



**Declaration of the Global Connections XX Conference**  
Held at Wesley College, Melbourne, Australia 24-29 March 2019

Educators from across the globe gathered for the 20<sup>th</sup> Global Connections Seminar on the topic of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. We were warmly welcomed by a representative of the First Peoples of Australia who asked us to “bring our best to the land of the Aboriginals”.

With the recent heinous killings in Christchurch, New Zealand, we were asked to allow ourselves to be heartbroken but not broken and to acknowledge that it was profound ignorance that had caused the tragedy. We were challenged to support those who build bridges of empathy.

We were asked to see the state of Victoria as a bridge built on multi-cultural foundations: where one third of the student population is born overseas, where 50% of the students come from more than 200 countries, who speak over 260 languages and celebrate 135 faiths. Currently one third of Victoria’s state schools have established 483 sister-school links with schools in Asia and are building an education which is globally focused.

In this land of ancient peoples and their enduring wisdom, where we were enchanted by magnificent marsupials, we explored the extraordinary fruits of scientific research at Bosch and the Australian Synchrotron; we witnessed the benefits of experiential learning at Wesley College’s Clunes campus and at the John Monash Science School. We learned of an exciting new model of schooling epitomized by the Yiramalay/Wesley Studio School. We were charmed by the enthusiasm of the students we encountered at the Clunes Primary School.

We were inspired by a wide variety of provocative speakers who offered insights into a fundamental truth of where education is today: a mass enterprise which increasingly embodies the values of a market society. We cannot but be affected by those whose words we heard and the connections we made. In the words of a final keynote speaker, Associate Professor Radhika Gorur: “there is an urgent need for us, as educators, to re-think the purpose of education, and to re-conceptualize creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship” in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.