

# RINGWOOD T. S.

Inspector: Ringwood.

Region: Port Phillip Eastern



## THE RINGWOOD TECHNICAL SCHOOL

HEATHMONT ROAD, HEATHMONT

Telephone  
87 7569

Principal  
E. J. HEARD

### THE HISTORY OF RINGWOOD TECHNICAL SCHOOL

By J.M. MONTGOMERY.

This school was originally advertised as Mitcham Technical School for boys, in June 1957, for occupancy in the following year.

Mr. Gordon M. Veitch, B.A., B.Sc., Dip.Ed., Senior Teacher at Footscray Technical College, was appointed as Principal and Mr. Fred. George as Headmaster. Mr. George had previously been headmaster of Sale Technical School and Wangaratta Technical School.

The new school consisting of 91 boys (forms IW, IX, IY and IZ) and a staff of 5 were temporarily housed at the foster Technical School of Ferntree Gully. Teachers at the parent school assisted in the teaching of art and practical subjects.

Mr. Veitch formed his School Council under the Presidency of Major General L.E. Beavis, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., formerly Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan. The school was indeed fortunate in having such a distinguished soldier with service in both world wars, and who had held several important military posts, particularly in the Middle East in the 1940's as a General Staff Officer and later as Chairman of the Australian Guided Missiles Committee associated with the development of the Woomera Rocket Range (1946-1947), as the first School Council Advisory Chairman.

While the young school developed at Ferntree Gully, strong ties were made in the various fields of sport by the form One boys of both schools. This was highlighted with the presentation of a Cup on the occasion of the farewell of the Ringwood boys at the end of 1958. Mr. Colin Roche, the then Headmaster of Ferntree Gully Technical School, had been largely instrumental in encouraging the guest school's early interest in sport, and donated the trophy. The inscription reads, "Presented to our friends and rivals by the First Form of F.T.G. T.S. 1958."

In the following year the new school was transferred as a whole, to an unused section of the Lilydale State School. Difficulties in obtaining local land at Mitcham ultimately led to the purchase of several acres in Heathmont between Heathmont Road, and Great Ryrie Road. This land was owned by the Bomford family who had lived in the Ringwood district for three generations.

It is fitting to note that many Bomford children were later students at the school.

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In 1958, the North Box Hill Co-educational Technical School was advertised, but only the girls' section of this new experiment in Technical Education could be formed.

The Head Mistress was Miss W. Cotes from Swinburne Technical College. The girls, forming sections 1A, 1B and 1C (approximately 60 in all) and their teachers, were housed at the host school of Box Hill Girls Technical School. Further difficulties in establishing the North Box Hill Technical School led to the decision to create a co-educational Technical School for the Ringwood - Heathmont District, for these girls, and also the boys in temporary accommodation at Lilydale.

The plans were laid for the erection on the Heathmont site, of a building of the standard type, single storey building, but with provision for 4 wings. This was the first Co-educational Technical School design evolved by the Education Department. The school, positioned in a pleasant residential area, on a site where eucalypts - stringybarks, messmates and peppermints had been preserved, was ideally located. The setting was picturesque and typically Australian. Even the tall pine trees that once stood along-side the old homestead of the Bomford family were retained at one end of the school oval. A small section of land was also fenced for the preservation of the many different varieties of wild flowers common to the district.

It was unfortunate that prior to moving into the new building Mr. Fred George died. Mr. Doug Thomas, Senior Teacher of Horsham Technical School, was appointed acting Headmaster and in February, 1960, both the boys and girls met for the first time when they occupied the building. Teachers and students were enthused with the task of developing the first co-ed technical school. This unusual, pleasant and well run institution soon became a showplace for overseas visitors and Australian educationalists.

In the following formative years Mr. E.J. Heard became Principal (1962) and extended the building with the second and third stages and the erection of an Assembly Hall (1967). Substantial night classes in several subjects for adults were commenced in 1961 and also in the same year the Parents, Citizens and Teachers Association was formed. This has been an industrious and valuable school organization, along with the Mothers' Club.

The school reached a consistent level of enrolment in 1969 with approximately 356 girls, 536 boys and 419 evening students, and in 1966 was host school for the girls' section of the new Mitcham Technical School.

It was perhaps a fitting touch, that the school which had originally been misnamed Mitcham Technical School was the one selected to temporarily foster the real Mitcham Technical School - also a Co-educational School.

<u>ORIGINAL STAFF</u>	-	<u>PRINCIPAL:</u>	Mr. G. Veitch
		<u>HEAD MASTER:</u>	Mr. F. George
			Mr. L. Brittingham
			Mr. D. Donaldson
			Mr. B. Hird
			Mr. S. Powell

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