



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

**YARRA VALLEY GRAMMAR FINE ARTS BUILDING OPENING**  
**Friday 21 May 2021**

**Mr Andrew Hirst**, Chairman, Yarra Valley Grammar and **Board members**

**Dr Mark Merry**, Principal

**The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier**, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne

**The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP**, Federal Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing

**The Hon. David Hodgett MP**, Victorian Shadow Minister for Education

**Distinguished guests**

**Staff and students**

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us.

It is such a pleasure to be here with you today to open your new Fine Arts Building.

With the celebration of such a contemporary building, it is interesting to reflect on the perspective of your Founders.

As you know, they envisaged a learning and caring environment, catering to the boys of the eastern suburbs, when the school first opened its doors in 1966. They would be proud to see how their vision has been so well realised for thousands of young people across the decades since.

Yet, what your founders could not have envisaged, is just how much this school has grown and adapted across the last 55 years.

The wonderful building to be officially opened today is a testament to that.

First, it is anchored firmly in this community. You have already achieved that special connection via your Performing Arts Building, Swim Centre and playing fields. Now, your impressive Art Gallery will be made available for community arts groups as well as your own students.

Even in the more modest setting of the old Art, Design and Technology Building, Yarra Valley Grammar students have for a long time produced outstanding works of art – works that have appeared regularly in the VCE Top Arts and Top Design awards.

The new building, with its dedicated gallery space, multi-purpose art classrooms, woodwork and machine rooms, and outdoor teaching spaces, is ideally suited to foster the creativity of your students. So too the flexibility of the building, allowing for the full breadth of visual arts from design in fabric through drawing, painting, sculpture, graphics and design in wood.

I have no doubt that the panoramic view from its windows will provide extra inspiration.

We all know that the arts are such an essential part of our lives. They illuminate the world around us, bringing us much joy in the process. Not least over this past year, with COVID-19, which saw so many of us relying on the arts as a way to connect with the outside world, and to distract us during the challenging times.

Your emphasis on the beauty and connection that accompanies fine arts says much about you.

As does your school mantra: *'confidence to achieve'*. It clearly underpins the learning that will be nurtured here.

And as important as the purpose-built Fine Arts Building will be, it is what takes place within and around it that really matters.

It is the skill and the care of your teaching staff that will unlock both the confidence and the achievement of your students. I am pleased for the opportunity to thank these dedicated educators.

Congratulations too to the Chair and the Board, Principal and staff and everyone involved in realising this ambitious project.

And a final congratulations to the talented students who are the ones who will truly breathe life into the structure.

It will be my pleasure, shortly, to officially open the new Yarra Valley Grammar Fine Arts Building.