Parents / Carers,

This is our final newsletter for 2016 and I have been privileged to be part of the Berendale school community this year. I have been continually amazed with the expertise and dedication of all staff and agencies who work with our students. The highlights throughout the year have been many with, excursions and camps a focus, Choc Bean café & Eleanora providing fine coffee for staff and residents, the Graduation was outstanding.

Berendale School is heading into a new and exciting phase with the development of new buildings. This year we were incredibly fortunate to receive $2.2 million dollars from the State Government to begin the process of upgrading our facilities. The initial planning phase is focusing on a new classroom wing with multi use classrooms and providing the school with a new entrance to relieve the bus and car traffic which currently occurs outside the school.

Further to the building upgrade, the schools leadership will have a new focus for 2017. I welcome Athina Cravatas as Assistant Principal, Chris Murray Leading Teacher for Year 10-12, Mandy Thomas Leading Teacher years 7-9, Vanessa Sigamoney leading teacher of Curriculum and Belinda Hodges leading Teacher Wellbeing. These staff will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to Berendale School in 2017.

I wish all families a safe and restful holiday season and look forward to the New Year.

Regards,

Jennifer Hamilton
Principal
**WELFARE MATTERS**

**Parent Support & Information**

A reminder that Carer respite in the southern region is available, so please visit [www.respitesouth.org.au](http://www.respitesouth.org.au) or call 1800 052 222. For eastern region (includes Monash) carers please visit [www.lifeassist.org.au](http://www.lifeassist.org.au) or call 1300 277 478. Both organisations can provide funding packages to support a variety of family situations, including camps. Parents may self-refer, however if you prefer the school can support and guide you through the process.

Carers Victoria also provide a range of services and support such as, advocacy, counselling, planning, work, finances and self-care. There are a number of publications available also, so please call 1800 242 636 or visit [www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au) for more information.

**Student Transport 2017**

If your student will be accessing either Crown Coaches or Bayside Coaches next year, information on their updated times and stops will be sent to you by the second week in January at the latest. Please contact the school from January 23rd if you have not received a letter. Please be assured also that any adjustments are usually minimal and that rules and procedures around bus travel will remain the same.

**Access for All Abilities (AAA)**

Access for All Abilities has helped to grow inclusive sports and recreation for people with disabilities. There are now over 25 different sports involved including; cricket, football, swimming, netball and soccer. For more information visit [www.aaavic.org.au](http://www.aaavic.org.au) or [www.reclink.org](http://www.reclink.org) (phone 9419 6672).

**Ten Pin Bowling at Moorabbin**

AMF Moorabbin hold a Saturday session (10-12) for bowlers with disabilities. Any age or standard are welcome to join in the fun. Games are at half price, and there are competitions throughout the year. Please contact Bree or Matthew on 9555 3555 to find out more or just go along any Saturday for a look. Several Berendale students attend regularly and it is a great way to have fun, meet friends and improve your skills and fitness.

**Student ID & Taxi Cards (School Leavers)**

A Proof of Age Card is available to students 17+years and is an excellent form of ID. Forms are available from the Post Office. The Multi Purpose Taxi Program (M.P.T.P.) provides 50% discount on taxi fares for eligible members. Please call 1800 638 802 or visit the government website [www.transport.vic.gov.au](http://www.transport.vic.gov.au) for further information.

**Disability Support Pension (DSP) & Pensioner Education Supplement (PES)**

Students (b. 2001 ) and turning 16 in 2017, will be eligible for the Disability Support Pension. We encourage students to apply for the DSP which will be helpful in registering for the NDIS later. The PES is an additional payment to help with educational expenses.

**Happy Holidays**

Very best wishes for a wonderful festive season, and happy and safe holidays. I will be on long service leave from the start of Term 1 and welcome Belinda Hodges to the welfare role. If for any reason there is a need to make contact me, please speak with Jennifer Hamilton or Bev Jackson, who will be able to assist you. Best wishes for a wonderful 2017.

Dr Maree McCutcheon  
(Student Wellbeing & Family Support)
Art Show
The Year 9’s and Year 10’s participated in the Youth Resilience Survey from Resilient Youth Australia. They celebrated their engagement and the results of the survey by hosting a Cupcake Morning Tea. The funds collected from the morning tea were donated to Front Yard Youth Services (Melbourne City Mission) to support young people. The article below appeared in the local Bayside Leader Newspaper (November 29th 2016).

Mind issues do matter

BAYSIDE schools are thinking ahead of ways to keep mental wellbeing at the forefront of students’ minds.

Nineteen local primary and secondary schools, including Berendale in Hampton East, are part of a youth resilience survey project that is designed to identify what issues are on students’ minds. About 6500 Bayside Year 3-12 children and teenagers are part of the program, discussing counselling, bullying, depression, anxiety and self-esteem concerns that could hold back student development.

The project is being run by Resident Youth Australia in conjunction with Bayside Council, with workshops held last month.

Berendale is the first special school in Australia to participate in the survey.

Year 10 teacher Vanessa Sigamoney said it was a very positive project.

“Typical teenage behaviour issues such as social media and peer pressure issues were brought up,” Ms Sigamoney said.

“But also becoming more aware of disabilities, how our students see themselves and how they want to be seen by the community as being the same as others, were also concerns raised.”

Bayside Mayor Alex del Porto said the survey results would help shape youth service programs.

“Bayside’s students show strong levels of empowerment and belonging, as well as high overall resilience.

“Despite this, mental health results show more than a quarter are losing sleep through worry and the same number report feeling depressed and unhappy,” Cr del Porto said.