



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

OPENING OF THE PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA CENTRE AT YARRA VALLEY GRAMMAR

Thursday 3 July 2025

Acknowledgments

The Honourable David Hodgett MP, Shadow Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation,
Shadow Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations

Matthew Gregg MP, Federal Member for Deakin

Carrie Edwards-Britt, Chair, **and members of the Yarra Valley Grammar School Board**

Dr Mark Merry, Principal and Chief Executive Officer, Yarra Valley Grammar

Councillor Kylie Spears, Mayor of Maroondah City Council

Staff and Students

Distinguished Guests

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which this building stands – the Wurundjeri People – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

It is a great pleasure to join you all here today.

Victoria is renowned for its vibrant arts and culture.

That hasn't happened by chance – it relies on the passion and richness in the performance and its appreciation evident in performers and audience.

This requires a commitment to the performing arts and music, such as has been deep in this school's culture since its earliest days.

In its first year of education – almost sixty years ago – one third of students were learning to play an instrument, and a school orchestra accompanied hymns at assemblies.

By the school's second term, members of the drama club were already performing a selection of one-act plays.

Since that time, countless students have come through the gates, benefitting from and contributing to that longstanding tradition – picking up new instruments, studying scripts for school plays and lending their voices to choirs.

For many, this introduction would spark a lifelong passion for musical performance and theatre.

For others, it may have deepened their appreciation of the arts – an equally important and valuable discovery.

Much has altered since the school first opened in 1966.

The curriculum taught by teachers, the diversity of the students, and the quality of facilities and classrooms have all changed significantly over the past six decades.

The students of those early years – a time when gumboots still formed part of the school's uniform list – would no doubt be thoroughly impressed with the facilities that surround us today.

What has remained constant is the breadth of education provided.

Education allows us to find new ways of understanding and responding to the world, even as that world changes around us.

The arts remain one of the most influential ways for us to express that understanding, to gain meaning from it and to share it with one another.

That relies on having the spaces to explore culture and find inspiration.

It was Oscar Wilde who once said:

“The great poet is always a seer, seeing less with the eyes of the body than he does with the eyes of the mind.”

The building we are opening today is more than just bricks and mortar.

It is a space where students can open their eyes to find inspiration, to discover their voices, and express their creative talents.

To the students here today – I encourage you to make the most of the opportunities afforded by your education here.

Make the most of them, because, the way we make our best memories and our best understandings is being deeply anchored in now.

It’s not what comes next – it’s actually deeply appreciating it here.

You will get the most out of your education when you actively pursue all the opportunities.

One of the worst things that happens to you is that moment when you look back and you think, ‘Why didn’t I join that club? Why didn’t I put my hand up to be part of that?’

There’s usually not a very good reason, except you had taken too long to make a decision.

Just keep walking forward. Keep putting your hand up. Keep joining in.

Because life is not just about planning the possibilities for the future – the future grows on what you do now.

So, whether that's engaging in music, or dance, or drama or other forms of creative expression

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Or out on the sporting fields, in the science labs, or the library –

The best preparation for your future is making the most of all that is in front you right now.

The new performing arts and media centre offers another avenue for you to discover these joys for yourself, wherever they may lie.

It is a resource that will continue this school's proud tradition of nurturing artistic talent and guiding it along pathways to further education.

This will benefit both the students at this school, as well as the broader community in Maroondah, providing the opportunity for new ideas and movements to be formed, and to grow from here.

In doing so, such spaces help sustain the vibrant arts scene – that we are so proud of as a State – for years to come.

I'd like to congratulate all those who have made this facility possible.

Today's ceremony is testament to your vision and your determination to make it a reality.

In particular, I'd like to acknowledge the service of your Principal, Dr Mark Merry.

To lead an educational institution for over 15 years is no small feat – and I wish you all the best as you approach your retirement at the end of the academic year.

On that note, I look forward to joining you to officially open the Performing Arts and Media Centre in a short moment.

Thank you.