



## From the Principal

### Greetings to the Eastern community.

In 1988, Tabor College Victoria opened its door for the first time with only 6 students. Dr Ian Richardson was the founding Principal. This new college held its lectures at Blackburn Baptist Church, where I'd been attending as part of the worship team, playing trumpet with Robert Colman as our Worship pastor.

This decade was quite amazing in the history of the church as there was a fervor to plant churches, spread the Gospel and equip believers in ministry and mission so they could participate in these exciting times. And it was into this that Tabor began a new work, which, over time, would lead to the ongoing work of Eastern College Australia.

It's always interesting as you look back through an organization's albums of history and see how the Lord planted a seed, watered it, nurtured it through some pretty tough times, and even pruned it so it could grow again and bear the fruit He had always intended it to. Eastern has been through many seasons in its 36-year history, but the one thing that remains clear is how great has been God's faithfulness in providing just what was needed at the right time, as it has strived to train and equip women and men for ministry to meet the needs of the church.

While Eastern moved to Wantirna in 2018, it has remained unique and complementary to the range of courses offered by MST. In 2008, the Micah 6:8 Centre commenced with Steve Bradbury as Co-ordinator, with it growing into the Master of Transformational Development course which is

run for Christian leaders across the world, now led by Tanya Riches. The Christian counselling stream was begun in 2003 and continues to be developed today, and in 2007 the Education stream was initiated, growing to the now sought after Master level courses with enrolments growing stronger each year.

The faculty and staff here at Eastern College Australia have worked tirelessly in service for over 36 years now. They have been faithful to their calling to ministry and the Lord has been faithful in His provision. Please pray for Eastern throughout 2025 because it has a significant role in vocational training for the church. There are many needs and a vast array of opportunities that require us to be wise in how we use our valuable but finite resources.

You will notice that we have reverted back to providing you with the *Be Change* enewsletter, which specifically targets Eastern's activities and those which show the collaboration we enjoy with MST. There is much to be thankful for as *all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!*

In His name,

**Rev Tim Meyers**  
EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL,  
EASTERN COLLEGE AUSTRALIA

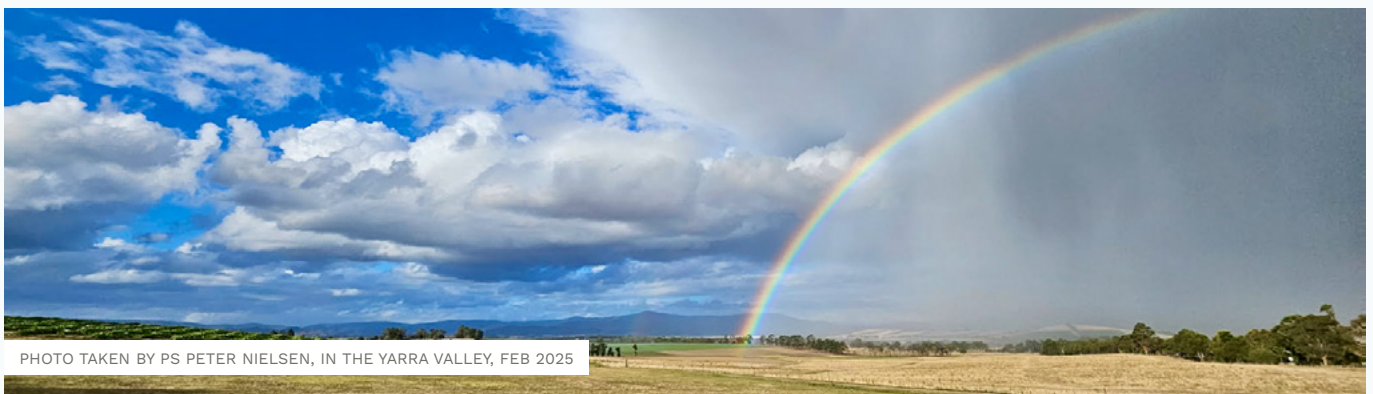


PHOTO TAKEN BY PS PETER NIELSEN, IN THE YARRA VALLEY, FEB 2025

# Two Newsletters, One Community

From 2025, each college, Eastern College Australia and Melbourne School of Theology, will receive its own newsletter which has a greater emphasis on its courses and community of interest. Eastern's digital-only *Be Change* newsletter focuses on our unique training in Education, Counselling, VET Tertiary preparation and missions, together with the internationally acclaimed Master of Transformational Development program. Some articles will appear in both newsletters as we are Two Colleges–One Community. These crossovers of content are indicative of our integrated community, and we want to ensure you don't miss out on these important updates.

You can choose to receive either or both newsletters by contacting Reception on (03) 9790 9200 or emailing your request to [info@eastern.edu.au](mailto:info@eastern.edu.au)

## Contents

2

Two Newsletters, One Community

3

New Students—Getting to Know You



5

Education: Teaching as Mission

6

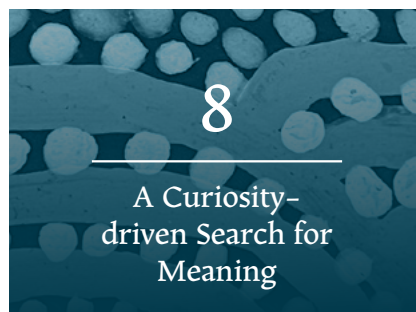
Introducing Rebecca Dimmick, Head of ITE

6

Earn While You Learn

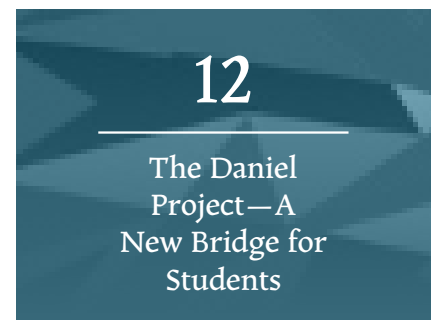
7

A New Opportunity—Synchronous Learning Model



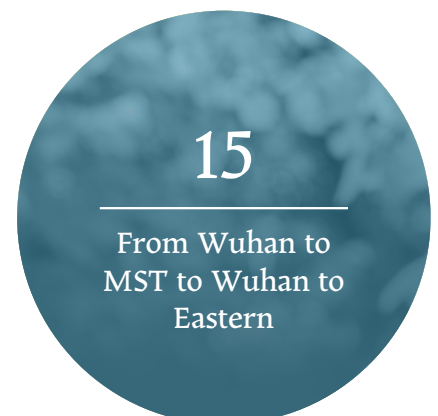
10

Student Life



14

Counselling at Eastern



# New Students—Getting to Know You

BY LEANNE HILL, DEAN OF STUDENTS



## Opportunities, challenges, and the unknown

The start of a new academic year is always filled with anticipation—new opportunities, new challenges, and the excitement of stepping into the unknown. As students embark on their courses, they bring with them hopes, expectations, and a sense of curiosity about what lies ahead. In these reflections, some of our newest students share their thoughts on beginning this journey—their excitement for learning, their aspirations for the year, and what they look forward to most as they step into this next season of life and study.



## Bonface Muthomi

My name is Bonface and I'm from Mombasa, Kenya, where I'll be pursuing a Master in Transformational Development from Eastern College Australia. In 2024, I worked as a project officer with a consortium of three organisations, focusing on an intervention project dedicated to Online Child Safety. I chose Eastern because it's one of the few institutions globally offering this program, and I am eager to gain knowledge and skills that will empower me to contribute meaningfully to the development sector in Africa. I envision my studies to be both enlightening and fun, offering opportunities to learn and engage with a diverse community. What excites me most about my studies is knowing that the training I will receive will equip me as a strategic resource in God's restorative work, particularly in Kenya and the wider African continent. I'm passionate about advocating for good governance and creating transformative programs aimed at alleviating poverty. After graduation, I look forward to being a change agent and making a lasting impact through the work I do in my home country and beyond.



## Jacob Ballard

I'm from Coffs Harbour, NSW, and I'm excited to embark on my studies at Eastern. In 2024, I dedicated my time to seeking the face of Jesus Christ while working full-time as a cleaner. In my everyday life, I make it a mission to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in my sphere of influence. Now, I am pursuing a Certificate 4 in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care, a course I believe the Holy Spirit led me toward after researching many Bible colleges. I admire Eastern's values and commitment to Biblical integrity, and I feel called to be part of this community. Since I'll be conducting my studies online, I plan to stay connected through Zoom calls and by building rapport with faculty and fellow students. I am excited to use my studies to fulfill God's predestined plan for my life, to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ, and to spread the Gospel as part of the Great Commission. This journey will prepare me to live out my purpose and make a significant impact in God's kingdom.



# Brunch on the Lawn

BY DAVID BRIDDOCK, PROPERTY AND SERVICES MANAGER



The annual event of Brunch on the Lawn was held on Saturday the 1st of March and was again a wonderful event. The Lord blessed us with a beautiful sunny 25-degree day, which was a perfect backdrop for a great morning of socialising, eating and drinking, all held on the college library lawns.

Our wonderful staff manned the food stalls, which consisted of Tim Meyers producing sausages, eggs and bacon for our Aussie Breakfast, Tom and Sue Kimber slaved over a hot grill pumping out American style pancakes topped with maple syrup and cream, and our always hard-working Chinese Dept almost stole the show with pulled Beef roti

and Hong Kong style egg waffles. All this delicious food was washed down with coffee and other great beverages made by the Two Sparrows coffee cart from Kilsyth South Baptist Church.

The highlight of the morning though was the student vs staff tug of war. Last year the staff pulled off a resounding victory and were confident of repeating it but this year the students were just far too strong! As they say...there's always next year!

All in all, it was a fantastic morning where new relationships were made and existing ones strengthened.



# Education: Teaching as Mission

BY DR AVRIL HOWARD, DEAN OF EDUCATION



During a chapel service in Semester 2 last year, Dr Kirk Franklin, Lecturer in Missional Leadership, presented a meaningful theological understanding and application of mission. Referring to the term “Missio Dei”—Salvation activities of the triune God to bring the kingdom of God into existence, he introduced us to the Integrative Missiological Matrix, which encompasses four interconnected spheres: the Bible, the church, the context, and personal pilgrimage (Franklin, Chapel Presentation, 2024).

The mission of Eastern Education faculty is to train high-quality Christian teachers who, through their personal formation in Christ, will bring a Godly transformation to the schools and communities in which they will one day teach and lead. This year, we’ve seen a significant increase in enrolments, particularly through our Christian Initial Teacher Education (CITE) Alliance program. These future Christian educators are choosing to be equipped and empowered through a Biblical Christian worldview, and we are honoured to play a role in empowering them on their ‘personal pilgrimage’ in the vocational and noble missional call of teaching.

Additionally, lecturers from our Education faculty and MST have provided professional development for several Christian schools. These sessions have equipped practicing teachers and leaders to “sharpen the axe” (Proverbs 27:17). By doing so, they have been better prepared to impact their schools with the gospel from a Christian missional perspective. The feedback from these sessions has been overwhelmingly positive, with staff expressing deep appreciation for the insights they’ve gained into engaging their students more effectively in character and spiritual formation.

Ten years ago, my husband Mark and I responded to a very specific, God-given dream—reminiscent

of St. Paul’s Macedonian call in Acts 16:9—to start a Christian school in the Indigenous community of Weipa South (Napranum). Our children, Kelly-laine, Ross and David (two of whom are leading teachers, while the other is a businessman), generously supported us in this pioneering phase. We stepped out in faith to establish a Christian primary school in uncharted waters, and God’s faithfulness was evident throughout the journey. Despite facing fierce opposition at times, we were constantly reminded that where the Lord guides, He provides. The school (Prep-6) commenced in 2023 with 13 delightful students, and by the end of 2024, enrolments had tripled. We also witnessed God’s provision in staff, building and facilities. Now, in its third year, the school community continues to flourish, and we praise God for His unwavering faithfulness as we serve Him in advancing His kingdom through Christian education, embodying the Missio Dei and living the dream!

Eastern Education faculty testifies to the Biblical promise, “You crown the year with Your bounty, and Your paths overflow with abundance” (Psalm 65:11). Indeed, we have experienced these great blessings and favour in our work at ECA. We’ve connected with and formed wonderful partnerships with Christian schools in both metropolitan and regional areas. I am deeply grateful for our Education faculty and staff, who have been faithful in prayer, diligent in their work, and dedicated to the noble mission of raising quality Christian teachers. Together, we are committed to bringing Godly transformation to the schools and communities where these teachers will serve and lead. Our hope is that greater things will come as we rest in the faithfulness of our Almighty God!

We welcome all enquiries from prospective students who wish to join in the mission of serving God through Christian education.



# Introducing Rebecca Dimmick, Head of ITE



BY REBECCA DIMMICK, INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE) COORDINATOR

Hi, my name is Rebecca, and I am the new ITE Coordinator at Eastern College Australia. I am passionate about learning and seeing young people become ambassadors for Christ in all aspects of their lives. I have been a School Chaplain, teacher, Pathways Coordinator and Assistant Principal in Secondary Education in NSW and the NT. I have found these roles incredibly rewarding (and challenging) and am blessed to have had these opportunities.



This next chapter at Eastern College is exciting as we help form teachers who will know Christ, seek to teach from a Biblical perspective and who will also be passionate about helping young people become culturally engaged, articulate, lifelong learners who are disciples of Christ. I am looking forward to being able to support the amazing work of the Education Team here at Eastern to continue to grow Christian teachers.

Outside of work, I am the wife of Paul (also a teacher) and mum of Isaac, Keziah and Isabella. They are all out pursuing meaningful vocations and are wonderful young adults who I am very proud of. Paul and I have lived in Darwin for the last 12 and a half years and have loved the Territory lifestyle. The move to Melbourne is a big change but we are excited to explore all that Melbourne and Victoria have to offer.

I am glad to be a part of the Eastern community and have found my beginning weeks a real blessing. I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months.

## Earn While You Learn

BY ANDY CALLOW, SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR



Sometimes when invited to address Senior School students about a potential career in Education, I begin by asking *"What do plumbers, doctors and Anne of Green Gables have in common?"*

The widespread puzzled looks gradually diminish as I go on to explain that they all learned by doing, honing their craft by working as an apprentice or intern.

In contrast, the universal complaint of today's teachers is that their years spent in Tertiary Studies were inadequate to prepare them for the myriad challenges of the school classroom. And there are so many talented people working in an ancillary role in schools, positive role models who daily encourage children to flourish, but are technically unqualified to teach students.

An exciting alternative teacher-training approach is gaining ground around Australia and was launched at Eastern College in 2024. Sometimes described as the 'embedded' model, it is a mix of theory and

practice where participants begin their career as a teacher on Day One. In most cases this includes two days a week in a school practicing their craft under the watchful eye of a mentor teacher and two days studying on campus here in Wantirna. It has the great potential of developing a 'reflective practitioner' who has a well-developed Christian worldview, character and understanding of their calling.

We are excited by the calibre of the students this program has already attracted. They have been hand-picked by their schools for their potential to add to their teaching team and include both recent Year 12 graduates studying a Bachelor of Education as well as mature-age students on track to gain a Master of Teaching.

The *Embedded/Intern model* has enormous potential to be a triple 'win'—for the students, their sponsor schools, and Eastern College. May the Good Lord continue to bless the work of our hands as we press into the exciting days ahead!



# A New Opportunity— Synchronous Learning Model

BY CORAL MAXWELL, INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE) FACILITATOR



In 2024 we were excited to launch our *Synchronous Learning Model* of class delivery. This flexible, blended model of teaching and learning proved to be very successful with the model now embedded into everyday practice. Moreover, state of the art equipment has been installed in lecture rooms to ensure a quality online learning experience for students.

## What does that mean?

In essence, ITE (Initial Teacher Education) students from all around the State, and indeed throughout the country, now have the flexibility to study at Eastern. They can link into our ‘live’ classes but

be physically located in a regional or remote area where it is not practical for them to travel to our Wantirna campus.

We are so pleased to be able to have these students join in with our classes. Each of them is passionate about being able to complete their Bachelor of Education or their Master of Teaching in a Christian Higher Education College and we are delighted to be able to meet that need.

We now have a wonderful opportunity for us all to learn together, and for Eastern to train up more Christian teachers in areas where the need is so very high.



SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING MODEL CLASSROOM



ONLINE AND ON CAMPUS STUDENTS IN A CLASS



# A Curiosity-driven Search for Meaning

BY DR TANYA RICHES, DIRECTOR OF MASTER OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Over the last year and a half in the Master of Transformational Development (MTD), I have seen God's faithfulness in so many ways! Late in 2023 we received word that TEQSA had reaccredited our course and since then, we have seen our Master's student enrolments increase to 53 due to the generosity of our partners. We processed many students who were struggling to complete their research projects after COVID-19.

While some transitions of staff occurred, those who reduced their involvement also continued in new and different ways, and incredible new staff joined our team, all experts in different and complementary areas, who serve with joy. Our students face challenges of so many kinds, and we find God walking with them and us as they complete their course step-by-step.

I am constantly coming across little notes from the alumni of our program, who tell of what they gained from the course. I always love reading these because it's so personal. One alumnus recently said,

*"I undertook one unit in Malaysia and found the cross-cultural experience in study (both reading cohorts and the intensive) really enriched my experience in a vocation that most often involves working across cultures." and "[the research paper] was an excellent opportunity to become more immersed in one area of the topic."*

Before 2024's graduation ceremony, our recent World Vision alumni, Shirantha Perera, summed things up so well,

*"When I started the MTD, I had no idea where it would take me... the beauty of enjoying a journey rather than being fixated on a destination. For me, it wasn't to add another qualification, but rather **a curiosity-driven search for meaning**, God's presence in my journey and growing in my faith...as I continue to commit myself to what I have been doing for nearly a quarter century. Reflecting...it is a crucial course for Christians committed to making a positive impact by working in the NGO sector and other similar industries to alleviate poverty and promote justice."*

The MTD brings together a regional community of practitioners around a topic. We get to watch as practitioners in diverse roles and perspectives learn from each other and strategise together for greater impact. The change or turning point might be just a friendly, "Oh, I know what you mean! We experience this too," or it could be sharing tips that are underrated. I remember our Uganda Steering Member, Dr Sara Kaweesa, from A Rocha sharing tools for making briquettes (bricks for the fire), and practitioners from Kenya immediately bought samples for their context. If it prevents villagers burning old-growth rainforest merely for charcoal, this could even change the whole world for the better!

Often, an organisation runs its own programs and sees things in particular ways. It's of significant mutual benefit when practitioners get to share what's going on. We find that getting outside of their day-to-day space to reflect and evaluate is a critical need when working with those who are in poverty and are vulnerable.

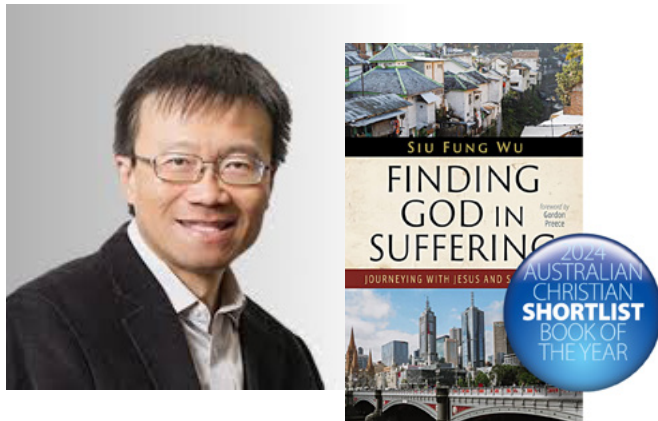


## About the MTD program

The Master of Transformational Development is an innovative degree bringing together practice and theory, in theology and development. Students undertake six MTD units in a cycle, with online cohort conversations and one-week intensives at our locations in Uganda and Zambia, Malaysia, Egypt and Melbourne.

The topics include:

- Leadership and Organisational Development
- Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution
- Biblical Justice, Advocacy and Human Rights
- Community Development
- Economics, Development and Human Flourishing
- Practical Theology in the Context of Poverty and Injustice



Additionally, students complete a research project in an area of interest for their context.

Last year, one of our MTD faculty members, Dr Siu Fung Wu, was shortlisted for the Australian Christian book of the year for his book *Finding God in Suffering*. We're extremely proud that he received this well-deserved recognition, and for the importance of a book that grapples with the lived experience of poverty, reflecting diaspora and migrant Australian realities.

## Enabling others to join the next MTD Cohort

Our MTD students are supported by the generosity of Eastern College Australia and our scholarship fund. Because of the nature and context within which our students work, their tuition costs often need to be funded through support from across Australia. Most recently we have had students report that they are affected by economic challenges across the world, and recently, the defunding of USAID. Stephen Okkilor says:

*"I am an experienced leader with over 25 years of experience... currently serving as the Deputy Regional Vice President for Africa [at] Living Water, a global charity running operations in more than 15 countries, 9 of those in Africa (Rwanda, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Liberia, Burkina Faso, and Sierra Leone). My role involves coordinating and collaborating with government, private sector, and funding agencies to implement Water Sanitation and Hygiene Projects and Programs.*

*In February 2025, my employer, constrained by donation inflow issues, announced major strategic shifts to maintain some operations. The moves have included reducing the number of countries it serves, cutting off some regional hubs, and laying off associated staff effective March 2025. Unfortunately, I am affected by these changes, so I will not be able to contribute to my tuition."*

We have set up an appeal for Stephen so he can continue with his MTD course and the important work he does: [eastern.edu.au/mtd-appeal-2025](https://eastern.edu.au/mtd-appeal-2025)

We also have many students across the world working in poverty-alleviating ministries and Christian organisations waiting to begin study. You can share in the MTD program by supporting our students in prayer and with your gifts.



Stephen needs your help

## Urgent MTD Appeal

Together, we can empower leaders who embody the Gospel in action.

[DONATE ONLINE NOW](#)

# Student Life

BY STUDENT SERVICES TEAM



LEANNE HILL  
DEAN OF STUDENTS



IONA KROUSSORATSKY  
STUDENT SERVICES MANAGER



DIANE NAIDOO  
STUDENT SERVICES OFFICER

## The Lord's faithfulness in growing the student community

Last semester, we welcomed several new online students from different states and even from New Zealand, highlighting that our student body reaches far beyond the Wantirna campus. Iona Kroussoratsky, our Student Services Manager and 2014 graduand, reminds us of the Lord's faithfulness as an authentic student community continues to flourish at MST and Eastern into a post-Covid norm.

*"One of the joys of the MST and Eastern student communities coming together has been the vibrancy of Christian community and diversity both on-campus and online. While study approaches (online, on-campus, part-time, full-time) are constantly changing, we thank God for his prevailing faithfulness as He continues to lead many students to be equipped and trained for his purposes. What a joy it is to have this blessed assurance in Christ as a student body and learning community. He is faithful and He is equipping more and more students for many and varying ministries and missional contexts!"*

## Reflections from Student Leaders

Our campus has always had the reputation for having a focus on being a learning community.

Our student leadership continues this tradition, fostering community within the student body through various activities. From weekly prayer gatherings and shared meals, to organising creative worship evenings each semester, their efforts have deepened students' connections in faith and fellowship.

A highlight from last year was the Creative Worship Evening, where students gathered around the grand piano on campus in the foyer, singing praises together

Some of our 2024 student leaders shared their reflections on the year, offering insight into the joys of their role and a testament to the importance of a student leadership committee in shaping a supportive and spiritually enriching campus environment.

*"This has been a very interesting year for me because I graduated from Eastern in March with a Master of Community Counselling and, at the same time, started a new course at MST. Although I am doing two different courses, I feel very blessed that we share the same community, as it makes the transition a lot less scary. I love that we are able to fellowship together around campus and through different college events."*

**Pinky Hui – Master of Theological Studies**





*"Helping with events has led me to new friends, I have been encouraged by God's hand over MST and even grown as a person outside my comfort zone."*

**Tammi Taylor – Advanced Diploma of Theology**

*"Having the opportunity to serve in the kingdom of God has been a blessing. Hearing others' prayers in the time of corporate prayer on Wednesday mornings has strengthened and uplifted me as the love others have for our glorious God touches my heart and further transforms me."*

**Nathan Lesslie – Master of Ministry**

## Chapel Focus: Reflections on Israel–Palestine

Last year, as part of Chapel's *Matters of the Heart* theme, we held a mini-series on Israel and Palestine, aiming to provide thoughtful, well-rounded insights into the ongoing situation in Gaza. By exploring these issues, we sought to deepen our understanding of the suffering experienced by various communities.

Mercy Aiken, co-author of the biography of Bishara Awad, a Palestinian Christian and founder of Bethlehem Bible College, shared compelling stories about the Christian communities still confined in Gaza. Stuthi Rubdi, a past MST student leader reflected that,

*"Her message about Christians still confined in Gaza deeply challenged me. It reminded me that as the Body of Christ, we're called to bring light even to the darkest corners of the world and Our Heavenly Father is the one who equips us."*

A couple of weeks later we heard from Lawrence Hirsch, Executive Director of Celebrate Messiah Australia and Messianic Rabbi of Beit HaMashiach Congregation in Melbourne. Lawrence, a Jewish believer in Christ, provided a unique and valuable perspective on the conflict and Jewish communities in Australia.

Our very own Dr Bernie Power concluded the series by consolidating the insights shared. Bernie gave us all the reminder that true peace can only be found in Jesus and, as Christians, we are called to bring the gospel into the world, sharing the message of peace and hope with all.

These sessions certainly deepened many students' understandings of the conflict and reinforced a commitment to prayer, and the pursuit of peace through Christ.

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God – Matthew 5:9*

**Please pray** for our 2025 Student Leaders and the Student Services Team who supports and encourages them. They have a unique role in settling in new students, whether in February or July, providing support in a diverse range of ways, and in forging the bonds of community that MST and Eastern are known for.

**A reminder:** Chapel messages are posted online each week for students who are not able to attend our Wednesday gatherings. They are accessible for anyone who would like to watch them. Please join us.



MST-EASTERN CHAPEL PLAYLIST



# The Daniel Project— A New Bridge for Students

BY DR DAMON SOKOLOWSKI, VET TRAINER & COURSE COORDINATOR



**The Daniel Project**, integrating the 22582VIC Certificate IV in Tertiary Preparation, was brought onto Eastern College's scope of courses and launched at the start of 2024 with a pilot cohort of face-to-face and online students, largely coming from homeschool backgrounds. The rich program gives students an alternative pathway towards further study while developing in their own worldview. Imogen, one of the online *Daniel Project* students who lives in Geraldton, WA, found this prospect a compelling reason to enrol.



IMOGEN MICKE FROM GERALDTON, WA

*"With coming towards the end of my schooling I wanted a way to get to uni, so the Cert IV was one of the main things, but also looking at some of the content, I was really excited by that."*

But more than a pathway, the *Daniel Project*'s vision is to disciple, develop and prepare young people for launching into the university and work world. Imogen's parents, Ben and Alissa, note,

*The Daniel Project was really a God-send... the bridge for what's coming next. Every homeschooler faces the idea that one day we'll run into the senior years of highschool, what do we do then? We were happy to see that, for the transition period between homeschooling and the big wide world, there was a pathway which was informed by a biblical worldview, by rich literature and was part of a community. All those things were big plusses for us. We're really glad to have found it.*

While other tertiary preparation programs exist elsewhere, the *Daniel Project* embeds a formational discipleship experience which incorporates theology, philosophy, history and literature, inspired by a classical liberal arts approach. More than just a certificate, program coordinator, Dr Damon Sokolowski, says the course equips students to be prepared for a rapidly changing world:

*The program draws its name from the biblical Daniel who is an example of an archetypal figure of faith who, like Jesus, resisted the allures and temptations of his age and was faithful to God no matter what the consequences. The program exists to empower the next generation to do the same and in so doing, like Daniel, to influence their world for good.*



**DANIELPROJECT**

Check out the newly launched [thedanielproject.com.au](https://thedanielproject.com.au) or contact Damon at [dsokolowski@eastern.edu.au](mailto:dsokolowski@eastern.edu.au) for more information.





DEVELOPMENT TEAM:  
STEPHEN, DAMON AND AIMEE

There has also been strong interest from adult learners who want to learn the story of their own civilisation. Dr Jonathan Tay, who is a school teacher based in Perth, WA, has a PhD in education anthropology, and is one of the online students in the pilot cohort. Jonathan enrolled as he

wanted to understand the broad sweep of Western history and is using the program as his professional development.

While the first cohort are only halfway through the rigorous program, the development in students has been encouraging. Course developer and trainer Mrs Aimee Brown commented that the “students have grown so incredibly. They have been asking such amazing questions.” One of the original visionaries and developer/trainers, Mr Stephen Hurworth, notes however that the program is not for the faint-hearted:

*“Students will engage and wrestle with ideas, thinkers and history and their own place in God’s story as they trace through the ancient to the modern world. They*

*will need to be ready to be challenged, but also bring a good sense of humour!”*

The program has welcomed its second cohort in 2025 and in the future plans to expand to more students from across Australia from both homeschooling backgrounds and in Christian schools, as well as adult learners. Damon hopes that in time as more teachers are trained to deliver the program that there will be more face-to-face cohorts across Australia.

So how can teachers prepare to run the program? Damon quips,

*“Join Dr Tay and enrol in the program! In all seriousness, the interest from Christian teachers has been strong and anyone, whether a Year 11 or 12 student, a teacher, homeschooling parent, or anyone wanting to grow in their own worldview, will gain from doing The Daniel Project for themselves.”*

Current student Imogen concludes,

*“I’ve really enjoyed learning more about God and growing in my faith. I also love the history, it’s really important and valuable to study history; I highly recommend it. All the content I am learning is important and valuable for every Christian high schooler, something that we all need as we make our transition to adulthood.”*



PERTH FACE-TO-FACE COHORT ON DAY ONE, WITH TEACHERS AIMEE AND STEPHEN

# Counselling at Eastern

BY REV CHERYL OSMENT, GENERAL MANAGER; HR MANAGER



Australia is currently experiencing a mental health crisis and Christian communities are not an exception... there is a shortage of holistic care. At Eastern we are eager to draw on our 20+ years of experience training Christian Counsellors and equipping Christians in counselling and allied skills and professions to serve the health and wellbeing of their communities to help fill this gap.

To respond to the need, we're re-developing our current Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Counselling), exploring the option of a new Bachelor of Counselling and Master of Counselling to complement our reaccredited Master of Community Counselling and the relatively new Master of Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Eastern's Certificate IV in Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care is also part of our suite of courses designed to serve the needs of a wide spectrum of people hoping to increase their capacity to serve God's mission to the world by ministering in a range of vocations and professions.

Our graduates serve in churches, schools, private practice and government agencies to bring healing, encouragement and hope.

We are looking to God to provide committed Christian academics who are qualified appropriately and who share our vision to provide quality Christian training. Please pray with us as we embark on this new season of course development and accreditation, to serve the future needs of our constituency.

View Eastern's Counselling courses:  
[eastern.edu.au/counselling](http://eastern.edu.au/counselling)

## Sing Me a Song to Soar – A new resource from Dr Julie Morsillo

On February 15, friends and colleagues of Dr Julie Morsillo gathered at the Fairfield Boathouse for the book launch of her new handbook for counsellors *Sing Me a Song to Soar*. The book offers helpful tools to support others through their dark times, finding hope in their redemptive stories for healing. This hope is life-giving and allows one to SOAR through stories of personal meaning, with other respectful relationships beside us, a community encircling us and restorative time to flourish in nature. This practical handbook includes twenty-six worksheets with prompts, offers nourishing poems, and integrates theory and practice using positive psychology and narrative therapy principles. It focuses on connection, using the power of life stories approached from personal, relational, community and nature aspects. There are many resources in each section for further insights. It also contains creative ideas for working with children, youth, refugees, those grieving and those traumatized in order to help improve self-compassion and a sense of identity for hopeful redemptive stories to soar in life.

Julie Morsillo is a community psychologist and senior lecturer in counselling at Eastern. She taught psychology and community development at Victoria University, was a researcher at the Australian Psychological Society and a counselling coordinator at Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. She has also worked for the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission and been a cottage and foster parent.

This new publication provides a very practical resource for counsellors wishing to work creatively with clients for healing and restoration.



BUY JULIE'S  
BOOK HERE:





# From Wuhan to MST to Wuhan to Eastern

BY RACHEL LIN, MASTER OF TEACHING (SECONDARY) (EASTERN COLLEGE AUSTRALIA – CURRENT);  
DIP CHRISTIAN STUDIES (MST)

**My name is Ying Lin, but many of the students and faculty on the campus know me as Rachel.**

Before coming to Australia, I was studying English at a university in Jiangxi province in my home country, China. By the grace of God, I had a few American teachers who were Christians, and who freely shared the gospel with me when I visited their homes outside of class. When I graduated from uni, I moved to another city, Wuhan, for my Master's studies in translation and interpreting.

As a new believer, I joined the local church in Wuhan and was called to voluntarily serve as an interpreter for pastors in their Sunday Services. Around the same time, I also got a part-time job related to my major. Surprisingly and graciously, the company I worked at was founded by an American Christian, where all my co-workers were believers. Over the four years I worked there my faith was strengthened and I began to know more about the Bible, craving for a deeper understanding of it. Then, in 2015, I applied for a visa for a working holiday to Australia.

I fell in love with Australia as soon as I walked out of Tullamarine airport: blue sky, fresh air, wide landscape, and clean roads. More importantly, living in Australia meant I could go to church and join “religious” activities freely. I started to attend a church in Melbourne and became quite involved with the community. When my one-year working holiday visa came to an end, my heart didn't feel like going back to China. I shared how I was feeling with my pastor about studying Christian Studies. He then introduced me to Melbourne School of Theology as this was where he did his theological studies. He drove me to MST right away and, after I chatted with Tom Kimber, I decided to study at the college.

Coming to MST was a shock; I don't know what I was expecting! I came from a country with huge universities both by number and size, so when I first visited MST, honestly speaking, I was surprised to see MST being so “petite”, just like me, but as one would say, “Great things come in small packages.” I loved this place. The staff and lecturers were easy to access, and they were super supportive in both my study and life as an overseas student.



RACHEL WITH HER DONATED BIKE, WHICH SHE RIDES TO COLLEGE

I finished my Diploma of Christian Studies in one year. My favorite memories included Wednesday chapels, morning teas, different events hosted by the student leadership body, and staying with our then Vice-Principal Peter Tyrrell's family. At the end of 2017 I graduated, proudly awarded the Top Student Award of the Year for my course. But sadly, my visa was finishing and, I had to return to China in January 2018.

Even though I loved my time in Australia, I felt the need to return to China for different reasons. I wanted to help my friends to learn about the Bible with what I had learned from MST. However, after I got back and settled in Wuhan, I realised that



RACHEL WITH HER COHORT

people were occupied with work, and they didn't even have time for themselves in the evenings or weekends. It seemed like life was all about working and making a living. I came to realize there is a dramatic difference between Australians and Chinese culture. Soon I became one of them, working overtime daily and having to sacrifice my weekends for work. Then, in the beginning of 2020, COVID-19 hit hard in Wuhan and quickly the rest of the world. There wasn't much to do or to fulfill myself during the three years of COVID. All I can remember was making sure that I tested negative for what seemed like never-ending COVID tests.

During this time, I applied for an English teaching job in Wuhan. Teaching comes naturally to me but I knew I needed to learn how to be a more effective teacher so I could be the positive influence I wanted to be to my students. The thought of studying teaching overseas was formed but I had to wait for the COVID-19 pandemic to be over and for Chinese customs to be open. From my time at MST, and conversations with other students, I knew where I wanted to apply to study teaching – Eastern College Australia.

Because of my previous study at MST, I was able to quickly adapt to the study mode at Eastern, especially since it's the same location, and there were many staff I encountered before. I also benefitted greatly from my MST course as it helped me to see education from a Christian perspective and how I can integrate faith with my vocation. But

studying teaching and studying ministry are quite distinct. They have different content and focus, with teaching requiring me to become familiar with secondary education in Australia, which is totally different from how I was educated in China. That was a big challenge for me. The study load also seemed to be bigger.

When I graduate from my two-year course in June this year, Master of Teaching (Secondary), I'll register with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, and apply to teach in a secondary college, which could be either Christian, public, or private. I sincerely hope that God will guide me to become a role model for the younger generation in my teaching and that I can use my Christian faith to impact them, so they know that they are loved.

Over the years, God has been faithful to me. He put the passion of teaching in me and sent spiritual leaders my way to encourage and strengthen me, also providing me with the amount of money I needed to travel and study overseas, and places to stay when I didn't have money to rent in Melbourne.

Going overseas was a step of faith and a decision to get out of my comfort zone. There are many days I sense the difficulties of living and studying alone in a different country, and many tears are shed, but I know that this is exactly where God wants me to be now.

He is my shelter and comforter (Psalm 91:2)



## OPEN EVENTS

# Open Day

WEDNESDAY 14 MAY

# Open Night

THURSDAY 14 AUGUST

# Open Morning

SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

To find out more, go to:  
[eastern.edu.au/events](http://eastern.edu.au/events)



## IMPORTANT DATES

SEMESTER 2 APPLICATIONS CLOSE  
TUESDAY 1 JULY

SEMESTER 2 STARTS  
MONDAY 21 JULY

MID-SEMESTER BREAK  
22 SEPTEMBER – 3 OCTOBER

SEMESTER 2 FINISHES  
FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER

# Alumni & Friends Gathering

SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER

## SUPPORT US

Eastern College Australia relies upon the support of the Christian community to fulfill its mission. With no government grants or denominational support, the College seeks financial contributions from donors each year.

We invite you to prayerfully consider financially supporting Eastern's mission, 'to provide teaching, training and research from a Christian worldview that contributes to the church and the flourishing of humanity through the lives of its graduates.'

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