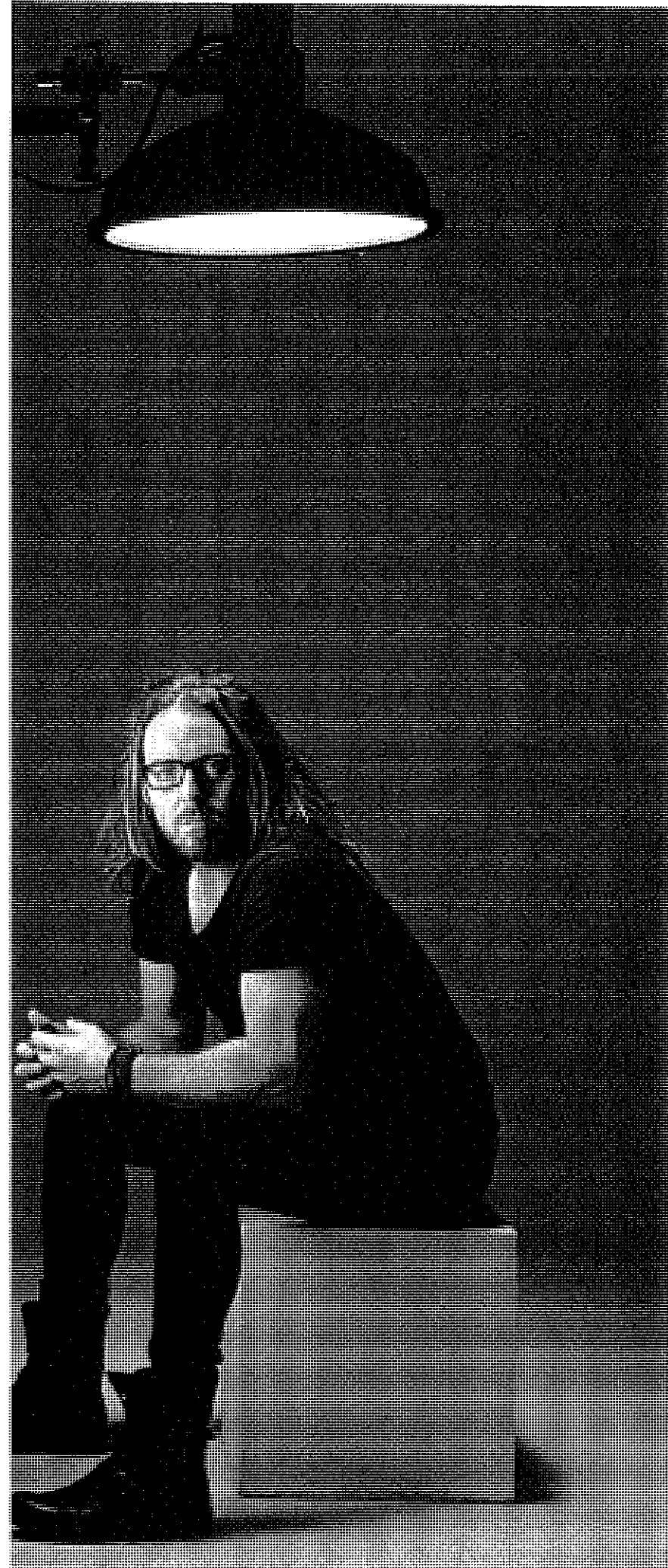
"Hi Ginger," I greet him (I've been practising this for days).

"I'm not really a redhead," he replies, bizarrely. "I mean, I'm not red like you. Mind you, it's quite red these days but yours is proper red."

"You're a ginger, of course you are," I say, expecting some sort of punchline. "What are you talking about?"

"Is it red? You call that red? No, you're looking at my beard; look at my hair, it's not red. Actually, it will be red in this filtered light. Sometimes it just doesn't look red at all and I feel quite awkward about it."

This sort of equivocation shouldn't really come as a surprise. Minchin, the self-described "foul-mouthed idiot from Perth", has always had an ambivalent relationship with his own image. Self-deprecation is his forte, and a curious blend of raging ego and genuine self-doubt has informed his act from the early days when he



struggling musician-comic supported by Sarah's social-worker salary. On stage, he packs a profane, intensely provocative mix of complicated rhymes fuelled by barely repressed rage (*The Pope Song* employs more than 100 swear words) and then glance nervously at the audience as if his own ideas have given him a fright. Minchin has now become a superstar. He fills 10,000-seat stadiums with his one-man show; he has toured UK arenas as Judas Iscariot in *Jesus Superstar* and played a coked-up rock star in the American TV series *Californication*, not to mention the triumph of last month's concerts on the stages of Sydney Opera House. "I'm a really underdog," the 39-year-old shrugs. "I've spent the last 10 to 15 years unpacking ideas for the stage and I suppose you get good at it, sort of." In 2005 there's *Matilda*. The Royal Shakespeare Company's deliciously nasty musical adaptation of Dahl's children's novel has proved an unexpected smash in London's West End and on Broadway. It arrives in Australia this winter with a swag of international awards, including a record seven Oliviers and four Tonys. Off the stage, Minchin is writing the music and lyrics for one of the most acclaimed stage musicals of recent years. Minchin is now penning a musical version of the 1993 film *Groundhog Day* and developing a film for DreamWorks called *Mean Streets*. But, you know, no big deal. "It's not that easy coming up with a whole new form," Minchin says. "These are just ideas that anyone could have. I have to have them because it's my job." What is the shtick? Not really, says close friend and producer Kirving, who directed *Rock 'n' Roll Nerd*, a recent documentary which tracks Minchin's rise from obscurity to his breakthrough-winning the Perrier Best Newcomer award at the 2005 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. "Tim is self-deprecating and ultimately humble, but he also understands that he has some very strong talents," she says. "In the old days, he was a bit more insecure about his worth as an artist, partly because he hadn't had it validated in the way he has now. But that long stretch of struggle becomes part of your make-up and he carries it around with him."

Minchin started out more than a decade ago when he accompanied the performer Eddie Perfect on piano, often playing cabaret clubs in the company of two. "Here's a guy who worked hard and persisted with his material and I promised him even though I saw him down many times," Perfect says. He isn't surprised his friend is struggling with the notion of success.

"It's not like there's a moment when the siren goes and you get to do that big sporting fist-pump, 'Yeah, I've won!'" Perfect says. "He's got so much amazing stuff in him and he's so ambitious and there are probably a million things he wishes he could be doing right now, all at once. I think we haven't seen the best of Tim."

Minchin was born in

England but grew up in suburban Perth, the son of a surgeon and one of four children (he has an older brother and two younger sisters). "I was a little bit asthmatic and quite early on I was pretty underdoggy and not very bright," Minchin says. "I was very deaf at a young age, I eventually had grommets in my ears, but my parents didn't quite realise at first." His upbringing was loving and stable. Though being middle-class meant money "has never been a source of fear or aspiration", the paucity of emotional turmoil was no help when it came to creating art. One of his early songs, the self-referential *Rock 'n' Roll Nerd*, laments this fact: "So he sits and imagines his girlfriend is dead / To try and invoke some angst in his middle-class head / But the bitch is always fine / At half past nine / When they go to bed".

On stage, he assumed the guise of a grand-standing rock god: kohl-rimmed eyes, rat's nest hair, dissolute dress suit and bare feet. In the early small venues, he was cloaking himself in dry ice and irony but, a friend says, "I know for sure there was a period when what he really wanted was to be a massive rock 'n' roll star." After graduating in contemporary theatre from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Minchin moved to Melbourne and took a trickier route: he would win the crowds with a combination of serious musicianship and confrontational comedy. Though he once toyed with becoming a schoolteacher – "I think I would have been OK" – by his late 20s he'd decided "I was going to be a muso whatever happened and I'd just be poor".

In 2003, when Neville Sice and David Read took over as owner-operators of the 45-seat Butterfly Club, it had become the unofficial home of Melbourne's cabaret scene. Housed in a rundown Victorian terrace teeming with



Some people in my life say I stick the knife in and pull it out and think that means it doesn't hurt. I can be a bit caustic



kitschy trinkets, it resembled your crazy aunt's living room. Sice, who now runs the Melbourne Cabaret Festival with Read, remembers the night he first saw Minchin – "a bit chubbier with short, curly ginger hair" – accompany a subversive singer-comedian named Eddie Perfect on piano. Towards the end of the show Perfect handed the floor over to Minchin, who chose to showcase the deeply sacrilegious *Ten Foot Cock and a Few Hundred Virgins*, a ditty about suicide bombers that he still plays today.

"I walked out of the show and said to my partner, 'You know the little guy with the crazy eyes, I've just booked him,'" says Sice. "Tim was not only an extraordinary piano player but he played unlike anyone I had ever seen. His songs and use of language were just mind-blowing." They were also slap-in-the-face shocking. Along with the



Minchin
with his wife
a scene from
Minchin's doco

backstage kitchen and storage area by a plastic chain and a sign that said "Private Parts". Sometimes the audience was just family and friends, "but he always gave it everything", Sice says. Minchin can't read music and is largely self-taught on piano. Yet "his knowledge of music is as good as his use of the English language," says Sice. "His improvisation is astounding and I reckon his playing is the better for it. He and Eddie used to do some extraordinary things. Tim would sit on top of this cheap old upright piano and pull off the sound board and lid and play with his bare feet a duet with Eddie seated at the keyboard."

Meanwhile, Skirving, a friend from Perth, had also moved to Melbourne and was living around the corner from Minchin and his wife Sarah. (Minchin and Sarah are childhood sweethearts and she is clearly on his wavelength: When the RSC rang to offer him *Matilda* she asked, "Why don't they get someone proper?") Skirving felt her talented friend was going somewhere but it was the couple's attempts to start a family that piqued her interest as a documentary maker. "Here was an artist trying to have both a family and a career and not wanting to have a child until he could provide for them," she says. *Rock 'n' Roll Nerd*, which went on to play in theatres, intimately traces the ups and downs of this quest – the couple now have Violet, eight, and Caspar, five – against the background of Minchin's climb from anonymity.

At the 2005 Melbourne International Comedy Festival his show *Darksides* caught the attention of Scottish producer Karen Koren, who offered him a spot at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. His debut performance there won him rave reviews as well as the Perrier Award and he was soon inundated with offers. In one turbulent fortnight, Minchin became famous.

Gore Vidal said, "Whenever a friend succeeds, a little something in me dies." Yet Minchin seems to inspire zero envy from his peers, who seem truly, convincingly happy for him. "Tim always wanted to write stuff that was smart, to construct songs with complicated arguments using complicated language, and he also really wanted people to love him," says Perfect, who

has forged a successful performing career in Australia. "It actually requires quite a lot of an audience to get on his wavelength, so it took a really long time to find that audience."

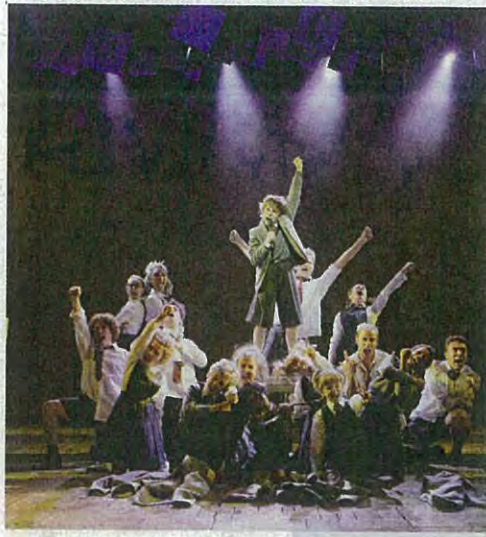
Hypocrites. Fundamentalists. Homeopaths. Minchin has them all in his sights. "I'm a bit ranty, aren't I?" he says, biting into another snake, yellow this time. Leaning back in his chair, he crosses one black-booted, skinny-jeaned leg over the other and fixes me with a look rendered unnaturally intense by blue-tinted contact lenses. "Some people in my life say I stick the knife in and pull it out and think that means it doesn't hurt," he says. "I can be a bit caustic. But I think I'm usually pretty clear that what I'm cross with is the hypocrisy of claiming a magic thing and using that to promote bigotry. I mean, every single person who has ever stood up and said 'God says this' is a liar."

He is wary, though, about being the poster boy for atheism and has deliberately put some distance between himself and the Richard Dawkins crowd. "The whole point about atheism is that it's the absence of something," he says. "It's so boring! It's only the f..kers misusing their misbelief that makes atheism interesting."

Like most perfectionists, Minchin doesn't take criticism well. When *Guardian* critic Phil Daoust coughed up a measly one-star review for Minchin's Edinburgh show, the comic waited three years before retaliating with *The Song for Phil Daoust*, a jaunty tune in which he vows to make the critic's children "watch you eat your own face-meat". (The intervening years have done little to thicken his hide. Sice was there recently when a tweet came through from a guy who found Minchin's voice "aggravating". He has more than 850,000 followers but agonised over this one tweet: "Is he right? Is that a fact?")

Minchin has said the only thing he reads is his Twitter feed and he's concerned at the internet's new role in public shaming. Of particular interest to the avowed feminist is the hate women get from other women ("They get slammed for the audacity of having an opinion!") and it has stirred him to write his first new comedy material in four years.

First he has to wrestle his music and lyrics for the *Groundhog Day* musical into shape. "Last week, I was like, 'This is shit, it's f..king rank amateur, stupid shit,'" he says. "I'm feeling all right about it this week, but there's a lot of pressure on this – it's a sacred text and it's my second musical and I've nooooo idea if it's any



Big noise: *Matilda* has been a hit in the West End and on Broadway

Outside, the grey waves of Sydney Harbour washed softly against the posts of the pier. Minchin's voice cracked slightly and sank to a murmur:

*And it is quiet
And I am warm
Like I've sailed
Into the eye of the storm.*

"That song is called *Quiet* and although it's not the one you go away humming, I quite like it," Minchin said as the last note faded. He rarely performs the song. It belongs to the schoolgirl Matilda, a fact he acknowledged with another stab of self-deprecation: "I admit it's a bit weird when sung by a hairy man."

Back at the cafe, I tell him that I found his performance of *Quiet* moving. "Cool," he says, before leaping to undermine his achievement. "But anytime you make someone hark back to their childhood, you're going to move them. Adults are so f.cked up about their childhood."

Minchin has reached the bottom of the packet of lolly snakes and he's finally prepared to acknowledge he's done all right for himself. "Look, I've done much better than I thought I ever would," he says, crumpling the plastic into a misshapen ball. "I was 30 before anything happened so I knew who I was already – I had my partner, my wife was pregnant; my child was born the year my career was born. And I've got really f.cking kind parents. I'm one of four kids and we all talk to each other and I've got no deep-seated pain that says I have to be mean to people. It's just I got all brought up good, you know?"

This story has a happy ending, then. "So far," he says warily. "I've got a song called *Nothing Can Stop Us Now*; I wrote it the morning after I got married. It's very short." He sings:

*Nothing can stop us now
Only the good times left
Nothing can stop our love
Except terminal illness
Or sudden accidental death.*

He stands up and stretches lazily. "Give me a hug," Minchin says, reaching out both arms. His hair smells nice. Like strawberries. ● *Matilda* opens at the Sydney Lyric Theatre in August

have implications that are cruel to another whole subset of people. He's got a warrior aspect to his writing that comes from wanting to engender his audience with a sense of social justice and inclusion."

Minchin is "just so pleased to have put something in the world that is just f.cking good for people," he says. "It's not born of anger. It's just a... Good. Bit. Of. Stuff." He stops short of calling the musical wholesome – "an awful word that implies Disney" – and settles on two words that could be used to sum up his own disposition: it's naughty and nice.

It was an overcast day in October last year when Minchin flew into Sydney to officially launch *Matilda*. Dozens of media gathered in the arts precinct of Walsh Bay to watch the bespectacled composer perform songs from the musical on a grand piano. "It is quirky and a bit dark and full of heart and it makes kids laugh and think and grown-ups laugh and cry and think," was how he described his tour de force.

It was school holidays and there were a few children there, tagging along with their parents. Ignoring the grown-ups with their cameras and microphones, Minchin immediately crouched down to kid level. "Hello! Are you from a newspaper or a television network?" he asked a couple of clearly amused pre-teens. Then he launched into *Quiet*, a thrilling, discordant ballad that reflects the mental turmoil of a child genius with a frantic escalation of existential questioning that stops, suddenly, before delivering a whispered, emotional kicker that had a roomful of journo eyes pricking with tears.

*Quiet
Like silence, but not really silent
Just that nice sort of quiet
Like the sound of a page being turned in a book
Or a pause in a walk in the woods.*