



Professional Learning
Research
Innovation

A Year in Review The Barker Institute in 2018

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About the Author

Dr Brad Merrick is currently Director of Research in Learning and the Barker Institute. His PhD examined the influence of motivation and self-regulation on student understanding and learning. He has co-authored several music textbooks combined with scholarly chapters, articles and papers that explore emerging approaches to teaching and learning, most recently in the 'Oxford Handbook of Music Education' and 'The Routledge Companion to Music, Technology and Education'. He is the immediate Past Chair of the National Executive of the Australian Society for Music Education. His passion is examining new research, pedagogy and emerging practice in education.

About the Barker Institute:

- Provides a centre for research, reflective practice, professional learning and innovation in education
- Is a resource hub that facilitates the ongoing development of learning for teachers, allowing them to stay abreast of emerging practice, constantly striving to refine the quality of teaching and learning
- Looks to develop collaborative ventures with other institutions and providers, initiating research and innovation combined with the implementation of new projects and programs for the benefit of students, staff and the broader community
- Shares current research and issues with parents, professional bodies and educators around the globe through ongoing symposia, forums, lectures and conferences

About the Learning in Practice Journal:

As a leader in Christian education, Barker College aims to both demonstrate and inform best practice. This journal was developed to showcase a range of initiatives and research projects from across the School. It explains the rationale behind innovations in practice and archives pivotal developments in Barker's academic, co-curricular and pastoral realms.

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Director of the Barker Institute

Abstract

The Barker Institute was developed in 2014 under the leadership of Mr Philip Heath and the direction of Dr Brad Merrick, seeking to place a connection across the core components of research, professional learning and innovation within the broader learning context at Barker College. Specifically, the mission of the institute was to share emerging thinking, practice and approaches to learning with the broader Barker Community and also beyond the Mints Gates to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that fosters learning across all key areas. Throughout 2018 there has been considerable growth and interest in the Barker Institute. This article serves as an overview of the various presentations and areas of coverage included in the internal and external events throughout the year. This is the last year that Dr Merrick is overseeing this initiative as he is moving to the University of Melbourne as a Senior Lecturer in Music Performance Teaching in 2019. Dr Matthew Hill will be responsible for the Barker Institute in 2019.

The Barker Institute (www.barkerinstitute.com.au) has been an important and successful component of the broader provision of access to rich and diverse presentations, research and thinking across a range of settings. Since the formation of the Barker Institute in 2015, the BI now has well over 25 events each year. These exist for different purposes and have very specific audiences and interest areas. Whether one of the larger Community forums, a parent-directed Focus on Learning series or a guest lecture as part of the Twilight Series, audiences have continued to grow across the 2018 program. The beauty of the Barker Institute is that it is able to respond to the emerging needs of the community to ensure that the presenters and content offered provide a strong connection so the nature of the Schools' broader mission can be enhanced. The Barker Institute has continued to contribute to education at the local, national and global level through the provision of ongoing professional learning, connected to emerging research and innovation.

Based around the various needs of the school and the mission of the Barker Institute, the focus of each event has been tailored to the needs of a specific area of the community, while also providing a means of sharing and discussing emerging trends in educational research, social issues and other facets of society that have strong relevance and importance across the broader Barker Institute audience.

This year, the following levels of events were provided with close to three thousand people attending these events collectively ranging from 40-50 for small, more boutique presentations up to 400 attendees for the larger Community Forums such as the session presented by psychologist, coach and elite sportswoman, Gayelene Clews.

The different types of presentations that were covered this year included: -

1. The Community Forums with presentations that included:

- a. "Realising your Learning Potential: Turning the ordinary into the extraordinary", where Olympic Psychologist and Author, Gayelene Clews presented her research and experience into student well-being, mental health and exceptional performance.
- b. "Safe on Social Media" where Kirra Pendergast, Cyber Safety expert presented on the key issues and understanding that users of all ages need to know about Social Media. This Parent Forum provided and delivered real life strategies to help parents support their children to use social media with increased awareness.
- c. "Why you need Economics in your life" with Leith Thompson, who discussed the important and ever changing components of society, linking the various important areas associated with economics with everyday living in the 21st century.
- d. "Licensed to Fly", where the Little Ripper Group provided both a presentation and series of workshops that highlighted the ever-changing world and the ways in which drones can be employed for the benefit of society. Using a range of real-life scenarios such as catching sharks and the Westpac emergency service, the presentation showed the advances in this type of technology while also engaging students in the many opportunities that are arising in this area of technology development.
- e. "Surviving in the Digital Age of Distraction" where Vanessa McCamley highlighted the many factors that can overwhelm humans in the present day when immersed in the day-to-day technology use that exists. Using a range of research and strategies, she encouraged participants to connect with their emotions and those around the workplace.
- f. "A conversation with Rosalie Kunoth-Monks" where the Head of Barker College, Mr Phillip Heath, interviewed Rosalie Kunoth-Monks about her life and journey from being a young student-actress through to her ongoing involvement with reconciliation and Indigenous rights within the broader Aboriginal and Indigenous communities around Australia.

2. The Twilight Series with more personalised sessions from staff, parents and alumni including the following:

- a. "A guide to Walking the Camino de Santiago", where Jeremy von Einem, Barker staff member and intrepid explorer, shared his amazing trek in Spain and how to make the most of this unique pilgrim trail.
- b. "Frankensteam Festival", where various presenters from our Science and STEAM area, created a myriad of different experiences to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the creation of Mary Shelly's novel.
- c. "Outsmarting Cancer", where the wider community gathered to hear about some exciting developments in the field of cancer research. Amazing examples of the multidisciplinary research approach being used to tackle over 200 known forms of cancer were presented by members of the team from the Australian Cancer Research Foundation.

- d. "Learning and Wellbeing: Connecting the Research" where the outgoing Director of the Barker Institute, Dr Brad Merrick spoke on the emerging key areas in Educational Research and Ms Rowena Dudgeon provided an overview of the new Wellbeing framework and model that will be introduced at Barker College in 2019.

3. The Focus on Learning Series which provided sessions that were specifically developed to create opportunities for interaction with both parents and students across the learning community, including:

- a. "Digital Security" where ICT staff presented practical sessions to ensure that all parents were able to understand and use the Surface Pro devices allocated to their sons in year 7-9 of the curriculum.
- b. "Transforming the Digital Learning Environment", where digital integrators provided parents with an overview of the Barker digital learning plan and learning management system. This session demonstrated how students access online learning resources and activities.
- c. "Year 7 Study Skills", where Dr Prue Salter presented a session on effective study skills to all Year 7 boys and their parents.
- d. "Writing Across the School", where a range of teachers shared their latest approaches to teaching and refining writing and literacy in all subjects as part of the broader curriculum offered at Barker College.

4. The Parent Forums included a range of interesting areas for parents to learn more about their sons and daughters and how they can share in the learning process. These included:

- a. "Academic Conversations - Goal Setting and Grit", where Dr Brad Merrick, Director of the Barker Institute, presented strategies for parents and students on fostering Academic conversations through Goal Setting and GRIT.
- b. "Exam support – The Metacognitive Student", where Gayelene Clews presented a session to assist parents in understanding the various social, emotional and cognitive functions that adolescents employ in their learning experiences, both through academic and co-curricular activities.

5. The Post Graduate Forum in 2018 once again saw a range of staff presenting their research and practice to one another in the 11th Annual forum of this type at Barker College. This has become a significant part of the annual Barker Institute calendar.

6. The College of Teachers coaching opportunities continued the development and implementation of coaching within the growth framework across the School, encouraging reflection to improve their engagement in teaching across the School. This year, there was also the implementation of a Coaching component in the School based TLC's (Teacher Learning Communities), whereby this coaching was a continuous form of feedback and interaction in an ongoing way throughout the year.

7. There were several **Teachmeets** whereby staff shared small aspects of their teaching and research with others. The evening called "Sharing your Success" allowed staff to present short, focused presentations. At many of these there were over 20 presenters, all allocated a period of 2-3 minutes to tell their story. TLC's (Teacher Learning Communities) were also implemented across the school, as a means of developing the professional knowledge of staff. This was integrated with online resources through the Learning Management System (Canvas) proving to be successful with staff.

The Institute continued to develop a research program during the year, working with various projects and areas of interest across the School including the continuation of the Barker Journey study which will continue for many years as the BI tracks the students beyond the school. An important component of the Barker Institute's role is to tell the story of the many facets of research, teaching and learning combined with the day-to-day experiences of students and staff. In 2018, the BI continues archiving the work undertaken with the Second Edition of the newly-created 'Learning in Practice' Journal, following on from the First Edition published in November, 2017.

All in all, a busy but extremely diverse and interesting year for the Barker Institute, with a wide array of participants and many interesting sessions made available. We look forward to another successful and engaging series of presentations and events in 2019 under the guidance of Dr Matthew Hill. I take this opportunity to thank Mr Phillip Heath for the opportunity to direct the BI for the last four years. I know it will continue to play an important role in the fabric of teaching, learning, research and innovation at Barker College.



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