

YEAR 9

THE **CHALLENGING ME** PROGRAM EXPLAINED

Peninsula Grammar's Pre Senior program, **Challenging Me**, recognises the need to engage Year 9 students differently. In this critical year level where students make the crucial transition from the Middle Years to the Senior Years program, learning is relevant, relationships are supportive and our students develop life-long learning skills and a curiosity for self-discovery. The program is centred around our Challenge Blocks which see our students step outside both the traditional classroom and their personal comfort zone and turn 'I can't' into 'I can'. A coherent program incorporates student experience with classroom practice, making student learning relevant and engaging.



THE WHAT

Year 9 at Peninsula Grammar is a stand alone year deliberately designed to transition and support students from the Middle Years to Senior Years.

The **Challenging Me** program offers an academic program based on the Victorian Curriculum with a particular emphasis on Critical and Creative Thinking. It comprises traditional subjects such as English, Mathematics, and Languages and focuses on community service. An interdisciplinary subject features, known as Big Picture Learning, during which our students learn key skills that equip them to become rigorous, self-directed, independent learners.

THE WHY

Year 9 is a time when young people experience significant social and emotional change and develop an increasing level of self-awareness. Strong relationships between peers and mentors are essential and therefore investment is made early within the program to establish trust and confidence between staff and students.

There is a need for greater engagement during this year to ensure this cohort make the most of their educational experience, gaining valuable learning, interpersonal and life skills leading into the Senior Years program.

THE HOW

Deliberately designed to maximise the students' interests and passions, the **Challenging Me** program takes our students out of the classroom and presents them with real-life challenges and experiences that are then explored and reflected upon in the classroom.

The learning within **Challenging Me** is based on relevance, curiosity, posing questions and testing answers. It is collaborative, inquiry-based and focused on 'doing' rather than simply 'knowing'. These are the skills that will equip our students to be life-long learners and prepare them for senior academic study.



YEAR 9 EXPLAINED

RELATIONSHIPS

The Year 9 **Challenging Me** program is based on strong relationships among students and mutual bonds between students and their teachers. Before students can be expected to step into their stretch zone they need to establish a solid base, feel like they belong and know that they matter. Dedicated teachers and discrete Challenge Block groups provide the confidence from which our students step up and challenge themselves.

“TELL ME AND I FORGET,
TEACH ME AND I MAY REMEMBER,
INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN.”
Benjamin Franklin

CHALLENGE BLOCKS

Much of the learning in the **Challenging Me** program takes place or is inspired by the experience of our students outside the classroom. Here their eyes are opened to new horizons and they are challenged to extend themselves and go beyond their former limits.

P2C PENINSULA TO THE CITY

The P2C Program fosters independence, responsibility, respect, organisation and open-mindedness.

Students travel to Melbourne each day for two weeks, learning through immersion in the life of the city and those who use it. They are challenged to familiarise themselves with the geography of the city, and visit important historical and cultural sites, as well as community organisations.

Students take responsibility for travel and navigation, and varied project work.

P2C links to the Big Picture Learning project on society. Students' horizons are broadened through a discovery of the underbelly issues of cities, and the difficulties that other people in our community face.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CAMP

Year 9 Camp promotes resilience and a sense of community through adventure based and wilderness activities.

It builds on previous camps in the years prior and provides a basis for future experiences. Half of the 10 day camp program involves a variety of daily adventure activities from Wootton Lodge “base camp”, whilst our wilderness experience is based at the unique Wollangarra Outdoor Centre.

Sustainability is a focus offering a link to the Big Picture Learning project. Students will experience an entirely sustainable form of living at Wollangarra, and will be involved in Peninsula Grammar's ongoing rejuvenation project at Heyfield Wetlands. Students will be invited to link these experiences to their everyday lives.

PATHWAYS 4 LIFE

Pathways 4 Life gives students the tools for successful and happy future lives. They are challenged to consider future education, part-time jobs, potential careers and financial security. They will be exposed to everyday life skills to enable them to grow into confident independent young people. They will be reminded of the importance of balancing the more serious aspects of life - careers and learning - with an enjoyment of the outdoors, fitness activities, and giving back to the community.

Over a two week block students will participate in a variety of activities, some at Peninsula Grammar, and others off campus.

Pathways 4 Life links to the Big Picture Learning project on students' individual futures.



BIG PICTURE LEARNING

The year will commence with the 'How did we get here?' Big Picture learning project which will take students step by step through a formalised and resourced project-based structure based on the Bill Gates Foundation's 'Big History Project'. Having learnt about the past, students will also focus on the 'Where are we going?' project. A targeted investigation involving Science and Technology will ask students to consider local and global futures.

Overall students will undertake six themed Big Picture Learning activities, which are outlined below, during which the key skills for project based learning will be enhanced. These skills will be showcased in a final 'own choice' project based learning activity at the end of the year. Self-directed learning, and self and peer-assessment will encourage students to monitor their own success; the process of achievement and the recognition of failure will all be learning opportunities.

The Victorian Curriculum highlights the importance of Critical and Creative Thinking, which provides a framework upon which students 'challenge previously held assumptions and create new links [and] proposals' and they critically examine their own thinking. Deep learning is encouraged by posing questions, testing ideas and becoming active learners. Our students pose driving questions, test hypotheses and apply their knowledge by using the higher order skills required in the Victorian Certificate of Education.

**"IF WE TEACH TODAY'S
STUDENTS AS WE TAUGHT
YESTERDAY'S, WE ROB THEM
OF TOMORROW."**
John Dewey

Recent changes to the VCE have placed greater emphasis on the higher order skills that the **Challenging Me** program is based upon. The ability to think critically and creatively forms the basis of much of the internally assessed course work as well as being a key feature of the end-of-year examination. Application of knowledge to new situations, evaluation and analysis are key skills to VCE success. The **Challenging Me** program prepares our students for both this, and for a successful future.





“WHEN WE CHOOSE TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE, WE BECOME AN EVERYDAY LEADER.”
Ash Buchanan

CORE LEARNING

Students also undertake studies in more traditional disciplines such as English, Mathematics and Physical Education. In addition, an Elective program comprised of Languages, Commerce, Robotics, Arts, Drama and Music is offered. In English and Mathematics, our students continue to study in carefully selected gender and ability groupings, enabling targeted teaching and personal growth.

RELEVANCE

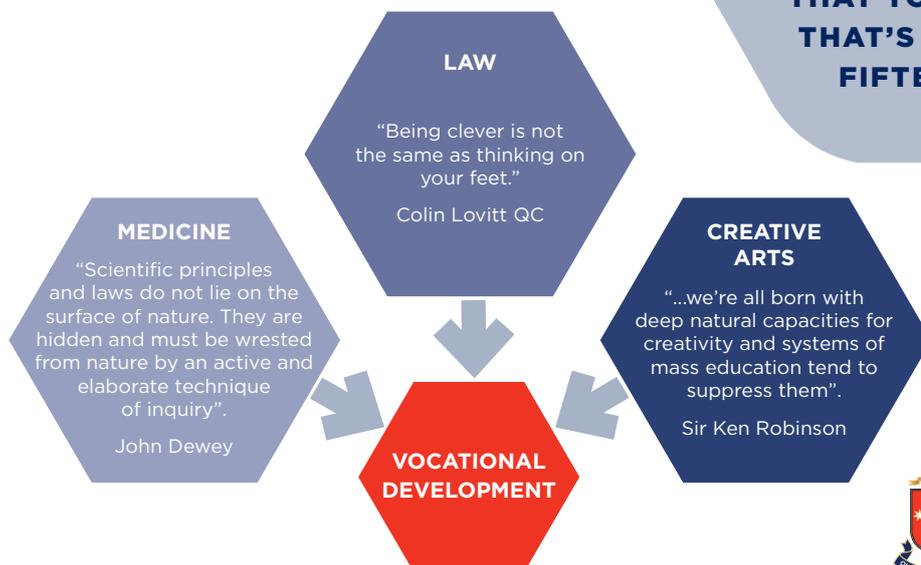
By matching classroom learning with Challenge Block and real life experiences, students recognise a reason to learn and the inquiry units have meaning. ‘What is with society?’ will link to everyday people who the students interact with during P2C, ‘What is our world coming to?’ is directly relevant to the wilderness experience of Camp, ‘Where am I going?’ may incorporate a real-life business run by students and learning vocational skills to help them access part-time work.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Service Learning is an important component of **Challenging Me**; regular opportunities to contribute exist throughout the year, including as part of each of the Challenge Blocks. The ‘How can I help?’ unit will enable students to draw on these experiences and design their own projects, helping people in the local or global community. Fundraising may be the emphasis, or a physical act of helping.

All students have the opportunity to experience an overseas community service expedition.

“ACCORDING TO THE BUREAU OF LABOUR STATISTICS, THE AVERAGE WORKER CURRENTLY HOLDS TEN DIFFERENT JOBS BEFORE AGE FORTY, AND THIS NUMBER IS PROJECTED TO GROW. FORRESTER RESEARCH PREDICTS THAT TODAY’S YOUNGEST WORKERS - THAT’S YOU - WILL HOLD TWELVE TO FIFTEEN JOBS IN THEIR LIFETIME.”
Scott Marker



PENINSULA
GRAMMAR