

HELEN DRENNEN

Dr Helen Drennen, an Australian citizen born in 1951, has more than 30 years of experience in the field of education. After completing a Bachelor of Science with Honors from Monash University in Melbourne and a PhD from the Australian National University's research school of biological sciences, Dr Drennen obtained a diploma in education from Melbourne University. In 1978, she began her teaching career as a biology teacher and head of the English department at North Altona high school in Melbourne. Over the next decade, she was also awarded an International teaching fellowship by the Victorian government, through which she taught at a senior high school in Wisconsin, USA, and was a lecturer in the faculty of education at Melbourne University.

In 1989, Dr Drennen was appointed as senior teacher at Wesley College in Melbourne, a leader in international education and one of Australia's largest independent schools, with more than 3,000 students spread across three campuses. Since then, she has been head of the senior college at Wesley's Prahran campus, associate to the principal for the International Baccalaureate program, and Head of Wesley's Glen Waverly campus. She is currently the principal of Wesley College, a position she has held since 2003. She is the first woman to head this prestigious institution since its foundation in 1866.

Her achievements at Wesley College include opening an early childhood centre at the Glen Waverly campus, promoting a new partnership with the University of Melbourne, and establishing the Wesley College Institute for innovation in education, which forms partnerships with universities, community groups and philanthropic organizations in order to explore innovative learning frameworks and enhances cross-cultural educational connections.

Dr Drennen has a long and close association with the IB, and is an active proponent of international education. She was responsible for introducing the IB Diploma Programme at Wesley College in 1992, and has fostered many relationships between the college and international partners. She has held leading positions at the IB for seven years, as director of academic affairs in Wales (1997-2002), and as regional director for Asia Pacific in Singapore (2002-2003). Her achievements within the IB include taking part in the worldwide launch of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in 1997, and in the establishment of the online curriculum centre (OCC) for IB teachers in 2001.

Dr Drennen has a broad range of personal interests in the visual and performing arts, architecture, and sports.