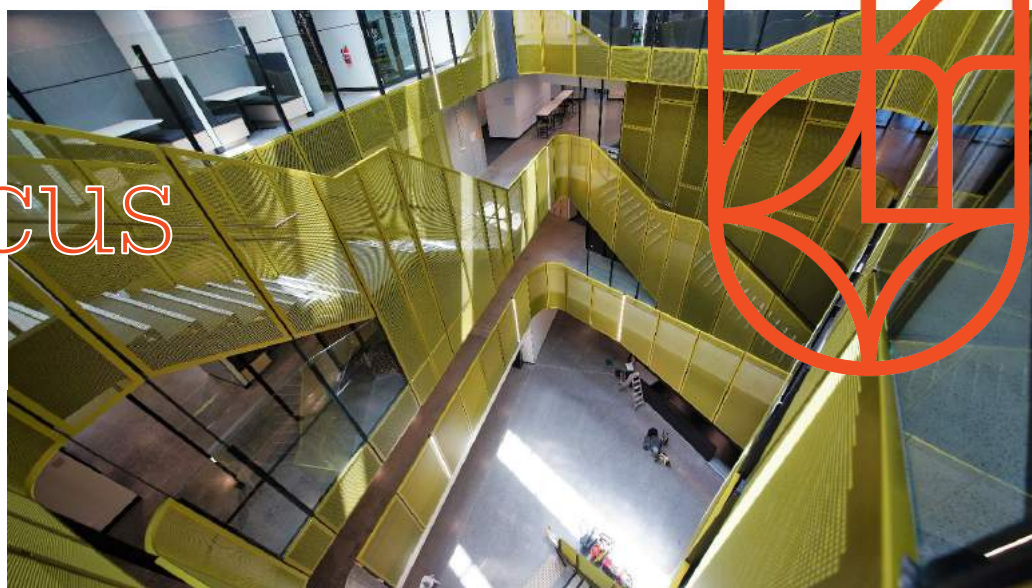


Richmond
High School

In Focus



Your Coeducational School - To Create, To Prepare, To Achieve. Make a Difference.

We have high expectations of our students. We expect them to work hard, set high standards for themselves and strive to be their best. We also set high expectations for ourselves. Colin Simpson

■ From the Foundation Principal

We had a second successful Parent and Teacher Conference Sessions this Tuesday. We decided to trial the interviews on the ground floor and thought that worked better. You will see us experiment with different approaches over the next years.

Each day we feel more and more like a normal school, fully forming with each new experience.

Alec Wooley has been awarded a 'Swannie Award' as the best speaker in his grade and region in the 2019 Schools Competition. They say he has shown immense growth in debating this year, as a direct result of his effort, enthusiasm and collaboration with teammates. Congratulations Alec and Ben Russell. We believe our school will be a major competitor in the school debating area and Alec will help us achieve this.

Fraser Penfound entered the Kill Your Darlings School Writing Prize supporting early-career writers. He was awarded a Highly Commended. Congratulations Fraser.

This year, there were five highly commended writers who each receive a \$100 cash prize, generously donated by Maxine Beneba Clarke. One of these writers was Fraser Penfound.

We include this wonderful work in this newsletter for your pleasure.

■ Enrolments 2020

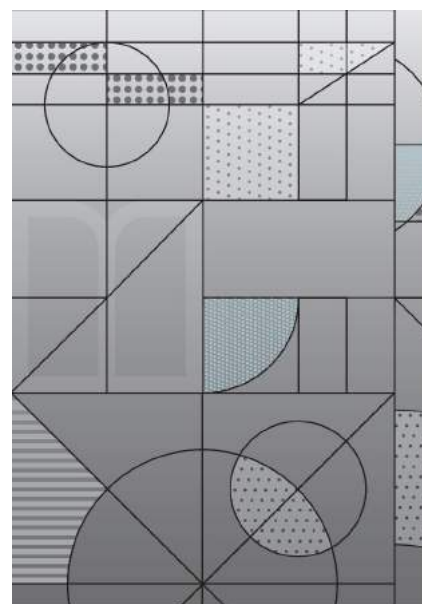
I am regularly asked about our gender balance. The concern is that while we build our local co-educational school credentials we may find ourselves with an imbalance. On that basis we aim to be very transparent about our enrolments. What we see is our school numbers are growing strongly and our co-educational balance is good.

In Year 7 in 2020 we expect 125 students - 87 boys and 38 girls. That is a ratio of 1:2.2

In Year 8 in 2020 we expect 115 students - 84 boys and 31 girls. That is a ratio of 1:2.7

In Year 9 in 2020 we expect 110 students with 65 boys and 45 girls. This is a ratio of 1:1.4

The Age, in a recent Editorial said - *While in the decade to 2018, the number of pupils statewide has risen 15 per cent, enrolments at private girls' schools have gone up only 2.4 per cent, boys 4.2 per cent.*



We believe our co-educational school is representative of the future, with single-sex schools having their own market share. We feel that our enrolments in 2020 has us positively positioned where we want to be, and that we are earning respect as a school for girls.

Interestingly we will almost double in size next year and are about to hire eleven new teachers. Exciting times, as always.

COLIN SIMPSON



KILL YOUR DARLINGS
WRITING ENTRY

One Last Wish by Fraser Penfound

* * *

You can nearly pretend that everything is normal, if you just let your eyes drift over the scene. The roads are still paved, people still walk around, and trees still sway in the wind. Except no cars rumble along the cracked bitumen, the few people who wander pointlessly down the street are bent over in defeat, and the trees are dead, the too-strong wind pushing through the grey fingers still reaching for the clouds like someone hoping for a second chance

And it has been this way for five years now. They have probably been the hardest five years humanity has ever struggled through. For what remains of humanity, anyway.

As I scuff my way down the deserted road, I wonder, not for the first time, what the rest of the world is like. Is it as miserable as it is here? It is as dry? Unpredictable weather? Fear that at any moment you could drop dead from any one of the diseases that are floating around in this toxic, dry air? It can't be as bad as here, that's for sure.

I continue past another main street with a train station, the trains in a distant city, the clocks long stopped. Time is no longer relevant in this desolate, abandoned city. The stalls selling food where people once hurried past, dodging others as they shouted into their phones, are now gathering dust and growing mould. There is one shop left, probably supplying to all of the city, judging by both how few people there are here and also how no one would and could be stupid enough to venture to the edges of the city. Especially now.

Down the road I can see the spire rising up, a network of steel crossing over itself, climbing ever higher. I can remember, back when I was younger and we would walk along footpath at night, and the spire would be lit up, spreading light across the arts buildings and the gardens opposite, casting crazy, elongated, colourful shadows. But the morning has come now, and like the burning hot sun

leeching the world of colour, forever present in the disgusting yellowish haze of sky, those memories are long gone, distant, another world. Before the end.

I still have vivid memories of the gallery. Throwing coins into the fountain, making a wish. A silly wish. I would give a lot to have one last wish. I can remember the water wall at the entrance too, running my fingers through the crystalline, moving surface and shrieking with surprise when the water suddenly splashed back onto my arm. I don't know why, but I always thought that that wall was seriously magical, the way it was always flowing in constant motion, attracting so much attention and joy when it was something so simple.

The main atrium at the entrance of the gallery is empty and dusty when I walk inside. It has been for a long time now. I remember one exhibition they held here when I was much younger. They had reconstructed a massive Buddha statue that took up the entire space. It was covered in smaller, life-size people who appeared to be giving him gifts. Thinking back on that piece makes me think of the gods that people once worshipped before the world went to shit. It makes me wonder if there is anyone watching over me, watching over anyone at all. Do we even deserve to be watched and cared for? Humans are the ones who doomed this planet, killed it, stole from it. I don't think we are worth protection when we wiped the most precious thing on this planet away, possibly even in the Universe: life.

And now, wandering through the galleries long gone, I can remember the art, the memories preserved by a species so stubborn in their beliefs that they thought they would live forever.

The slightest shuffling noise behind me pulls me back to the dark and the dust, and I whip out my knife, turning with the blade glinting dangerously against someone's chest. Someone trying to sneak up on me. Someone, I now see, who is a boy.

He freezes too. Then drops to his knees and holds up his hands in surrender.

'What are you doing?' I demand, and I hope that my voice doesn't squeak.

'Kneeling on the ground with my hands up.' he answers, then, at my glare, sighs. 'Followin' you.'

'And why would you do that?' I try to deepen my voice without sounding fake.

'Cause I thought that you mighta had some shit that I coulda stolen.' His voice sounds bored, like he can barely be bothered to answer me. He's definitely rolling his eyes a lot. I can feel my heart racing. 'I thought you looked kinda scrawny, to be honest.' he continues. I press my blade closer to his chest and he inhales sharply. 'Which obviously I wrong 'bout,' he says quickly.

'Well-' I begin. But then my feet go out from underneath me and the boy is suddenly on top of me. I am aware of his knees pushing against either side of my waist, his strong arm pushing down on my chest as he holds his own knife against my throat with his other.

'Maybe you are pretty weak after all.' He grins and it's a wicked, playful smile, like he knows he's got me. But that look is replaced with one of shock as I knee him squarely in the back. He is pushed off me, his knife nicking my cheek. I wince at the pain but ignore it. He bounces back up, his movements as graceful as a cat, and I scramble for my own knife, thrown across the hall a few metres. Just as my hand closes around the handle, he leaps at me and knocks me down again. Before he gets a good grip on my arms, I land a punch in his stomach and he jumps back winded.

We stand crouched, ready, panting hard. Then a droning sound cuts through our loud breathing and I freeze, my blood going cold. I notice him go pale as well. The world slows for a moment as I see him drop to the ground. I feel myself falling to the ground, too and the loudest crashing explosion I have ever heard erupts behind me. Then I notice that I have fallen past the boy, I'm still falling, down, down. I jerk to a sudden halt and something heavy hits me on the top of my head.

I must lose consciousness for a moment or two because the next

thing I know the boy is shouting down at me from the top of a very deep hole that I have fallen about two metres through. I slowly twist around and see that the tough material of my jacket has ripped through and is caught on a jagged piece of metal that looks very close to snapping. I will myself to fight the panic. I can see black shapes moving, flickering in front of me. *Keep calm, keep calm, it's fine, just hanging from a jacket above an impossibly deep, gaping hole!* I think, slightly hysterically.

I carefully unhook myself and cautiously step on a beam suspended part-way across the gaping hole, threatening to crush and swallow me with its jagged and sparking teeth. The sparking part isn't a great sign. 'Climb and I'll lift you up!' the boy calls down. It seems that my only option is trusting him. He appears to notice my hesitation. 'I *will*.' I nod.

I climb carefully, noting the sharp, serrated edges of metal and the sparking wires waving around, itching to cast their power through something. At about two thirds of the way up I run out of handholds. 'Here.' he offers his hand but he's stretching too far; I'd pull him down. 'You're reaching too far,' I tell him. 'You'll get dragged down with me.'

'Would that be so bad?' he asks with a smirk. I feel the heat rising in my cheeks and glare at him.

'Don't worry, I can pull you up. Here.' He offers me his hand again. This time I take and it's warm. With a grunt he hauls me up and I land on top of him. I quickly roll off and dust myself off. 'Thanks.' I mutter. He nods back.

Without a word we begin to make our way out of the building, our feet crunching on broken glass and plaster. We reach the main entrance where the dry water wall is shattered,

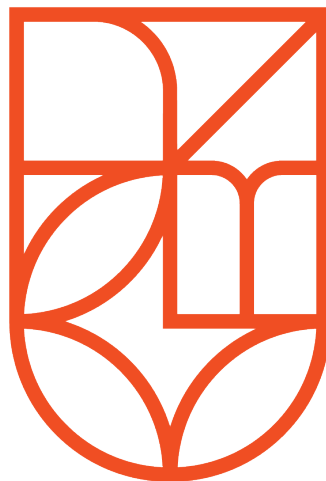
lying in shards and powder on the floor. I look away.

As we step back onto the street, into the streaming sunlight, I look back and lose my breath for a moment. One whole half of the building has collapsed. And behind that, where the skyscrapers should be, there is nothing.

The city has fallen.

The Protestors have won.

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About us

Richmond High School is a bespoke, multi-level co-educational learning space created to serve the local community.

We are welcoming and inclusive, embracing difference and diversity in its many forms. We offer a strong academic focus that encourages creativity and original thinking.

We have high expectations of our students, balanced by care and support whenever it is needed. We hope to equip the students in our care for an ever-changing world, encouraging them to embrace learning for life and the desire to make a difference.

Contact

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Respectful acknowledgment

Our school is located on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, we pay our respects to them. They are the Traditional Custodians of our Land.

We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Kulin Nation and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

As a school, we aim to embrace difference in its many forms. In culture, gender and religion. We ask you to respect everyone, yourself included.

"Sometimes a decade arrives when nations have the chance to turn away from bigotry and selfishness and turn to their countrymen and women and embrace them as loved members of the human family. But do we have the ticker for it?" — Bruce Pascoe, Convincing Ground.



Make a difference.

