JOHN XXIII COLLEGE
SEEK JUSTICE

Heritage

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Girls from Oz

PAGE 39

Heritage, hope and the call to seek justice



As the last edition of *Heritage* for the year is distributed far and wide, our community is once again turning its mind to the year that has been, and the years yet to come.

> *I have been reminded throughout the year about what makes John XXIII College such a distinctive school: a willingness to hold fast to who we are, while always being courageous enough to look beyond the horizon.*

This year, we have marked 40 years since our community moved to our Mount Claremont campus; a modest anniversary in one sense, and yet a significant one, given it gives cause to recognise and acknowledge the community effort to realise the shared, audacious vision of four campuses becoming one.

Next year, in 2027, we look forward to celebrating a milestone of even greater significance: 50 years since Loreto and St Louis came together to form John XXIII College. A significant moment indeed; two schools, Loreto and Jesuit, each with their own proud tradition, choosing to become one.

I often have cause to reflect and question what makes our Catholic education in the Ignatian tradition so distinctive in a world of rapid change. My answer has not shifted since arriving at our College: it is our willingness to see the dignity of every person we encounter. Our mission makes it clear: 'Inspired by the Gospels, and in the spirit of St John XXIII, Mary Ward and St Ignatius of Loyola, our mission is to nurture people of competence, conscience and compassion who are committed to God and the service of others.'

For the students and staff who participated in the Year 11 pilgrimage, the nurturing of competence, conscience and compassion involved listening, 'with the ear of the heart', to sometimes uncomfortable stories to better understand the complexities of reconciliation.

This theme of reaching out to anybody and everybody regardless of their race, religion or views was further reinforced by Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO, who was warmly welcomed back to the College for the launch of his most recent book, *Equality, Reconciliation and Social Cohesion*, a compilation of speeches from Sir William Deane.

The first small steps to developing understanding and relationship with our two partner schools in the UK – St Mary's School Ascot in Berkshire and St Aloysius' College in Glasgow – have also been taken. Students and staff commenced the production of a short film introducing our College, our Whadjuk Noongar Country,

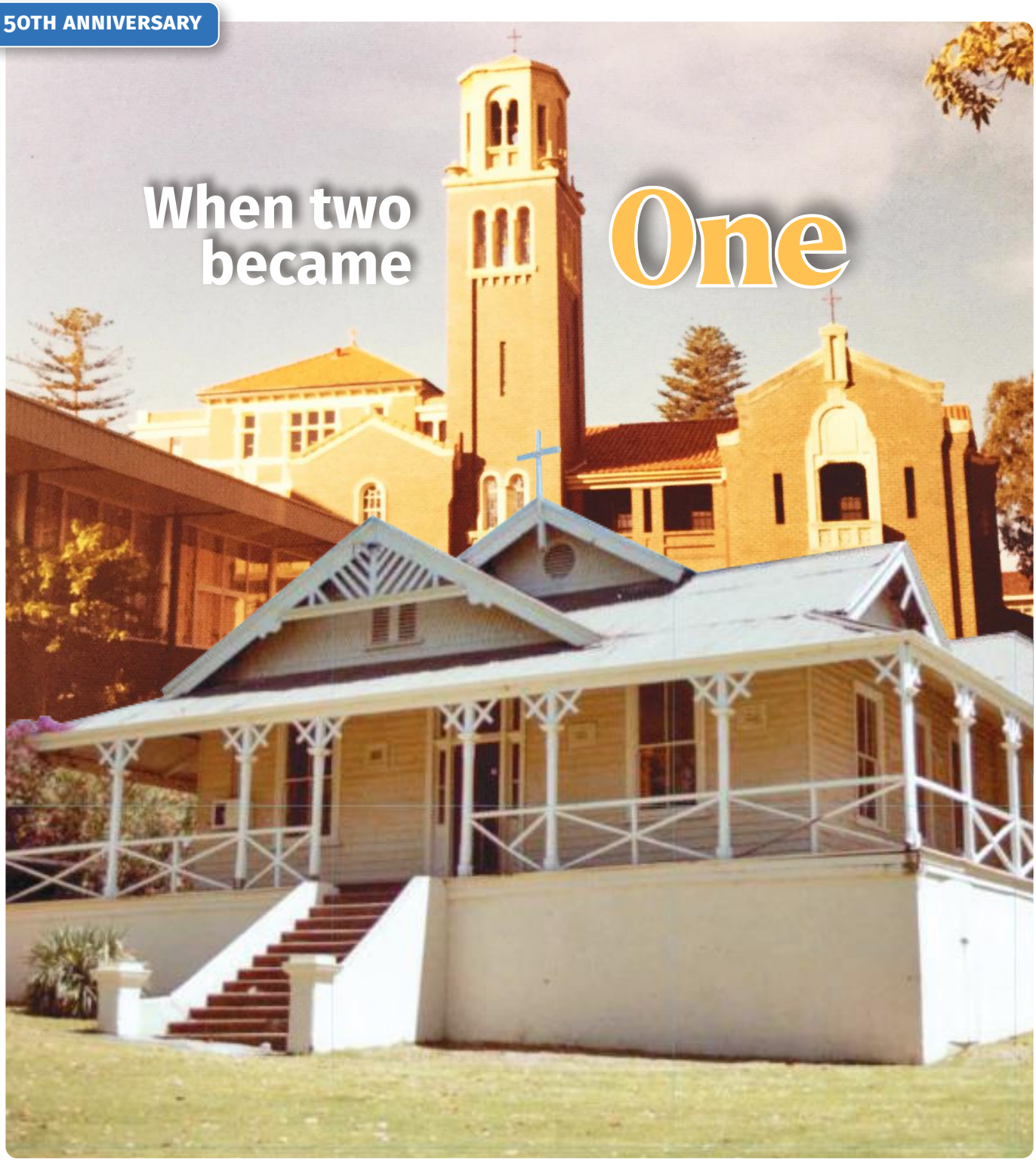


our College history, our motto, Seek Justice, and our Ignatian heritage. We look forward with anticipation to what our new friends in England and Scotland will share of their own heritage in return.

So, we reflect on how our College has developed from such humble beginnings with families laying turf and planting trees, to parents fundraising for key facilities which current students still benefit from today, to the present, when we excitedly share our Ignatian heritage with schools from across the globe.

Who knows what may be beyond the horizon, but what will remain constant is the courage to look.

Daniel Mahon
College Principal



IN 2027, JOHN XXIII COLLEGE TURNS 50.

Save the date: Saturday 3 April 2027

Half a century ago, two schools with proud histories of their own, Loreto and St Louis, came together to form our College. What began as an amalgamation has grown into a community shaped by Ignatian values, connecting students from the earliest days through to the present. Some of our readers were there at the beginning.

50 1977–2027 YEARS

Others are part of our College today, or belong to families whose connection stretches back generations. However your story meets ours, this milestone belongs to you. There will be many more details to come, but mark it in the diary right away. Fifty years deserves a celebration worthy of the community that has built John XXIII College.

FUNDRAISING



Cold water, warm hearts

Nothing says ‘last day of school’ quite like watching your Principal slide into ice water in front of the whole College.

That’s exactly how the Year 12 Student Representative Council (SRC) chose to close out Term 3 in that fashion, launching the Ice Plunge Challenge to raise funds for Jesuit Mission’s work in Hazaribag, India, and pulling the rest of the College in with them.

Every $250 raised sent another staff-and-student pair or group down the slide and into the icy depths, each one dressed to a theme and dropping to a matching soundtrack. The lineup delivered: Sharpay and Ryan bopped to *Bop to the Top*, Pokémon took the plunge to the Pokémon theme, the cast of *The Hangover* went down laughing, Elphaba and Glinda committed fully to *Defying Gravity*, the Cat in the Hat crashed in to *Wipe Out*, Mario Kart racers sped off the edge, Shrek slid down to *All Star*, surfers caught the *Misirlou* wave, and Kung Fu Pandas dropped in to *Kung Fu Fighting*.

As the tally climbed, the surprises got bigger. Mr Smith went full *Sister Act*, sliding as a nun to *Ain’t No Mountain High Enough*. Then it was West Australian swimming star Zac Incerti’s turn, taking the plunge in swimmers to *Down Under*. A two-time Olympian, Incerti won bronze medals in freestyle relays at both the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Games, along with three gold medals at the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The 2026 College Captains, joined by Mr Bostelman, dressed as Fremantle Dockers ‘Warfie’ legends and plunged to *Hell’s Bells*. Once the total ticked past the $10,000 mark, the milestone set weeks earlier, Principal Mr Mahon made good on the promise and took the plunge himself.

Why the SRC does this

The Ice Plunge Challenge is entirely SRC-led, from planning through to persuading their Principal to get in the water. The initiative is a clear, hands-on expression of what the College asks of its students: to be young people of competence, conscience and compassion, and to live out the College motto, Seek Justice, as people for others. Getting cold and wet in a Shrek costume for a cause that will never benefit you directly is exactly that, just with better music.

Where the money goes

Funds raised support Jesuit Mission’s education programs in Hazaribag, where the organisation works to give children access to classrooms, teachers and the chance of an education many currently lack. Every dollar makes a concrete impact:

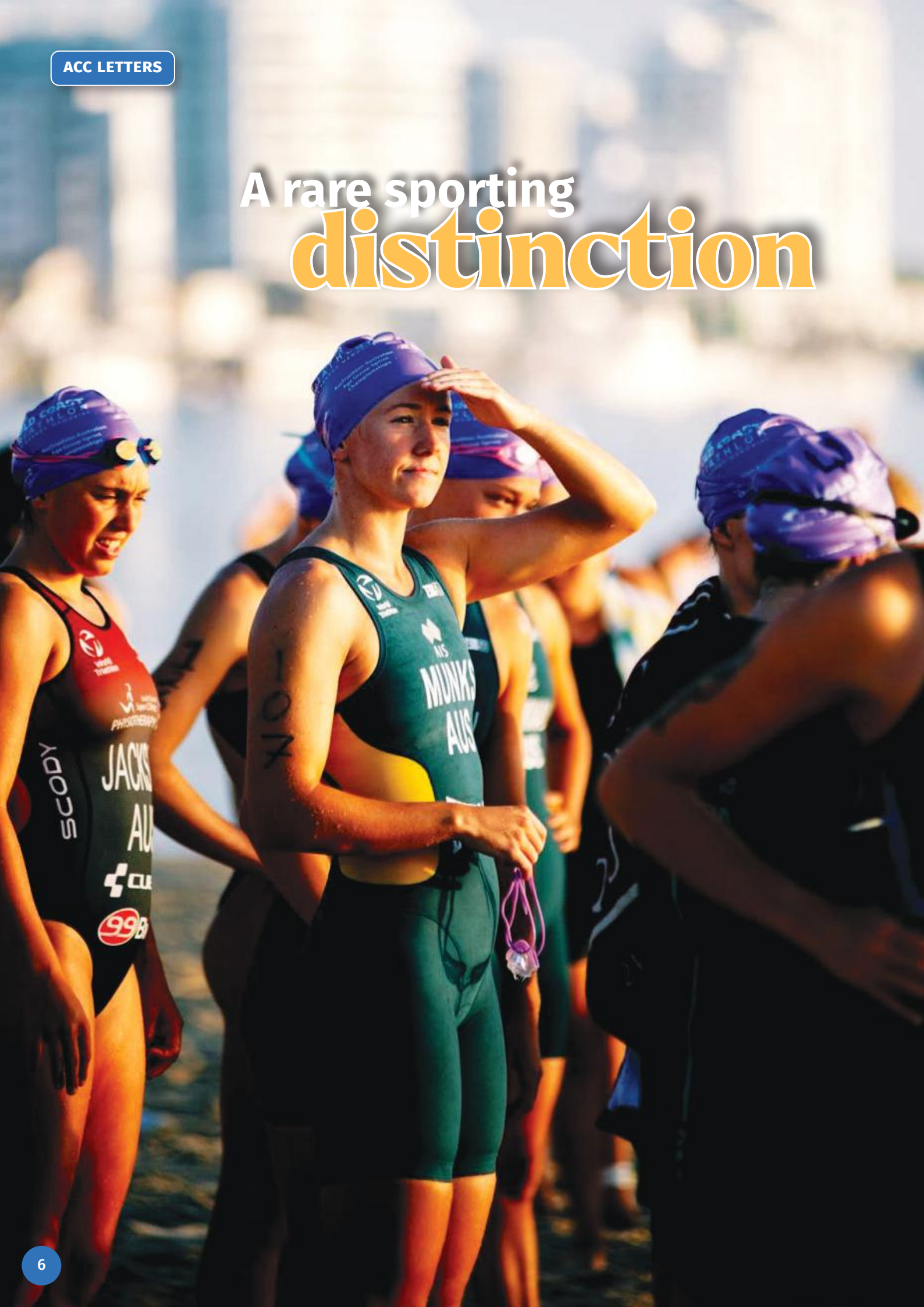
- $20 provides a month of learning materials for 100 students
- $100 covers a full year of school for one child
- $225 covers one teacher’s wage for a month

Thank you to every staff member and student who took the plunge, and to everyone who has donated so far. It was a fitting, freezing way for the SRC to finish their final term.

The College’s goal was $15,000. With over $10,000 already raised, the SRC is asking our community to help close the gap. Donations over $2 are tax-deductible and can be made via the Jesuit Mission fundraising page – just scan the QR code.



A rare sporting distinction



Since ACC Letters were introduced in 2013, almost four hundred students across Western Australia have been awarded the honour.

Only two of them have earned Letters in swimming, cross-country and athletics – and both are graduates of John XXIII College: ***Sian Munks (Class 2017)*** and ***Sasha Pallis (Class 2026)***.

An ACC Letter is the highest individual honour presented by the Associated and Catholic Colleges of Western Australia, the sporting association whose motto, 'Sport in the Right Spirit', has guided interschool competition since 1937. A student earns the distinction by gaining selection in an All Star team in the same sport across several years – the years need not run consecutively, though they cannot be carried over different sports.

The physical Letters take the form of a chenille-embroidered patch in a classic collegiate style font, framed alongside an All Star medallion, a sport-specific pin and an engraved name plate.

Of the 397 students awarded Letters across the state since 2013, 126 have receive the honour in athletics, 117 in swimming and 61 in cross-country. Sian and Sasha stand apart from all of them – no other students in WA have claimed Letters in every one of the three individual sports. Also worth noting: the only two students to reach this distinction are both young women.

Sustaining that level of commitment across three individual sports is rare, according to Jess Pillera, Head of Sport at John XXIII College. 'To compete at a high level across one individual sport requires significant commitment,' she says. 'To do so across three sports is exceptionally rare. It takes years of consistent training, outstanding time management, resilience and a willingness to make sacrifices.' Individual sports, Ms Pillera adds, place the responsibility solely on the athlete, so maintaining that level of performance across multiple disciplines demands sustained motivation rather than a single strong season.

The College's sporting program is built to give students room to pursue several sports alongside their studies. 'Our philosophy is centred on participation, commitment and personal growth but we are also fortunate to have dedicated coaches and supportive staff. The culture within Sport at the College is about being your best for yourself, and most importantly, for the whole team.' While these achievements ultimately come down to the individual, Ms Pillera also says it is rewarding to see the program play a part in results of this kind.

Sian graduated in 2017 and went on to study physiotherapy at University of Notre Dame Australia. 'Because I was so sporty at school I was always interested in how the body works and moves,' she said, 'so physiotherapy seemed like a natural progression.'





After taking a break from competitive sport for a few years, a return to sport was sparked by an unlikely suggestion from a friend. 'It was suggested that I try a triathlon, but I was always terrible on the bike and did not like it.' The results came quickly. 'I quite liked it and dove into it. I started to get good results quite early on.'

More than three years on from her first triathlon, Sian remains with the same club and coach. She works as a physiotherapist at Fiona Stanley Hospital, in the burns unit, having reduced to three days a week so training and competition can fit around her career. Her racing has recently taken her across Europe, with results in Spain, France, Austria and Hungary, and a start at the World Triathlon Cup in New Zealand – a stepping stone towards a possible future Olympic selection window.

Triathlon is a discipline where your best years tend to come later. 'You can peak later in age and it is one you can keep doing for a while,' she shares. 'I started triathlons quite late, but women usually peak in their thirties.'

She is candid about what elite endurance sport demands. 'Endurance athletes often push themselves very hard, and it is a fine line between pushing yourself too much, which can result in injuries or sickness or mental stress, and not pushing hard enough to achieve your best,' she said. 'Your mindset is very important.'

Her advice to younger athletes is simpler. 'Make the most of the sport opportunities at school,' she said, 'and whatever opportunities you have outside of school as well. You meet different people, you learn new skills on and off the field or court. Sport brings people together.'



Sasha Pallis completed Year 12 this year, closing out her time at John XXIII College with Letters in the same three sports as Sian. 'Being awarded ACC Letters across three sports is something I am really proud of, because it reflects a lot of years of commitment, training and support from my coaches, teammates, teachers and family,' she says. 'Each sport has taught me something different about teamwork, resilience and pushing myself outside my comfort zone.'

Sasha is hoping to study engineering and commerce at the University of Western Australia next year, alongside a sporting commitment that shows no sign of slowing. A longstanding member of City of Perth Surf Life Saving Club, she plans to keep competing in beach running and ocean swimming and to take on patrol leadership responsibilities in the future. Her beach relay team won gold at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships this year. 'What I enjoy most about surf lifesaving is that it's about more than just competition,' she shares. 'I want to continue doing patrols and contributing to the community.'



One memory has stayed with her since Year 7. 'One of my favourite sporting memories was winning the ACC Cross-Country in Year 7,' Sasha recalls. 'I ran through the banner across the finish line, which was a pretty special moment. It was one of my first major experiences representing the College, and it has stayed with me throughout my time at John XXIII.'

Ms Pillera says the achievement speaks as much to both women's character as it does to their sporting skill. 'It reflects not only their athletic ability, but also their determination, humility, consistency and commitment over many years. They are outstanding role models for younger students and thoroughly deserving of this recognition.'

Sian is still working towards personal bests and a possible future Olympic selection window. Sasha's comes sooner: in December, her beach relay team competes at the World Surf Life Saving Championships in South Africa. Different code, same training, and both still adding to a record no one else in the state has matched.



Achieving your personal best

'The first question they asked in my interview was: was I nervous?' ***Matthew Bowman (Class 1991)*** recalls. 'I was more nervous about the footy tournament.'

It was the day of his final university exam. Before it, a job interview at the Water Authority. After it, a touch football tournament to coordinate the next day, involving around 50 teams and done the hard way, with no social media, chat groups, or mobile phones. Just pen, paper and lots of phone calls on a landline.

Matthew got through the interview, sat the exam, then went down south for the weekend with friends. His mother took the call that came in after he left, and accepted the job offer on his behalf before he had even seen it come through.

That was 1996, and he has now been part of the organisation – now known as Water Corporation – for nearly 30 years.

Matthew's path there began a few years earlier, in 1987, when he arrived at John XXIII College's new Mount Claremont campus as a Year 8 student who had come up through Loreto Nedlands. He recalls:

> *'A lot of sand, not many trees, an undulating sports oval, with seagull bones and all sorts of weird stuff. It was raw.'*

He played sport through his years at the College and served as St Louis House captain. He also remembers a pre-dawn muck-up day prank involving a tower of picnic benches piled in the top quadrangle and wrapped

completely in toilet paper. 'It was a massive effort,' he admits, 'but by the time school started that day, it was gone.'

A teacher whose encouragement stuck with him once told him, 'you would make a good engineer.' He had no clear idea what that meant, but the suggestion, paired with an interest in maths, physics and geography, sent him to the University of Western Australia (UWA) to study environmental engineering, then a new and still-forming discipline. He is candid about how those years actually went.



'I started off doing really well,' he explains, 'and then I tried balancing social life versus sport versus academics, and I ended up becoming an average student. But someone who enjoyed university life.'

A growing commitment to Uni Camp for Kids, a volunteer program taking underprivileged children on camps and picnics, competed for his attention. Matthew became its president in his third year, a role that meant slowing his degree to part time.

He is quick to credit the friends who volunteered alongside him there, known then and still now as 'the three Kates' – ***Kate Chaney (Class 1991)***, ***Kate Gauntlett (Class 1991)*** and ***Kate Smith (Class 1991)***, along with fellow alumnus ***Andrew Carroll (Class 1991)***.

That decision – not his marks – is what he credits with getting him the job. His interviewer told him later that what stood out was not four or five years of academics but evidence he could lead a team.

His first posting drove the point home. At the Subiaco wastewater treatment facility, a site whose odour problem was well known to anyone who went to John XXIII College, he found himself 'a young, fresh-faced engineer trying to tell operators with thirty years of experience something out of a textbook, and them telling me the reality of how things actually work out in the field.' It taught him, he says, 'a really good lesson in the balance between theory and experience.'

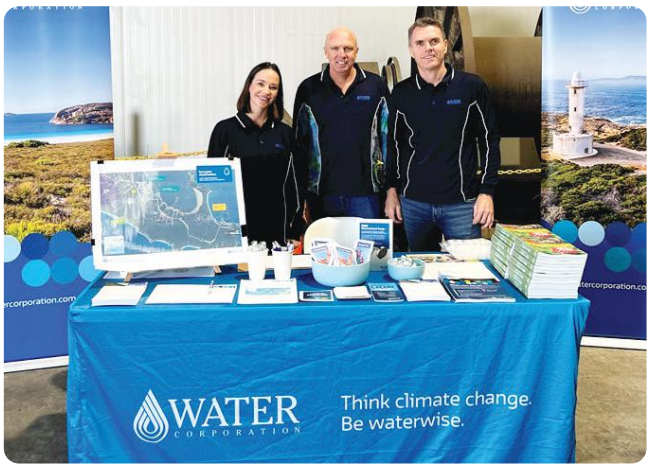
This lesson is one he now applies from the other side of the interview table. He says of the graduates he hires:

> *'I look at what else they have done, because if all they have ever done is study for four or five years, there is potential that they are probably not going to work well in a team environment. It doesn't have to be anything elaborate. It can be working in a fast-food place, or being part of a club, because of the team aspect.'*

Three years managing water quality in Karratha followed, overseeing between fifteen and twenty wastewater treatment facilities and the towns they served, a posting Matthew calls 'probably one of the best things I ever did'.

Safe drinking water became the focus of the next fifteen years of his career, work that put him in direct contact with the public's concerns about taste, smell and the science behind chlorine dosing. It also drew him into an operations support role liaising with the Department of Health, where stakeholder management became central to the job.

'Making sure you said what needed to be said,' he explains, 'but being cautious so as not to cause alarm.'



In 2018 he missed out on a promotion and was told, plainly, to broaden his experience. 'So I thought I would go and get it' he says. What followed was a twelve-month placement in long-term planning that became permanent – work built on population forecasting, flora and fauna surveys, and the kind of calculated, considered decision-making that now underpins his role managing the effects of a drying southwest.

Around the same period, he completed a MBA through UWA, studied in person, drawn less by the finance and budgeting components than by what it taught

him about leading people. ‘To be a leader you must understand people and how they work,’ he says, ‘what motivates them.’ The course also expanded his professional network – connections he still draws on.

Ask him whether the tap water is safe to drink and the answer comes without hesitation. ‘Absolutely. You may not like the taste or smell of the chlorine, but you only need a filter for aesthetics, not for safety.’

Running entered his life almost by accident, taken up in Karratha’s heat and hard ground as something to occupy a restless mind, and encouraged along the way by JTC friend, ***James Pollett (Class 1991)***, who had completed an Ironman triathlon and pushed him towards his first marathon. ‘I got the bug,’ he says of his first marathon, finished in three hours and seventeen minutes. For the uninitiated, that is a strong, competitive amateur result.



What followed was years of small, obsessive improvement. ‘I started to look at the science behind it all,’ he recalls. ‘How do I shave seventeen minutes off?’ Breaking three hours meant treating every variable as something to control. ‘You had to be extremely disciplined,’ he says. ‘No injuries, the right diet, enough sleep, hydration perfect. Everything had to be right.’ He eventually broke the three-hour mark at the Melbourne Marathon, then ran ten Perth marathons, then one in every Australian state and territory. COVID-19 dashed his dream of running one marathon on every continent, but he hopes to achieve this one day.

In 2016 he noticed a tremor in his little finger. ‘Typical male,’ he admits, ‘I didn’t do anything about it.’ A conversation with his sister-in-law – a doctor – changed that. By 2018 he consulted a neurologist, who simply asked him to walk across the room and back.

‘He said, due to the way I walk and the way I present, he thought I had Parkinson’s,’ Matthew recalls. ‘It was pretty confronting.’

For the first five years, he told almost no one, taking his lead in part from actor Michael J Fox, who spent his early years on *Spin City* riding a skateboard around set, he explains, as ‘a clever way of masking his symptoms.’

What eventually changed his mind was talking about it. He has since spoken to Water Corporation colleagues about living with Parkinson’s and ran the Margaret River Ultra Marathon in support of Parkinson’s WA.

Awareness matters to him beyond his own comfort with the subject. ‘It is important to talk about taboo subjects,’ he says, pointing to a growing number of younger people now being diagnosed. He sees a direct link between visibility and progress.

> *‘The more people that are aware, the more opportunity there will be to find a cure.’*

Last November, he completed a three-day, roughly 110 kilometre event through bush and coastline. He still plays cricket socially and is working towards international accreditation as a touch football referee, having stepped back from playing after a concussion made the sport’s risks harder to justify. ‘That pathway is alive and well,’ he says. ‘I hope to get to the World Cup in 2028 in New Zealand.’

Asked how he wants to be treated now that people know, his answer is immediate. ‘I don’t want to be treated any differently. You wouldn’t even know I had Parkinson’s.’ Then, more quietly, ‘sadly, when I go out, I see other people and I can pick it out now. You start noticing symptoms in others.’ His strategy for managing it rests on a support network he counts out plainly: ‘one is family, one is close friends, one is work colleagues, one is my medical and allied health teams.’

He stays physically active, works to keep his mind engaged in different ways, and writes by hand as often as he can, working against the small, cramped script that is one of the condition’s quieter effects. ‘Behind closed doors, there are hard days and challenges,’ he says. ‘When people see you out, they see you at your best.’

For younger members of our College community heading into the workforce, his advice returns to where his own path began. ‘Do not underestimate the value of teams and experience working with groups of people,’ he says. ‘Learn how to negotiate, how to compromise, how to listen, how to speak up, and how to read the room.’

Then, in the outlook that has carried him through the last decade, he adds simply: ‘do what you can do while you can do it. You don’t know where life will lead you.’

Fortune favours the brave



We are delighted to congratulate student ***Miriam Sekendy*** on receiving a Highly Commended award at the 2026 Lester Prize for Portraiture Youth Awards – an achievement that speaks to both her technical skill and artistic maturity.

Miriam's work, *Interrupted Thoughts*, was selected from hundreds of entries submitted by high school students from across Australia and was exhibited at the Old Gaol building, WA Museum Boola Bardip, earlier this year.

About the awards

Now in its 18th year, the Lester Prize is Australia's largest national art prize by total prize pool. The Youth Awards component invites high school students in Years 7 to 12 from across Australia to submit original portrait works, with finalists exhibited alongside adult professionals in a nationally recognised public forum. The prize champions the artist's voice over the subject's celebrity – a philosophy that resonates deeply with John XXIII's own commitment to seeing and celebrating each student's individual gifts.

The work

Interrupted Thoughts is a hyperrealist portrait; rendered with extraordinary precision, yet deliberately, meaningfully unfinished. In their judges' comments, Casey Temby, Sarah McBride and Ross Potter described the work with rare praise:

'The technical prowess of the artist is impressive in this artwork. The rendering and highlighting to create texture display a highly skilled hand. A very contemporary choice is evident in terms of what the artist chose to leave out.'

> *'In a hyper-realistic style, it is a brave decision in knowing when to stop and let the work speak for itself.'*

'The unfinished part of *Interrupted Thoughts* is particularly meaningful, conveying a sense of uncertainty that reflects the artist's stage of life and the evolving nature of identity, leaving the viewer to wonder how her future will unfold.'

To know when to stop, to trust the work, and to let silence carry meaning, is the mark of a confident, thoughtful artist.

Learn more about the Lester Prize for Portraiture

In her own words

'*Interrupted Thoughts* is a portrait of my cousin, who at the time was moving through adolescence and into adulthood. It reflects the uncertainty of transition and the vulnerability of growing up. She is captured deep in contemplation, her thoughts interrupted. Pressed hands into the face emphasise the weight of expectation and self-doubt. The subtle curvature of graphite follows the folds in her face to depict the slow, organic movement of change.

The portrait is intentionally left incomplete to symbolise a young girl caught between who she is now and who she is becoming. The fully rendered side represents her present self - shaped, visible and defined. The unfinished half suggests an unclear future, the possibilities depicted by her undefined finger placement.'

A reflection on art and identity

At John XXIII College, we believe in finding meaning in all things – in the classroom, on the stage, on the field, and in the studio. Miriam's work is a beautiful expression of that Ignatian principle. Through portraiture, she has done something quietly powerful: she has paused, reflected, and invited her audience to do the same. *Interrupted Thoughts* is a meditation on identity, uncertainty, and the courage to leave space for what is not yet known.

A familiar face returns



The same prize has also welcomed back one of our own. Alumna ***Lucinda Tassone (Class 2022)*** has been selected as one of just 40 finalists in the 2026 Lester Prize Main Awards, chosen from a record pool of entries from across Australia.

Lucinda is no stranger to this event. In 2024, she was honoured with the Minderoo Foundation Spirit Prize for her powerful and emotive work, *I love fast food*. Her 2026 entry, *Beauty was shattered as light in a prism and she could not gather the rays together again* (oil on masonite, 82 x 46cm), will be on display at WA Museum Boola Bardip until 29 November 2026.

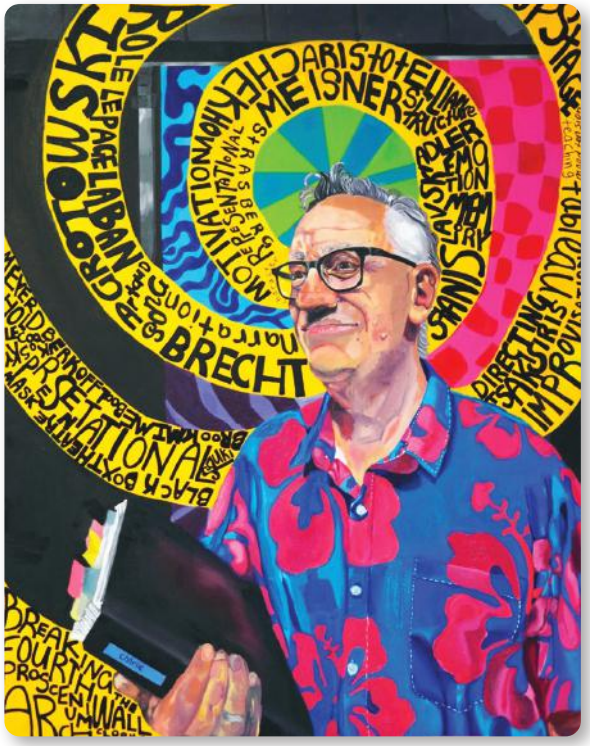
The title alone speaks to an artist working with depth and intention.



Our art angels

Eight secondary students and a group of primary artists represented John XXIII College at this year's Angelico Exhibition.

They submitted work as different as a recognised portrait of a teacher and a handful of clay beetles.



Secondary entries

Rani Cleghorn took home the Catenian Award for *Το όραμα του σκηνοθέτη (Director's Vision)*, an oil and acrylic portrait of Mr George Tsakisiris, Head of Learning Area – The Arts. A spiral of theatre terminology, drawn from names including Grotowski, Stanislavski, Meisner and Brecht, circles the familiar figure of Mr Tsak in the finished work.

In her exhibition statement, Rani wrote that his 'iconic Doc Martens, decorated with drama terminology' inspired the spiral design, and that the piece 'reflects drama's values of self-expression and creativity embodied by Mr Tsak'.



Monet Dillon was awarded first place in the Two Dimensional Artwork category for *Pseudologia*



Fantastica, an oil on board work exploring the blurred line between reality and persona through a deteriorating subject and the motif of stage makeup.



Mia Davies was named runner-up for the Fra Angelico Award with *Billy*, a portrait in oil and acrylic of her young cousin, painted as a study of curiosity and a child's unguarded view of the world.

Evie Hughes exhibited *The Eyepocalypse*, a coloured pencil work inspired by MAMBO artist Reg Mombassa that considers the experience of growing up under constant digital surveillance.



Claire Sweet exhibited *On Thin Ice*, an oil on board piece addressing global crises, warfare, technology and media distortion.

A Year 9 group submission – *Woven Wall Hangings* by ***Ashlyn Otway***, ***Connor Siegert*** and ***Katie Stynes***, drew on the work of textile artist Natalie Miller, translating the patterns and textures of the natural environment into three woven pieces.

Primary entries

Our youngest exhibitors drew inspiration from a very different source.



Scarlett and ***Elise*** each produced a mixed media sculpture, incorporating plaster bandage, in response to Yayoi Kusama's flower motif sculptures.

Niko, also inspired by Kusama, produced a two-dimensional flower piece in mixed media.

Vittoria contributed a clay beetle, a small and precise study that stood in neat contrast to the exhibition's larger works.

A group submission called *Beetlemania* (main image, page 14) brought together students from Years 3 to 6.



The background was made and the finished piece curated by Year 6 Art Leaders ***Jemima*** and ***Martin***, whose eye for arrangement pulled together contributions from right across the primary years.

The exhibition

The Angelico Exhibition is named for Blessed Fra Angelico, patron of artists. It is held annually as one of the largest events on the Catholic schools' art calendar in Western Australia, open to students from Pre-Primary through to Year 12.



The secondary component of this year's exhibition, including the Catenian Award, the Two Dimensional Artwork category and the Fra Angelico Award, was judged at an awards evening on 18 August at the Forrest Centre.

Sisters on the same wavelength



On a typical school morning, Rebecca Bergen (née Lamb) turns on the radio in the car and tells her children to settle down because Aunty Katie is on air.



The ritual is small, but it points to something larger about the Lamb sisters: three different careers built from the same classrooms, and a closeness between them that only grows stronger.

Rebecca Lamb (Class 2001), ***Stephanie Lamb (Class 2004)*** and ***Katie Lamb (Class 2007)*** all came through our College in Mount Claremont. Between the three of them, they accumulated 37 years at John XXIII, with Katie among the inaugural cohort of Pre-Primary students when the program first opened.

Bec's post-school journey began with a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Public Relations, at Curtin University. The placement attached to her degree turned into a five-year stretch in stakeholder and community engagement, before she and a group of school friends packed up and moved to London for two years. There, she worked in council housing for the Wandsworth Council, an experience she describes as eye-opening. Back in Perth, she spent a decade in engineering, working on projects including the NBN rollout and Metronet, before moving into her current role as Disability Access and Inclusion Officer at the City of Cockburn. She is married with two children.



Much of Bec's work has involved navigating conflict on major infrastructure projects, where residents are personally affected by works near their homes. She has had to sit with people's anger and frustration, remind herself that the emotions behind those reactions are real, and keep communicating clearly even when the news is not what anyone wants to hear.

'People need to be heard,' she says. 'They need reassurance they are being listened to and taken seriously.' She traces some of this steadiness back to her enjoyment of English and writing at school, and now sees plain, accessible communication as central to her current role – particularly for community members who still prefer to visit the council counter in person.

Her current role brings a different kind of emotional weight. 'Working with individuals or community groups that can't advocate for themselves is very rewarding and meaningful,' she reflects.

A recent project stands out: her team awarded a grant to players selected for WA's first special needs netball team. That is exactly the kind of outcome that reminds her why the work matters.

Human Biology was Steph's favourite subject at school, shaped in no small part by a teacher she still regards as a standout, Mrs Helen Barcham. Her mother saw the potential in it before Steph did, and a simple question about what she had enjoyed most at school pointed Steph towards Health Science at UWA – a new degree at the time – with a final placement at the City of Fremantle that dropped her straight into organising health promotion events and workplace initiatives. The move from study to employment was smooth; she was offered a job there once she finished.

After saving for a trip overseas with her John XXIII friends, she returned to Perth and joined the Red Cross, delivering community workshops on health literacy and budget-friendly cooking. She then joined Cancer Council WA, first coordinating a free counselling service for people affected by cancer, then running the Life Now program of yoga, meditation and exercise sessions. She stayed for seven years and still counts colleagues from that time among her close friends. Since 2019, Steph has worked on the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program through WA Health, a Commonwealth-funded initiative whose eligibility age was lowered to 45 in 2024.

The hardest part of the role, she says, is when someone receives a positive screening result and does not follow up because they feel fine. Steph still remembers a lecturer telling her class, on the final day of her health promotion unit, that 'health promotion is a marathon, not a sprint' – a line that has stayed with her ever since. 'You are educating people,' she says, 'but you can only do so much before someone changes their own behaviour.'

Sport was Katie's world at John XXIII, and it stayed that way into university – until an unread email changed everything. On her mother's suggestion, she enrolled in Exercise and Sports Science at Edith Cowan University in Joondalup, where she played sport daily and built

lasting friendships. She might have missed her break into media altogether had a friend not pointed out an email from veteran broadcaster Peter Holland, inviting sports science graduates to audition for the Graduate Diploma in Broadcasting at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Katie went in, faced an unscripted, on-camera and on-air audition in front of Holland and fellow lecturers Jo McManus and David Smith, and was accepted as one of 22 students. She had expected to prefer television, having grown up watching her father Phil commentate the WAFL and front the ABC, but it was radio that won her over, for its relaxed pace and informal dress code.

A seven-month unpaid stint on the dawn shift at HIT 92.9, alongside a reception job for a painting business to cover the bills, led to a weekend announcer role, and then an offer from NOVA as a panel operator. Katie stayed at NOVA for a decade, working her way up to afternoons announcer and operations manager, and occasionally filling in on the breakfast show for Nat Locke – an experience that confirmed she wanted a show of her own.

In 2022, a message from former AFL player Andrew Embley led to two years co-hosting Triple M's drive program, *Rush Hour with Embers and Katie*. She moved across to the Triple M breakfast slot alongside Xavier Ellis, where she is currently in her second year.

Ten months ago, she welcomed a daughter, Charlie, and now shapes her days around early starts and afternoons at home, alongside occasional appearances on Channel 7.

For all the uncertainty of building a career in a small media market, leaving Perth was never really an option for Katie. 'I never considered going over east because I am very close with my family,' she says. That closeness runs through the whole story.

Their mother pointed both Steph and Katie toward degrees they had not considered themselves. Their father, Phil Lamb – long-time WAFL commentator and ABC broadcaster – planted the seed of Katie's ambition long before she knew what to do with it. The Lambs are a family that stay involved in each other's lives, and that has shaped where the sisters have ended up, and how they got there.

Katie's social media following, built on relatable, situational humour filmed during quiet weekend shifts at NOVA, grew an audience that helped bring her to Triple M's attention. Bec remembers her as the class clown at school. Katie traces some of her self-belief back to a difficult stretch at NOVA, when she felt repeatedly overlooked for presenting roles and began to doubt whether media was the right fit. A letter from Peter Holland, written around that time, stayed with her: he wrote about how people in the industry are knocked down regularly, and that what matters is how they get up again. She leaned on that advice while building a profile through content she enjoyed making for its own sake, often sending new ideas to Steph first to see if they landed.



School memories surface easily for all three. Steph joined the netball team in Year 3 and played alongside the same group of friends all the way through to Year 12, a continuity that says something about how friendships at John XXIII tend to work. John XXIII Day and the BBQ nights remain fixed points, along with teachers including Mrs Tiller, Mr Lloyd and Miss Hayes (now Mrs Fleahy) who Katie remembers fondly despite a habit of being sent out of Religious Education classes for talking too much.

Steph was once part of a teacher's wedding party, chosen along with three other students to scatter petals and blow bubbles, after the bride – who taught creative dance at the College – picked her former students for the role.

Years later, a chance reunion in Fremantle, at a friend's 40th birthday, brought the sisters face to face with the same teacher, Mr Antulov, prompting a photograph on the spot.



Their advice to current students and younger alumni leans away from certainty. Steph says:

> *'Know that nothing is forever. Try things, and if you don't like it, that's fine – you can move on.'*

Katie agrees, encouraging students not to stress if they do not know their direction by the time they leave school. 'Lean into your passions,' she says. 'There's a whole world out there, and you can be more creative in your own right.'

Bec points to the value of travel in broadening perspective, and credits the College itself with nurturing whatever each sister was drawn to, regardless of academic ranking.

What threads through all three stories is how little distance their different paths have put between them. Their wider circles of John XXIII friends still holiday together and catch up often; Bec notes that almost everyone she has lived with or travelled with came from those same school years.

For Katie, those friendships extend beyond the personal. 'All three of us made so many great friends through JTC,' she says. 'Those relationships and connections can also help in your career.'

Back in the family car, with her children quietened by Aunty Katie's voice on the radio, that connection keeps finding new ways to carry on.



The art of the introduction

On two evenings this year, John XXIII College alumni opened their workplaces to fellow alumni and Year 12 students, and welcomed them into a room full of strangers.

The venues changed, from TRCB Architects' heritage-listed office on William Street to Sterling Property in the buzziest part of Subiaco, but the lesson stayed the same: connection does not simply happen but must be learned, like any other skill, and somewhere has to be the place where that learning begins.

Both gatherings were part of Alumni Connect, a College initiative built on a simple premise: invite graduates back not as former students, but as professionals with something to offer, and put them in a room with other professional alumni and Year 12 students who are about to become graduates themselves.

TRCB's ***Eamon Broderick (Class 1988)*** hosted the July occasion, and the choice of venue said something in itself. The firm's recently redesigned CBD office occupies a heritage-listed building on William Street, originally designed by Sir Talbot Hobbs – a space that carries its own sense of craft and continuity. Eamon has served as



campus architect to our College for more than 25 years, and the courtyards and learning centres students move through each day, along with the junior playground known as Angelo's Village, bear the mark of his work. His fellow TRCB co-director ***Fred Chaney (Class 1982)*** shares that same long attachment to our College.



In his address, Eamon spoke about his own history with John XXIII College, first as a student and later as its architect, and reflected on the significance of 40 years on our Mount Claremont campus.

'John XXIII College has been part of my professional life for as long as I can remember, and long before that, it was part of my personal one. When I was a student here, I had no idea that the relationships and experiences I was forming would shape the kind of architect I became.'

> *'That is really what an evening like this is about. Not telling others what to do but showing them that the people who can help them figure it out are closer than they think.'*

In September, the series moved to Sterling Property, where founder and managing director ***Brian Neo (Class 1997)*** shared his workplace with our community. One of four siblings who came through John XXIII, Brian has spent close to 25 years in WA commercial property, including more than a decade as a director and equity partner at Burgess Rawson, before founding Sterling Property. Two of his sons are now at the College, keeping the family's link to the College strong.

Sterling Property is a boutique commercial real estate agency, working across sales and leasing as well as property and facilities management, and currently manages more than 120 properties across WA. For Brian, the firm's community involvement sits alongside its transactions: supporting medical research through the Harry Perkins Institute, and community sport through clubs including Claremont Football Club and Claremont Lawn Tennis Club.

'As a team, we feel strongly about giving back and supporting our local community,' Brian says. 'Our commitment to that has been inspired by our own team's life experiences, whether that be going through cancer treatment, or playing for the local football or tennis club.'

That instinct extends to his recent appointment to the development advisory network for the Perth Children's Hospital Foundation, a role focused on connecting people within the business community to support WA families. 'Knowing I can contribute to not only my own family's future wellbeing, but the families that live and work around me as well, made it an easy decision,' Brian adds.

There is a version of networking that feels transactional, the exchange of business cards, the calculated introduction. Both evenings asked for something else: show up, be curious, ask a genuine question, and listen to the answer.

Across both gatherings, alumni brought careers spanning engineering, law, academia, planning, resources, architecture and more, and year groups spanning decades. What they shared, beyond their fields of work, was a willingness to do something that matters enormously to a young person navigating uncertain beginnings: to be honest about how they got where they are, and to offer, whenever possible, an introduction or a few minutes of their time to someone still finding their way.



Brian's own advice to a Year 12 student unsure of what comes next is direct. 'I believe that failure can lead to success, so long as you learn from mistakes and work hard to improve your own situation. Don't expect anyone to give it to you,' he explains. He is equally clear-eyed about the pace of change ahead of them: 'The world significantly changes every 10 years. Don't be complacent. Adapt to the changing environment.' And above all: 'Do the right thing and be a good person, every decision you make, small or large, will have an



impact on the outcome, and treat people as you would like to be treated.'

That kind of generosity must be modelled, and occasions like these make it part of the culture.

> *'We talk a lot about preparing students for life beyond school, and we mean that in the fullest sense, not just academically, but in how they carry themselves in the world and how they build relationships. Evenings like this matter because they give students a genuine experience of what that looks like. And they remind our alumni that our John XXIII College community is always here when they want to come back to it.'* – Daniel Mahon, Principal

For Brian, the value of an evening like this comes back to the same network he relied on as a student, and still relies on now. 'It has been a privilege for me to share a little story about myself and the passion behind what we do at Sterling Property.'



For the students who attended each evening, the experience offered something a classroom cannot: a room full of people who once stood exactly where they now stand, and who worked out, through effort and the kindness of others, what came next.

Future instalments of Alumni Connect will keep that door open, wherever the next venue happens to be. Any Year 12 student curious about what comes after school, not just what to study, but how to walk into a room and start a conversation, is welcome to come along and see for themselves.



The art of the introduction, it turns out, is not really about the introduction at all, but about what a person is willing to offer whoever stands on the other side of it.

Our thanks to Eamon Broderick and the team at TRCB Architects, and to Brian Neo and the team at Sterling Property, for their generous hospitality and for welcoming our students and alumni into their workplaces.

Keen to host a future Alumni Connect event at your workplace?

Get in touch with Sue McLennan at alumni@johnxxiii.edu.au



The art of the pivot

There is a version of Josh Taylor's life in which he stayed in investment banking. The salary was good, the experience was formative, and the trajectory was clear. He walked away from it anyway.

That decision, made alongside his business partner and friend Kese Gasbarri in late 2025, led to Juvo Recovery – a wholefood protein smoothie vending machine business that did not exist in Australia before they built it. Twelve months into trading, as of November 2026, the company has grown from a founding team of two to eleven staff, operates machines across more than five Perth locations, and is planning to scale to two hundred machines in 2027. Josh is 25.

The pivot makes more sense when you understand where it came from.

Josh graduated from John XXIII College in 2018 and, before heading to university, spent a gap year overseas that turned out to be less a holiday and more a masterclass in self-reliance. He arrived in France with no job and spent two months walking the docks across the south of France and western Italy looking for work. Someone eventually hired him. The experience – directionless, occasionally difficult, ultimately clarifying – left a mark. He reflects:

> *'Away from school and home you get a lot of freedom, which is incredibly empowering, but you also realise how much the people around you normally do for you.'*

'When that support is stripped away, you feel lost and unsure of yourself. Pushing through that alone gave me a level of confidence and independence I'd never had before.'

He returned to Perth and enrolled at the University of Western Australia (UWA) in a double major in Mechanical Engineering and Finance. He became president of UWA's Student-Managed Investment Fund, overseeing around forty peers – a role that gave

him leadership experience before he had ever run a business or managed a payroll. He also received a New Colombo Plan Scholarship through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which took him to Waseda University in Tokyo for the final semester of his degree. While there, he started a small jewellery brand on the side – more curiosity than commerce, but a sign of where his instincts were pointing.



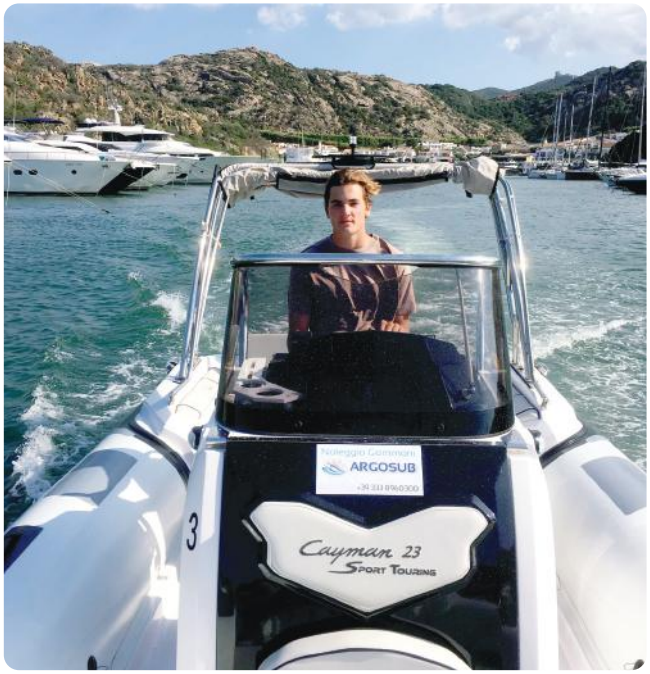
Japan also gave him the idea that would eventually become Juvo. Vending machines there are not a novelty; they are infrastructure. Hot drinks, cold drinks, full meals, everyday goods – available around the clock, on almost any corner. Josh saw something specific: a Japanese 7-Eleven blending smoothies on demand, and a gap that clearly existed back in Australia.

'Before I left, my idea of a career was pretty narrow,' he says. 'Living abroad blew that wide open.'

After graduating, Josh moved into investment banking at Macquarie Capital where he worked for around two years across Melbourne, Sydney and Tokyo. The corporate environment was demanding and high-pressured, involving transactions worth millions of dollars and direct exposure to senior company leadership and clients who were CEOs. He learned a great deal from it. Entrepreneurship, though, had always been a pull.

When he and Kese decided to back the Juvo idea properly, both left their investment banking roles and started building. Within roughly three months of that decision, they had a machine operating in a Perth gym and product in market. Laine Mulvay, a data scientist, joined as a third co-founder.

The product is straightforward in concept and precise in execution. Each cup is hand-packed by the team, loaded with fresh-frozen, locally sourced ingredients, and stored at minus 18 degrees. The customer selects a flavour, and the machine produces a finished smoothie in sixty seconds. The menu currently includes four smoothie options – Choc Charge (42 grams of protein, combining banana, whey protein, oats, date, raw



cacao and maca powder), along with Creamy Mango, Wild Berry & Peanut Butter, Berry Baddie, Passionfruit Nectar – and Electrolyte Slushie made with apple juice, coconut water, lemon, honey, aloe vera and Celtic sea salt. Every ingredient is something you would recognise from your own kitchen. There are no artificial additives and no hidden components; the Juvo website states it plainly: 'Nothing hidden, nothing artificial.'

The cups are lightweight aluminium, and the team are working through registration for the ten-cent container deposit scheme. The straws are a plant-based fibre – a deliberate alternative to paper, because let's face it, we all hate paper straws.

What surprised Josh about running the business was not the hours.



‘I knew running a business meant long hours and giving it everything, but I didn’t expect just how mentally and physically demanding, and how varied, that would be,’ he says.

> *‘One day you’re fixing machinery, the next you’re developing product, designing, leading a team, doing the engineering, building the brand, running marketing. You end up doing everything at the start, most of it for the first time, all under the pressure of right now, with no guarantee any of it will work.’*

What he did not anticipate was how much he would love it.

‘It feels like a game: we get to build whatever we want, test it in the real world, and do it alongside my best mates,’ he says. ‘It doesn’t feel like work. It feels like a team building something together that we genuinely love, and it gives us so much mental stimulation and fun.’

The team reflects that spirit. Everyone is in their twenties. Each week, they do a beach swim and sauna session together – a ritual that has less to do with wellness programming and more to do with building the kind of trust that a shared workspace does not automatically create. Five machines are currently operating across Perth: at Life and Soul gym in Bicton, Revo Fitness in Dayton, New Movement in Osborne Park, a private corporate space in Osborne Park and the publicly accessible machine at UWA’s eZone North building. Enquiries have come from overseas, but the current plan is domestic: two hundred machines across Australia in 2027.

The pace is deliberate. As the only wholefood smoothie vending machine business of its kind in Australia, Juvo is moving while the road ahead is clear, knowing that others will eventually follow.

Asked what he would tell our students who are drawn to entrepreneurship or simply unsure of where their path leads, Josh does not hedge.

‘Focus on learning,’ he says. ‘Choose jobs and experiences that will teach you the most. Like a game, be deliberate about collecting skills and experiences, levelling up as fast as you can. By the time you land on an idea you actually want to pursue, you’ll have the resources, confidence, skills and relationships to put you in the best position to execute it.’

When he thinks back to John XXIII College, it is not a subject or a particular lesson that comes to mind first.



‘When I think back to school, I think of the people,’ he says. ‘I think JTC did a good job of fostering an environment that allowed for strong friendships, and looking back, the best thing I got out of school was these friendships that have lasted a lifetime so far – some forged through sport, some through academic competitiveness, or getting into trouble and stuffing around together.’

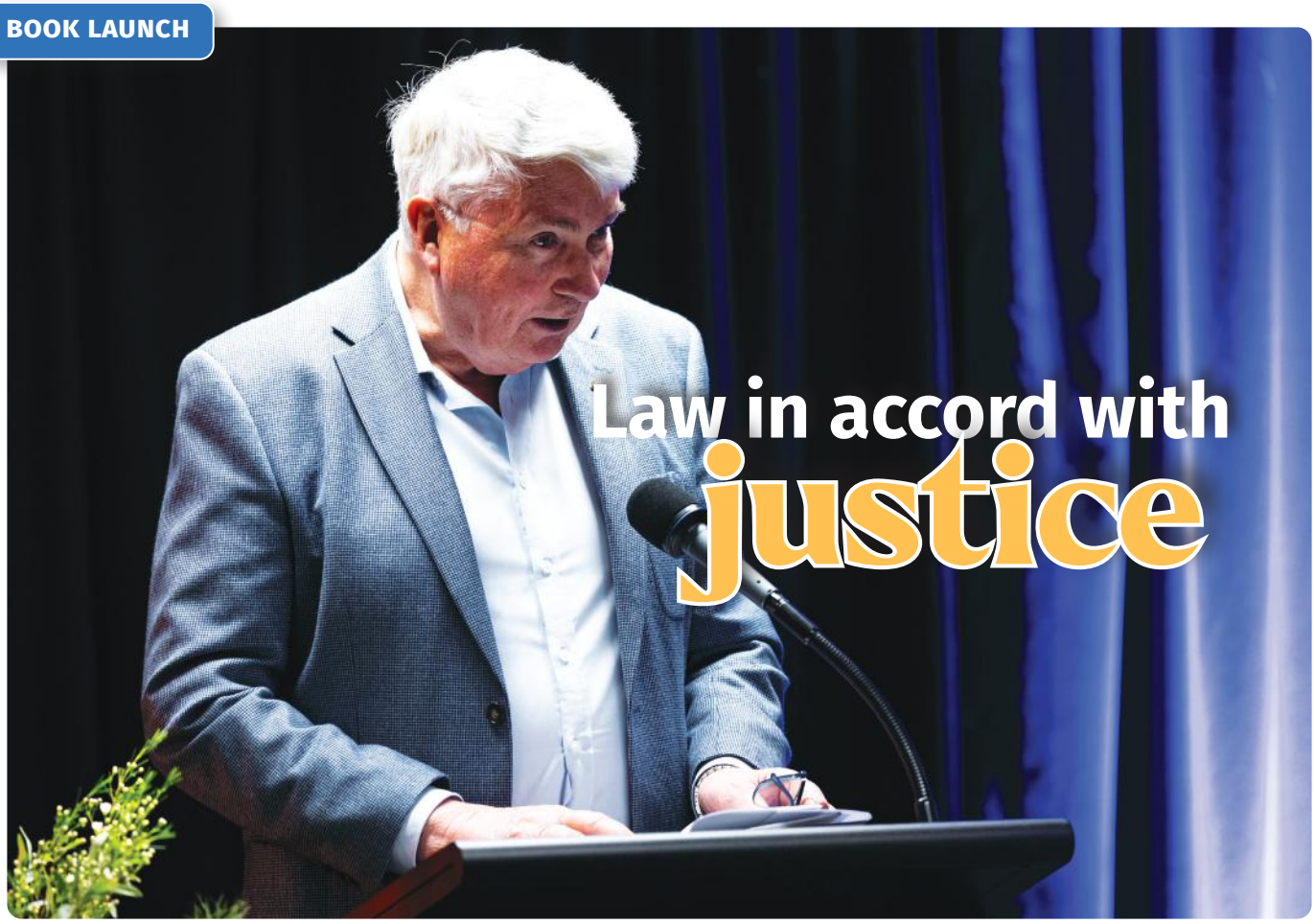
As for the bigger picture, Josh’s outlook has the easy confidence of someone who has already learned to navigate uncertainty.

‘Stress less. Worry less. You get to choose your own adventure. Do what fulfils you, or what moves you toward what fulfils you,’ he says. ‘You’ll mess up a few times, get lost along the way, and that’s fine – it all works out in the end.’

Follow Juvo Recovery on Instagram @juvorecovery

For more information about Juvo Recovery, visit their website:

BOOK LAUNCH



Law in accord with justice

HJohn XXIII College hosted the launch of Fr Frank Brennan's new book on Sir William Deane – and asked what his legacy demands of us today.

'Seek Justice' is a lived obligation at John XXIII College. We recently put that obligation into practice, hosting the launch of Fr Frank Brennan SJ's new book: *Equality, Reconciliation and Social Cohesion: The Inspiration of Sir William Deane*.

We welcomed a full house of one hundred guests to hear a distinguished panel: The Hon Kim Beazley AC, who officially launched the book; ***Kate Chaney MP (Class 1991)***, Federal Member for Curtin; and Fr Brennan himself. What emerged was not a nostalgic tribute to a public figure of the past, but a direct challenge to the present.



Who was Sir William Deane?

Sir William Deane, Australia's first Catholic Governor-General, is remembered for a rare combination: deep faith and a steady commitment to justice and reconciliation.

As a High Court judge, he was part of the landmark Mabo decision, which overturned the doctrine of *terra nullius* and opened the way for the Native Title Act 1993. Fr Brennan's book draws together Deane's speeches and writings from across his time on the High Court and as Governor-General – a record of one man's insistence that the law had to answer to justice, not the other way around.

His relevance to our time

The launch was timed to meet this moment. Australia is once again working through hard questions of equality, reconciliation and social cohesion. Divisive rhetoric has resurfaced in public debate, and the legacy of the White Australia policy remains unresolved. Most recently, the nation has had to reckon with the terror attack on Bondi Beach in December 2025.

Deane's speeches were written for a different decade, but the questions beneath them have not gone away. Fr Brennan's book, and the voices of Deane, Beazley and Chaney around it, ask the same thing of this generation

that Deane asked of his own: what does justice actually require of us, here, now?

What was said

The Hon Kim Beazley AC spoke of Deane's moral clarity and his ability to seize what Beazley called a 'Mansfield moment', a chance to nudge the law, and the nation, towards greater equity.



Kate Chaney MP addressed the ongoing relevance of Deane's words in Australia today.

Fr Brennan spoke of his lifelong friendship with Sir William. After the tragic loss of the 2023 Voice referendum and then after the horror of the Bondi massacre, he went to Sir William and pleaded that the country needed him.

It was 30 years since Sir William had become Governor-General. Many people now did not know him or had forgotten what he had said about issues of equality, reconciliation and social cohesion. Fr Brennan was sure that the many insights of Sir William would help young Australians come to terms with the difficult issues confronting our society. He was so grateful that Sir William agreed to the book being done.

Drawing on his decades of advocacy for human rights, he reminded the room that the work is never someone else's job alone: it is both a personal and a collective responsibility.



A College that means what it says

At John XXIII College, 'Seek Justice' is tested against exactly this kind of moment. The College's Reconciliation Action Plan, its commitment to cultural competency, and its focus on respectful relationships are part of our response to this conversation.

As Principal Daniel Mahon says:

> *'Sir William Deane's life is a reminder of what our motto "Seek Justice" actually asks of us, and hosting this conversation is one small way our community tries to live up to it.'*



Looking forward

Sir William Deane's words, as Fr Brennan told the room, still stand as both instruction and challenge: 'Justice according to law, and law in accord with justice.'

The launch of this book stands as an invitation to students, staff and our wider College community to keep it going: to listen honestly and to act with courage and compassion.

Watch a video recording of the book launch evening:

Purchase a copy of Fr Frank Brennan's new book:

Walking together



Each year, a group of Year 11 students leave the familiar behind, trading classrooms for campfires and swapping the comfort of the known for the discomfort, and the gift, of being welcomed as guests on someone else's Country.

The Pilgrimage Program takes students to Cape York, in partnership with Red Earth, where they live alongside Traditional Owners on private homelands. By any measure, this is an adventure but at John XXIII College, this is deliberately not called a trip. It is a pilgrimage, and that word shapes how the journey is prepared for, undertaken, and remembered.

More than a destination

A pilgrimage has always meant a journey undertaken for the sake of the soul, not the itinerary. For our Year 11 students, that distinction matters. They will fish for barramundi, walk to sacred sites, sleep under an open sky and share a meal cooked in an underground oven, but the purpose of the journey is not the doing. The purpose is the encounter.

This is where the Catholic character of the program comes through most clearly. Grounded in the College's Ignatian tradition, the pilgrimage invites students to encounter God, self and others – through the people they meet, the stories they are trusted with, set against the silence of a landscape far removed from their everyday lives.

Faith becomes active here: not taught from the front of a room, but lived in relationship. Students return having asked bigger questions of themselves than any classroom discussion could prompt.

Janeen Murphy, Deputy Principal Faith and Mission: 'Pilgrimage is a powerful expression of our Ignatian tradition and our commitment to Seek Justice. Through formation, and encounter, our students have the opportunity to step beyond their own experience to listen deeply to others, embrace curiosity, and recognise God's presence in all things.

> *'By walking alongside new communities, they can grow in understanding, compassion and solidarity, becoming people of competence, conscience and compassion who are inspired to serve others.'*

Assistant Deputy Principal – Year 11, Tim Chaney explains: 'The word pilgrimage is underpinned by the fact that this is not just a trip like many other school trips. It is grounded in the traditions on which our College is based – our Ignatian traditions and Catholic social teaching principles – and it is an immersive experience, with a view for our students to learn, to reflect, to grow as individuals and to come back with different perspectives than what they left with.'

The pilgrimage also connects directly to our College motto, Seek Justice. Walking alongside others, listening to their stories, while engaging honestly with questions of justice and history, are not incidental to the pilgrimage – they are the point of it.

Reconciliation in action

Our College's commitment to reconciliation is something we try to live out, and the pilgrimage program is one of the clearest expressions of that commitment in practice.

Students who take part are guests on Country, welcomed by Traditional Owners who choose, on their own terms, to share culture, language, stories and skills that have been carried for tens of thousands of years. This is truth-telling in its most direct form, heard first-hand, around a fire, from the people whose history it is.



'One of the biggest privileges of being on pilgrimage was hearing history first-hand,' student Alyssa says. 'You're sitting in a place where people have walked for 60,000 years, hearing stories that happened to them and their people, and it gives credence to everything you learn in the lead-up.'

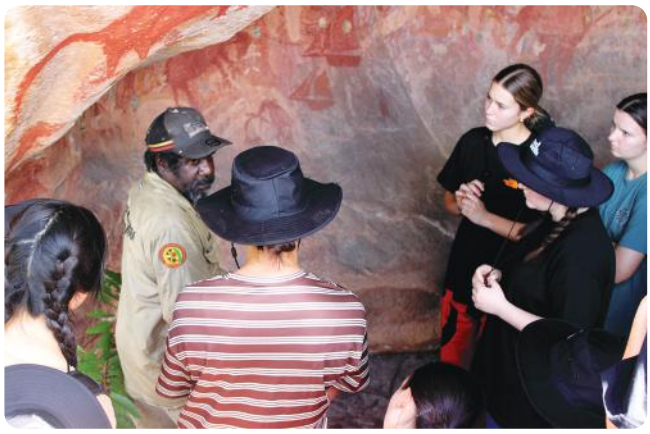
For many students, this is the first time they have sat with the full weight of that

history: the beauty of the world's oldest continuous cultures, alongside the harder truths of what First Nations communities have endured and continue to navigate. Both matter. We ask students to hold both, honestly, rather than choosing the comfortable version of the story.

The work before the journey

What often surprises people is that the pilgrimage begins months earlier, in formation sessions back at school.

These sessions are where students are prepared, not just logistically, but personally. They explore what it means to be a respectful guest on someone else's Country, unpack their own assumptions, and begin to understand the histories they are about to encounter. Staff describe this preparation as inseparable from the immersion itself: without it, the experience risks becoming spectacle rather than genuine encounter. With it, students arrive on Country ready to listen rather than simply observe.



The same care continues on return. Students take part in reflection sessions designed to help them process what they have experienced and to consider what is asked of them going forward, as students, young Australians and people of faith.

In their own words

'One of the most powerful moments on pilgrimage was an experience the students had at a rock art site, listening to the Traditional Owner – who is also a ranger on Country – speak about the history of the land from an Aboriginal perspective, including some of the atrocities that took place there, and offer a perspective that is not so commonly heard,' Mr Chaney reflects. 'That was a really powerful moment for our students, hearing that truth-telling firsthand.'

'By the end you're at the airport, saying goodbyes and getting emotional,' Alyssa says. 'It's an experience you really wouldn't get from anything else, being bonded by knowledge that you know you're so privileged to have.'



A memory that lasts

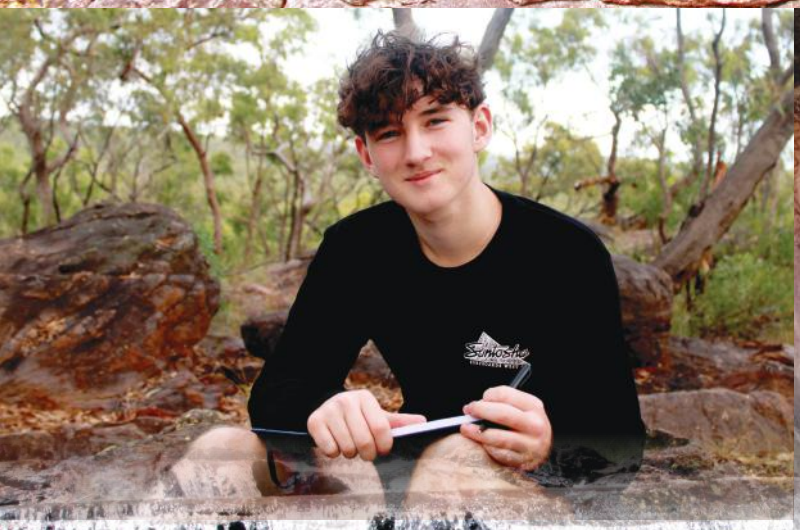
Talk to our alumni long enough, and this is the story that comes up again and again. Before COVID-19, immersion took several forms, with students travelling not only on Country but also to India and Thailand, alongside long-running pilgrimages closer to home. Wherever they went, the shape of the experience was the same: living alongside a community, seeing life through eyes other than their own.

Years, sometimes decades, after they have left the College, graduates still point to that immersion, whichever form it took, as one of the experiences that shaped them most. Not exam results or winning awards. The week they spent experiencing cultures, learning and listening, and what it asked them to see and reconsider about themselves and others.



That is what a pilgrimage is meant to do. The experience does not end when the plane lands back in Perth – it becomes part of how a person sees the world. At John XXIII College, we believe that is exactly the kind of formation our students deserve.











Holding tradition and technology

Andrew Dowding (Class 1997) is Co-Founder and Managing Director of Winyama, an Indigenous-owned geospatial consultancy based in Perth. In conversation with us, he reflects on the pathways that led him there.

Take us through a timeline of your study and career pathways since graduating high school.

The timeline starts with a false start. I wasn't a high achiever in high school, and my TER was nowhere near good enough for entrance into university. Moving through the world without a clear sense of purpose made it feel impossible to find the motivation to commit to my studies in Year 12.

I was able to gain entry into Curtin University through an Indigenous bridging program, but I still had no idea what I wanted to study. So instead of forcing myself forward with no clear goal, I went north and worked on pearling farms for a couple of years. First in Broome and then Arnhem Land. After that I ended up in Sydney and stumbled into a sound and audiovisual traineeship at the Sydney Opera House, which turned into a full-time position as a Sound and AV Technician.

Somewhere in there, the desire to study came back, and on my own terms this time. I applied to the University of Sydney through the School of Indigenous Studies and got in, which I still count as one of the luckiest breaks I have had. I did a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Anthropology and History, working shifts at the Opera House the whole way through, and spent an exchange year at the University of California, Los Angeles, stretching the degree sideways into Ethnomusicology, Chicana and Chicano Studies and Social Geography.

After graduating, my partner and I moved to Roebourne in the Pilbara, where I worked for my community's native title corporation, spending a few happy years with my Elders and reconnecting with community and family.

Two years later we moved to India. I worked in New Delhi at the Centre for Ethnomusicology and at the Digital Empowerment Foundation. The ethnomusicology work put my two halves together for the first time: the sound engineer and the anthropologist. The Foundation was the other half of the education; putting internet access, digital literacy and community-owned infrastructure into rural communities at enormous scale and on very little money. I did not realise I was looking at the model I would spend the next decade building in Australia.

I came home to Perth from Delhi and in 2015 started my first company, Tarruru, doing cultural mapping across the Pilbara, the Kimberley and the South West. In 2018 I co-founded Winyama, rolling that expertise into a fully-fledged Indigenous geospatial company alongside a great business partner and mentor. In December 2025, I acquired my co-founder's stake and became sole owner.

You have lived and worked across different countries and cities. How has each place shaped who you are today and how you approach work and business?

Roebourne is home and the reason for all of it. Ngarluma Country is where my obligations sit, and everything Winyama does is measured against whether it would hold up in front of the people I am related to.

Broome and Arnhem Land taught me how remote work actually functions. Not the theory, the logistics. Half of what Winyama sells is software that must work on a ranger's tablet four hours from a phone tower, and you cannot design for that from an office if you have never lived it.

Sydney and the Opera House taught me that technical skill is a form of respect. Running sound well for someone's performance is how you honour their work.

Los Angeles widened the frame, showing me that our questions about land, language and who gets to tell the story are shared with Indigenous peoples worldwide.

New Delhi was the hardest place I have lived and the most formative, and I will not romanticise it. Nothing was smooth, on the first attempt or the third. It taught me to hustle, because nobody there waits for permission, and that is still mostly how I win work for a business that was never anyone's default choice. It taught me respect for deep culture, because India holds traditions thousands of years old as a living present tense rather than heritage in an archive. And connecting villages with no infrastructure and no budget taught me that constraint produces better design than abundance ever does.

Perth is the business end and where my wife and I have chosen to raise our kids. But, living in the city while working for different Indigenous communities means constantly translating between two systems that do not naturally speak to each other, and that translation work turns out to be the actual job.

What prompted you to co-found Winyama and what gaps were you trying to fill in the Indigenous mapping and technology space?

Aboriginal organisations were commissioning maps constantly, but the work was done by outside consultants who arrived, extracted the information, produced a map, invoiced, and left. The community ended up with a PDF while the consultant kept the data, the software and the skills, so next year the community paid again for the same thing. That process creates a dependency machine, and it puts culturally sensitive information under other people's control, which is a sovereignty problem before it is a technical one.

Winyama was built on the opposite premise. Aboriginal organisations should own their spatial data, hold it in their own systems, and have their own people trained to run it. This is what it means to have full and equal participation of Indigenous people in the digital economy. The best outcome is a ranger team or land council that stops calling us for day-to-day mapping and instead gets us to build cloud infrastructure, culturally safe AI models, or run drone surveys, the things that genuinely need specialists.



Describe a typical working week.

There is no typical week. Mondays are internal, going through our delivery and project pipeline, project health and team capacity with our commercial and delivery leads and deciding what we are chasing and what we are dropping. I protect that meeting fiercely, because it is the one that stops the rest of the week from being reactive.

The middle of the week is client work: a scoping call with a land council in the Northern Territory, a workshop with a ranger group, a contract to review, or working with a native title body on a plan to build their geospatial capacity. I also sit on several boards, including Country Needs People, the EON Aboriginal



Foundation, the WA Aboriginal Lands Trust and an Aboriginal advisory group for Main Roads WA.

Then there is fieldwork, which is the part I would not give up. On Country with Elders and rangers, recording places and stories, testing the tools we have built. Those trips reset my sense of what matters.

Winyama blends traditional cultural knowledge with digital tools such as satellites, drones and mapping software. Can you describe a project that captures what that blend looks like in practice?

The Bindjareb Djilba Project with the four Aboriginal Corporations south of Perth is a good one, because you can see both halves working on each other.

Culturally, the work is guided by Elders. We use software to map their river system, record places, names, stories, seasonal knowledge and what has changed in their lifetime, and that material is tagged into a cultural data schema we built so sensitive information can be held with the right restrictions on it. We also built a vegetation condition baseline from satellite imagery, a repeatable measure of the state of Country at a point in time, then analyse it to identify where intervention matters most.

The interesting part is the overlap. The satellite data tells you where the vegetation is degraded. Cultural knowledge tells you why that place matters and what a healthy version of it looks like to the people who belong to it. Neither is sufficient alone. Put together, the community can walk into an Aboriginal ranger funding round or a land use negotiation holding both, and that is very hard to argue with.

What are your biggest challenges in your current role?

Data sovereignty is the constant one. We want Indigenous cultural data to stay with the communities it's from and be controlled by them, which sounds simple but is consistently not.

Hiring for Winyama is another challenge. We need people who can do genuine technical work and who can sit respectfully with Elders. Universities can produce the first, communities produce the second, and very few arrive with both, so sometimes we need to grow them ourselves, which takes time and investment.

Winyama has grown from a small start-up into an award-winning consultancy. What have you learned about leadership along the way, particularly leading a team where cultural knowledge and technical skill both matter?

The main thing is that cultural authority and technical authority are different, and you must be explicit about which one applies. On how software should be architected, the best engineer in the room decides. On whether a story can be recorded or who can see a site,

the engineer has no standing at all, and neither do I. The team must know which register a question sits in, rather than letting seniority quietly override culture.

You also cannot compensate for cultural competence with technical brilliance, or the reverse, so we build pairs and invest in people crossing over. And slowing down at the start is the lesson I learned most expensively: everything that has gone wrong in a project can be traced back to consultation that was rushed or an opinion formed too early. I'd say this is a major learning curve for many things in consulting!

Mostly, though, I've learned that trust is a massive tangible asset in a consultancy. Clients work with Winyama because of relationships and kinship, so a project delivered badly does not just lose a contract; it damages standing with people I am related to, or a community's view of us. Our business thrives on trust, and that raises the floor on quality in a way no KPI ever could.

In December 2025, you became sole owner of Winyama after acquiring your co-founder's stake, moving the business to full Indigenous ownership. What does that milestone mean to you, and how has it shifted the way you see Winyama's future?

The company my co-founder leads was acquired by a subsidiary of a French space agency. It was a great opportunity for them and aligned with their global growth trajectory. Winyama's growth will only ever be national. We work with the Indigenous communities of Australia. It was a moment of realisation for us that our goals for the future looked different. I am grateful to my co-founder. That partnership got Winyama through the start-up years when we could have easily failed.

What memories and experiences stand out from your time at John XXIII College?

What stayed with me was not the academic record; it was the things I did not recognise as education at the time. I really loved my Years 10-11 English classes - I enjoyed literature and thinking critically about texts, and looking back I think I was always destined to find a home in the school of humanities, but overall I was far more engaged with my friends and the more creative and sporty side of school than by anything I was being assessed on.

I was not disruptive, not unhappy, just unfocused. School was something happening around me while I worked out who I was, and I had no sense that any of it connected to a future.

However, one thing that has stayed with me is the Ignatian value of service, the idea that an education is meant to be for the benefit of other people rather than solely your own advancement. I would have rolled my eyes at that as a teenager! But it is more or less the thesis of my working life now.

What advice can you offer our students and younger alumni who are thinking about their own study and career path?

Your Year 12 results are information, not a verdict. Mine accurately described how much attention I was paying, not what I was capable of. Bridging programs, mature entry and other entry pathways to uni exist; as do TAFE and second attempts, and nobody in my professional life has ever asked me about my TER score.

I would also say don't feel like you need to fake a direction just to have one. I didn't know what I wanted from uni, so I followed my gut and went pearling instead, and that detour gave me something to study for later. Then take the work in front of you seriously even when it seems irrelevant. A traineeship in sound and AV had nothing to do with anthropology or geospatial technology, but two decades later I run audio processing pipelines for cultural mapping recordings. You cannot pick which skills will compound.

The rare thing is the combination, not the specialisation.

> *I am not the best anthropologist and certainly not the best mapping analyst, but holding both is unusual, and it is the entire basis of my company. If you have several interests that supposedly don't go together, that could just be an asset.*

Beyond that, ask, and then say yes. Nearly every door that opened for me was because someone gave me a chance. And when you find yourself in the position to do so, open the door for the person behind you.



The power of an open mind

On Tuesday, 4 August, the College community gathered for the Semester 2 High Achievers' Breakfast, an event dedicated to recognising students who have demonstrated outstanding academic performance in all subjects in the previous semester.

Held twice a year, these breakfasts are a proud tradition at John XXIII College, celebrating not only academic excellence but also the values of commitment, curiosity, community and connection that underpin our learning environment.

Students who achieved high results were invited to attend, joined by staff and special guests. The morning began with a warm welcome and a shared breakfast, providing an opportunity for students to connect with peers who share a passion for learning and personal growth.

A highlight of the event was the address from our guest speaker, College alumnus ***Ben Negus (Class 2021)***. Ben shared stories from his own journey since graduating, including his experiences in university clubs, law, entrepreneurial ventures and volunteering. He encouraged students to keep an open mind about their future pathways, to embrace opportunities both within and beyond their studies, and to value the friendships and networks formed along the way. Ben's message was clear: success is not a straight line, and the most rewarding experiences often come from stepping outside your comfort zone and pursuing your interests with energy and curiosity.

The High Achievers' Breakfast celebrates more than results. It is a chance to reflect on the importance of hard work, resilience, discipline and a willingness to try new things. The event also highlights the strength of our alumni community, whose ongoing involvement provides valuable mentorship and inspiration for current students.

> *As Ben reminded us, the connections made at John XXIII College can last a lifetime, opening doors to new experiences and lifelong friendships.*

Congratulations to all our high achievers for their dedication and commitment. We look forward to seeing how you continue to grow, lead, inspire and contribute as you move through your journey at the College and beyond.

An address to the High Achievers

Morning everyone,

I'm Ben. I graduated in 2021 and since then have been up to all sorts of things. I decided an interesting way to take this speech was a non-chronological journey through some of those things. Along the way I feel like I have worked out a few things and hopefully some of that is interesting.

Before I get into that, though, a little context to me. I finished a Finance degree after high school and am now completing Law. In Years 11 and 12 I stayed more or less as broad as possible with Chemistry, French, Literature, Mathematics Applications, Religion and Politics and Law.

Before I start, I will also make the note that everything I say should be taken with a big pinch of salt. This is all what has worked for me and the way my brain ticks – what works for you might be very similar but more likely quite different.

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Anyway, I will start it off with a university club I was a part of called ECOMS. I think this was potentially the best thing I've done post-school and it very much put me on a crash course with a lot of things I did after that.

ECOMS is the commerce club at UWA. In 2020 it ran the biggest ball in the southern hemisphere (because the rest of the world was closed because of COVID). I liked the vibe of the people I had met at a few of the events, so figured why not join up.

Flash forward a year later and I found myself sitting in a room with the other friends I was running it with, watching 1000 tickets sell out in half an hour. In other words, the seven of us had made 180 grand to throw a party which was, as you might expect, very fun. The real reason I bring up ECOMS, though, is because the six other people I was on the executive of that club with have gone and done some really cool things.

- One runs the PR for a wellness retreat startup, which basically meant that, at 22, she was handed a million dollars and, more or less, full autonomy to spend it.
- One works for Anthropic in San Francisco. That's the people who make Claude, which I am sure none of you are familiar with, and especially not in relation to school work.
- One works in sales at Airwallex in Melbourne, which is on track to become Australia's largest private company.
- I do Law with one of them.
- Another was the president of the UWA Guild, managing the $15 million budget they have to run student life at the uni.
- The last guy is working in private equity in Sydney.

All this is a long way of saying that there are so, so many options out there. Keep an open mind when it comes to choosing what you want to do next. On that day we sold all those ball tickets, none of those people knew what they wanted to do afterwards, and yet they are having a lot more fun than many people who did.

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The next thing I will talk about is Bennett, the commercial law firm I have been working at for a bit over four and a half years now. They practise defamation law, which is a fancy word for sorting out arguments between politicians and people with money to burn.

The interesting thing about Bennett is that, despite the fact that a lot of the people there are highly accomplished individuals who are genuinely market leading in what they do, they are also people. Sometimes it is easy to see a big title or someone very senior and think that it is unattainable or that they are some special breed. They're not.

They are highly motivated people who worked hard, not just at their jobs but on themselves, and have made it big. None of them are pure geniuses - they just outworked everyone else. I am positive that anyone in this room can also make whatever they want to do work, so long as you are happy to knuckle down and get to it.

Bennett is also a good example of how great pursuing some of the extra-curricular activities you have at school is. I was very engaged with the mock trials Ms Farley runs, which is the main reason I was interested in law, and I am very glad for it. If I hadn't done that, I doubt I would have landed working in a law job I really enjoy, because I wouldn't have been aware of how much I liked it.

I chased that passion down as much as I could at school with the constitutional convention I attended in Year 12 with a whole lot of other students across the country. And, to be honest, it was one of the highlights of my school experience.

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I think it's a good foil to the Bennett takeaway to bring up Campus Crush, which was a university dating event business I ran for a while – I know, random, but hear me out.

I started this with a good friend of mine because we had a whole lot of other friends of ours who really had

not met anyone at university. I dove into it because I thought I might learn some interesting things but also because it was about as far from my law degree as you could possibly get.

We ended up matching 750 people, and I pitched at the big startup conference in WA last December after winning the UWA startup incubator. I know of 20 couples who met at our events and are still together. We managed to run an Instagram campaign that organically reached 90% of the people in Perth aged 18-22.

Along with accidentally becoming well known to the point I couldn't really go to a bar without someone asking me if I was the Campus Crush guy, there were also a lot of interesting lessons from this business.

I found the group of startup friends I made was a really healthy foil to my law friends because they did not know a thing about how stressed I was about my exams, and helped me keep a lot of perspective throughout everything.

> *I would encourage you all to do something in a completely non-academic group because, without knowing it, you can very easily slip into a bubble of stressed, academically-oriented people that you don't even know you are in.*

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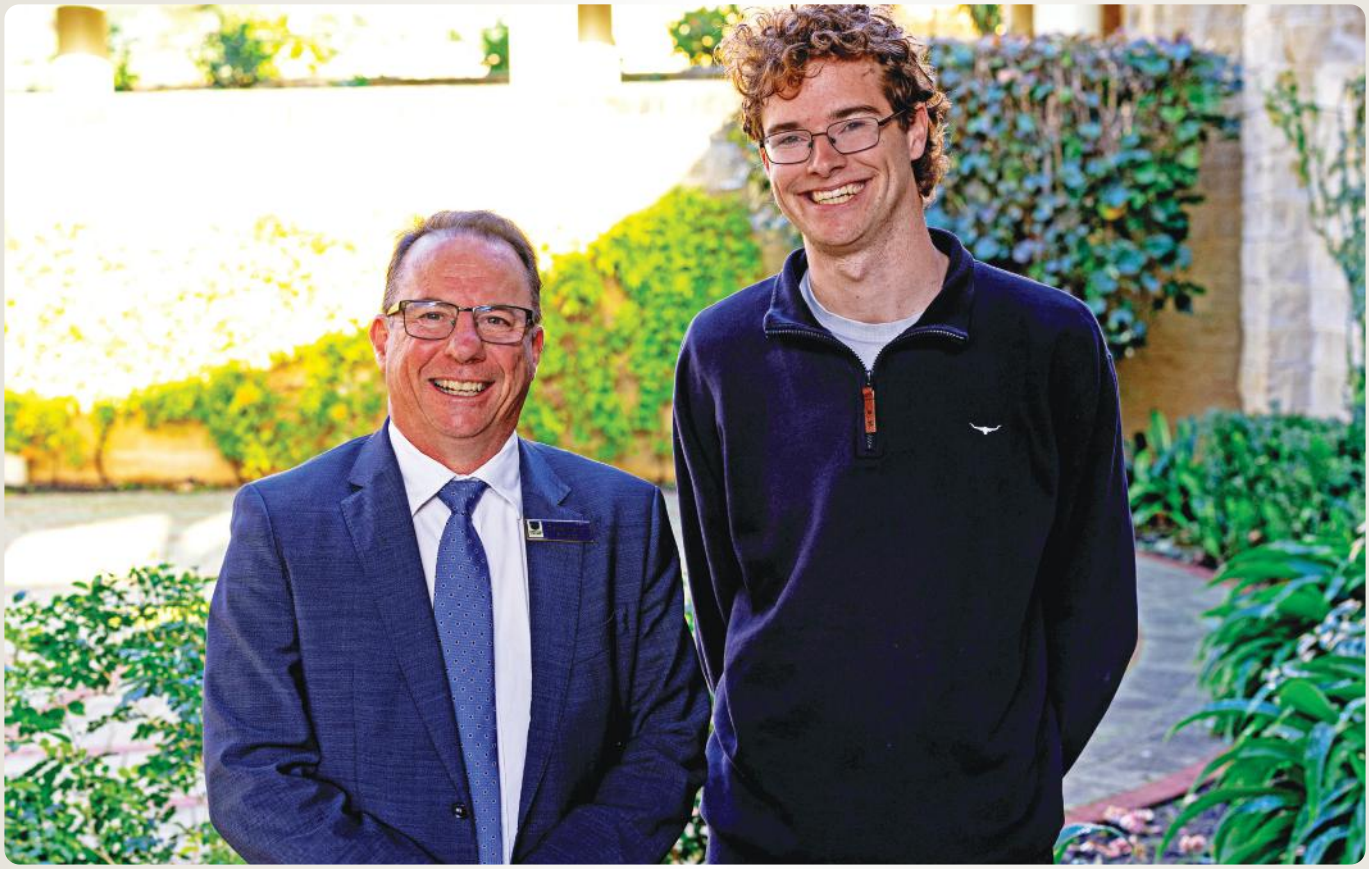
The final thing I thought might be interesting to bring up is the consulting club I was a part of for a while called WAUC. Again, the people I was doing that with are now all over the world and doing all sorts of cool and interesting jobs – my best friend from it is splitting his time between MIT and Harvard designing steering wheels for people with Parkinson's. But I feel like I have already made the point that you should keep an open mind about where you go next.

I bring this up because consulting for charities was so rewarding. We worked with a great organisation that helps refugees improve their English, as well as learn baking skills. They also needed support accessing government grants, but they didn't have the systems in place to apply and weren't tracking their data properly, so they couldn't compete. We helped them fix that.

I know, for me personally, what really motivates me is solving interesting problems. This made me realise how rewarding it is solving those problems for people who really need it and can't afford to pay. Wherever all of you go next, I would encourage you to seek out places where you can blend your interests with giving back. Once you look, there are plenty of options out there.

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I could go on, but I know what you are all really here for and that's the food, so I will leave it there. I am happy to chat if any of you have questions.





Girls from Oz

In Halls Creek, several thousand kilometres from her home in Melbourne, ***Sophia Matthews (Class 2020)*** spent a week last year teaching a group of girls singing, dance and drama.

It was her first trip with Girls from Oz, a program she had wanted to join since she was still studying in Perth. 'I always thought it was something I would enjoy doing, and I was right!' she says. Since then, she has returned to the Kimberley three times this year, to Halls Creek and Bidyadanga in August and Halls Creek again in October.

Sophia was a student at John XXIII College from Kindergarten to Year 12, then studied through two performing arts degrees before landing in classrooms, rehearsal rooms and remote communities where she now works.

She auditioned for the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), in classical voice and Music Theatre. She was offered a place in classical voice and in the Music Theatre diploma, and chose the diploma. A year later she auditioned for the Bachelor of Music Theatre and was accepted, training under industry professionals in singing, acting and dance.

Since graduating and starting professional auditions, she is candid about life as a performer. 'It's difficult for shows to keep running because people simply can't

afford to go to the theatre at the moment. So, when we aren't performing, we have to find other jobs we love.'

Before moving to Melbourne, she trained as a teacher through the Australian Girls Choir (AGC), which she credits for giving her genuine skill development. She now teaches for the AGC, gives private singing lessons at a Catholic girls' school, and teaches musical theatre at a performing arts school, while continuing to audition for live theatre performance as well as film and TV. She also works alongside fellow John XXIII College alumna ***Lucy Durack (Class 1998)*** at Lucy's Glee Club, where they visit primary schools to teach a selection of songs. 'It has a strong focus on wellbeing and social connection rather than perfect performance', Sophia says of the Club.



Earlier this year she was the vocal director of a production of *Chicago Jnr* at a girls' high school not long after being the one on stage in her own school musicals. 'It's exciting to have enough expertise to now work on the production side of the performing arts', she says.

Her experience in performing arts education also shapes Sophia's work with Girls from Oz. The program sends teams of three staff to four remote, predominantly First Nations communities for one week each term. These performing arts programs are designed to build school attendance, confidence and community connection. The Community Programs are funded through small contributions from schools, individual donors and grants.

At the end of each year, Girls from Oz selects 32 girls (eight from each community) to travel to a major Australian city, where they are hosted by AGC families for a week and experience city life, including performing at major concert venues. The travel program aims to raise $100,000 annually to fund these visits, a target it met last year and is on track to reach again this year.

Last year, the 32 selected girls travelled to Sydney, with several experiencing life outside their community for the first time. The program provides opportunities that build confidence and self-esteem while empowering the next generation of young women and future leaders. Having recently experienced the incredible impact of this program firsthand, Sophia is passionate about helping Girls from Oz continue to provide these opportunities:

> *'Programs like Girls From Oz bring extraordinary value to their communities, and I am excited to continue working with them. With adequate funding, this program can continue to empower young women and girls in remote places.'*

When asked what advice she would give someone heading into their first audition, Sophia explains: 'Who you are can be your greatest asset when you're auditioning, because nobody can be you better than you,' she says.

On the industry itself, she is direct: 'The performing arts industry can feel very isolating and self-centred because it's so competitive.' She credits Lucy Durack for showing her another perspective: 'Lucy is someone who has really shown me how it's possible to find success while supporting your colleagues and still giving to others.'

Sophia's fondest memories of her time at John XXIII are around music camp and the school musicals she performed in: *Beauty and the Beast*, *Mary Poppins* and *Wicked*. Her teachers Mr Tsak, Ms Green, Ms Alexander, Mr Kros and Mr Dockery gave the arts program a level of care and generosity she has only fully understood since stepping into a similar role herself.

'Their approach to teaching in the arts helped me understand the value music and performing arts could bring, not just to me, but to my peers and to the community.'

Learn more about the Girls from Oz program:



Journey into Jazz

For ***Mia Serra (Class 2023)***, the sound of New York City is still working its way through her singing.

A few months after finishing high school, Mia began a full-time Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance (vocal) degree at Edith Cowan University's Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), now based at the new city campus in Perth. She credits her John XXIII College singing tutor, Holli Scott (also a WAAPA lecturer) with helping shape her progress well before she ever set foot on campus. 'Her support and encouragement gave me the confidence to audition for WAAPA,' Mia shares.

University life started at the old Mount Lawley campus. 'The music scene at WAAPA is quite broad,' Mia says of those first two years, spent alongside musicians across every instrument and style. WAAPA has since relocated to the new campus in the Perth CBD, and Mia has mixed feelings about the move. 'We are very privileged to have the amenities we have there, and we are a lot more central to things,' she explains, listing the extra practice rooms and instrument lockers among the gains. 'I do miss the outdoor aspect of the old campus though.'

The biggest shift in her studies so far came this year, when Mia travelled to Manhattan, New York, for an immersive two-week Jazz Arts Collective program hosted by Fordham University at Fordham College Lincoln Centre campus. The program was open to WAAPA's second, third and fourth year students, and around fifteen students made the 2026 trip. 'New York is the hub of jazz and where it all happens,' she says. 'If you want to get big in the industry, you go to New York.' A number of WAAPA graduates now live and perform there themselves, and several return to Perth to speak to current students about building a career overseas.

Once in the city, the group filled their days with intensive classes in ear training, jazz improvisation, big band and a listening class built around developing your personal sound by transcribing other artists. Teachers had worked at renowned institutions including Berklee College of Music and The Julliard School, including an expert on jazz legend Miles Davis. Evenings were spent chasing live music around the city, sometimes with student teaching assistants who became fast friends. 'We probably saw thirty live gigs,' Mia recalls.

The trip also fell during the 250th anniversary of American Independence, and a planned outing to Coney Island turned instead into a Fourth of July baseball game between the Mets and the Yankees. Fireworks



afterwards off the Brooklyn Bridge drew crowds that surged like a mosh pit. The group learned the next day that a shooting had taken place at Coney Island. Students had already been advised to avoid Brooklyn and the Bronx more generally during the trip, though Mia's group made an exception on one of their last days, travelling to Fordham University's Rose Hill campus in the Bronx.

There, Mia spent an afternoon with Fr Thomas Massaro SJ, the Laurence J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society at Fordham. Conversation ranged from his students and his own path into teaching, to sacraments and the way the value of religion can get overlooked or overcomplicated. 'Religion can be a really simple thing,' Mia reflects, noting that a shared Italian heritage helped the two find common ground quickly. She rounded out the visit with a tour of the campus archives with one of the university's other academics, an unplanned detour that became one of the trip's quieter highlights.

New York's pull went beyond the classroom. 'It's an incredible cultural destination, with museums, galleries, art, music, dance,' Mia reflects. 'We were there for a finite time, so we really made the most of it.' That included a private lesson booked with phenomenal jazz vocalist Julia Danielle Smulson in Harlem, which led to an unexpected but welcome discovery. 'I ended up bumping into a lot of really well-known vocalists, as they live in the same building or apartment.'

Mia's top three jazz vocalists to listen to:

Gretchen Parlato

Carmen McRae

Samara Joy

What stayed with her most was the difference in teaching style. 'The way they teach music in New York is very different to how they teach it in Perth,' Mia observes. 'It was extremely valuable to go through that experience and see what is happening in other parts of the world.' She describes the shift in plain terms: the assignments didn't disappear, but the rules around how to complete them did. 'There were still tasks and projects to complete, but the usual boundaries of how you achieved the end result were taken away,' she explains, tracing that creative freedom back to the history of jazz itself.

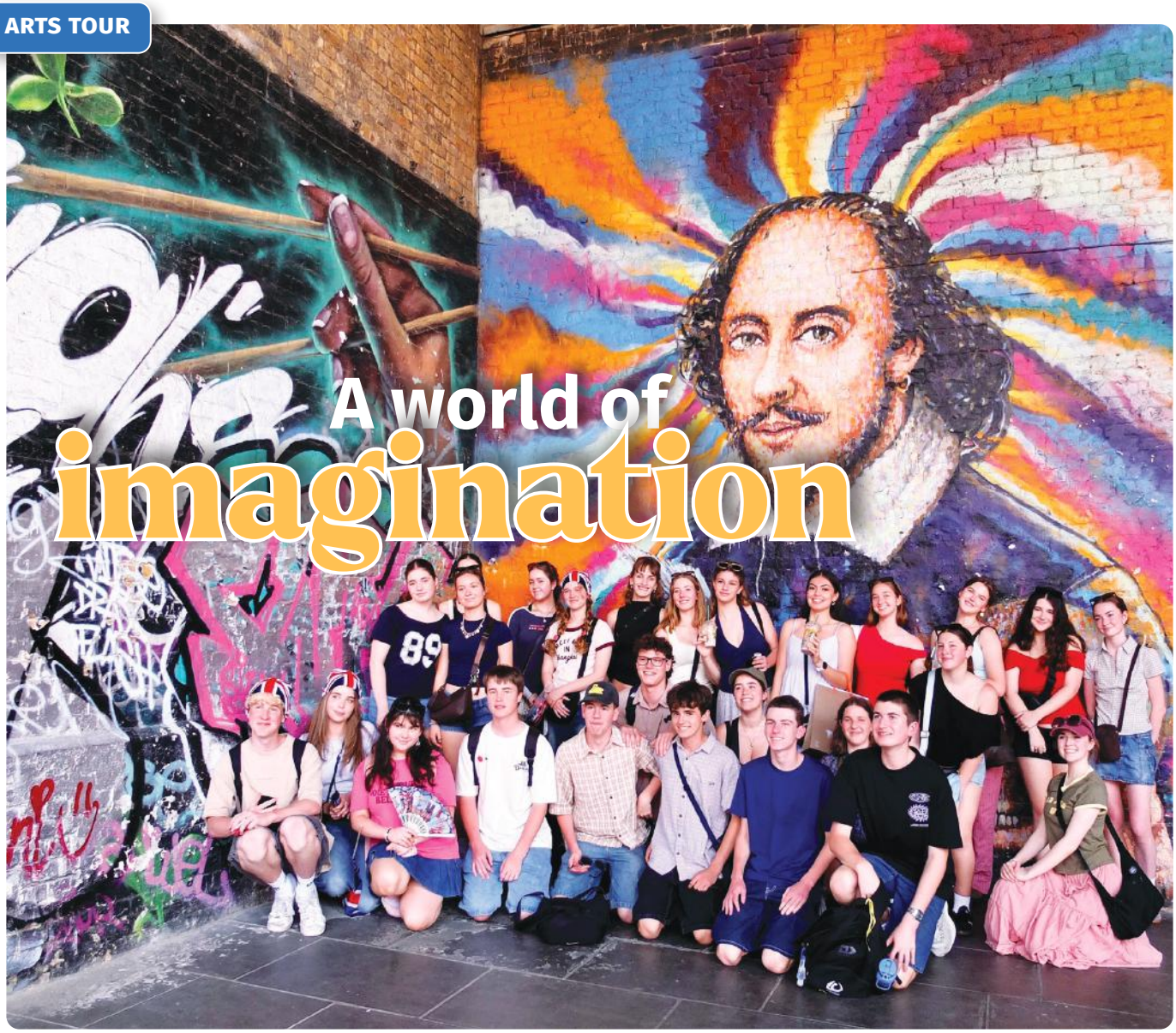
> *'The origins of jazz were about freedom of creative expression under oppression, and breaking away from conventional ideas of art.'*

That thinking is shaping her choices back in Perth. This last semester Mia studied 'Sonic Culture and Sound Art', exploring how unconventional sounds can become music, alongside an advanced jazz workshop focused on free jazz. 'People think it is a lot easier than it is in reality,' she points out.

'You spend so long learning jazz conventionally – the harmony, the rhythm, the musical boundaries. Free jazz is a genre that fully escapes from that.'

Her advice for anyone eyeing a similar trip is practical. 'New York is expensive,' she cautions. 'We spent so much money going to as many gigs as we could, which also meant food and drinks at all these venues. If you are going to do this course or similar, keep that in mind.' Looking further ahead, Mia is drawn to music therapy, a path shaped partly by her nana's experience of dementia. 'I am very people-oriented. I want to use music to help people connect with themselves.'

For course information, visit WAAPA's Jazz Performance page:



A world of imagination

Imagination has always held a special place in Ignatian spirituality. St Ignatius encouraged those undertaking the Spiritual Exercises to imagine themselves within scripture, entering a scene with their senses as though present within it, as a way of encountering God more deeply.

This same spirit underpinned our College's first Arts Tour, which invited students to step into the great works and stories of London and Paris, and to let that encounter shape how they see the world.

The College community farewelled its Performing Arts students embarking on the inaugural Arts Tour, accompanied by five staff members, for eight days of immersive, multi-disciplinary cultural experiences across both cities.

The itinerary combined hands-on creative learning with some of the world's great cultural landmarks. In Paris, students took part in drawing classes in Montmartre, the historic hillside quarter that has inspired artists for generations. In London, the itinerary also included





a behind-the-scenes look at the Harry Potter Studios, performance workshops to build on students' craft, a visit to the iconic Shakespeare's Globe, and a guided tour through the National Theatre.

Travel of this kind offers students something a classroom cannot. Standing in the room where a masterpiece was painted or walking through the theatre for which a play was written gives history, culture and creativity a tangible presence. Exposure to different cultures and cities broadens students' sense of the world and their place within it.



Travelling together builds independence and confidence, as students navigate unfamiliar environments and work alongside professionals in the field. Workshops led by practising artists and performers add a further layer, offering direct insight into the working life of a creative professional. For students of the Arts, this kind of firsthand encounter with craft and culture is difficult to replicate in a classroom and often proves formative in how they think about their own artistic pursuits.



'The Tour of London and Paris has had a profound educational, cultural and artistic impact on our students. These two cities are recognised as global centres of creativity, history, performance, design and innovation. The students were immersed in environments that have inspired generations of artists, musicians and performers. Walking through these historic spaces and participating in workshops encouraged the students to generate new creative ideas, explore different artistic styles and perspectives, reflect on their own creative practice and develop greater confidence in their own artistic identity. They were able to make the connection between classroom learning and real-world experience and gain a greater understanding of the role art plays in society. The tour provided an authentic learning experience with rich opportunities for reflection and artistic growth. The students were a wonderful group who enthusiastically embraced every day, and every experience presented to them. It was a very successful trip.'

– George Tsakisiris, Head of Learning Area – The Arts



For many students, the tour also offered a chance to see, in person, the artists, playwrights and works they had studied and rehearsed at school, a link between classroom and craft that few opportunities can provide.

'Attending the Arts Tour to London and Paris was an experience I will never forget. Each day was filled with sightseeing, workshops, performances and shared meals, and even the sore feet from hours of walking felt like a privilege, because they meant we had been able to see and experience so much. One of the most special moments was touring the National Theatre and the Globe Theatre, where seeing how theatre professionals work behind the scenes gave me a real insight into the artistry, precision and collaboration that bring a production to life. The backstage tours, seeing props, costumes and staging up close, were invaluable for my Drama ATAR studies and deepened my appreciation of theatre. Above all, I am deeply grateful to the teachers who guided us and the friends who shared every discovery along the way.'

– Aria MacMillan, student



'Our Arts Tour to London and Paris was an unforgettable experience that opened our eyes to the richness of the arts in two iconic cities. In London, we had the pleasure of seeing 'Matilda' and 'Kinky Boots' on the West End, which was definitely a highlight, and seeing a production come together in a theatre on the opposite side of the world felt very special. We also visited the Royal Opera House, which gave us a real sense of the



history and effort behind these live performances. In Paris, we spent time exploring the Louvre, appreciating a wide range of artistic styles and seeing the Mona Lisa in person. The trip continued to impress, with memorable moments including a Seine River Cruise, climbing the Eiffel Tower, and a magical day at Disneyland. Overall, the tour was an inspiring and memorable opportunity to experience art and theatre, and the impact they can have on people all over the world.'

– Liam Ptolomey, student

The John XXIII College Arts Learning Area looks forward to expanding the tour in future years, giving more students the chance to step beyond the classroom and into the works and stories that first inspired them to create.





Gathering together

Long before John XXIII College opened in 1977, the Loreto Sisters and Jesuit Fathers were educating young people in Claremont. Today, former Loreto and St Louis students remain an important part of our story.

This year, reunions brought old friends together to reminisce, reconnect and celebrate friendships forged decades ago. As we look towards the College's 50th anniversary in 2027, these gatherings are a wonderful reminder that our history lives on through the people who shaped it.



Loreto Class 1966

Six decades on

Loreto Class 1966 marked 60 years since leaving school, beginning with a Memorial Mass at St Joseph's Convent before continuing their reunion over lunch at Royal Perth Golf Club. Our thanks to Maureen Diffen, Geraldine Davies, Terry Geers, Margaret Campbell, Helen Busanich, Anne Sullivan and Sandra Sutton-Mattocks for bringing everyone together.

St Louis Class 1966 also celebrated 60 years, returning to Claremont to gather at the Claremont Hotel, close to where their school once stood. Thank you to Bernie Masters for organising the reunion.



Loreto Class 1976

Together again at fifty

Loreto Class 1976, the final class to graduate from Loreto Claremont, reunited 50 years on at The Unicorn Bar in Subiaco. More than 25 past pupils came together to celebrate this special milestone and reconnect with old friends. Our thanks to Pauline Chamberlain, with

the support of Clare Barker and Angela Weekley, for organising the gathering


St Louis All Years

Still seeking higher things

Old Louisians spanning graduating years from 1953 to 1976 gathered at The Camfield for the second St Louis All Years Reunion. Yearbooks, uniforms and photographs provided plenty of memories as former classmates reflected on their school days and what it means to be a Louisian.

Generations of Loreto

More than 60 Old Girls, representing graduating years from 1952 to 1976, came together at John XXIII College for the Loreto All Years Reunion. Over morning tea, guests reconnected with classmates, shared memories and celebrated a Loreto connection that continues across generations.

Reunion coming up?

Our Advancement Team is happy to help bring your cohort together. Contact Sue McLennan at alumni@johnxxiii.edu.au or 08 9383 0520


St Louis All Years


Loreto Class 1966


St Louis Class 1966



The long reach of a good mentor

For most of Year 12, ***Daniel Poland (Class 2020)*** had no idea what he wanted to do with his life.

He was good at specialist methods, chemistry and physics, so engineering seemed the obvious choice. Four weeks into a double major in engineering and finance at the University of Western Australia (UWA), he knew it wasn't for him.

Daniel moved into a Bachelor of Philosophy, a newer degree offering flexibility to change direction, guaranteed exchange opportunities and an honours year built in. A double major in finance became a triple major with economics and maths, before unit caps forced a rethink. He dropped maths and, in his second year, spent five months on exchange in Zurich, Switzerland, studying finance and economics and travelling through Italy, Germany and the Czech Republic. 'It was my first time leaving the nest,' he recalls. 'A taste of freedom, I suppose.'

Back in Perth, an internship in investment banking gave him a taste of a different kind. The work was demanding and, for a time, engaging, but it did not sit well long-term. 'It was intellectually fatiguing,' Daniel explains, 'and it often felt like I wasn't making an impact in a positive way.' Underneath it all, something kept resurfacing. 'Always in the back of my mind was an interest in medicine.'

Acting on that pull towards medicine meant sitting the Graduate Medical School Admissions Test, while still completing an honours year in finance. That thesis examined short selling in Australian financial markets, and a New Colombo Plan grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade supported a two-week internship in Japan with Mitsui & Co.

Midway through 2024 an offer arrived for the graduate program at what was then known as the Department of Treasury, starting the following January. Knowing the earliest he could begin medicine was January 2026, Daniel took the offer, spending much of the year working on his application to medicine. The offer from UWA came in late 2025. 'I had already spent two long years getting there,' he says. 'I accepted the offer without hesitation.'

One unexpected turn in Daniel's story runs back through John XXIII College. Through College connections, Daniel was put in touch with orthopaedic surgeon ***Dr Peter D'Alessandro (Class 1998)***, who is also an Associate Professor at UWA. Daniel had hoped for little more than a coffee with Peter. Instead, Peter invited Daniel to shadow him while he worked. Within weeks, Daniel was accompanying Peter on rounds, taking histories and examining patients at Bethesda Hospital and in the sports trauma clinic at Fiona Stanley Hospital, and observing complex sports surgical cases that most students do not see until much later in their training, if at all. 'I learned more in those weeks than I had doing the actual course.'

For Peter, mentoring Daniel carries a particular resonance. 'Mentoring Daniel has a great connection,' he explains, 'because Daniel's mum (Veronica Brennan-Poland) was my English Literature teacher at John XXIII College 30 years ago.'

He has deliberately built the mentorship beyond the clinic alone. Daniel is now part of Peter's research team and is contributing to one of their randomised controlled trials in sports surgery. 'I want him to see the whole process,' Peter says, 'recognising a problem in clinical practice, asking the right questions, challenging what we have traditionally done through good research, and ultimately translating that evidence into better patient care. I also want him to see the human side of medicine.'

Daniel is drawn to orthopaedic surgery, tracing some of that back to his school years. 'I did a lot of woodwork in high school,' he reflects. 'Orthopaedics is a lot like woodworking. Connecting things, making things function, screwing stuff in, chisels, tapping.' He is now completing his first year of the Doctor of Medicine at UWA, a four-year graduate program.

Peter's own journey to sports surgery began with a similar piece of good fortune, and it also began at John XXIII College. In Year 10, on a school camp, he was offered a lift home by a parent, ***Dr Tim Keenan (Class 1959)***, then the West Coast Eagles' orthopaedic surgeon. Over a three-hour drive, Tim spoke about the following week's ACL reconstruction on then-captain John Worsfold's knee.

'What struck me was not just how accomplished Tim was as a surgeon,' Peter recalls. 'His intellect, compassion and care shone through, and it was obvious he genuinely loved his work. I remember getting out of that car thinking, "I want to be that guy."' More than 30 years on, Peter looks after that same knee.

After graduating from medicine in 2004, Peter completed his orthopaedic training in Western Australia before spending three years in London, Vancouver, and other centres across the USA and Europe.

It was in London that he found one of his most significant mentors, global sports knee surgeon Dr Andy Williams, whose approach to the work has stayed with him ever since.

‘Only accept excellence,’ Peter remembers him saying. ‘That has stayed with me, for every case, every patient.’

That pursuit of excellence has never come at the expense of the human side of the work. How a surgeon communicates, handles difficult moments, builds relationships and empowers people around them matters just as much as technical skill, and he sees this as part of what earns a patient’s trust, not separate from it. It is a value he wants Daniel to absorb early.

> *‘Medicine is a team sport. The people you train with, work alongside and look after will ultimately matter far more than another line on your résumé.’*

Peter now works predominantly in sports orthopaedics and complex knee reconstruction with Coastal Orthopaedics and is the orthopaedic surgeon for both the Fremantle Dockers and West Coast Eagles.

Alongside clinical practice, he established the Perth Sports Surgery Fellowship, an intensive six-month program for international surgeons combining high-volume sports surgery, research, rehabilitation and exposure to professional sport. The most recent recruitment round drew 137 applicants from 18 countries for a single position.

‘The aim is to give our fellows high-level surgical skills, responsibility, autonomy and support,’ Peter adds, ‘to let them develop into confident, independent, world-class surgeons.’

That work has taken him beyond Perth, and he sees no contradiction between the city’s distance from the rest of the world and its standing within it. ‘Perth may be geographically isolated, but professionally we certainly are not,’ he believes. ‘From a clinical, research, innovation and elite-sport perspective, the work being done here can genuinely stand alongside that coming from any of the much larger centres around the world.’

He teaches internationally several times a year, and recently he travelled to Pune, India, where he performed live surgery streamed directly into an auditorium of 1,500 surgeons and thousands more watching online. He is passionate about surgical education, both in Western Australian and abroad. ‘When you teach another surgeon, you’re not just helping that individual,’ he notes. ‘You’re influencing the care of thousands of patients over the course of that surgeon’s career. Knowledge and opportunity have the greatest impact when you share them.’

Both men offer similar advice to anyone earlier in their journey. ‘Don’t stress about picking the ‘right’ thing straight away,’ Daniel offers. ‘There are a lot of pathways you can take, and different ways to get into courses. Keep your doors open. Consider changing if you don’t like something.’

Peter’s version comes from further down the same road. ‘There isn’t a blueprint,’ he reflects. ‘Work out what you want and what success means for you. Find mentors who raise your standards. Be ambitious. Be available. Be prepared. Be reliable. Follow through.’ He also returns to the same theme of trust and relationship. ‘Be human,’ he continues. ‘Put the person before the patient. Technical excellence matters enormously, but so do compassion, communication, humility and kindness.’

Daniel’s memories of John XXIII remain close, even six years on. He was Campion House Captain in Year 12 and Dux of his cohort, the year his House won the athletics carnival and finished second in swimming, narrowly missing the sought-after triple header with cross-country. He fondly recalls Outdoor Education camps in Years 9 and 10, Music Camp, and the close friendships formed through the STEM cohort, many of which endure today.

His graduation year was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and although a two-week period of online classes disrupted the usual routine, the College’s response is still felt on campus today. Valete became a stand-up cocktail event, a format the College has continued ever since.

For Peter, the connection to the College runs just as deep. His eight closest friends are John XXIII alumni, including two who started Year 1 with him back in 1987. His own children, Sienna and Josh, currently attend the College, in Years 7 and 9. Peter also received the John XXIII Award in 1998, given to a student who embodies the ethos and spirit of the College. He reflects:

> *‘For me, John XXIII College has always represented much more than just a school. It connects so strongly with the values of service, social justice, community and focusing on others. The same values that started my journey in the first place and have guided me ever since.’*



Full political immersion

*Year 12 Politics and Law student **Zeph O'Brien** represented John XXIII College at the 2026 National Schools Constitutional Convention in Canberra, joining delegates from every state and territory to debate a proposed change to Section 53 of the Constitution. Over three days, Zeph toured Parliament House and met with senior political figures and attended many events. He then took part in a formal vote on the proposed amendment, before reflecting, in his own words, on what the experience meant for his understanding of Australian democracy.*

The National Schools Constitutional Convention (NSCC) was an incredible experience and certainly one that I will never forget. I was one of 15 WA delegates alongside 113 representing the other states and territories, all meeting in Canberra to discuss and debate components of the Australian Constitution.

In particular, we considered to amend Section 53 of the Constitution, to prevent the Senate from blocking supply bills (money bills). In our debates, we considered the 1975 Constitutional Crisis and how the blocking of supply had played a pivotal role in the dismissal of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam.

We arrived in Canberra in the late afternoon on a Monday, and our first night provided a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted with the other delegates over dinner.

The next day, the program began at the National Archives of Australia, where we got to view original documents relating to varying parts of parliamentary history such as a copy of the Australia Act 1986, that officially cut Australian and British legislative ties; a copy of the Larrakia Petition, a plea to the Queen to help First Nations peoples, which was signed by 1,000 Aboriginal people from across Australia.

This was followed by a tour of Parliament House – where we received an address from the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon Milton Dick MP.

After this we watched question time with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Hilda Heine.

We then attended the 'Meet your MP Event', where delegates met with their Federal MPs. The tour concluded with an address from the Minister of Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP.

On the second day, we went to Old Parliament House for the Convention's official opening ceremony. The Welcome to Country was delivered by Richie Allan, a Ngunnawal and Kamilaroi Custodian and Cultural Director of the Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

This was then followed by a heritage message from Georgie Bryant of the Museum of Australian Democracy, and a video address from the Attorney-General, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP. Emeritus Professor Clement Macintyre, from the University of Adelaide, then outlined the referendum topic and the rules of engagement that would be discussed.



The first keynote address was delivered by Professor Gabrielle Appleby from the University of New South Wales, who examined the constitutional tensions surrounding Section 53 and the compromises embedded in Australia's federal design.

After morning tea, the second keynote address was presented by Professor Emerita Anne Twomey AO of the University of Sydney, who revisited the Whitlam Dismissal and the constitutional issues surrounding the blocking of supply.

After lunch, the third keynote brought together two senior political figures: Former senators the Hon Nick Minchin AO, and the Hon John Faulkner. They provided contrasting political perspectives on the use of Section 53 in the Whitlam dismissal.

We then attended Government House for an official reception hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia. The evening concluded with dinner at the National Press Club, where we heard from speakers such as Amber Brock Fabel, Founding Director of the South Australian Youth Forum, and Tom McIlroy, Political Editor at *Guardian Australia*; and a surprise entrance from Treasurer, the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP.

Day 3 began at the Museum of Australian Democracy. Professor Alan Fenna from Curtin University delivered the first keynote address, bringing together the major arguments for and against constitutional change. The soapbox sessions on Days 2 and 3 provided students the ability to publicly share and test their ideas on the information that we had received.

The program then shifted to the referendum component, with Lisa Wyllie from the Australian Electoral Commission explaining the referendum process before delegates participated in a formal vote to change section 53 of the constitution. The result: the No vote achieved a majority by one vote, though a majority of states voted Yes.

At the conclusion of the convention, we headed to Canberra Airport where, by coincidence, travelling on the same flight with us were the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Hon ***Kate Chaney MP (Class 1991)***, Federal Member for Curtin; and the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, Federal Member for Cowan.

Participating in the NSCC has been such an extraordinary opportunity and one that I feel genuinely privileged to have taken part in.

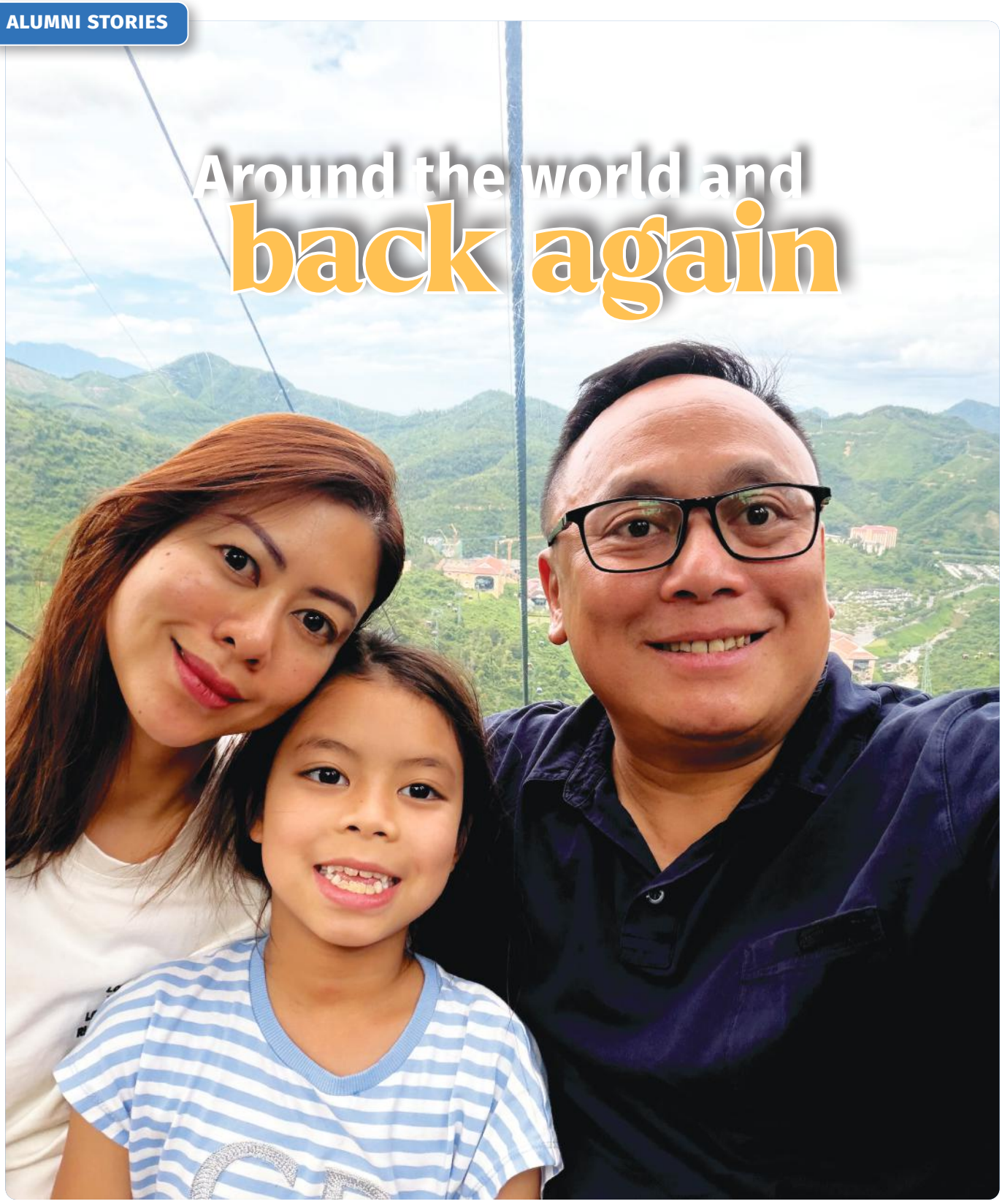
> *Being surrounded by motivated, politically engaged students created an environment that was both inspiring and energising. I've formed strong friendships and gained insights that will stay with me well beyond the program.*

I would like to express my sincere thanks to John XXIII College and all my teachers who aided me in the management of my schoolwork that I missed. Particularly I would like to thank Head of Magis, Ms Daisy Farley, and Principal Mr Daniel Mahon, for their support and for enabling me to be part of such a valuable educational experience.

The hands-on learning throughout the convention has reinforced my commitment to pursuing political studies at university and has strengthened my ambition to continue engaging with politics in the future.

Zeph O'Brien
Year 12 Politics & Law ATAR student

Around the world and back again



When ***Hien 'Kevin' Trinh (Class 1992)*** returned to Perth in 2012, he thought it would be temporary. He planned to stay six to eight months before taking his next international assignment.

Fourteen years later, he is still here as Vice President of Operations and Country Head for McDermott Australia, overseeing the company's work nationally as well as supporting teams across its wider global network – including offices in London, Brazil, Houston and Kuala Lumpur. McDermott is a global engineering, procurement, construction and installation contractor to the energy sector.

His path there was not direct. After graduating high school, Hien enrolled at university with plans to pursue dentistry, but quickly realised it was not the right fit.

'As it turns out, I do not have an appetite for cutting things or seeing any blood,' he admits. He switched to

civil engineering at the University of Western Australia (UWA), drawn by the chance to build a career with international reach.

His first job out of university was as a graduate with JP Kenny (now a part of WOOD), a subsea engineering consultancy that designs offshore platforms and pipelines. He stayed for a few years while chipping away at postgraduate units in the Master of Oil and Gas Engineering degree at UWA. Consulting gave him theory, not the hands-on construction experience he wanted, so after several years in Perth's engineering sector he joined Saipem, an Italian oil and gas contractor that specialises in engineering, procurement, construction and installation of onshore and offshore infrastructure.



'I wanted international exposure, and finding a career that would allow me to do that was key,' he reflects. That decision took him from Perth to Houston, Paris and Singapore, across engineering consulting, construction and project management. He also completed a Master of Science in Project Management through Curtin University while he was still based abroad.

When family circumstances brought him back to Perth, he stayed with McDermott and began managing projects from the company's local office, which currently employs around 170 people. What was meant to be a short pause became a long-term chapter.

Equipment for Australian projects is often fabricated in China or Indonesia, before being installed offshore for clients including Woodside, INPEX, Santos and Shell. Projects here are typically installed in water 150 to 200 metres deep, while projects in Brazil or West Africa can run to two or three kilometres, a difference that changes both the engineering and the regulatory approach required. 'There is a solution to every problem, but not every solution is the same,' he observes.

Today, as Hien reflects on his journey, he says 'leadership is less about having every technical answer and more about helping teams find the right one.' He credits much of his own approach to taking issues one step at a time, rather than trying to resolve everything at once. 'Understanding the issue is probably half the challenge,' he explains. 'The other part is resolving it.'

That mindset also guides his work with graduates and new hires. Each year, McDermott organises an annual graduates and young engineers' day for staff who have joined the company in the past five years, using it to understand what drives the next generation into the industry.

Beyond technical ability, he looks for attitude, fit and passion for the role, qualities he says matter as much as academic results. He sees it this way:

> *'A leadership role requires the skill to work with all kinds of people, to guide your team to execute the work.'*

Looking back, Hien describes himself as a shy student who balanced classwork with athletics, running competitively until Year 12. He still values the College's culture and hopes his daughter can one day experience it for herself.

Perth has also proved unexpectedly connected. Hien has crossed paths with former classmates who became clients, alumni who now work with him and even a school bus companion he had not seen in three decades.

Fourteen years after he planned to leave, Hien is still finding reasons to stay.

A credit to our College



At John XXIII College, excellence in teaching is nurtured through deliberate support and recognition. One of the clearest expressions of this approach is the College's investment in Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation – the highest level of national recognition available to a classroom teacher.

Across Western Australia, only 39 teachers hold HALT accreditation, awarded against the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. By the end of the year, our College will have seven accredited teachers for 2026, with approximately five more undertaking the process in 2027.

The certification is rigorous and evidence-based. Teachers undertaking it must demonstrate strong practice and reflect deeply on their impact. They are also required to provide evidence of how they have supported colleagues, alongside how their teaching shapes student learning, engagement and wellbeing. The process is not quick, and this is precisely what gives it credibility.

Nationally, teacher certification exists to recognise quality practice and provide a reliable means of identifying and supporting excellent teachers. For schools, this means HALT is more than a personal achievement for the teacher; it also represents a strategic investment in the quality of teaching across the College.

John XXIII College has made a clear commitment to that investment. Staff are invited to apply through an expression of interest process, with the full cost of accreditation funded by the College. This reflects our College values: professional excellence matters, and the educators who demonstrate it should be empowered to lead from within the classroom.

HALT also carries a direct benefit for students. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) framework places student outcomes, including learning, engagement and wellbeing, at the centre of certification. This team of nationally certified teachers helps lift outcomes further by mentoring colleagues and sharing expertise, building a culture of professional growth across our College. HALT accreditation therefore does not end with the teacher who earns it; it strengthens the experience of every student they teach, and often those in classrooms beyond their own.

Joel Wynn, Director of Teacher Professional Growth, said the College views HALT as part of a broader focus on

building a culture of learning and leadership among staff. He explains: 'At John XXIII College, HALT accreditation forms part of our broader commitment to evidence-informed professional growth and teaching excellence. Teachers who achieve certification have demonstrated not only the impact of their own practice on student learning, engagement and wellbeing, but also their capacity to support and influence the growth of colleagues.

> *'By recognising and developing accomplished teachers, we strengthen a culture of continuous improvement that benefits every student across our College.'*

Claire Pierce, a Year 1 teacher who has completed accreditation, said the process has encouraged her to think more intentionally about her practice and its impact on students. 'Achieving HALT accreditation has been a rewarding milestone that has strengthened my confidence as a teacher and helped me recognise my professional growth. The process encouraged me to reflect deeply on my practice and its impact on student learning, while highlighting the importance of sharing effective practices, supporting colleagues, and leading positive outcomes across the school. It has reinforced my commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.'

Secondary mathematics teacher Cat Roberts, who has also attained accreditation, said the program has sharpened her focus on what excellent teaching looks like in the senior years of schooling. 'Completing my HALT accreditation has challenged me to look more closely at the evidence behind my practice and the impact I have on student learning.'

> *'The process has reinforced that excellent teaching is about continually reflecting, refining and growing, while helping students build confidence and achieve their potential.'*

'It has also given me opportunities to collaborate with and support colleagues, sharing effective practices that strengthen learning across our College.'

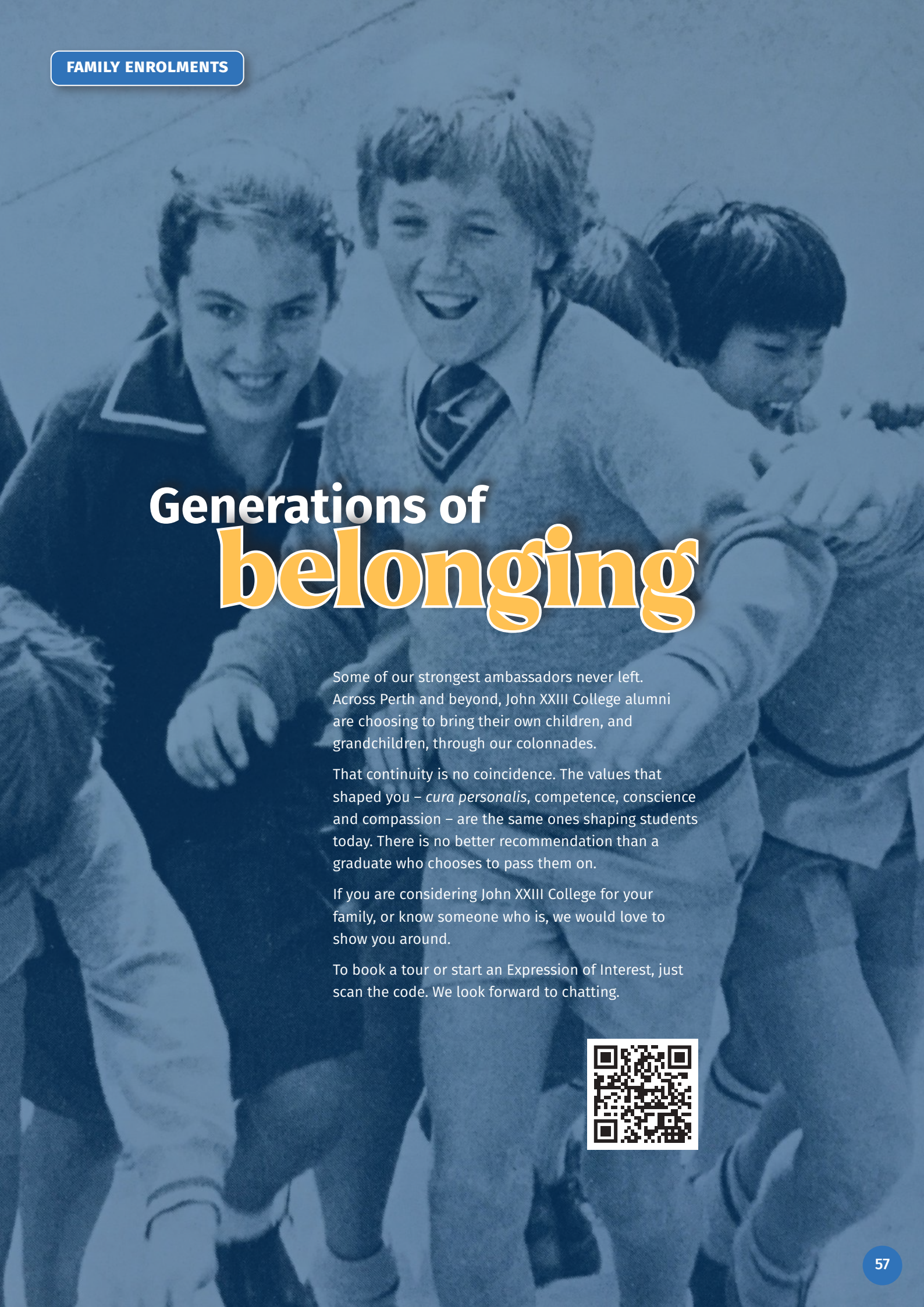
This focus matters. The HALT process asks teachers to do what the best educators already do by instinct: examine their practice against evidence and adjust accordingly. At our College, this work is understood as more than individual ambition; it forms part of a wider culture of shared professional responsibility, in which excellence is supported and extended for the benefit of students.

Nationally certified teachers are recognised not only for the quality of their own teaching, but also for their capacity to mentor others and contribute to whole-school improvement. This is why HALT matters so much to our College: it helps retain outstanding teachers in the classroom and strengthens professional learning, while deepening instructional leadership across the school.

In October, our College hosted delegates attending the Association of Independent Schools of Australia Conference, who had the opportunity to tour the campus. That educators from across the country are choosing to visit says something about what our College has built, through our sustained attention to the craft of teaching.

Supporting teachers to pursue excellence is, in the end, one of the most direct ways our College can invest in its students.





Generations of belonging

Some of our strongest ambassadors never left. Across Perth and beyond, John XXIII College alumni are choosing to bring their own children, and grandchildren, through our colonnades.

That continuity is no coincidence. The values that shaped you – *cura personalis*, competence, conscience and compassion – are the same ones shaping students today. There is no better recommendation than a graduate who chooses to pass them on.

If you are considering John XXIII College for your family, or know someone who is, we would love to show you around.

To book a tour or start an Expression of Interest, just scan the code. We look forward to chatting.

Planting for the future



In June, a team from the Corridors for Carnaby's project arrived at John XXIII College to plant 1,000 banksias at the north-eastern corner of the College grounds, near the ovals. Winter conditions give young trees the best possible start, and the timing could not have been better suited to the task.

The planting marks the College's formal entry into a landmark conservation initiative led by University of Western Australia botanist Professor Kingsley Dixon AO. Launched on 10 June, the Corridors for Carnaby's (C4C) project is backed by a $3.3 million investment from Amazon's Right Now Climate Fund, in collaboration with the Winjan Aboriginal Corporation and Five Rivers Catchment Council. Over three years, it will plant 200,000 Banksia trees across a 10-kilometre stretch of land near Mandurah, forming the largest Carnaby's Black Cockatoo restoration corridor in Western Australian history.

The need is urgent. Found nowhere else on earth, the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo has lost more than half its population in the past 45 years, as habitat and food sources were cleared for farming and urban development. Banksia trees are a lifeline for the birds, flowering at key times of the year when cockatoos need energy to breed and raise their chicks. The program will also install 50 artificial nests and 20 self-cleaning, solar-powered water stations, with nearby farms providing dedicated water sources for the birds.





For Professor Dixon, this particular planting carries a personal significance, tied to the memory of a former John XXIII student who passed away one year ago.

> *'Kate Wagner was an inspiration to this program from the very beginning. She spent hours with me talking through what should be done for the Carnaby's, and she was key to building my link with John XXIII. These banksias are dedicated to her memory, and I know she would be thrilled to see the plantings she dreamed of finally take hold.'*

C4C extends well beyond the Mandurah corridor. The project will also engage 12 Perth schools over three years to plant more than 2,000 Banksia and other trees, developing 'pocket forests' that provide food and nesting hollows while fostering children's interest in science, nature, and conservation. John XXIII College is among those schools. Amazon Web Services is also supporting the project by developing AI-powered technology to detect, identify, and count Carnaby's Black Cockatoos, with an app called Carnaby Connect in development that will allow volunteers to contribute to real-time flock counting from their smartphones.

The site at John XXIII was identified through the work of Sustainability Coordinator Adrian Sims and Head of Grounds Reid Lukasik, who worked with Professor Dixon to select the most suitable location on campus. 'Choosing the site was about more than convenience, it was about giving these trees the conditions to actually thrive here for decades to come,' Mr Sims explains. The banksias planted here will create feeding habitat in our College's own corner of the city – a meaningful addition to the wider restoration effort.

For the College, participation in C4C expresses values held long before the project existed. As a Catholic community guided by the principles of *Laudato Si'*, John XXIII has always recognised its responsibility to the natural world, and to the young people who will inherit it.

Principal Daniel Mahon reflected on what the planting represents: 'Caring for creation is a lived commitment. When our students plant a banksia, they are making a tangible contribution to the survival of a species. Joining the Corridors for Carnaby's project is exactly the kind of action our College community stands for: purposeful, generous, and hopeful.'

The program builds on sustained environmental work already underway at the College. Students, parents and staff at the College have already planted close to 300 banksias on the campus in recent years, with visible results: Carnaby's Cockatoos have already returned to feed on trees nurtured by our community. Students have also joined community garden maintenance days, working alongside parents, alumni, and staff to care for native gardens and support local wildlife.



These sustained efforts reflect an ongoing commitment that asks students not only to learn about the environment, but to take responsibility for it.

Professor Dixon has described C4C as a story of hope, with the community standing firmly behind it. Our College is proud to play its part.

The road quickly travelled



H John XXIII College alumnus ***Xavier Henderson (Class 2023)*** is making his mark in motorsport after being selected as one of just five drivers worldwide to test with Jaguar TCS Racing's Formula E team in London.

The opportunity follows an impressive rookie season in the Australian Formula Ford Duratec Championship. Xavier Henderson finished second outright in Round 2 of the Australian Championship at Sydney Motorsport Park, set the Formula Ford lap record at Queensland Raceway and secured a front-row start for the final race of the season at Phillip Island. He has also been invited to join the Toyota Gazoo Racing CTFROT FIA Formula 3 series in New Zealand in early 2027.

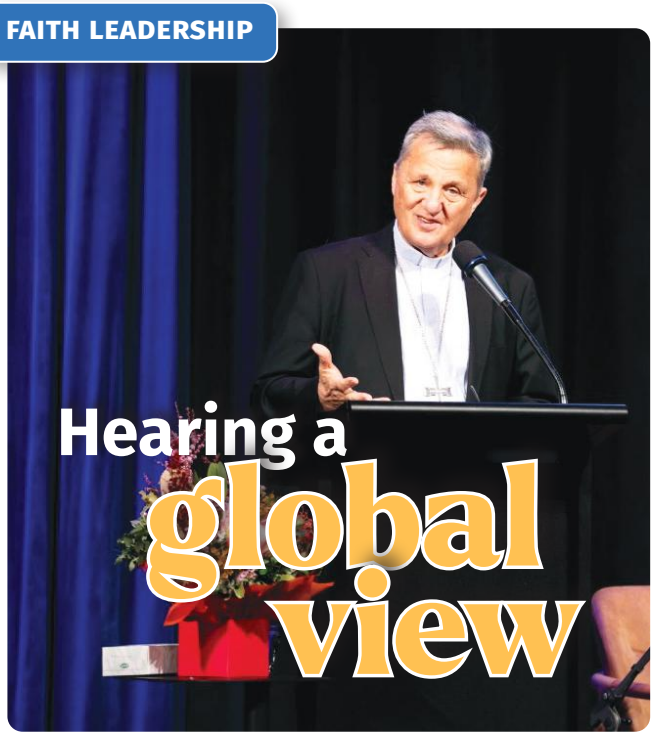




Motorsport has been part of Xavier Henderson's life from an early age. He began riding MotoTrials bikes at five before progressing to karting and Formula Ford. Now managed by Australian motorsport champion Marcos Ambrose, Xavier Henderson continues to take exciting steps in his racing career.

Reflecting on the opportunity with Jaguar TCS Racing, Xavier Henderson said it was something he had dreamed about for years, with the opportunity making the years of training and dedication worthwhile.

With an exciting road ahead, we look forward to following Xavier's journey and seeing where his passion for motorsport takes him next.



Hearing a global view

The Vatican's Secretary General of the Synod joined Perth Catholic leaders, clergy, educators, and students at the College for a day of prayer and dialogue on shared responsibility in the Church.

John XXIII College welcomed His Eminence Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod. Catholic leaders, educators, clergy and community members from across the Archdiocese of Perth gathered for two encounters on the theme 'The Mission We Share: Differentiated Co-responsibility in the Church'.

Presented by the Global Centre for Catholic Leaders at the University of Notre Dame Australia, the Perth gathering formed part of Cardinal Grech's November visit to Australia. His program also included public conversations in Melbourne and Sydney, as well as an address to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference at its plenary meeting.

The Cardinal and The Synod

Born in Qala, on the Maltese island of Gozo, Cardinal Grech was ordained a priest in 1984. A canon lawyer by training, he served as Bishop of Gozo for almost 14 years before Pope Francis appointed him Pro-Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops in 2019. He became Secretary General in September 2020 and elevated to the College of Cardinals that November.

The General Secretariat of the Synod supports the Pope in drawing the whole Church into shared discernment about its life and mission. Under Cardinal Grech's leadership, the Secretariat guided the multi-year Synod on Synodality, which began with listening sessions in parishes, schools, dioceses, and religious communities worldwide and culminated in two assemblies in Rome in 2023 and 2024.

The process has now entered an implementation phase, confirmed by Pope Leo XIV. Dioceses will hold evaluation assemblies in 2027, followed by national and continental gatherings and an ecclesiastical assembly at the Vatican in October 2028.

The College's namesake gives this occasion resonance. Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council in 1962, and the Synod of Bishops was established in 1965, in the Council's final year, by his successor, Pope Paul VI. The synodal path Cardinal Grech now leads traces its origins to that era of openness and renewal.

Breakfast Encounter

The day opened with a Breakfast Encounter. College student leaders Alyssa Mignacca, Joshua Standen, Anashe Marerwa and Charlotte Foot led the opening prayers and Acknowledgement of Country before Cardinal Grech presented synodality.

The student-led prayers centred on the many gifts that make up one Body in Christ. Student leader Joshua Standen offered a reflection on the place of young people in the Church.



Cardinal Grech described synodal gatherings as liturgies, in which participants listen to each other in order to listen to the Holy Spirit. He invited those present to reimagine how the Church listens, discerns and walks together, noting that the synodal path will take a particular shape in every diocese and context.

The Cardinal also turned to French poet Charles Péguy's *The Portal of the Mystery of Hope*, a poetic-theological work that explores the virtue of hope, through a small, humble yet powerful child called Hope. In Péguy's telling, the little girl walks between her older sisters, Faith and Charity. Though she seems the least of the three, she is the one who keeps them moving forward.



Rev Fr Eamonn Conway, Professor of Integral Human Development at the University of Notre Dame Australia, then facilitated a panel discussion with:

- His Eminence Cardinal Mario Grech
- Most Reverend Timothy Costelloe SDB, Archbishop of Perth and President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
- Annette Morey, Executive Director, Catholic Education Western Australia
- Daniel Mahon, Principal, John XXIII College
- Linda Brandon, Parish of St Joseph's Subiaco

Fr Conway opened the discussion by asking each panellist where they had heard good news that morning. Each person recognised God at work in the encounters of the day and each responded with gratitude – the disposition Ignatius placed first in the daily Examen. The exchange gave lived experience to the Ignatian practice of finding God in all things.

Clergy Encounter

Later in the morning, clergy from across the Archdiocese gathered for a second encounter, 'The Mission We Share As Clergy'. Following Cardinal Grech's presentation, Fr Conway facilitated a panel discussion with Cardinal Grech, Archbishop Costelloe, Rev Fr Vincent Conroy of the Archdiocese of Perth, and Reverend Fr Joseph Laundy, Administrator of Applecross Parish and Director of Vocations. A question-and-answer session followed before guests shared lunch.

Listening in the Ignatian Tradition

For a College formed in the Ignatian tradition, the day's theme carried a familiar note. The synodal practice of 'conversation in the Spirit', with its emphasis on attentive listening and shared discernment, echoes habits Ignatian spirituality has long cultivated, among them prayerful reflection and the discernment of spirits.

'Co-responsibility reminds us that the Church's mission is shared, with each person contributing according to their gifts and calling. Every member of our College community has a part to play in our shared commitment to service and justice. Ignatius taught us to discern how God is at work in our lives and to respond generously, and synodality invites the people of God into that same way of proceeding. For our students, the invitation is clear: they have a place in this shared mission today.'

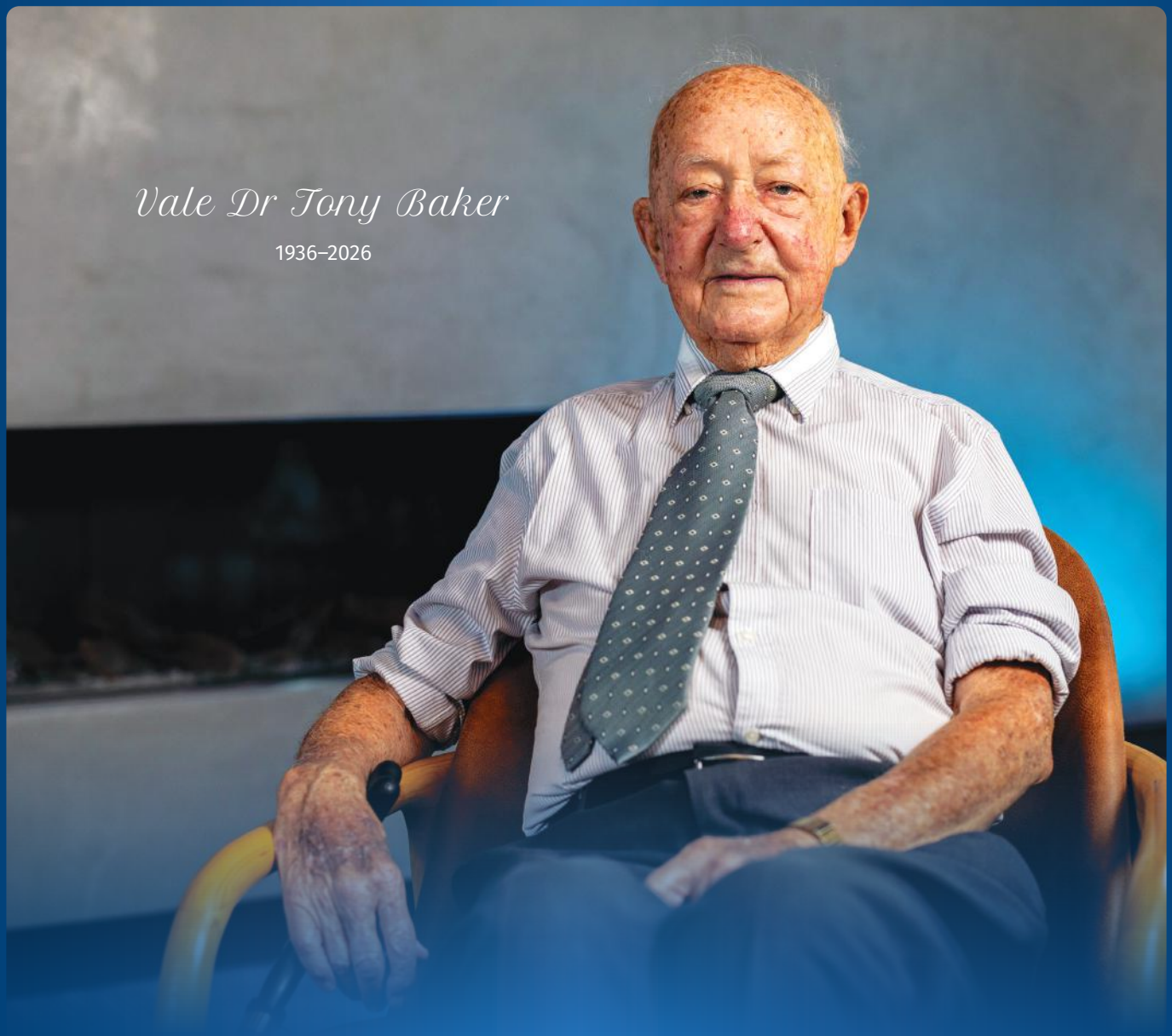
Daniel Mahon
Principal



'At a time when some feel disconnected from institutions and from one another, the Church's call to walk together carries real weight. Synodality calls us into shared responsibility, and our College community lives that each day as students, families, and staff work alongside one another. We were honoured to welcome Cardinal Grech and the Archdiocese of Perth to our campus, and to take part in a conversation that spans the whole Church.'

Janeen Murphy
Deputy Principal – Faith and Mission

> *The College thanks Cardinal Grech, Archbishop Costelloe, the Global Centre for Catholic Leaders and every panellist and guest who joined the encounters, and acknowledges the student leaders who led the gathering in prayer.*



The John XXIII College community remembers with gratitude the life and contribution of former Principal Dr Tony Baker.

Dr Baker served as Principal of John XXIII College from 1988 to 1993, bringing experience from the Brisbane Catholic Education Office and a reputation as a wise, highly regarded educational leader. He guided the College through an important period in its development, gently consolidating College life on the Mount Claremont campus.

Remembered as a gentle, kind presence, Dr Baker took a genuine interest in students' lives and concerns and was often seen walking among them during recess and lunchtime. Staff and parents remember his wisdom, compassion and particular concern for students experiencing disadvantage in their studies or behaviour. His prayerful leadership, commitment to excellence and care for others left an enduring impression on the College community.

Earlier this year, Dr Baker generously shared his reflections and hopes for John XXIII College students: that they would be happy, successful and fulfilled in their vocation, with loving human relationships grounded in their personal relationship with Jesus.

We remember Dr Tony Baker with gratitude, and honour the contribution he made to the story of John XXIII College.

In his own words

Earlier this year, Dr Baker reflected on his time at John XXIII College and shared his hopes for our students. Scan the QR code to watch the interview.

Watch a recent interview with Dr Tony Baker

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