



A new community hub

Generations of students will recall dissecting frogs and sharks in the Avoca biology laboratory, which overlooked a rather bleak landscape of bitumen that blanketed the space between Avoca, Toorak and the boarding house (or classrooms on the lower level if you go back far enough!).

Fast forward to 2017 and a radical transformation has taken place that brings with it so many benefits to the current community, as well as preserving some of the school's rich history.

Now, in place of the old 'biol' labs, there is a new multi-purpose space to enjoy in the form of M's Café. With the functionality and flexibility to be anything from a fully operational café for hospitality students, a learning space or function room, M's Café will have multiple uses for the St Margaret's community to enjoy.

The interior creates a juxtaposition between old and new, incorporating contemporary design elements with a nod to the school's heritage. Modern furnishings and bright pops of colour are intermixed with restored traditional style furniture once used by the Sisters in Community House.

A historical timeline features along one wall, commencing from the school's inception in 1895 to the present day, making the St Margaret's story very accessible to students, teachers and visitors.

The space has been transformed with contrasting materials; brick and polished concrete feature alongside soft drapings and floral furnishings. Even some of the lampshades pick up the school's history with quotes from headmistresses and Old Girls and images of the school's eight houses.

Bi-fold doors open out on to a covered timber deck, where cappuccinos, freshly frothed by hospitality students, could be sipped while overlooking a landscape now lush with greenery.

Running from the Boarders' Gate right down to the Health Centre, the new landscaping creates a green pedestrian spine, as well as seating among the shade of newly planted trees and shrubs. It will be a wonderful addition for the boarders – not just to look out onto from their bedroom windows, but it will be a space to enjoy some peaceful reverie at the end of the day and on weekends.





The entire project – landscaping, Ms Café and the deck – has been made possible through the generous donations of parents and Old Girls to the “Enhancing Excellence” annual giving campaign, as well as substantial contributions from the P&F Association and the Old Girls’ Association.

Principal Ros Curtis says she is excited to see the impact the project will have on the community.

“Just as the Barley Sugar Garden and Godlee Arbour area has become a treasured space for recreation, musical concerts and as an outdoor classroom, the landscaping and addition of M’s Café will serve the community in many and varied ways; just having additional greenery in a place where we spend so much of our life is a boost to the wellbeing of all who live, work and study at the school,” said Miss Curtis.

