Every year more than 3000 international students choose to study at Victorian government schools. In 2014, five international students successfully completed their VCE at Brunswick Secondary College with two achieving ATAR scores above 90. Here’s a little bit about our international stars:

**Syed Shabeeh Haider Raza** (Shabeeh)
Shabeeh joined Brunswick Secondary College in 2013 from Pakistan to complete his Year 11 and Year 12 studies with us. Shabeeh’s positive attitude helped him to adjust to his new school environment and to make friends quickly. His popularity also earned him the role of International Student Captain in 2014. Shabeeh was a wonderful role model for all students, as he worked well with everyone. Shabeeh’s subject interests lay in the Accounting and Business Management field and his disciplined approach earned him an ATAR of 93.4.

**Afriena Azhar**
Afriena has studied at Brunswick Secondary College since 2010 and has praised the supportive environment of the school. Afriena moved to Melbourne from Malaysia and her highlights include the friends she has made here, attending the Year 12 Formal and especially the homework clubs that she joined as part of the co-curricula Program. Particularly the Maths Help classes. Afriena’s study interests were in the areas of Biological Science and Maths and she is looking forward to her tertiary studies in Melbourne in 2015. Well done Afriena.

**Taejine Song** (John)
John has followed in the footsteps of his older brother who studied at Brunswick Secondary College a few years ago. He has been an exemplar student for all students at the college, but especially to international students. John moved to Melbourne from Korea. He has consistently balanced his academic studies with extra-curricular commitments and used all possible supports within the school to achieve a high academic standard. John’s interests were spread across Maths, Sciences, Economics and Legal Studies over Years 11 and 12. His dedicated approach was rewarded with an ATAR of 98.3.

**Julia**
Julia is originally from China and started with the Brunswick English Language Centre in 2011 before moving into Year 10 at Brunswick Secondary College where she quickly made friends within the cohort. Julia’s main interests were in the Business and Design and Technology field. Julia is still considering her options for her courses next year, and hopes to continue her studies in Melbourne, within the Design and Technology field. Congratulations on passing your VCE and good luck in 2015!

**Shujun Liu** (Julia)
John has followed in the footsteps of his older brother who studied at Brunswick Secondary College a few years ago. He has been an exemplar student for all students at the college, but especially to international students. John moved to Melbourne from Korea. He has consistently balanced his academic studies with extra-curricular commitments and used all possible supports within the school to achieve a high academic standard. John’s interests were spread across Maths, Sciences, Economics and Legal Studies over Years 11 and 12. His dedicated approach was rewarded with an ATAR of 98.3.

**Jinyeop Oh**
Originally from Korea, Jinyeop also started with the Brunswick English Language Centre in 2011. Building on his strong maths/science focus, Jinyeop included Maths and language (Korean) in his final year. Like many of the Year 12 students, Jinyeop was grateful for the help he received from teachers outside of class hours through the co-curricular program. He believes that the extra attention helped him to pass his VCE. Congratulations on your VCE result, Jinyeop!

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**An Interview with Shabeeh**

**Q What were your highlights?**
A My first highlight would be that I was able to smoothly and quickly adjust to my studies and surroundings which allowed me to enjoy my time at the school and work effectively towards my post VCE goals. Secondly, I was also selected as the International Student Captain in Year 12 which was a great chance for me to give back to the school and my fellow students. These experiences are truly memorable and were surely my highlights not only for VCE but also for the rest of my life.

**Q How long have you been at BSC?**
A Two years (2013 and 2014)

**Q What were your first impressions?**
A The atmosphere of the school was relaxed and energetic since the students were not only studying but pursuing other interests as well. Also, the teachers were very supportive and gave me a lot of help since I was new and did not know much about the school and the study pattern.

**Q What were the challenges and the supports experienced?**
A The main challenge was that I had to adjust to a new system of education in a new country altogether. Another challenge I faced was that I had to overcome homesickness while also studying but pursuing other interests as well.

**Q What advice do you give to other international students and local students?**
A I would strongly advise international students to make new friends at school, especially with local students, since it allows them to explore the school, the community and Australia itself. Similarly, I would also advise local students to form friendships with international students and accept them as a part of Brunswick Secondary College since it will allow them to learn about new cultures and countries. It is my belief that it is in the mutual interest of both local and international students to become friends leading to a very enriching experience that I will certainly cherish forever.

**Congratulations to all the students for passing their VCE, particularly as international students. As such, these students manage their studies in an environment away from the immediate support of family, often overcoming homesickness and language difficulties. Their experiences of living in a different culture while improving their English and completing their VCE have been rich and rewarding for all involved in their studies. Well done.**

**Anne Siciliano,**
**International Student Coordinator**