

NO BORDERS FOR DECLAN



Photo (L-R): MSF Volunteers' Anders Windstrand MD, Gleeson Old Scholar Declan Overton, Markus Lyksell MD & Bronson Kibroke Nurse

As most of us awake to the pleasant sounds of Adelaide suburbia, Gleeson College Old Scholar, Declan Overton (1995), is accustomed to waking to the sound of machine gun fire. He is now so used to it that he hardly raises an eyebrow, unless it is sustained fire or return fire from another direction. He has also learnt how to tell how far the shooting is away from him - if it cracks then whistles, it is pretty much overhead.

Declan is a Technical Logistician for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). MSF is an international humanitarian aid organisation that provides emergency medical assistance to

populations in danger in over 70 countries around the world. The organisation is committed to bringing quality medical care to people caught in crisis, regardless of race, religion or political affiliation, and operates independently of any political, military or religious agendas.

After nearly a decade of travelling to developing countries for pleasure, Declan became dissatisfied with the "superficial" experience, and decided to give something back to the countries that he believes has helped him grow significantly as a person. His role as a Technical Logistician is full and varied, and covers everything associated with the running and logistics of a field hospital. This

includes water supply and sanitation, transportation, construction, security and communications and information technology.

Somalia has the unenviable title of highest security country in the MSF profile, and Declan said it was in this tough, war-torn area that he found work most enjoyable and rewarding. Armed guards, strict protocols and dangerous situations were all part of a normal day in Somalia.

"We received gunshot wounded daily and there was a mass migration fleeing the constant bombings in Mogadishu - the town we worked in doubled in size over six months," he said.

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A Word from the Principal

A Happy New Year to all members of the Gleeson College Community.

On behalf of the staff, I hope that all families had a holy and wonderful Christmas. I would like to wish all families every success and joy in 2009 – the twenty-first year of our College.

I would also like to give a very special welcome to the new staff members who have joined us for the first time. I pray that God will bless them in their work and that they find enjoyment and fulfilment during their time at Gleeson College. We welcome Kelvin Ching (Maths/Science), Ian Doherty (Maths/Science), Nancy Matricciani (Bus St/RE/Maths), Anthea Triantafyllou (Design & Tech/Electronics), Tanya Welden (SOSE/English/R.E.) and Emma Tunbridge (Dance). It is great to have former student, Emma (nee Page), who graduated from Gleeson College in 1999, return to teach in our Performing Arts faculty. We also welcome back to our community, Mrs. Lina Russo, who will be teaching Italian.

Stage 2 Results

In 2008, our Stage 2 students achieved an 85.3% (up by 0.6 % from 2007) pass rate in terms of ABCs across all subjects (State Ave: 83.7%). We had 5 students achieve full marks in a subject area. These 20s were achieved by **Thomas Crisp (I.T. Studies)**, **Jarred Williams (Music Technology)**, **Nicole Park** and **Danielle Fuccio (Desktop Publishing & Electronic Publishing)**. It was my great pleasure to attend the Government House Merit Ceremony as these students were presented with their respective certificates for achieving full marks (*see photo below right*). While the College is very proud of Nicole, Danielle, Thomas and Jarred, there were none prouder than their parents. We also had 5 students achieving a TER of 90 or above. Thomas Crisp was the Dux of the College with a TER of 95.35 followed by Jared Williams (92.80), Rhianne Caruso and Alexandra Shelley (91.90) and Alexander Trimboli (90.95).

The University and TAFE offers have been amazing also, with over 75% of our students getting their 1st or 2nd choice. Our sincere congratulations go to all students who achieved their personal best in 2008.

Trade Training Centre

In March, the Campus received fantastic news from the Australian Government that the Trade Training Centre application from 2008 has been accepted. This will mean that our three schools will be provided with \$4.13M to redevelop our Shared Facilities and develop certificate course pathways for our students, especially in the field of modern electronics.

The funding is an enormous boost for our Campus facilities and will further enhance the educational pathways (Academic and VET) that will be made available to all of our students.

Gleeson Redevelopment Projects & Pilot Specialist Netball Program Launch

The newly resurfaced sports courts were officially opened by Adelaide Thunderbirds players at our recent Open Evening, where we also launched our exciting Pilot Netball Specialist Program. Following the success of our World Football Specialist Program, which is currently in its seventh year of implementation, the program is offered to talented Year 8 students who have a passion for Netball, to train and develop under the skilled guidance of elite coaches. The program aims to provide students with the opportunity to develop their netball potential towards an 'elite' level, while maintaining their performance in academic studies.

The new Science building has a roof now and is scheduled to be complete by August this year, while the courtyard surface redevelopment is nearing completion, with a brand new stage currently being built.

Pride in Success

There has been much for Gleeson College to be proud of so far in 2009. Besides our successful bid for the Trade Training Centre,

we have had some Old Scholars shining in the area of media, sport and performing arts.

Jake Walasek (2008): Has secured a part in the latest production from the Australian Ballet Company, an honour that young people usually wait years to achieve.

Ben Harvy (2008): Wrote a front page article for The Advertiser before winning a position as a Cadet Journalist; a great recognition of Ben's writing and investigative skills.

Danielle Rowe (1996): Danielle was recently promoted to Principal Artist at the Australian Ballet Company. Late last month she was also named as the inaugural recipient of the Dorothy Hicks Endowment Fund, to support principal dancers of the Australian Ballet (*see article on page 3*).

Daniel Mullen (2007): Played his debut game for the Qantas Socceroos against Kuwait last month, and just prior to that he played for Adelaide United in the A-League Grand Final against Melbourne Victory.

Bradden Inman (2007): Joined Newcastle United from Gleeson College, when he was in Year 10. Recently, as outlined in the Sunday Mail, Bradden was on the substitute bench in a Barclay's Premier League game against Manchester City, and seems destined to secure a first grade contract in the near future.

Dylan McGowan (2007) is currently playing for Scottish Premier League side Hearts Midlothian of Edinburgh in the Under-19 competition, while older brother **Ryan McGowan (2006)** won a spot in the senior side for the 2009 season, after performing well as Captain of the U-19's in 2007/08.

Craig Goodwin (Year 12, 2009) will also be joining first division football team, Inverness Caledonian Thistle, in the Under-19 competition, in Scotland mid-year.

We congratulate these students, and all of our past students, who have achieved wonderful goals so early in their lives. Their successes are a tribute to their determined individual effort and fantastic support from their families.

I pray that God will bless all members of our College and guide us as a Catholic Community in our important work throughout 2009.

Phil Lewis, Principal



MSF BREAKING MEDICAL BARRIERS ABROAD

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“There were hundreds of severely malnourished children and massive food shortages, and just being able to offer support was very rewarding.”

With danger always lurking, Declan has had many memorable moments in the field. For him, apart from the experience of eating sorghum, a Sudanese staple which is “like eating Clag glue”, two definitely stand out from the rest.

“Burying a recently deceased woman on Christmas Eve, with the help of the surgeon, was surreal and also a bit of a spiritual experience. It was like a penance before the celebration of Christmas, or a fast before Easter.” he said.

“The other was the time I had a pistol aimed directly at me as I turned into a small side street in Somalia. There were two guys with AK 47s and one with a pistol who drew it up and pointed it straight at me – I was bricking it!”

He survived. However, incidentally, two weeks after Declan finished his mission in Somalia, an MSF Land Cruiser was destroyed by a roadside bomb, killing two international staff and a Somali driver. This led to the immediate withdrawal of all expatriate staff on the ground, with all MSF projects now run remotely with the dedicated national staff.

The gunshot fire he is so used to waking to has ceased for the moment,

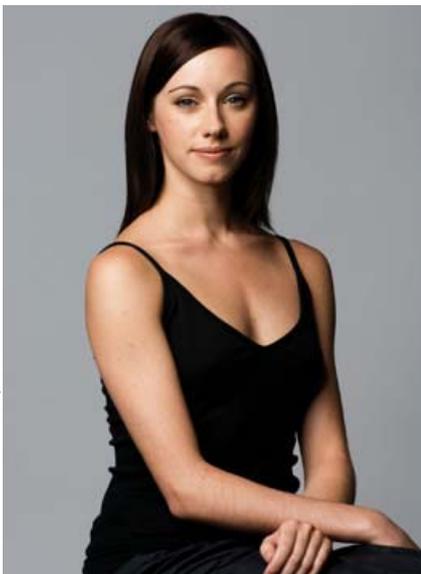
with Declan now working as a site manager for a construction firm in Serbia. Their current project is building a centre for children with learning difficulties. He is aiming to stay for up to a year in this “somewhat normal” role in Serbia, before heading off on another mission with MSF, who are always in need of committed volunteers.

“They particularly need Medics (MD, Nurses, Surgeons, MidWives), people with Administrative and/or Logistic experience and Technical staff,” he said.

“It’s the most rewarding work I’ve ever done!”

For more information on MSF, head to www.msf.org.au

Photo courtesy of www.australianballet.com.au



MILLION DOLLAR BALLERINA

Gleeson Old Scholar and Prima Ballerina, Danielle Rowe (1996), was named the inaugural recipient of the Dorothy Hicks Endowment Fund, to support principal dancers of the Australian Ballet (AB), last month.

The \$1 million fund was donated by Melbourne businessman Ian Hicks and his three children in memory of their wife and mother, Dorothy. Mrs Hicks, a passionate balletomane, sadly died of cancer in 2007. Rowe’s salary will be covered by the fund, with the AB receiving \$200,000 installments annually for the next five years.

Danielle was promoted from Senior Artist to Principal Artist at the AB in June 2008, and finished the year with three critically acclaimed lead roles in *Ballet Imperial*, *The Concert* and as Baroness von Rothbart in Graeme Murphy’s *Swan Lake*.

We congratulate Danielle on this impressive achievement and wish her well in her future performances.



Gleeson Old Scholar and ABC News Journalist, Hayley Conole (2001), revisited the College last month to give an informative talk to Year 10 English students about her exciting role as a Police and Emergency Reporter.

Students were amazed to hear what a day in the life of a media reporter involves, with Hayley sharing many interesting stories about her first-hand experiences, and also speaking about the learning journey she travelled in order to secure a job that she loves.

Year 10 English Teacher, Mrs Julie Gontar, and students would like to thank Hayley for her visit.

20TH YEAR CELEBRATION COCKTAIL FUNCTION - SFERA'S

