



Lessons in best practice

Judy Reid reveals how Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak raised over \$3 million to build a facility that included a normally-difficult-to-fund new school staff room.

Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak has recently opened a magnificent new facility, the Mandeville Centre. As one of Melbourne's leading Catholic girls' schools, Loreto Toorak aims to be increasingly recognised as one of Australia's finest schools, highly regarded for its pastoral care, academic, sporting, musical and cultural programs that educate women who will work towards positive social change.

A critical component in achieving our vision is ensuring our facilities provide the optimal learning environment for all students and staff. Loreto Toorak has a long and proud tradition of investing in and renewing its infrastructure so that both current and future generations of students have world-class facilities in which to grow and learn.

Over the last decade the school has delivered a number of important projects, resulting in a range of improvements to teaching programs, learning resources and spaces for engagement with the Loreto Toorak community. The Mandeville Centre is a natural progression of the master plan journey that the school council has been implementing over more than a decade. In many ways, it is the final piece of the puzzle that will unite the junior and senior schools, provide significantly improved facilities for teachers and students alike and a new, more welcoming public entrance to the school.

Reaching out for philanthropic support

The scope of this project was extensive, and it

became apparent that a fundraising appeal would be critical to the project's successful delivery. In early 2012, we engaged the services of AskRIGHT (formerly Global Philanthropic) to conduct a feasibility study. This tested our case for support, helped identify capable committee members and suggested a possible fundraising target.

In October 2012, the appeal committee was formed. This was made up of current parents (some of whom were also past pupils) who were very well connected across the school community. This committee met regularly (generally monthly) with the principal, council chair and director of development attending all committee meetings. On the recommendation of the appeal committee, the school council agreed to continue the relationship with AskRIGHT, and senior consultant, Jeff Buchanan was engaged as the advising consultant. He played a pivotal role in leading us through each stage and was present at each meeting.

Facility tours a key step for engagement

The appeal began with a silent phase, the purpose of which was to identify and approach potential major donors. A series of meetings was held between February and September 2013, in which small numbers of potential major donors were invited to view the existing facilities and listen to a presentation by the chair of council, chair of the property committee, chair of the finance

committee and the appeal chair, to hear about the plans for the Mandeville Centre and why financial support was needed. It was made very clear to potential donors that this building would not proceed without substantial financial support. Whilst an appeal target was not announced publicly at this stage, initial budgeting showed a shortfall of \$2.5 million.

The tour of the existing facilities was crucial to attract the interest of donors. The project included a modern, extensive staff centre on the ground floor and it was especially important that donors were made aware why this new facility was needed.

By giving them the opportunity to view the existing conditions in which our senior teaching staff worked, they were able to see first-hand how inadequate the facilities were. Our aim to provide the very best education for our students is dependent on our ability to attract and retain the best teaching staff, and potential donors were able to understand the pressing need for adequate facilities in achieving this goal.

Room naming-rights proved an attractive reward

Another successful strategy in attracting potential major donors was the option to have naming recognition for various rooms within the new building. We wanted donors to know how much their philanthropic gesture was valued within

the school community, and this was a public way of acknowledging their contribution. While some donors preferred to remain anonymous, others were pleased to accept this offer, and nine rooms within the new building now carry the name of substantial donors to the appeal.

Telethon to parents helped appeal's public phase

Jeff Buchanan continually reiterated that the silent phase of the appeal was not over until we were confident all potential major donors had been approached. We reached this stage in September 2013, at which time we had received nearly \$2 million in pledges and donations. An appeal target of \$2.5 million was agreed and made public. The wider community was made aware that we needed to raise \$2.5 million and that nearly \$2 million had already been received.

The public phase was launched very close to the end of Term 3 (September 2013) and we were concerned that the school holidays would result in a hiatus for the appeal. Shortly into Term 4 (October 2013), a telethon was conducted to current families who had not yet donated or advised us they were unable to donate.

The principal, chair of council, director of Rathfarnham (ELC to Year 6), director of development and the appeal committee telephoned parents from the school over a four-night period. This was a good opportunity not only to ask parents for their financial support, but also to answer any questions they had about the centre and the appeal.

Involving donors in the opening of the centre

In December 2013, based on the successful response to the fundraising appeal to date, the school council made the decision that building works would commence. In May 2014, the appeal committee chairman wrote to the whole school community advising that an amount in excess of \$2.76 million

had been raised and donations were still being accepted. To date, over \$3 million has been raised, our most successful fundraising appeal ever.

The Mandeville Centre was completed in April 2015 and whilst external works were still being undertaken, staff and students have been using the building since that time.

The centre has delivered for the school an underground car park, an impressive gallery space and lecture theatre, state-of-the-art facilities for staff (incorporating cooperative and collaborative working areas, meeting rooms, casual and lounge areas and an outside courtyard), a whole school library (Preparatory to Year 12) and a Year 12 Centre, including classrooms, breakout areas, a common room with a rooftop garden and a seminar room.

The entire school community is delighted with the building, which is making an enormous difference across many aspects of school life. It has been very important to us to share this with our donors and acknowledge their role in the successful realisation of the project.

In April, all donors were invited to a VIP cocktail party to celebrate the success of the appeal and to have a special preview tour of the centre ahead of its official opening. This took place in July, once the external works were complete, in the form of a blessing by the Archbishop of Melbourne in the presence of staff, students and invited guests.

"Hard work, vision and generosity"

It seems appropriate to conclude with the words of two donors, Nicola and Alex Commins, who have outlined these reasons behind their contribution to the appeal: "Loreto provides a world-class educational experience for young Catholic women thanks to the hard work, vision, and generosity of many previous families who have had an association with Loreto Toorak."

"We found it our duty to contribute to the latest building development as a current family whose daughters have, and continue to benefit greatly from being part of the Loreto Toorak school community." 

Table of major gifts

Gift level	Plan	Prospects	Percentage of total
>\$500,000	1	4	16.2%
\$250,000 - \$500,000	1	4	21.5%
\$100,000 - \$250,000	2	8	22.7%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	4	16	12.2%
\$10,000 - \$50,000	25	25	14.0%
\$5,000 - \$10,000	20	50	5.4%
Other gifts	Many	Many	8.0%

Judy Reid

Judy Reid has worked in fundraising for nearly 15 years, specialising in educational fundraising. She has held the role of Director of Development at Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak since 2011 and is responsible for fundraising, community relations and alumnae relations, overseeing a team of four.



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