



MLC

2025  
WINTER EDITION

# STRIVE





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**Editor**

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**Image cover**

Three MLC Junior Years students lying on the grass smiling and laughing together

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**Acknowledgment of the First People of the Land**

We respectfully acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar Nation as the traditional owners of the land on which we stand and pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging. It is upon their ancestral lands here on the bay of Minderup on the Derbarl Yerrigan that Methodist Ladies' College stands. We acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-Indigenous Australians to the education of all children and people in this country.



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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Imagine what life must have been like for the first students who walked through the MLC gates in 1907. They were part of an emerging movement of independent girls' schools that believed girls were just as entitled to rigorous academic education as boys, at a time when such thinking was far from the norm.

Higher education for women was controversial. Health care was rudimentary. Too many women died in childbirth. Their voices were absent from public decision making, with Western Australia electing its first female MP, Edith Cowan, only in 1921.

Now fast forward to 2025. Today, young women in Australia live, learn, travel and work with a level of freedom that the women of 1907 could scarcely have imagined. While gender gaps persist in some areas, progress is undeniable. Active efforts continue to strengthen female representation in leadership, STEM and innovation. Women are visible and influential across every sector—from boardrooms and parliament, to laboratories, studios and start-ups. Feminism has moved into the mainstream, and the professional landscape is gradually becoming more diverse, flexible and inclusive.

This transformation from 1907 to 2025 hasn't happened by chance. It's the result of courage, conviction and consistent effort, qualities embodied by the first women who traversed the Great Court and graced the hallways of Centenary Building. They imagined something better for the next generation and took the first steps towards it. It's the MLC spirit that still guides us today.

As this edition of *Strive* and our *Shaping Futures* Strategic Plan both reveal, MLC remains true to its founding purpose: to be a College built for girls, where ambition is expected, where opportunities abound and where her gender is never a barrier to what she chooses to pursue. This belief has always defined us, but it must be backed by action and a vision that grows with every generation.

**Rebecca Clarke**  
Principal





# THE POWER OF SMALL STEPS TOWARDS BIG GOALS

In today's fast-paced world, we want to remind our community to pause, stay present and keep perspective. That's why we chose 'Look Up' as our Prefect theme. For us, it's about trusting that even the smallest steps can lead to something bigger—no matter how insignificant they might feel at the time.

We've both come to appreciate the importance of these smaller steps—from being cast as Recycling Bin #2 in Lucy's first Middle Years Production, *Excuse Emporium*, to nervously treading water in Charlotte's debut Year 7 IGSSA Water Polo match. While these moments might've seemed trivial at the time, we're now incredibly grateful for them. They helped us gain personal skills like tenacity and form lasting friendships with different people.

When we aim for big goals, we often focus only on the result, forgetting the smaller steps, disappointments and mistakes that get us there. 'Look Up' serves as a reminder to keep things in perspective and focus on the next small step forward—because they all add up in the end.

As a Prefecture, our goal is to shape a culture that nurtures positive attitudes. A teacher once told us that it's easy to teach knowledge and a bit harder to teach skills, but attitudes can't be "taught" in the conventional sense. Instead, they're developed through the culture of the groups we're part of—including our school community.

We believe that attitudes like resilience, empathy and optimism are crucial to our success and happiness—perhaps even more than knowledge and skills. As a Prefect group, we're working to build this culture in small ways, encouraging students to look forward towards the opportunities in front of them, try new things and get involved in the community. In doing so, we hope to help them develop these attitudes just a bit more.

It's not just about leading by example—it's about creating spaces where everyone can feel empowered to take their own small steps. Whether it's encouraging someone to try something new or offering support after a setback, every action matters.

By fostering this culture of growth, we aim to help each MLC girl take her next small step with confidence, knowing that even the smallest actions lead to something bigger that she might have ever imagined.

**Lucy Garratt, Head Prefect & Charlotte Swann, Deputy Head Prefect**





# THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY



Kylie Cross, Deputy Principal ELC – Year 6

At MLC, we understand that how a child plays shapes how they learn, grow and connect with the world. Play isn't a break from learning—it is learning.

In a fast-paced society where pressures on young people continue to rise, the simplicity and richness of play remain one of the most powerful contributors to a child's development, from childhood to adolescence.

That's why we're reimagining the role of play in our school environment—creating spaces across campus that not only invite curiosity, discovery and movement but reflect our deep commitment to student wellbeing, growth and joy at every stage.

Play is not just for our littlest learners. It's a vital part of development for all students—shaping creativity, building resilience and strengthening social connection. Through imaginative, active and collaborative play, students build skills that reinforce academic success and lifelong wellbeing.

Our students remind us of this every day. Over the past year, students have enthusiastically shared ideas to enhance their play spaces. They've asked for more places to climb, swing, slide and explore—not just for fun, but because they instinctively know that these moments of challenge and imagination help them grow stronger, braver and more connected.

Their suggestions reflect not only creativity but a clear understanding of how play supports their development. When children ask for adventurous, dynamic, inclusive spaces, they're telling us what they need to thrive.

A well-designed play environment offers much more than physical activity. It's where students learn to negotiate, take risks, develop empathy and practise leadership. It's in the playground—as much as in the classroom—that they build confidence and collaboration skills that will carry them through life.

**“ Play is the work of childhood. It builds confidence, resilience and creativity, helping children grow stronger, braver and more connected.**



Play also supports emotional regulation, giving children space to process emotions, resolve conflict and develop independence in a safe, student-led environment. It builds physical strength alongside mental agility and emotional resilience.

Importantly, play is inclusive. Regardless of background or ability, every child deserves meaningful play experiences. For younger students, unstructured play builds a foundation for learning. For older students, it provides a platform for challenge, agency and creative exploration.

With these principles in mind, we're transforming the heart of our College into a vibrant, multi-purpose space where creativity, movement and connection come together. Designed with natural materials and imaginative structures, this central play space will offer endless opportunities for exploration, problem-solving and relationship-building across year levels. It's a living expression of our belief that wellbeing and student agency are central to learning.

At MLC, we believe that play builds futures—and that every student deserves the space and opportunity to play, imagine and thrive.

Now, as a community, we can help bring this vision to life. I warmly invite you to join me and be part of the adventure. By donating to our fundraising campaign, you can help us build a future where every child has the space to play, imagine and thrive.

**The Adventure starts now. Let's build it together.**



# Be Part of Her Adventure



**The MLC Adventure Hub  
is more than a playground.**

Invest in the space where  
tomorrow's leaders will play today.



**MLC**  
FOUNDATION

**Donate now**



# THE SOUND OF COURAGE

For young violinist, Lily Sawyer (Year 4), music is an act of courage. From competition stages to complex pieces, she's discovered that bravery isn't about fearlessness—it's about showing up, doing your best and having fun. We spoke with her about how courage drives her love for the violin and her future dreams.

## What first inspired your love for the violin?

When I was three, I used to go with my sister to her violin lessons. I loved listening to the music and one day asked my mum if I could try it. After my sister's lesson, I had a five-minute play and never looked back.

## What do you love most about playing?

I love how the violin can express different emotions. It can sound happy or sad depending on how you play it. I also love how the violin grows with you. As you move to bigger sizes, it's like making a new friend each time. That journey is really special to me.

**“Being brave means sticking with it, even when it's tricky.**

## How does courage play a role in your music?

Courage means being brave. When you're performing, even if you're nervous, you just have to have fun. If you enjoy it, you play better—and when you play better, you improve. I've learned it's okay to feel scared—the important thing is to try your best and enjoy the music.

## What's been your most courageous performance?

The Heather Lamont Festival at MLC. I remember the loud clapping from the audience, especially from the

Senior Years students. It gave me so much confidence. I felt courage growing inside me while I played. The applause made me feel stronger and helped me forget my nerves.

## What keeps you motivated to practice?

I practise three to four hours a day, sometimes more on weekends. Even when it's hard, I remind myself that I'm working towards something. Seeing progress and having fun helps me keep going. Being brave means sticking with it, even when it's tricky.

## What's your big dream for the future?

I want to perform at the Sydney Opera House. It's such a big and exciting place, and I think standing on that stage would be amazing. I'm planning to enter a Polish competition, and if I reach the finals, I'll get to play there. That's my goal—and I'm going to keep practicing with courage to get there.





Sally Sanderson and daughter Poppy

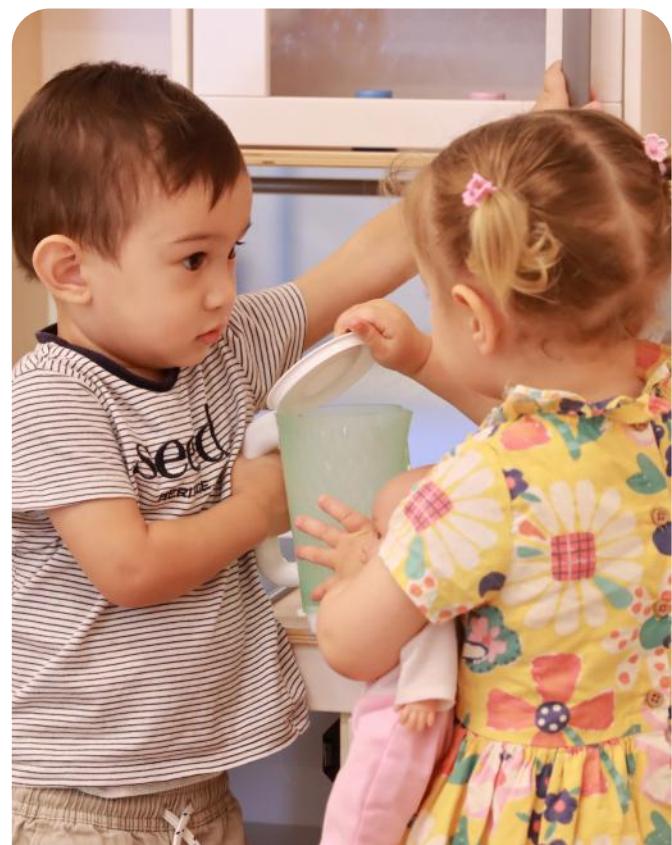
## PLAY DAYS AT MLC: A PLACE TO BELONG

In a sunlit corner of MLC known as the Early Learning Centre (ELC), joy is found in the simplest things: giggles echoing through the walls, toddlers proudly showing off their towers of blocks and parents connecting over a cup of coffee. This is Play Days at MLC—a new initiative welcoming families into a space that's as much about community as it is about childhood wonder.

For Collegian Sally Sanderson (Class of 2005), returning to the College is always nostalgic. So when she heard about Play Days, she knew it would be the perfect way to reconnect. "My oldest daughter Alice was in the ELC, and there were always fun activities when she was here," Sally shares. "We thought Play Days would be something fun for my youngest, Poppy—and we weren't wrong."

Director of Early Learning Melanie Leavers, also a Collegian, sees Play Days as an extension of the College's philosophy. "It's about nurturing curiosity, connection and growth from the earliest age," she explains. "Play Days offers families a welcoming space to come together, celebrate early childhood and build community."

**“ Play Days is a place that's warm, welcoming and encourages community.**

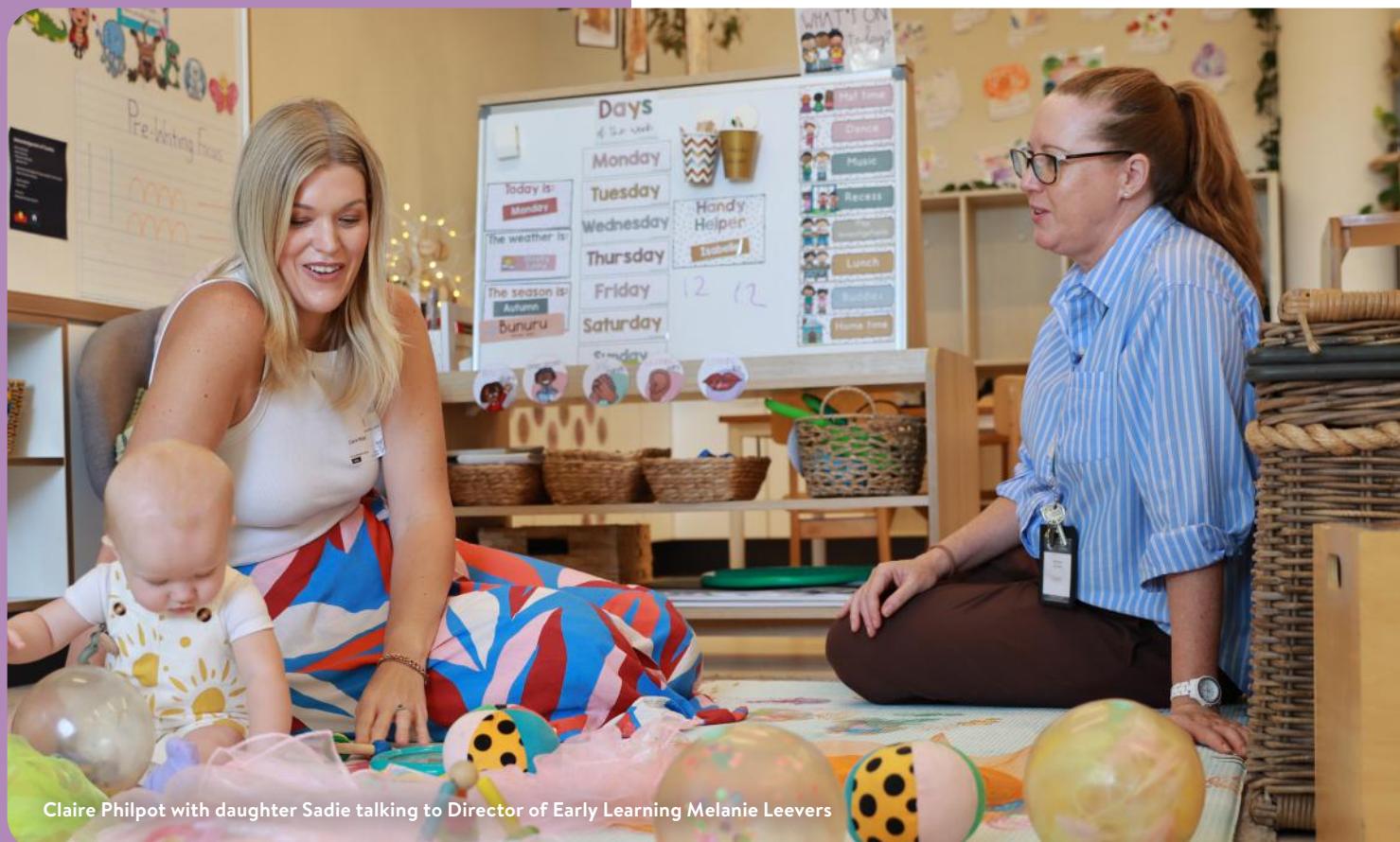


For current parent Claire Philpot, whose eldest daughter Amelia began in the Junior Years, Play Days is a chance to relive those early moments with her youngest, Sadie. “I thought, what a fabulous connection—we’ll start from the very, very beginning this time with Sadie.”

Claire sees playgroup as a vital stepping stone. “You see kids starting in Pre-Primary without that early socialisation and they tend to struggle more with the transition. That’s why it’s so important to develop those skills early through play,” she says. “We put a lot of expectations on our little people, so the earlier we help them make connections, the better.”

Across all these stories runs a common thread: Play Days at MLC isn’t just a program. It’s a place where children, caregivers and educators come together to grow, learn and interact. From the warmth of familiar faces to the chance encounters that blossom into friendships, Play Days is laying the foundation not just for school readiness, but for a lifetime of community and connection.

And as the little ones explore their world—singing songs, drawing pictures and making their first friends—Play Days reminds us of the magic of starting small and the power of belonging.



Claire Philpot with daughter Sadie talking to Director of Early Learning Melanie Leeviers



# MORE THAN A GAME: LEAH'S PATH FROM PLAYER TO MENTOR

For Leah Parry, sport has always been integral. From picking up a softball at seven to representing Australia at the Olympics, her journey has been shaped by perseverance, passion and people. Now MLC's Head of Sport and a recent inductee into the WA School Sport and WA Softball Halls of Fame, Leah draws on decades of experience to inspire the next generation.

## **What motivated you to continue playing softball at an elite level for so many years?**

I come from a sports-oriented family and always loved the game. I made the State team at 12 and represented WA for 28 years. My teammates were like a second family—the camaraderie made me want to keep playing.

## **Was there a pivotal period in your career that prepared you for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics?**

Playing professionally in the US was a turning point. Leaving the 9-to-5 for several months to focus solely on training was a great opportunity. Constant selection pressure and being under the coach's eye taught me how to handle the intensity of the Olympics.

## **Is there a special moment during your Olympic experience that stands out?**

Stepping onto the field for the very first time—that's what makes you an official Olympian. It was also my dad's birthday, which was the icing on the

cake. My family couldn't be there, but I remember looking into the camera and thinking how special this must be for them too.

## **How does your background as an elite athlete influence your role at MLC?**

I want to pass on my passion for sport—it's not just what I do, but who I am. I hope to help girls experience the joy I've found and understand how it can teach them valuable skills like making friends, managing time and persevering through challenges.

## **What advice do you have for aspiring athletes aiming for sporting excellence?**

Seek guidance from those who've been through it. With good time management and goal setting, you can balance school and sport to succeed in both.

**“ I want to pass on my passion for sport—it's not just what I do, but who I am. ”**

# FROM SETBACK TO SPOTLIGHT: MY CHINESE BRIDGE COMPETITION JOURNEY

In 2023, I was on the brink of an unforgettable opportunity: the Chinese Bridge Competition global finals. After a strong performance at the regional final, I felt confident I'd secured my spot. But just days before the competition, I came down with a cold and wasn't able to progress. The fear of losing it all set in—yet that disappointment became a turning point. It gave me the drive to try again.

In 2024, I jumped at the chance to compete in the 17th Chinese Bridge Competition. I wasn't chasing a title—I was chasing growth. Throughout the year, I committed to preparation, both in and out of class. I worked closely with my Chinese teacher Miss Li to refine my speech and prepare for the exam. I seized every opportunity to practise in front of my classmates—so often, in fact, that they memorised my performance!

That preparation paid off: I won first place at both the regional and national finals. If you had told me in 2023 that I had the potential to win, I wouldn't have believed you. Hard work really does pay off—I surpassed even my own expectations.

Arriving in Tianjin for the global competition felt like stepping into a whirlwind. Each day was packed with rehearsals, sightseeing and intense competition. Late nights became routine as I wrote speeches and memorised vocabulary. I got through it with determination—and two cups of coffee every morning!

Despite the exhaustion, I reminded myself to enjoy the moment. I bonded with competitors from around the world. The Icelandic, Moldovan and Mexican teams sang in the back of the bus while I chatted with an Austrian family up front. We laughed about the struggles of learning Chinese and marvelled at how far we'd come.

Of course, there were still moments of doubt—mind blanks on stage, fatigue and a creeping fear that I wasn't good enough. But this time, I approached those moments differently. I reminded myself that resilience isn't about being perfect; it's about showing up, again and again, even when it's hard.

Achieving First Prize in the 2024 Chinese Bridge Competition was more than a personal victory—it was proof that growth comes from struggle, and that setbacks can become springboards.

**Hallie Richards, Year 11**





# MARCHING FORWARD MY OWN WAY



Annette Suann, former MLC parent

The phrase 'March Forward' suggests steady, linear progress—but my journey has been anything but straight. Like many, I've taken detours, faced challenges and navigated unexpected turns.

At MLC's recent International Women's Day event, themed 'March Forward', I listened to five remarkable Collegians share their stories. Their reflections made me think deeply about my own path and what I've learned along the way.

Leaving school, I had no idea what I wanted to do. When I told my Accounting teacher I planned to study Commerce, she laughed. It wasn't my strongest subject, but I lacked a clear direction and thought a Business degree was a solid starting point.

After university, I landed an interview at BHP thanks to a funny misunderstanding. They thought I was from Newman, the mining town, when in fact I went to Newman College in Perth. Honestly, I'm not sure I would've secured the interview on grades alone, but sometimes luck shows up and you just have to run with it. With a little charm and a lot of enthusiasm, I secured a graduate role.



Annette with daughter Britt



**“ What matters is that we keep moving. That we lift each other as we go. That we march together.**

I quickly realised I loved working more than studying. I thrived at BHP and met my husband there. After we married, we moved to London, where I worked in management consulting, followed by relocations to Tokyo and Singapore as we started our family. Raising our three daughters—Britt, Tara and Alicia—became my focus. While I was grateful for the experience, I'd be lying if I said it was easy. I often felt isolated and missed the energy of a dynamic workplace.

Returning to Perth, we were drawn to MLC for its heart, values and diversity—a perfect fit for our daughters. I started volunteering with the Parents of MLC and later joined the Admissions team. Despite my qualifications, self-doubt crept in after my career break. I felt like that nervous 20-year-old again, interviewing at BHP. But MLC reignited my confidence, and I was proud to help create extraordinary experiences for young women. A few years later, I was promoted to Director of Community Relations, a role that brought me immense joy.

I love how the MLC Community lifts each other up. That shared support builds the kind of momentum we need to drive real gender equity. As a result, my daughters flourished. Britt recently earned a Master of Public Health at Harvard.

Tara works in investment banking in Sydney. Alicia is set to join Deloitte as a Data and Artificial Intelligence consultant. MLC helped them believe that anything is possible—and they've carried that belief into the world.

In 2019, I honoured a promise to myself and ran for Council at the Town of Claremont, inspired after presenting about the MLC Early Learning Centre. That same year, I co-founded Cohesion, an event management business, with two incredible women, Tamara and Brooke. In a beautiful full-circle moment, we're now producing the MLC Foundation Gala—right back on campus this November.

Today, as a community leader and small business owner, I'm passionate about championing other women, supporting female-led businesses and building meaningful connections.

Marching forward looks different for each of us. Sometimes we step to the side, take a break—or even step back (though is there really such a thing?) What matters is that we keep moving. That we lift each other as we go. That we march together.

*Annette Suann is Founder of Cohesion Creative and a Town of Claremont Councillor.*





# SIDE BY SIDE: THE CARMICHAEL SISTERS ON ONE CAMPUS

For Elizabeth and Lucy Carmichael, there's something comforting about walking through the gates of MLC each day—knowing their school is more than a place for learning. It's a shared space where they're growing side by side.

In Years 5 and 8 respectively, the sisters are the fourth generation in their family to attend MLC. Their mum, Wendy (Class of 1996), grandmother Rosie (Class of 1970) and great-grandmother Rilda (Class of 1945) all walked the same grounds. But for Elizabeth and Lucy, what makes their journey special isn't just the history—it's the daily connection they share on one unified campus.

"It's lovely," Lucy says. "I get to see Lizzie at all-school events, or I'll just come down to the Junior Years and say hi. We walk in together every morning and talk about our day after school." Elizabeth adds, "In my first week, Lucy came down every day. It made me feel close to her."





Wendy with her daughters Elizabeth and Lucy



MLC students participating in the Big Sister Program



Those shared moments are strengthened by MLC's cross-campus programs, which help build friendships, confidence and a sense of belonging from the earliest years. Initiatives like Peer Support Leaders, the Big Sister Program and the Buddy System bring older and younger students together through regular visits, shared activities and mentoring.

"For my class, our Big Sisters are in Year 9, and we do lots of fun activities together like playing volleyball, which helps us get to know the older girls," Elizabeth says.

**“ It’s really fun having Big Sisters. They help us feel more confident and we get to learn from them too.**

– Elizabeth (Year 5)

Lucy also reflects on the camaraderie built through these interactions during her own time in the Junior Years. "In Year 6, we had morning teas and orientation days with Senior Years students," says Lucy. "By the time I started Year 7, I already knew some of the girls, so it felt a lot less scary."

Mum Wendy says these programs are a big part of what makes the single-campus journey so powerful. "It's super beneficial to have those cross-year group mentors when you're younger. You feel a bit stronger if you've got a bigger kid looking out for you."

She's also seen how much smoother it makes the transition. "When Lucy was going into high school, the stress just wasn't there like I've seen in other families going from different campuses," she says. "It made the change so much easier."

**“ Coming in the Junior Years helped me so much. Knowing MLC already made it so much easier in high school.**

– Lucy (Year 8)

Already familiar with the campus, Elizabeth is looking forward to her own move to the Senior Years. "I'm used to seeing Senior Years teachers and going to Senior Years classrooms, so it doesn't feel like such a jump," she says.

At MLC, the journey isn't about starting over at every new stage—it's about growing stronger with every step. Every connection, every memory and every shared experience unfolds across one campus, where students learn and thrive together from their very first day to their final year.

# SEEING DOUBLE FROM DERBY: A TWIN BOARDING JOURNEY

Starting their MLC journey together from Derby, Year 7 students Shaneira and Tatiyana O'Connor reflect on their first semester in the Boarding House—navigating nerves, finding independence and making new friends.

## How was the move from Derby to Perth to start Boarding together?

**Tatiyana:** We were nervous but excited. It was comforting having her next to me on the plane—I wouldn't have liked coming by myself! Once we got here, it was nice to have a familiar face in a sea of new people.

**Shaneira:** It helps having someone going through the same thing as you, especially when you get homesick. We check in on each other and talk it through.

## What do you miss most about home?

**Shaneira:** Spending time with family and going fishing. We drive or go by boat to this swimming spot with a big tree and rope swing. That's our favourite time together.

## How have you each made your own way since starting school?

**Shaneira:** We're in different classes and bedrooms, which has helped us make our own friends. I've also become more confident.

**Tatiyana:** She has! At home Shaneira was the quiet one—now she's much more talkative because she's had to speak up for herself and do things on her own.



## What's been the best part of Boarding?

**Shaneira:** There's so many fun activities like going to socials. I sign up to all of them because I have friends at other schools and we make more there too.

**Tatiyana:** We're friends with all the Year 7 Boarders and lots of the older girls. They're nice and make us laugh.

## What advice would you give to new Boarders?

**Tatiyana:** Get out there and sign up for things—that's how you make friends!

**Shaneira:** Be confident and talk to people. They're not going to bite—they've been in your position and probably felt the same way you do.

## What are you looking forward to for the rest of the year?

**Tatiyana:** We're excited for what's ahead and can't wait to tell others about how fun and welcoming Boarding is.



**“**Be confident and talk to people. They're not going to bite—they've been in your position and probably felt the same way you do.



# FROM HADLEY HALL TO HOLLYWOOD: THE MAKING OF MIA CHALLIS

The moment Mia Challis (Class of 2014) stepped onto the Hadley Hall stage, something clicked. “My love for acting started there,” she says. “Every time I was on stage, I felt alive.”

Today, Mia is a successful actor based in LA, with credits in Netflix shows *Clickbait* and *Outer Banks*, and two new films on the way. She’s recently completed a Certificate in Criminology and has been accepted into Law.

But like many students, she initially followed the ‘expected’ path. “I was focused on doing well academically before pursuing anything artistic. That came from watching what everyone else was doing,” she says. “So, I finished school, got a good ATAR and started a Bachelor of Science.”

Then, something shifted. “I remember sitting mid-lecture thinking, ‘This isn’t what I should be doing’. I literally walked out, deferred and never went back. I started acting classes in Perth, got an agent and moved to Vancouver.”

As opportunities followed, Mia credits MLC for instilling her work ethic. “Being raised by a single mum and surrounded by strong women, I saw other girls achieving at a high level.”

She also learnt to assert herself in a competitive, male-dominated industry. “I grew up with my voice holding space,” she says. “If you don’t speak up, people will push you aside.”

Despite setbacks—like losing a lead role due to COVID-19 border closures—Mia’s resilience never wavered. “I’ve had a hundred people question why I’m an actor. If I’d listened to even one, I’d be doing something that didn’t fulfill me. Not trying was scarier than failing.”

Reflecting on her journey, she hopes today’s students don’t tie their worth to numbers. “Your ATAR doesn’t define you.

There’s no one path, and you can change your mind. The reason I chose to study now is because I wanted to, not because I felt I had to.”

And while Hollywood is home, Perth still grounds her. “I was once a 17-year-old girl vacuuming the studio to pay for acting classes. Now I get to do what I love every day. So, do what makes you happy—and never stop being yourself.”

“ **Not trying was scarier than failing.**





# THE EVOLVING IMPACT OF AI ON EDUCATION



Robert Dodds, Head of Data Analytics and Systems

What kind of future are we preparing our children for? The rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI) makes that question harder to answer—yet one thing is certain: AI will fundamentally shape how students learn, work and live.

The World Economic Forum forecasts that 39% of core job skills will change by 2030, with AI expertise among the most essential. Yet as innovation accelerates, ethical frameworks and policy struggle to keep pace—leaving educators and families to navigate both the excitement and uncertainty of what lies ahead.

At MLC, we're not waiting to see what happens. We're leading with intention—grounding our approach in excellence, innovation and the holistic development of every student.

## PUTTING HUMANS AT THE CENTRE

We see AI not as a replacement for human connection, but as a powerful tool to enrich the learning experience. Microsoft's naming of its AI as 'Copilot' captures this well: the user is the pilot, setting the course, while AI supports, enhances and extends what's possible.

MLC students are already using AI to elevate their learning—generating images for storytelling, composing music, coding solutions, summarising research and tailoring explanations to suit their needs. AI is becoming a creative, personal and problem-solving partner: helping students explore ideas more deeply, express themselves in new ways and take greater ownership of their learning.





“AI is becoming a creative, personal and problem-solving partner—helping students explore ideas more deeply, express themselves in new ways, and take greater ownership of their learning.

### INTEGRITY IN THE AGE OF AI

As AI becomes more embedded in learning, questions around academic integrity naturally arise. “Can’t students just use AI to cheat?” The short answer is yes—just as they could with calculators, the internet or even the written word when they first appeared. But the more important question is why a student might misuse AI, and how educators can respond.

To explore this, we undertook a pioneering action research project with teachers across the College. Together, we created a clear and consistent framework for responsible AI use in assessments—one that upholds academic integrity while reflecting the realities of modern learning.

But our focus goes beyond policy. It’s about cultivating a culture of ethical AI use, where students understand not just how to use these tools, but when, why and to what end. We are preparing them to engage with AI thoughtfully and creatively, using it to deepen learning rather than shortcut it.

### BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Our commitment to AI extends beyond student use—it’s transforming how our teachers teach, too. Through CIARA, a custom-built AI coach, staff are supported in designing learning experiences that foster the deeper capabilities today’s students need—like collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. This innovation is helping teachers personalise their approach, reflect on their practice, and ultimately enhance student engagement and outcomes.

### SHAPING THE FUTURE

AI will keep evolving—and so will we. At MLC, we’re not only preparing students for the world ahead; we’re empowering them to shape it. Through dedicated programs, hands-on projects and classroom integration, students are learning to use AI creatively, ethically and effectively. Whether they’re co-designing with generative tools, analysing data or exploring responsible innovation, our students are building the skills—and the mindset—to lead with confidence in a future still being written.



# EMBRACING THE CHAOS: RETHINKING CAREERS EDUCATION

When I stepped into the newly created role of Head of Futures at MLC, I wasn't just starting a new job—I was adopting a new mindset. In a world where change is constant and the future of work is unpredictable, traditional career paths no longer apply. That's why I've grounded our Careers Education approach in the Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC)—a framework that embraces complexity, uncertainty and opportunity.

CTC recognises that patterns and unpredictability can coexist. Our students are entering a future shaped by artificial intelligence (AI), climate change, automation and jobs that don't yet exist. Rather than offering a fixed roadmap, my role is to help students build a compass—developing the perspectives, skills and confidence to navigate this evolving landscape.

At MLC, Careers Education reflects this shift. We've moved away from destination-based questions like "What do you want to be?" Instead, we ask "What problems do you want to solve?" or "What brings you energy and purpose?" This values-driven, inquiry-led approach is embedded in every interaction—from individual guidance to hands-on programs that spark curiosity and build agility.

Our Year 10 Careers and Employability Program is a strong example. Using the BECOME Education platform, students explore who they are, what matters to them and what excites them. Reflective journaling, structured questioning and future mapping help students shape personal, purpose-driven pathways—not follow a pre-set plan.





Year 12 students at a careers event at Curtin University

In Year 9, students participate in Future Foundations Day. They identify their strengths through career storytelling, skills-matching exercises and immersive experiences such as virtual reality (VR) scenarios. They begin exploring the future of work and consider emerging fields like green innovation, cyber ethics and human-centred design.

This year, we also launched the MLC Futures Hub—an interactive space designed to support students on their career journey. The Hub helps students discover more about themselves while engaging with a range of curated virtual micro-experiences. Through dynamic online modules, they can explore fields such as allied health, environmental science and UX design. These low-pressure, high-impact experiences encourage exploration, self-reflection and confidence-building—essential traits in today's rapidly changing world.

The Futures Hub is part of our broader commitment to nurturing curious, capable decision-makers. Our goal isn't just to inform students about possible careers—it's to equip them with the agency and adaptability to create their own futures.

“ Rather than offering a fixed roadmap, our goal is to help students build a compass—one that empowers them to navigate, adapt and thrive in an unpredictable world.

Being Head of Futures means holding space for both hope and uncertainty. It's about building partnerships with teachers, parents, Collegians and employers to support student growth—not perfection. It means recognising that success doesn't come in one shape or form, and that each student—whether they pursue ATAR, VET or a different path entirely—is capable and full of potential.

So, what does the future of futures look like? We're still not sure. But what we do know is that the future isn't fixed—and that's a good thing. By embracing the chaos, we empower our young people not just to adapt to what's coming—but to shape it.

**Ellie Wood, Head of Futures**



# A NIGHT ON SOUP PATROL

When I first joined Soup Patrol, I thought it was just another volunteering opportunity. I was eager to meet new people and try something different, but I didn't expect the lessons I'd learn or how it would change my perspective.

*The night begins at the Red Cross headquarters, where we prepare the soup, bread, fruit and other essentials. After packing the van, we head to Royal Perth Hospital to collect the soup. At each stop, we serve food and interact with people.*

Before I started, I had assumptions about homeless people. But after meeting them, I realised how wrong I was. One man joked with us; another smiled and thanked us warmly. They weren't the people I'd imagined, and that made me reflect on how easy it is to stereotype.

The experience made me understand the quote: "When you paint people with stereotypes, you miss all the colours that make them real." I learned that homelessness doesn't define a person. Everyone has their own story, their own personality—and it was humbling to be reminded of that.

But perhaps the most valuable lessons came from the unexpected conversations. I learned to listen without judgement, appreciate the resilience in others and realise how quickly life can change. It taught me empathy in a way no classroom ever could.

Soup Patrol has been a chance to step outside of my comfort zone, meet new people and open my heart to others. If you ever have the opportunity, I highly recommend it. It's more than just handing out food—it's about connecting with people and seeing them for who they truly are.

*— Mandy Li, Year 12*

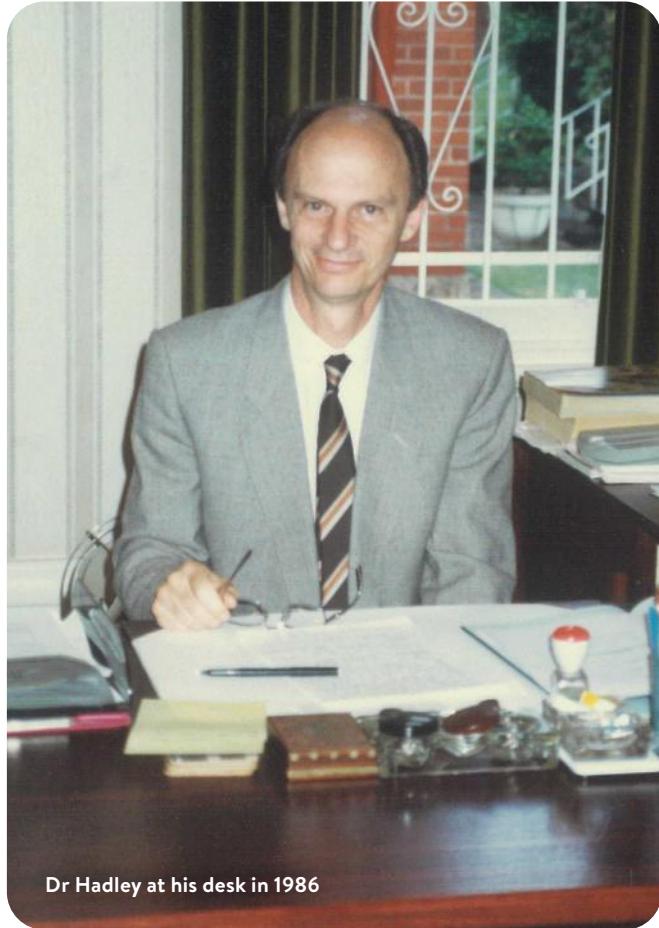


*Mandy (right) preparing soup on patrol*



# THE MAN BEHIND THE BUILDING

When Hadley Hall was dedicated in 1992, it honoured the transformative leadership of Dr Geoff Hadley, Principal of MLC from 1973 to 1992. During his tenure, enrolments rose by 200 and Music & The Arts flourished—a legacy that continues today.



Dr Hadley at his desk in 1986

In *Risks Worth the Taking* (2011), Dr Hadley wrote:

“I had to learn quickly the technique of the duck pond: looking calm and peaceful on the top of things while paddling furiously underneath.”

This ‘paddling’ included major campus upgrades—from new labs and classrooms to the development of Langsford, Barclay and Connell Houses—all managed without modern technology.

Together with his wife Lillian, Dr Hadley reimagined MLC Boarding, transforming it from a *house* to a *home*. They introduced House systems, leadership opportunities and a more inclusive culture, helping Boarders feel truly part of the College community.

As a leader, Dr Hadley believed in surrounding himself with capable people and empowering them to do their best work. One long-serving teacher would later thank him for his “light hands on the reins” and the deep trust he placed in staff.

His legacy also included meaningful shifts in school culture: thanks to his advocacy, Principals are no longer required to live onsite, a precedent-setting move for WA independent schools.

As Dr Hadley celebrates his 90th birthday, we honour a leader whose bold, thoughtful choices continue to shape MLC’s future. It is indeed the risks worth taking today that will ensure MLC’s longevity tomorrow.

# FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

It may be hard to imagine, but the iconic Great Court—now the beating heart of our campus—wasn't always MLC's central gathering place. In the early years, students and staff favoured the rear of Centenary Building. Boarders dashed up and down the iron spiral staircase, and recreation often meant a swim in the Swan River, accessed by wooden steps.

From the 1910s to the 1960s, the Great Court was planted with topiary trees, orchards and vegetable gardens. Visitors arrived by car—and even horse and buggy—via Stirling Road, exiting along the horseshoe path to Corry Lynn Road.

MLC's vision originated with architect James Hine, who imagined a grand College perched atop the hill. The main building, now Centenary, was designed in three stages, each triggered by student enrolment milestones. Completed in 1922, it then gained a west wing in 1926. Following the passing of neighbour Judge Burnside in 1929, the College acquired his estate, allowing the campus to evolve into what we recognise today.



## CAMPUS TIMELINE:

**1907:** Architect James Hine wins the preferred building design for MLC.

**1919:** The 'blank wall' second stage incorporating the Assembly Hall and front steps to Reception completed.

**1929:** Judge Burnside's property and house purchased, extending MLC land area.

**1950:** Classrooms added to western side of Centenary Building.

**1939:** Barclay House opened.

1900s

1910s

1920s

1930s

1940s

1950s

1913



**1908:** Centenary Building first stage completed. MLC opens in February with 54 students.

**1926:** A west wing added to the Centenary Building.

**1947:** Grounds replanted.

**1953:** Coronation rose garden planted at the front of the Centenary Building.

**1957:** Gertrude Walton Memorial Library opened.



**1922:** The Centenary Building and James Hine's original vision completed.

**1959:** Bosisto Hall completed.

For much of our history, buildings were named after Principals and Council life members. That changed in 2011, when the Meredith Taylor Health and Sports Centre became the first to be named after a community member—highlighting the wider circle of influence within our College.

The first full campus Master Plan was unveiled in 1986, MLC's 90th year. Even earlier, ambitious ideas had been circulating—including water taxis to ease growing highway traffic and a performing arts precinct that would relocate Gertrude Walton beside Hadley Hall. One particularly bold concept proposed two residential buildings extending out over the river, where the Marjorie Lyon Building now stands.

Today, many of those once daring dreams have come to life. As we prepare to launch our next Master Plan, we once again look ahead—inspired by the past and ready to shape the next chapter in MLC's remarkable story.

**Michelle Campbell, MLC Archivist**



**1962:** First on campus swimming and diving pool added.

**1971:** Langsford House opened.

**1979:** Sumner House built.

**1991:** Hadley Hall completed.

**1994:** Pre-Primary alongside Barclay House opened.



**2008:** Middle School (now Marjorie Lyon House) opened.

**2011:** Meredith Taylor Health and Sports Centre completed.

**2018:** Aquatic Precinct opened.

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

**1972:** Walter Shepherd Resource Centre opened.

**1967:** Dining Hall completed.



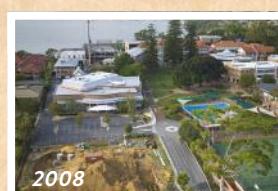
**1982:** Connell House opened.

**1965:** Physics and Biology Laboratory and Science Wing opened.



**2017:** Rebecca Cody Early Learning Centre opened, and renovation of Junior Years completed.

**2006:** Underground carpark and tennis courts completed.



# COMMUNITY AND COLLEGIAN EVENTS



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PANEL AND BREAKFAST

In celebration of International Women's Day (IWD), MLC and the Collegians' Association hosted an inspiring panel and networking breakfast focused on women in sport. Featuring five exceptional Collegians, the discussion explored leadership, resilience and the 2025 UN Women Australia theme, 'March Forward', through the lens of sport and empowerment.

## COLLEGIAN PIN GIVING CEREMONY

A long-standing tradition where new students with family ties to MLC receive a special blazer pin, this event celebrates a legacy and connection. Held on the first morning of the school year, the Collegians' Association welcomed the next generation—including one five-generation family—into the MLC Community.



## SUNSET ON THE GREEN

Our first community event of the school year is always a highlight in the MLC calendar. Parents, caregivers, teachers and staff came together on the Great Court for a wonderful evening filled with hospitality, refreshments and meaningful conversations.

## MLC ROWING SEASON LAUNCH

We launched the season with a special sundowner overlooking the magnificent Swan River—a location that holds great meaning to our girls. Bringing together rowers, families, coaches, staff and supporters with our new families, we shared our season goals and celebrated the strength of our community.



## COLLEGIAN BOARDING DINNER

“I was an MLC Boarder for six years, so returning after two years away felt like coming home. This event reminds the current girls of the lasting sense of belonging they gain when they too become a Collegian, especially as Boarders.”

– **Edwina Kilpatrick (Class of 2023)**



## PER ARDUA WELCOME EVENT

The first event of the Per Ardua calendar kicked off with a morning tea that brought together past staff, parents and friends of the College. It was a great opportunity to reconnect and reflect on their shared connection at MLC, as well as celebrate Dr Hadley’s 90th birthday. Thank you to Lynne Hughes and Jenny Borrill for helping make the morning a success.

## PARENTS OF MLC QUIZ NIGHT

The Parents of MLC Quiz Night was a fun and interactive evening where people relaxed, reconnected and met new faces. Friendly rivalries emerged as teams got competitive in the race to win, all while strengthening the sense of community that supports us all.



# OUR WORLDWIDE COLLEGIAN COMMUNITY

From the Adelaide Hills to New York City, our Collegian network is truly global.

Traveling far and wide to pursue their passions, MLC Collegians have made their mark on an international scale. Take a trip around the world as we catch you up on what some of our alumni have been up to since departing from the College.



## CHANDRA HENRY (NÉE SENATHIRAJAH) (CLASS OF 1993)

Chandra's career in special education began in Manjimup and soon took her to a summer camp in Florida for children with special needs—an experience that led to meeting her husband. She went on to teach in London before settling back in Florida, where she now works with both students with disabilities and gifted learners. Throughout her journey, Chandra has taught students of all abilities and was proud to be named Teacher of the Year at one of her schools. "The best part of my job is hearing their joyful shrieks and giggles when they discover something new. Together, we laugh, learn and break down barriers."



## TANYA BROWN (NÉE HARDY) (CLASS OF 1997)

Tanya has built a 25-year career spanning property, hospitality and philanthropy, taking her from Australia to the global stage. In 2023, she was an honoured guest at the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin—a celebration of courage and inclusion. Closer to home, she led Australia's bid to host the 2027 Games in Perth. "I'm inspired every day by the bravery and joy of those overcoming barriers to create a more inclusive Australia and world."



## OLIVIA SARTORI (CLASS OF 2022)

Graduating with a Musical Theatre degree from the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts feels surreal for Liv. "Moving to New York was always the dream—there's nowhere better than Broadway to dive into theatre. She's performed in plays, musicals and landed dream roles, with a new play workshop lined up post-graduation. "New York is chaotic, noisy and overwhelming—but it's exactly as I imagined. I'm beyond grateful to be living my dream and can't wait to see where this journey takes me next."



### OLIVIA MCSWEENEY (CLASS OF 2024)

From Perth to India, Darwin and soon the UK, Liv's cricket journey is truly global. After debuting in A Grade for Subiaco-Floreat at just 15, she's represented WA's 2nd XI and U19 squads, as well as Australia's U19 indoor cricket team. "I'm incredibly excited for next year—I'll be playing for Essex in England for six months and look forward to being called up to the Irish women's team for the World Cup."



### ROS THOMAS (CLASS OF 1984)

In her 35 years of journalism and writing, Ros has reported from war zones, newsrooms and communities worldwide. She's written over 400 newspaper columns, three bestselling books and award-winning short stories—but her latest project is her most personal yet. *Solitary: The Loneliness Project*, developed during a year-long Churchill Fellowship across the UK, Europe and the US, explores the growing epidemic of loneliness. It has sparked national conversation and solidified Ros as a leading voice on one of today's most pressing issues.



### MARLENE ROMEO (NÉE CRONE) (CLASS OF 2009)

After over a decade performing with orchestras across Europe, including touring with Andrea Bocelli, Marlene returned to Perth in 2021. She now teaches violin at MLC, co-led the early stages of the Djinda Strings program, and has students winning prizes at competitions and festivals. Outside the College, she runs a private studio, performs professionally, examines for the Australian Music Examinations Board, and serves as Vice President of Australian Strings Association WA. "Returning to the place that shaped me as a young musician and giving back through music education has been incredibly meaningful."



### KATE LAURIE (NÉE HOOKER) (CLASS OF 1993)

After discovering winemaking's perfect blend of science, creativity and the outdoors, Kate took her passion to Champagne, France—the only foreigner in her class at just 19. "I quickly learned to say yes to any opportunity, no matter how daunting." Now, 25 years into running her family winery in the Adelaide Hills, Kate is a pioneer of Australian Sparkling—shaped by her French training, supported by family and driven by a love for the craft that continues to earn accolades.

# COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ★ ★ ★ ACHIEVEMENTS

### DR DOROTHY ERICKSON AM (CLASS OF 1956)

A renowned jeweller, historian and writer, Dorothy has made an extraordinary mark on art, craft, design and heritage in Australia and around the world. This year, Dr Erickson was inducted into the WA Women's Hall of Fame for her ongoing work in this field.



Dorothy (first row on the left) at Government House

### KELLIE BENDA (CLASS OF 1985) |

#### FORMER PARENT | COLLEGE COUNCIL MEMBER 2005 – 2009



Kellie has been appointed to the Board of the National Reconstruction Fund Corporation (NRFC), bringing extensive experience across agriculture, energy, resources and technology. Based in Perth, Kellie adds a valuable national perspective as the NRFC supports innovation, manufacturing and economic growth across Australia.

### MIA GORDON (CLASS OF 2020)

Mia made headlines in 2025 with a standout performance at the Perth Track Classic. At just 22 years old, she delivered a personal best throw of 59.17 metres—an extraordinary improvement of nearly five metres—earning her place as the 9th best throw in Australian history.



## AWARDS

Congratulations to the following MLC Community members.

### AUSTRALIA DAY 2025 HONOURS LIST

#### PROF. GRAEME JOHN HANKEY

Former MLC parent to Genevieve (Class of 2004) and Michelle Hankey (Class of 2006), Prof. Hankey was appointed as Office of the Order of Australia (AO), for his distinguished service to medicine as a neurologist and stroke physician, and to research as an editor and author.

#### TANYA TREVISON

Former Council member and parent to Eliza Snellgrove (Class of 2016), Tanya received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to architecture and business.



### MARGIE OLDFIELD (NÉE DAVIS) (CLASS OF 1985)

Margie has been recognised as Volunteer of the Year at the WA Sport Awards for her incredible work empowering young women through cricket. As the driving force behind Team Connect, Margie is helping school-aged girls across Perth grow in confidence, resilience and community through the power of sport.



### CLAIRE WANG (CLASS OF 2025)

Year 12 student Claire has been awarded her AMusA diploma in both violin and piano—an exceptional dual achievement. The prestigious diploma recognises her advanced performance standard and deep commitment to music, placing her among a select group of young Australian musicians to reach this level in two instruments.



### CHARLOTTE SPENCER (CLASS OF 2024)

Charlotte has been awarded the prestigious Julia Gillard Women in Leadership Scholarship at Curtin University. She will undertake a Physiotherapy Honours degree, with plans to pursue Medicine. Charlotte's leadership, service and academic excellence at MLC continue to shape her commitment to helping others through healthcare.



### JOSIE FOUNTAIN | MLC CELLO TUTOR

Josie received a Department of Culture and the Arts grant to study in London with acclaimed baroque cellist Kinga Gaborjani. In January 2025, she travelled to the UK to undertake advanced training and attend specialist courses, further enriching her expertise in historically informed performance.

# Vale

## 2024

**Michelle Carroll** (née Woodhead)  
(Class of 1969)

**Krista Bates**—Former MLC parent

**Jean Dowie** (née MacNee)  
(Class of 1943)

**Ian Ford**—Former MLC parent  
and former staff member

## 2025

**Dr. Penny Flett AO**—Former Chair of MLC College Council

**Jonathan Osborne**—  
Former MLC parent

**Dorothy Whately** (née Stevens)  
(Class of 1954)

**Glenys McDonald**  
(Class of 1961)

**Georgia Malone**  
(Class of 1997)

## THE KING'S BIRTHDAY 2025 HONOURS LIST

### PROF. TIMOTHY WILLIAMS JONES

Former MLC parent to Stephanie Jones (Class of 2010), Prof. Jones was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his significant service to medical research, particularly to paediatric endocrinology and diabetes.

### SUSAN PATRICIA THOMAS

Former MLC parent to Amanda (Class of 2003) and Katherine Thomas (Class of 2006), Susan was awarded Order of the Medal of Australia (OAM) for her service to business through governance roles.

### ROBERT BRUCE WILLIAMSON

Former MLC parent to Rose Williamson (Class of 2020) and former Foundation Member (2018), Robert was Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to engineering.

# HER LIFE'S WORK

The Legacy of Dr Penny Flett AO (1949-2025), Former Chair of MLC College Council.



**Dr Penny Flett AO's legacy is defined by compassion, service and leadership. A Centenary Medal recipient and WA Australian of the Year, Penny was a trailblazer in the aged care and disability sectors, advocating for dignity and reform.**

Born in England, Penny lived in Nigeria and North Borneo in her younger years, before boarding at Mayfield School in East Sussex at age 10. Her early life, marked by independence, set the stage for a career of pioneering firsts.

At 17, she moved to Adelaide, where she studied Medicine and met her husband, Peter. Their journey took them to RAAF Base Butterworth in Malaysia, where Penny became the first woman to hold a male rank and first female doctor in the post-WWII Royal Australian Air Force.

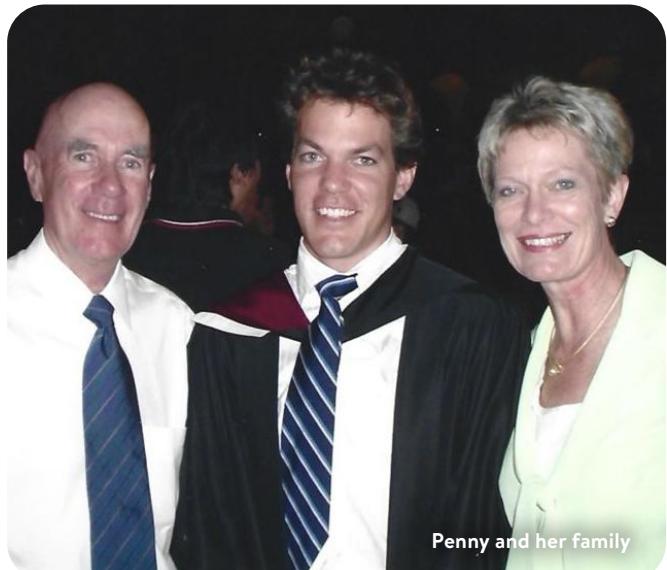
Returning to Australia, she earned a Diploma in Geriatric Medicine and was appointed Medical Superintendent at Homes of Peace, later Brightwater Care Group. There, she led groundbreaking reforms and established a world-first brain injury rehabilitation service.

In 1998, the Commonwealth Government enlisted Penny to help establish what is now the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC), the national body overseeing aged care.

Over the years, Penny's leadership earned national recognition: Telstra Business Woman of the Year (1988), the Centenary Medal for Aged Care (2003), WA Australian of the Year (2009) and an Officer of the Order of Australia (2014).

Beyond Brightwater, Penny chaired the Australian Bravery Decorations Council and contributed to an innovative Federal Government home care pilot. She also served as Pro Chancellor of UWA, the first female president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA (CCIWA) and Chair of the WA Aged Care Advisory Council.

From 2012 to 2018, Penny brought her expertise to MLC as Chair of the College Council, helping to shape key initiatives including scholarships and campus projects.



**Penny and her family**

After retiring in 2016, Penny embraced her creative passions—painting, quilting, playing cello and piano, and sailing with her husband.

Penny's impact is grounded in her unwavering advocacy for the lives of others. She is survived by her husband Peter, son Tom and two grandchildren. Her influence will continue to inspire the MLC Community and far beyond.

Light the way

MLC

# SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2025

Enjoy an unforgettable night of fun, philanthropy, dining and dancing. MLC's bold new Master Plan will be unveiled, illuminating an exciting new chapter in the MLC story.

Join us to celebrate the impact of the MLC Foundation in lighting the way for MLC girls now and in the future.



Scan the QR code  
to find out more.



MLC  
FOUNDATION



## METHODIST LADIES' COLLEGE

**PER ARDUA AD ALTA**

A College of the Uniting Church

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