MAGNA CARTA
CHIPCARD SOLUTIONS

Bermel
BUSINESS SYSTEMS
Building
Better
Solutions

Methodist Ladies' College

Fantastic plastic as a learning tool

Technology has always been integral in all aspects of life at Methodist Ladies' College. In 2001 MLC was the first school in Victoria, Australia to introduce smart card technology for both staff and students. The innovative fully integrated system provided photo identification, building access, and for the students, an introduction to a cashless society. In keeping with MLC's strategic direction to maintain its leadership in education and technology and given that the card technology being used was nearing the end of its life cycle, MLC recently conducted a global review of current card technologies. It was decided to retain the original supplier Melbourne-based Bermel Business Systems and their new product offering from European market leader, Magna Carta. They chose FacilityPro Smart Campus, already being used successfully in many Higher Education Institutions across Europe and the US.

The new card uses Mifare technology, selected because of its potential compatibility with the transport payment system being implemented by the Victorian State Government. This card or StarCard, as it is called at MLC, features an imbedded computer chip that stores dollar values, enabling users to load cash onto the card that can be used around the College, for example, food purchases in the Star Café, photocopying in the library and bookshop purchases.

All students in Years 7 – 12 have a StarCard which helps them learn about some of the technologies they will face outside the school environment. Students and staff upload funds using ATM type machines, simply by inserting their card and loading notes and coins. This feature of the StarCard is not only convenient, but also encourages students to plan their day to day spending at the College. "It is actually teaching students how to use their plastic cards wisely, so they understand the value of money," says Acting Principal, Debbie Dunwoody.

Currently funds stored on the StarCard can only be used at the College with new opportunities to increase the functionality of the card always being explored.

The StarCard can also be used to obtain building access, a logical extension of security at the College. It gives the College the ability to provide access to a particular building on a case-by-case basis. For example by restricting access to buildings they can provide an additional layer of security for their Boarding students who reside on the College grounds.

"MLC's use of technology in everyday life, incorporating the StarCard, will ensure that we produce a generation of young women who leave school confident in their ability to use technology," concludes Debbie Dunwoody.