

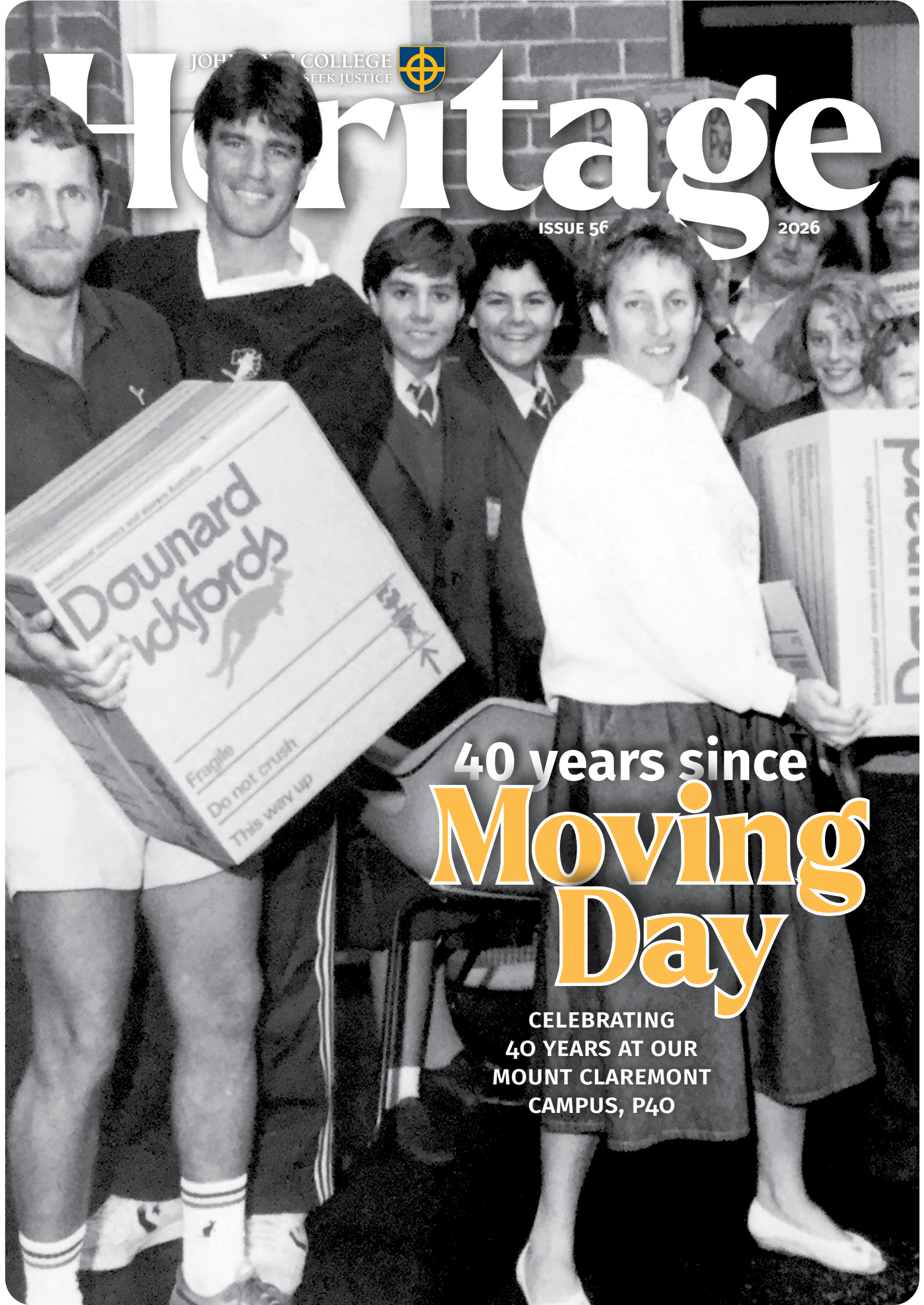
JOHN MARY COLLEGE
SEEK JUSTICE



Heritage

ISSUE 56

2026



40 years since
**Moving
Day**

CELEBRATING
40 YEARS AT OUR
MOUNT CLAREMONT
CAMPUS, P40

Greater than
**the sum of
our parts**



H The decision to consolidate four separate campuses, Loreto, St Louis, Campion, and Koolyangarra, into one single, purpose-designed facility was truly visionary.

As we mark forty years since our College's relocation to our Mount Claremont campus in 1986, then, we honour and celebrate the tenacity and courage of those who worked so hard to establish John XXIII College on one campus.

The architectural approach that emerged in our new campus design was deeply considered and grounded in an educational philosophy that continues to guide us today: horizontal movement between classrooms to foster connection; accessibility for all; Mediterranean, monastic architecture with colonnades and Spanish-inspired tiles evoking contemplation; and the deliberate positioning of key spaces, with the Chapel as our spiritual focal point.

We are particularly grateful to those who founded our Mount Claremont campus, and we acknowledge with deep appreciation those who continue to provide faithful stewardship through their service on College Council, Sub-Committees of Council and Parent Associations. Their collective commitment, along with that of our staff and students, ensures we remain faithful to our founding vision, while responding thoughtfully to contemporary learning needs.

As we honour our past during this milestone year, we also remain firmly focused on the future and our ongoing commitment to Inspiring Educational Excellence.

The commencement of 2026 has seen the addition of seven purpose-designed temporary classrooms, four dedicated to Secondary School use and three for Primary School use. These new classrooms have facilitated the reduction in class sizing across the College. In Years 5 and 6, the College has transitioned from two classes of 30 students to three classes of 25–26 students per class. Throughout the Secondary School, core classes of 32 students have been reduced to no more than approximately 27–28 students across all year levels.

This focus on smaller class sizes reflects our sustained determination to provide an educational environment where each student can be known, valued, and challenged to realise their full potential.

A second significant initiative designed to support our strategic intent of Inspiring Educational Excellence is leveraging our global Loreto and Jesuit relationships.

When students engage with peers, ideas, and realities from around the world, they develop critical skills that cannot be taught in isolation. They learn to listen more carefully, think more creatively, and respond more thoughtfully. Global connections in education challenge us to seek the more universal good (or the *magis*) and given we live in a time of extraordinary global interconnection, we remain mindful of its importance.

Perhaps most importantly, though, global learning reminds us that we are all part of something bigger. The challenges we face, whether climate change or ethical technology use, are not bound by geographical borders. Similarly, solutions to these issues transcend national boundaries. As we seek to form students as leaders, problem-solvers, and changemakers, we also strive to equip them with a global lens.

It is with this understanding that the College has formalised its relationship with a Mary Ward school in England and a Jesuit school in Scotland.

The first partnership is with St Mary's School Ascot, located about an hour and a half from London. Founded in 1885 by the Loreto Sisters, St Mary's is an independent Catholic boarding school for girls in Berkshire, England, with about 390 students aged 11 to 18.

Our second partnership is with St Aloysius' College Glasgow, in Scotland. St Aloysius' College is a Catholic, coeducational, independent school for students aged 3 to 18. Founded in 1859 by the Society of Jesus, the College has a proud history of Jesuit education in the heart of Glasgow and remains Scotland's only Jesuit school.

The Heads of English and Religious Education from each school recently met to explore the potential of a newly developed, innovative project across both subjects. A project developed utilising the expertise from three schools from three countries; our campus reach certainly continues to extend.

As you read through this edition of *Heritage*, I trust you will be inspired by the stories of our current students and distinguished alumni whose achievements and contributions exemplify the vision that brought us to Mount Claremont forty years ago.

Daniel Mahon
College Principal

Take a video tour of
our purpose-built
temporary classrooms



The Class of 2025



H The Class of 2025 has reached the culmination of their journey at John XXIII College with results that honour both their academic dedication and their formation as people of conscience and compassion.

These outcomes reflect a cohort that embraced the Ignatian call to strive for *magis* across diverse fields of study. From exceptional performances in ATAR examinations to Subject Certificates of Excellence spanning Religion and Life, Economics, Human Biology, and Literature, these graduates demonstrated intellectual curiosity and scholarly rigour throughout their final year.

Yet the achievements captured in percentiles and rankings represent only part of what the Class of 2025 accomplished.

Throughout their time at our College, these young people developed the capacity for critical thought, creative expression, and ethical reflection that defines an Ignatian education.

They learned to see God in all things and to recognise their responsibility to serve others with whatever gifts they possess.

Four graduates were selected to exhibit their visual artworks at *The West Australian Pulse* exhibition, while two received invitations to audition for the prestigious Performing Arts Perspectives WA.

Students pursuing vocational pathways achieved 28 VET certificates and endorsed work placements,

and those enrolled in Curtin UniReady reached successful completion. Each pathway reflects careful discernment about how best to use emerging talents in service to community.

What distinguished this graduating class extended beyond individual accomplishments.

They approached their final year with mutual support, demonstrating care for one another whilst navigating the demands of senior studies.

They embodied what it means to be contemplatives in action, balancing rigorous academic work with genuine concern for their peers and engagement with the broader College community.

As these graduates step into tertiary study, employment, and various forms of service, they carry the formation of many years at John XXIII College. Their success reflects the collaborative efforts of expert teachers who challenged them to excel, families who supported their growth, and a community committed to nurturing the whole person.

We invite you to explore their accomplishments and celebrate how these young people have answered the call to **Seek Justice** with both scholarly excellence and generous hearts.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2025 YEAR 12 RESULTS

Congratulations to the Class of 2025

We are immensely proud of our graduating class for their outstanding results, achieved through dedication, expert teaching, and the unwavering support of their families. Beyond the numbers, the Class of 2025 has shown us what true excellence looks like. They have demonstrated remarkable support for one another, approaching their final year with commitment, warmth, strength, and flexibility. They fully embraced every opportunity Year 12 presented.

Highest Performing Student

99.75

Bianca Petsos

3

students with an ATAR of 99+
(Top 1% in the State)

Bianca Petsos
Elizabeth Webster
Samuel Hughes

9%

Students with 98+ ATAR
(Top 2% in the State)

19%

Students with 95+ ATAR
(Top 5% in the State)

41%

Students with 90+ ATAR
(Top 10% in the State)

SUBJECT EXHIBITION

(Highest examination mark)

Bianca Petsos Religion and Life

SUBJECT CERTIFICATES OF EXCELLENCE

(Top 0.5% in each ATAR examination)

Bianca Petsos	Elizabeth Webster	Bianca Petsos	Thomas Webster	Elizabeth Webster	Luisa Parish
Religion and Life	Religion and Life	Economics	Economics	Human Biology	Literature

21 STUDENTS WERE AWARDED CERTIFICATES OF DISTINCTION

Indigo Barry	Sofia Lamattina	Elisabeth Samson
Isabelle Capolingua	Ella Matthews	Georgia Teasdale
Isabelle Counsel	Madeleine Nankivell	Poppy Thorpe
Sam Gallagher	Aditi Nguyen	Austin Vujcich
Matthew Gardner	Jennifer Ong	Amelia Watts
Olivia Gardner	Sarah Panetta	Elizabeth Webster
Samuel Hughes	Bianca Petsos	Marco Zammuto

29 STUDENTS WERE AWARDED CERTIFICATES OF MERIT

Aidan Bourne	George Griffiths	Edward Mulder
Zavier Burns	Charlie Haines	Clara North
Claudia Cavallaro	Amelia Hennessy	Matilda O'Connell
Lily Colombera	Jazmin Kirk	Chloe Ottobriano
Isabella Desiati	Valentina Kuruc	Luisa Parish
Ciaran Doyle	Abigail Lisle	Ava Pruiti
Chloe Fanowrios	Noah McLernon	Baxter Robertson
Luke Green	Joshua Mengler	Archie Ryan
Erin Griffin	Lilla Milvain	3 x not for publication

100%

student achievement in
Curtin UniReady

28

VET certificates and endorsed
work placements achieved

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

Four graduates were selected to show their artworks at *The West Australian Pulse* exhibition! The exhibition celebrates the artworks of Year 12 Visual Arts graduates from across the state and takes place at the Art Gallery of WA in 2026.

Catherine Mundy

Sarah Panetta

Clara North

Bianca Petsos

PERFORMING ARTISTS

Two graduates were invited to audition for the prestigious Performing Arts Perspectives WA! The highest-scoring WACE students are invited to showcase their talents, with performers selected by a panel of professional arts and education representatives.

Madeleine Nankivell

Georgia Philpott

JOHN XXIII COLLEGE
SEEK JUSTICE





CLASS 2025 DESTINATIONS

Each year, our graduating class sets out into the world – and the destinations they choose say a great deal about who they are.

The Class of 2025 is no exception. To this cohort, we offer our sincere congratulations. Completing Year 12 is no small thing, and we are proud of every student who has reached this milestone. Whatever comes next, our College community continues to walk alongside them.

The pathways ahead are diverse – university study, gap years, apprenticeships, employment and service with the Australian Defence Force among them. Some already know exactly where they are headed; others are taking time to explore before committing to a path. All of it is worth celebrating.

What follows is a snapshot of those choices – a reflection of the individuals our College has had the privilege of accompanying through their school years.

Read on to explore where the Class of 2025 are headed.

Pathways

**166
Graduates**

74% University

13% Gap Year

3% Full-time Employment

2% Deferred Study

2% Australian Defence Force

1% TAFE or other training

1% Apprenticeship/Traineeship

4% Unknown

Universities

**123
University
Entrants**

56% University of Western Australia

21% University of Notre Dame (Aust)

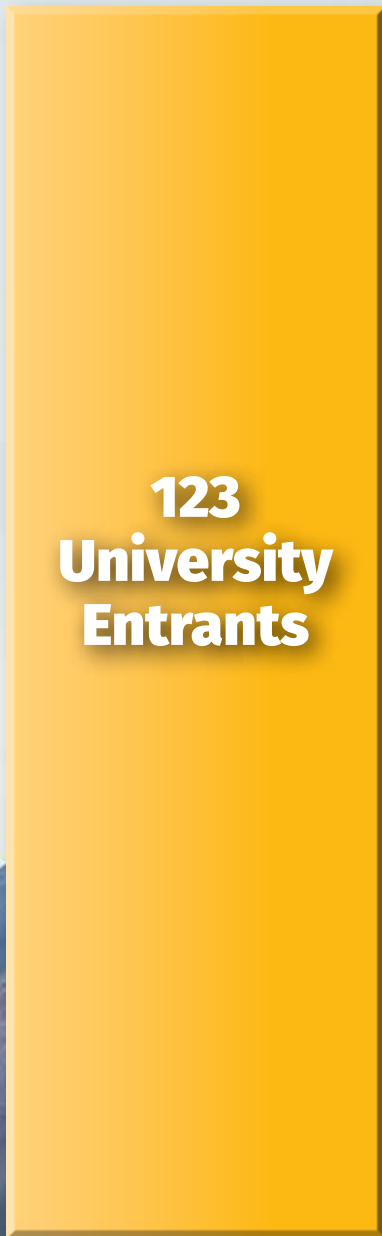
14% Curtin University

7% Edith Cowan University

1% Murdoch University

1% Flinders University

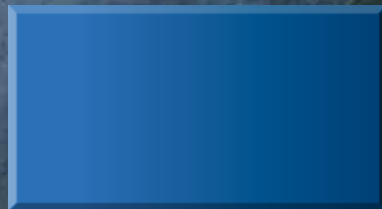
Degree Types



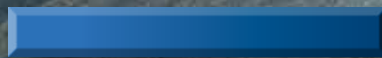
45% Bachelor's Degree (Single)



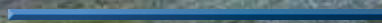
30% Bachelor's Degree (Double/Combined)



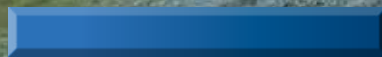
16% Bachelor's Degree (Honours)



4% Assured Pathway



1% Uniready Pathway



4% Other

Top Fields of Study

55
Bachelor's Degree
(Single)



37
Bachelor's Degree
(Double/Combined)



20
Bachelor's Degree
(Honours)



Scholarships

18 Total confirmed

7 UWA Engineering Excellence Scholarship

2 Curtin Excellence Scholarship

1 The University of WA Delano Music Scholarship

1 Commonwealth Teaching Scholarship

Australian Defence Force Enrolments



Australian Army



Royal Australian Navy



Australian Defence Force Academy

Gap Year Activities



Deferred Studies

2

Commerce/Property

1

Psychology

1

Philosophy (Honours)

TAFE

1

Diploma in Apparel, Fashion and Textiles
South Metropolitan TAFE

1

**Completing Certificate III in Early Childhood
Education and Care, commenced in Year 12**
Fremantle Education Centre

Apprenticeship

1

Carpentry
Train and Retain

Full-time Employment



Bartender
Food & Wine



General Hand - Donated Goods
Disability Employment Enterprise



Station Hand
Agriculture



Warehouse Staff
Building and Construction
(Certificate IV)



Underground Dump Truck Driver
Gold Mining
(Undergraduate Certificate)



Journeys to **excellence**

Grounds and maintenance staff with our newly installed Cockitrough®

H When teachers deepen their expertise, students benefit from richer, more contemporary learning experiences. This principle drives John XXIII College's annual Staff Scholarship program, which supports staff to remain at the forefront of their disciplines. In the spirit of *magis* – striving for the more – the initiative embodies our College's commitment to continuous growth.

The College has named two recipients of the latest John XXIII Staff Scholarship. Mr James Kros, Head of Music Learning Area, and Mr Rob Di Giallonardo, Media Teacher, have each pursued professional advancement that exemplifies our College's commitment to educational excellence and care for the whole person.

A global perspective on music education

Mr Kros travelled to Chicago, Illinois, to participate in the 79th Midwest Clinic, one of the world's most respected music education conferences. Drawing more than 18,000 attendees from over 40 countries, the event provided access to innovative teaching methodologies and contemporary repertoire from leading practitioners.

'The biggest thing was to seek that feeling of being genuinely inspired in the field and to try and keep that energy in my own teaching,' Mr Kros explains.

'I had a real desire to expand my scope of teaching reference beyond our College, our state and our country – to see and be inspired by some of the best to do it.'

Over three days, Mr Kros attended twenty-four workshops ranging from live performance demonstrations where international clinicians worked with school students, to conducting masterclasses and sessions on curriculum integration.

'The scope and scale was almost intimidating, to start,' he reflects. 'But, quickly, the shared passions and common desire to further music education amongst the attendees lent the conference an inspiring and infectious energy.'

His reaction to receiving the scholarship reveals both humility and appreciation. 'Certainly, gratitude after the initial disbelief! Having the opportunity to pursue professional learning in a conference environment that would be prohibitive to attend in normal circumstances is a great privilege.'

The impact on his teaching has already begun, with specific ideas around teaching, directing, conducting and programming already infusing his classroom practice. This investment in staff advancement supports our mission to develop educators who inspire and challenge their students.

Strengthening creative industries education

Mr Di Giallonardo is pursuing a Certificate qualification in Creative Industries while producing a professional-standard short film. This hands-on professional development will directly enhance media education and co-curricular opportunities for students across the College.

The film project is a coming-of-age story about a young Sikh man who discovers that a relaxation app lets him hear the inner thoughts of strangers. The production is close to completion, with plans to submit to festivals and arrange a screening in early 2026.

'This qualification allows me to deepen my technical expertise while creating something meaningful,' Mr Di Giallonardo explains. 'The skills and insights I gain will flow into our media program, helping students understand the industry standard processes that define contemporary screen production.'

Mr Di Giallonardo's project will be completed locally throughout the year, allowing him to share his evolving knowledge with colleagues and students in real time. The practical nature of his qualification, culminating in a festival-ready short film, has already begun yielding benefits.

'I have already been able to impart learning from my experience to the media students in my classes, particularly regarding logistics involved on a film shoot and the realities to expect,' he explains. 'My hope is that students can take this knowledge and apply it to their own context, enabling a more efficient and effective filmmaking process for them.'



This direct translation of professional learning into classroom practice demonstrates our commitment to authentic, relevant education that serves students immediately.



Investing in people, enriching education

The John XXIII Staff Scholarship offers teachers the opportunity to engage in research or acquire skills in areas of importance to both the applicant and the College. Research may focus on any aspect of College life, with the expectation that learnings acquired will contribute significantly to our community.

This dedication to staff growth reflects our understanding that inspiring educational excellence begins with inspiring educators. By supporting teachers to remain at the cutting edge of their disciplines, John XXIII College ensures that students benefit from contemporary, innovative, and deeply informed teaching practices.

Deputy Principal – Teaching and Learning, Laura Rutherford, emphasises the scholarship program’s

strategic importance: ‘We believe that everyone in our College community is a learner. By prioritising professional learning at a strategic level, we strengthen both curricular and co-curricular programs and maintain a clear focus on what matters most: student learning.’

Embodying Ignatian values

Recognising and nurturing each staff member’s individual gifts demonstrates care for the whole person, a foundational Ignatian principle. The scholarship program reinforces the understanding that the pursuit of knowledge and skill is never complete – there is always more to learn and discover.

Deputy Principal – Faith and Mission, Janeen Murphy, notes the deeper significance of the program:

‘In the spirit of St Ignatius, we understand that formation is ongoing. By supporting our staff to grow professionally and personally, we are creating a learning community where everyone – students and teachers alike – is encouraged to strive for greater excellence in service of others.’

A culture of continuous improvement

When teachers return from professional development experiences enriched with new knowledge, techniques, and perspectives, they share these insights with colleagues. Mr Kros’ international exposure to music education innovation will inform departmental





discussions. Mr Di Giallonardo's technical expertise and industry insights will strengthen not only media classes but also our broader approach to digital literacy across multiple learning areas.

This collaborative approach to professional growth reinforces our understanding that excellence is a shared endeavour, achieved through collegiality and mutual support.

Preparing students for their future

The John XXIII Staff Scholarship program ultimately serves our College's most important purpose: preparing students for meaningful lives of service and contribution. When teachers remain current in their fields, students benefit from relevant, engaging, and forward-thinking education that equips them for a rapidly changing world.

As Principal Daniel Mahon observes:

'Our strategic plan commits us to preparing students for their future. To achieve this, we must ensure our staff have access to opportunities that keep them at the forefront of contemporary practice.'

'Mr Kros and Mr Di Giallonardo's scholarship experiences will enhance our capacity to deliver education that forms capable, thoughtful graduates ready to make their mark.'

Beyond the benchmark



H For children growing up in Perth, the ocean is not just a backdrop. It is where families gather on weekends, where friendships form over summer and where young people test themselves against something bigger than a swimming pool.

Learning to move through open water safely is one of the most practical capabilities a child in Western Australia can develop – and it is something we have invested in purposefully for almost three decades.

The 2025 National Drowning Report, published by Royal Life Saving Australia, presents a confronting reality. In the past 12 months, 357 Australians lost their lives to drowning – 27% above the 10-year average. Beaches alone accounted for 82 of those deaths.



Perhaps most alarming is the finding that close to half of all Year 6 students across the country cannot swim 50 metres and tread water for two minutes, a benchmark that represents the bare minimum for water safety. In a state where the coastline is central to how we live, these figures carry particular weight.

At John XXIII College, the picture is strikingly different. Data compiled by Rare Indigo Swimming, which has delivered our aquatic education program for 28 years, shows that 92% of Year 6 students can swim 50 metres in the ocean – almost double the national average.

Eighty per cent can cover 100 metres, and close to a third are capable of swimming more than 300 metres in

open water. These are not pool-based results. They are achieved in the ocean, where conditions are unpredictable and the margin for error is far smaller.

Steve Williams, Primary Sports Coordinator, has watched the program shape hundreds of young people over the years. ‘What stays with me is seeing the shift in a child who was nervous at the start of Year 4 and then, by Year 6, is out there swimming confidently,’ he says.

‘It’s not just about the physical ability. You can see them assessing the water, making decisions, looking out for their mates. That kind of awareness comes from experiential learning.’

The program, delivered to students in Years 4 through 6, is structured around evidence-based aquatic education that goes beyond stroke technique. Students learn to identify hazards, understand tidal movements and respond to changing conditions.

It is the kind of layered, practical learning that reflects our College’s commitment to educating the whole child – developing not only physical competence but also the judgment, self-awareness and care for others that sit at the heart of an Ignatian education.

College Principal, Daniel Mahon, sees the program as an expression of something central to who we are as a community. ‘In Perth, the beach is part of our identity. Ensuring our students can navigate the ocean safely is not an optional extra – it is a responsibility we take seriously.’

‘This program develops the kind of practical wisdom and self-reliance that we hope all of our young people will carry with them long after they leave our College.’

The consistency of these results owes much to the long-standing collaboration between the College and Rare Indigo Swimming.

Over nearly three decades, the program has been refined and strengthened, with instructors who understand





both our students and the local coastline. Hamish Johnston from Rare Indigo Swimming reflects on what that continuity has made possible: 'When you work with a school community for this long, you develop a deep understanding of what their students need at each stage. The results we are seeing in ocean competency speak to years of sustained, purposeful instruction.'

At a time when national data reveals a generation at risk of losing fundamental water safety capabilities,

the achievements of our students stand as a reminder of what is possible when a school invests in the right program over the long term. For the children who started at the water's edge in Year 4 and now swim with confidence through open water, the benefit extends far beyond the beach. They are learning to assess risk, to persist through discomfort and to look after those around them – lessons that will serve them in every part of their lives.



Courage, creativity and commitment

H Six recent graduates from John XXIII College have earned places in prestigious state arts programs, demonstrating exceptional achievement across visual and performing arts disciplines.

Visual Arts at *The West Australian Pulse*

Catherine Mundy, Clara North, Sarah Panetta and **Bianca Petsos** have been selected to exhibit their work at *The West Australian Pulse 2026*, the state's premier showcase of Visual Arts ATAR student output. Their paintings will be on display at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, where the exhibition opened on 2 May.

Selection for the exhibition is highly competitive, with only the most accomplished pieces chosen to

represent the calibre of artistic talent emerging from 43 WA schools. To have four graduates selected from one school is a significant accomplishment that demonstrates the strength of our Visual Arts program.

Visual Arts Coordinator, Ms Kiri Moore, expressed great pride in what the four have achieved.

'Their work is not only highly skilful and discerning in selection and use of media, but also deeply socially conscious.

'These students have created a diverse range of artworks that comment on the world around them and reflect on their own experiences as young people in contemporary society.

'It takes a lot of courage and drive to say something, not only about what is going on around you, but also about yourself - and put it out there for the world to see.'

'Their works being selected for *Pulse* is a fitting acknowledgement of their hard work and creativity.'

Performing Arts at His Majesty's Theatre

Madeleine Nankivell was selected to join the Performing Arts Perspectives Cast for 2026, one of just 25 students chosen to perform on the main stage at His Majesty's Theatre. She presented work across music, dance and drama as part of this prestigious showcase.

Both Madeleine and fellow graduate **Georgia Philpott** were invited to audition for Performing Arts Perspectives after achieving over 90% in their practical drama exams in 2025. This invitation itself represents recognition of their outstanding performance throughout the year.

Head of Learning Area – Drama, Mr George Tsakisiris, spoke about the significance of their results and selection.

'We are incredibly proud of both students for achieving such outstanding results in their ATAR drama practical exam. To receive over 90% at this level is no small feat – it reflects not only their considerable talent, but also their discipline, resilience, and countless hours of dedicated rehearsal and refinement.'

'Their work exemplifies the very best of what drama demands: courage, creativity, and commitment.'

'To have Madeleine selected for the Performing Arts Perspectives Cast further demonstrates the calibre of her performance and the depth of her artistry. This is a significant achievement, and one that has been earned through sustained effort and passion.'

Creative growth and Ignatian values

The journeys these six graduates have taken through their respective arts disciplines embody several key principles central to learning at John XXIII College.

Catherine's attention to detail and connection to pop art culture, Clara's discovery of oil painting as her preferred medium, Sarah's evolution from strict realism towards bold colour and texture, and Bianca's decision to switch from Physics to Art ATAR all reflect the practice of discernment and self-reflection – learning to recognise and accept one's particular gifts.

Their experiences in Visuals Arts created a space where students found strength in community, were supported not just academically but emotionally and creatively, and developed the confidence to explore their distinctive styles. This embodies *cura personalis* – care for the whole person.

Madeleine and Georgia's achievement of over 90% in their practical drama exams, and Madeleine's subsequent selection for Performing Arts Perspectives, demonstrates the spirit of striving for excellence and finding innovative pathways through dedication and discipline.

The development of time management skills, artistic discipline and creative confidence alongside technical abilities shows the holistic approach to learning championed by Ignatian pedagogy. These young people have learned to balance multiple demands, examine their strengths and weaknesses, and emerge with not just completed pieces or polished performances but with a deeper understanding of themselves as artists and individuals.

The visual artists spoke about the atmosphere of their classroom as a collaborative environment where students used their gifts not in isolation but in service of inspiring and encouraging one another towards the *magis* – the greater good. This same spirit of mutual support characterises the performing arts disciplines at the College.

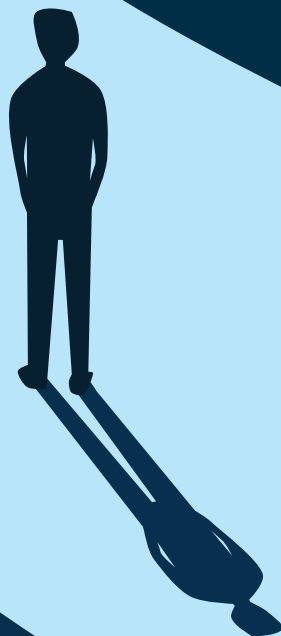
As visitors to the Art Gallery of Western Australia view the four paintings throughout the *Pulse 2026* exhibition, and as audiences attend Performing Arts Perspectives at His Majesty's Theatre, they will witness the culmination of years of dedication and growth. More than that, they will see the fruits of an educational environment that nurtures the whole person, honours individual gifts, and encourages young people to find beauty and meaning in creative expression.

Congratulations to Catherine, Clara, Sarah, Bianca, Madeleine and Georgia. We look forward to following their continuing journeys as artists.

Visitors to *The West Australian Pulse 2026* exhibition are encouraged to vote for their favourite work in *The West Australian People's Choice Award*. Visitor voting is open from 6:30pm, Friday 15 May until 5pm, Sunday 23 August (AWST), with the winner announced on Saturday 29 August. The student artist whose work receives the most votes will receive \$2,500. The school the artist attended will receive an AGWA workshop and tour package. And one lucky voter will win a \$100 AGWA Design Store voucher.

POPE FRANCIS BOOK LAUNCH

The Disruptive Pilgrim comes home



H A new book by Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO, co-developed with John XXIII College, invites readers to engage seriously with the teaching and legacy of Pope Francis.

A gathering of students, educators and Church leaders at John XXIII College came together to celebrate the launch of *Pope Francis: The Disruptive Pilgrim's Guide* – an event as much about the future of the Church as the book being celebrated. Written by Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO, the book offers a clear and accessible guide to Pope Francis' vision and its ongoing significance for the life and mission of the Church.



Much of the book was composed during Fr Brennan's time as an Academic in Residence at the College, lending the launch a strong sense of shared investment in the work. Copies sold out on the night – a fitting measure of the community's appetite for Fr Brennan's insights into a papacy that continues to prompt reflection and debate.

Three speakers addressed the gathering. Opening proceedings was Alyssa Mignacca, a Year 11 student and recipient of the College's 2025 Atticus Finch Justice Award. Established in 2011, the award is a collaboration between the English and Religious Education departments, drawing on two complementary curricular threads: the study of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* in English, and a unit on freedom in Religious Education. Each year, all Year 10 students prepare a five-minute speech exploring justice and freedom in light of these texts; a select cohort then delivers their speeches before the entire Year 10 body. The winner is chosen by the Principal, the Learning Area Coordinators of English and Religious Education, the Magis Coordinator and a guest judge. The award takes its name from



Atticus Finch – Lee's quietly courageous lawyer – and reflects both the College motto **Seek Justice** and the Ignatian call to *magis*.

Drawing on *The Disruptive Pilgrim's Guide*, Alyssa offered a thoughtful reflection on Pope Francis' leadership. She presented him as a figure who did more than speak persuasively – he acted, disrupted complacency and was willing to cause discomfort in pursuit of justice and authenticity. Connecting his leadership to the frustrations faced by younger generations inheriting global crises, she argued that his willingness to challenge entrenched systems should be seen as a strength. Pope Francis, she concluded, invites the Church to question, to press forward and to re-examine faith in the context of the modern world.

The keynote address was delivered by Fr Eamonn Conway, a priest of the Archdiocese of Tuam, Ireland, Professor of Integral Human Development at the University of Notre Dame Australia and a papal appointee to the Synod on Synodality 2021–2024, who described Pope Francis as both a disruptor and a restorer. Acknowledging the difficulty of assessing a papacy so soon after its conclusion, Fr Conway praised Fr Brennan's book for offering a perspective grounded in scholarship and lived experience alike. As a fellow Jesuit, Fr Brennan brings what Fr Conway described as an 'inside track' to understanding Pope Francis' life, spirituality and leadership.

Fr Conway highlighted three themes central to the pontificate: care for creation (*Laudato Si'*), a realistic and pastoral approach to families and relationships (*Amoris Laetitia*), and a call to fraternity and social friendship (*Fratelli Tutti*). Running through all three, he noted, is the practice of discernment – a hallmark of Jesuit spirituality and a guiding principle of Pope Francis' leadership.

Fr Conway described Fr Brennan's goal of providing a readable resource for engaging with Pope Francis' teaching as having been achieved 'both beautifully and masterfully.' He also acknowledged the contribution of Janeen Murphy – Deputy Principal Faith and Mission, whose reflective questions conclude each chapter.

A significant part of Fr Conway's address focused on synodality, which he identified as Pope Francis' most enduring legacy.

Synodality, he explained, calls the Church to deeper dialogue, shared responsibility, transparency and accountability – recognising the dignity and co-responsibility of all the baptised. In this sense, Pope Francis can be understood not only as a disruptor of complacency, but as a restorer who returned the Church to the path of Vatican II.



A Q&A session moderated by Janeen Murphy drew out some of the evening's most candid and searching exchanges. Asked what prompted him to write the book, Fr Brennan described the urgency he felt after Pope Francis died in April last year. Having spoken to around 2,000 Catholic teachers across Australia, he observed that many were asking what would endure – particularly given Pope Leo XIV's election on a platform of unity. 'We cannot afford to lose the momentum,' Fr Brennan said, 'and we cannot afford for young people in our schools to lose touch with what was actually so bold and energetic in what Francis did.'

The conversation turned to Pope Francis' image of the Church as a field hospital. Fr Conway drew out the radical pastoral logic behind it: in a field hospital, you treat the wounds first – you do not lecture the injured about their blood pressure. Only once people are healed can the deeper conversations begin. He noted that some have described the Francis pontificate as 'a revolution of tenderness,' and urged the audience not to lose sight of that image at a time when, as he observed, much of the mood in contemporary culture feels increasingly sinister.

Asked what disruption the Church most needs today, Fr Brennan pointed to the question of equal dignity – noting that his grand nieces have grown up knowing women prime ministers, chief justices and governors-general, and that the Church must reckon honestly with what that cultural shift means. He also named climate change, arguing that the Church cannot afford to tell young people there is nothing to be done. 'We don't have all the answers,' he said, 'but we've got to be prudent, we've got to listen to the experts, and we've got to act.'

Fr Conway urged a deeper solidarity with the Global South, where 70 per cent of the world's Catholics will live by 2050, and called on Catholic schools to resist what he described as an increasingly transactional educational culture – one that crowds out genuine accompaniment of students through the deeper questions of meaning.

The final question touched on what kind of papacy Pope Leo might offer. Fr Brennan was characteristically direct: 'I think Francis lived three years too long.' He described the poisoned atmosphere of Francis's final years, and noted the courage Pope Leo showed in addressing the College of Cardinals two days after his election – urging them to follow the path of Vatican II as Francis had set forth in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Fr Brennan's challenge to those in the room was clear: 'For God's sake, and for the sake of the world, maintain the Francis momentum and trust that unity will follow.'

Fr Conway offered a complementary reading, drawing on the slogan that guided the continental stage of the Synod – taken from the prophet Isaiah: 'Expand the space of your tent.' Francis, he suggested, gave us the first movement: the bold enlarging of the tent. Leo, he believed, would make firm the pegs and stretch the fabric to ensure it holds. 'There is no change in direction,' Fr Conway said, 'in terms of the implementation of the Second Vatican Council.'



In his closing remarks, Fr Brennan paid tribute to our College community and spoke of being moved to tears when judging the Atticus Finch Award; struck by the passion young people brought to questions that older generations too readily dismiss.

The evening ended not with a full stop but with a provocation – and a sense that the conversation Pope Francis started is far from over.

Watch a recording
of Fr Brennan's Pope
Francis book launch





Opening doors to future possibilities

H In December 2025, John XXIII College welcomed 18 alumni back to campus for our annual Alumni Careers Conversations event.

This initiative is designed to broaden Year 9 students' horizons about the diverse career pathways available to them beyond school.

The morning brought together graduates from an impressive range of professions, from doctors and paramedics to mining engineers, architects, business owners, and speech pathologists – all united by a common purpose: to share their career journeys and inspire the next generation of John XXIII graduates.

The Alumni Careers Conversations reflect the College's Ignatian foundation, where discernment and reflection help students discover their unique paths. By connecting Year 9s with professionals who exemplify being contemplatives in action – people who have integrated their values with meaningful work – this initiative helps young people begin imagining how they might serve in their own chosen fields. This focus on purposeful exploration aligns with our commitment to

nurturing graduates who are not only professionally capable but also reflective about how their talents can contribute to the world.

For many Year 9 students, the world of work can seem both exciting and overwhelming. With career possibilities expanding rapidly and traditional pathways evolving, young people today are navigating more options, and sometimes more uncertainty, than previous generations. The Alumni Careers Conversations event addresses this challenge head-on by connecting students with real people who have successfully navigated their own professional journeys.

The morning was thoughtfully structured to maximise student engagement. The Year 9 cohort was divided into two groups, with one group unpacking their Morrisby Profile – a tool that suggests suitable careers based on individual aptitudes and interests – whilst the other group engaged directly with alumni in the Thomas More Exhibition Centre. After the first session, the groups swapped, ensuring every student had the opportunity to benefit from both experiences.

What makes this event particularly valuable is its focus on exposure. Many students simply don't know what they don't know. A conversation with a geologist might spark an interest in earth sciences they had never considered. A chat with a talent acquisition specialist could illuminate an entire field they did not know existed. A registered nurse or physiotherapist might offer insights into healthcare careers beyond what students see on television and social media. These interactions plant seeds of possibility that can grow into genuine career aspirations.

The structured conversation format, facilitated by carefully prepared questions, helped students engage meaningfully with alumni despite their relative inexperience in professional networking. It was an introduction, a gentle first step into thinking seriously about their futures.

Year 9 Assistant Deputy Principal, Mr James McLaughlin, himself an alumnus from the Class of 1995, along with Head of Pathways and Transition, Ms Kalo Bell, and Ms Sue McLennan from Alumni Development, coordinated the event to ensure students gained maximum benefit from their time with the visiting professionals.



Police Officer **Stephanie Chahal (née Walsh, Class 2000)**, who has served with the WA Police Force for 23 years, brought along Grimm, a 19-week-old German Shepherd in training to become a General Purpose Police Dog. 'The most rewarding part was connecting with students and having honest conversations about policing. I've been reflecting on where I've been, what I've experienced, and how much the job has changed over the years. The students had some great questions and had the chance to pat Grimm! I'm hopeful that sharing an authentic perspective on policing will help them better understand not just the realities, but also the opportunities within the profession.'

The Alumni Careers Conversation event exemplifies the strength of the John XXIII community and the enduring

connection our graduates maintain with the College. For the alumni who participated, it was an opportunity to return the guidance and support they once received, to share not just their successes but also the challenges and learning experiences that shaped their careers.



Architect **Nic MacCormac (Class 1993)** reflected on the value of the morning: 'Seeing a good cross section of students showing great interest in architecture and knowing that my insight could provide clarity to those who wish to pursue this challenging yet rewarding career path – that was the most valuable part for me. I hope students gained an understanding of how diverse architecture itself is and that as a career choice there's a world of opportunities one can take within the profession.'

The morning concluded with a sense of optimism and possibility, exactly what we hope to instil in our Year 9 students as they continue their educational journey and begin to envision the futures they want to create.

The Alumni Careers Conversations event is part of John XXIII College's broader commitment to preparing students for life beyond school through comprehensive pathways and transition support.

To our wider alumni community: if you have ever wondered how you might give back or stay connected with John XXIII College, this initiative offers a meaningful way to make a real difference. Your career journey, whatever path it has taken, holds valuable lessons for those just beginning to imagine their own futures. Whether you are a few years out of school or decades into your profession, your experience and guidance can help shape how our current Year 9s think about their possibilities.

Your willingness to share your story could be exactly what inspires a student to pursue a path they had never previously considered. If you are interested in participating in the next Alumni Careers Conversations event on 20 November, please get in touch with Sue McLennan at alumni@johnxxiii.edu.au.



Making room for art

H There is a ceramic bust sitting in Corine Van Hall's backyard. She made it decades ago in Myra Staffer's ceramics class at Loreto, back when she and her friends would spend their lunch hours sculpting rather than heading outside. It has survived house moves and the passage of forty years. In many ways, it is a fitting marker for a career shaped by the creative spaces that first welcomed her in.

Corine Van Hall (Class 1986) is an independent public art consultant, creative producer and co-founder of the Fremantle Biennale. Her professional life has been built around bringing ambitious artistic projects into the public realm and advocating for the role of art in communities across Western Australia.

After graduating from John XXIII College, Corine enrolled at Curtin Art School. Part way through her degree, she and school friend Abi Temby caught the Indian Pacific to Sydney and explored the east coast. To fund her return to study, she worked on a gold mine at Laverton,

saving enough to move out of home and complete her fine art qualification in the early 1990s.

What followed was a determined entry into Perth's arts scene at a time when opportunities were scarce. With her partner, Corine set up The Lab Art Studios on Salvado Road in Subiaco, running exhibitions and coordinating community art projects. 'Perth back then was known as "Dullsville"; she says. 'Arts funding was limited, so you had to generate your own projects.' The Lab became a launching pad for promenade theatre installations and artist-run initiatives during a period of real economic uncertainty.

From there, her career moved through a series of roles that deepened her understanding of how art intersects with communities and institutions. She ran Tresillian Community Arts Centre in Nedlands, coordinated festivals at the City of Joondalup, and worked in special projects at the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

It was at the City of Fremantle, however, where Corine's impact became most visible. During her ten years there, she consolidated modest budgets and persuaded the council to invest further, ultimately commissioning Marcus Canning's *Rainbow* – a 66-tonne sculpture comprising nine shipping containers, affectionately known as 'Containbow', that has become one of Fremantle's most recognisable landmarks.



'Fremantle is actually a tiny council,' she explains. 'Everything you do has big impact on the local community, and a lot of that activity comes from a community-driven space.'

In 2017, a temporary art program Corine was running led to a collaboration with artist Tom Müller that became the Fremantle Biennale. The festival has since grown into an independent organisation attracting national and international funding and presenting site-responsive contemporary art across the port city and internationally.

Today, Corine runs Indarra, her independent public art consultancy. Through Indarra, she works as a consultant for the Western Australian Government's Percent for Art Scheme, guiding artists through the design and installation of public artworks for schools, hospitals and civic buildings across the state.

In Albany, she is currently working with Menang people on a public art project, and she has coordinated commissions including Melissa Riley's large-scale mural at the entry to the Willman Wadandi Highway. Respectful collaboration, she says, requires time, communication and genuine cultural knowledge. 'The space to make sure that everyone is comfortable and safe has been a big part of the process.'

Corine's path from artist to consultant has required skills that no art school could teach. She learned early that when she walked into a meeting room, she needed to know every person and their role. 'In the early days, I wouldn't get introduced even,' she recalls.

'I did learn that if I wasn't introduced, I would just say, "I'm sorry, we need to introduce each other."' Listening, she says, has been just as important – giving herself the space and time to absorb what is happening before responding. And through it all, advocacy. 'You are always advocating for the arts and always advocating for artists,' she says. 'We are still in a space where the economic value of the arts is not comprehended.'

She believes formal study remains essential for aspiring visual artists – not for the technical training alone, but for the critical thinking it develops. 'Anyone can be an artist,' she says, 'but how you engage critically in your practice is what sets you apart.'

Reflecting on her time at John XXIII College, Corine speaks without hesitation about what mattered most. 'That sense of community and people and place was what I have taken away.' She arrived at the Loreto campus from South Perth Primary not knowing a soul. 'It was really scary and it took a while to find my kind of tribe,' she admits. But the friends she made remain very close to this day.

Her graduating class holds a particular distinction in College history. The Class of 1986 were the first to complete their final year on the new Mount Claremont campus. Corine remembers the transition vividly – the bare yellow sand where grass should have been, the absence of shade, the striking colonnades. 'We were in awe,' she laughs. But the Visual Arts studio on the new campus provided the same refuge it always had.

'We kind of escaped back to the art room. We had a whole cohort who would be there, drawing and putting folios together. I think that just had a huge impact on my entire life.'

The Class of 1986 will reunite later this year for their 40th anniversary. Corine still thinks about that art room and the permission it gave her – to be present, to make something, to belong. It is not so different, she says, from the work she does now: creating spaces where art can take hold and a community can gather around it.



A sweet return

H When **Lucas Hughes (Class 2024)** came back to campus recently, he came bearing gifts. Tucked carefully in his arms was a box of macarons he had made himself; a small but meaningful gesture that said more than words could.

Lucas completed his Certificate II in Hospitality at the College, a qualification that gave shape to what has since become a genuine passion for the culinary arts. Since graduating, he has completed a Certificate III in Patisserie, bringing his skills to a professional level and stepping confidently into a career in the kitchen.

'Studying Certificate II in Hospitality at JTC helped me find my passion for the industry.'

'It led me to develop my skills further through Patisserie, where I learned from some exceptionally talented chefs.'

The visit, however, was about more than sharing good news. Lucas returned specifically to visit his teacher, Ms Mindy Toleman – not just to share news of his achievements, but to thank her for the encouragement she offered during his time as a student.

The macarons, by all accounts, were a hit! They were also a fitting reminder of what becomes possible when a student finds their direction and runs with it.

'It means so much when a former student comes back to visit,' Ms Toleman said. 'Seeing Lucas thrive and pursue his passion is a real joy.'

'When he told me he wanted to continue in hospitality, I wanted to support that journey in every way I could. I am thrilled to see him achieving success and ready to springboard into the next stage of his kitchen career.'



Two journeys. One destination.

H When **Katherine 'Kass' Keenan (Class 1997)** was a student at John XXIII College, her father was already crossing borders into Afghanistan with the Red Cross. She did not know then that his path would one day intertwine with hers.

Dr Tim Keenan (St Louis, Class 1959) grew up on a farm in York and boarded at the Jesuit school in Claremont. 'It was a hard life for boarders, a very strict environment,' he says. 'But our year got on well. We still meet every year – about fifteen of us catch up regularly. The teaching was very good. Our mathematics course in Year 12 – we went through the whole course twice! By the time the exams came up, they were easy.'

After St Louis, he studied medicine at the University of Western Australia, completed internships at Royal Perth and Princess Margaret Hospitals, and set off for England before spending five years training in general surgery and orthopaedics in Boston, USA.

Back in Perth, Tim built a practice centred on sports injuries and hand surgery, looking after the West Coast Eagles for about 13 years. He valued the breadth of his university education – Wednesday afternoons spent playing sport alongside law and engineering students, mornings hearing talks from people outside medicine. 'Doctors have to communicate and relate to different patients, real people,' he says. 'You have to know how to make people comfortable, how to read people.'

The humanitarian chapter opened through family connections. Tim's mother had married an Afghan

general, and visits to their home in Pakistan led Tim across the border into Jalalabad, where he first encountered the Red Cross.

'A lot of these opportunities open up once you are over there,' he says. 'You meet people and they ask you to work with them.' In the early 2000s, he closed his Perth practice to devote himself fully to overseas surgical

work – from Palestine and Afghanistan to East Timor, Bali, Indonesia and Cambodia.

Kass took a different route to a similar destination. Leaving John XXIII College, she was uncertain about her direction. 'I knew having Dad as a doctor, I didn't want to be a doctor,' she says. 'But I wanted a job where I worked with people, helped people, and a job where I could travel around the world.'



A combined science and nursing degree opened her eyes to the diversity of the profession, and she specialised in perioperative nursing – the highly technical work of the operating theatre. After living in Ireland, she returned to Perth and began joining her father on humanitarian missions.

The arrangement made practical sense. In between operations, Tim taught surgeons the arthroscopic techniques they had limited opportunity to learn, and Kass trained theatre nurses in the specialised equipment those operations require. 'Going back to the same place was rewarding...seeing the progress' she says. 'The last time I went, I got to stand back quite a bit and watch the staff run the show. Which is exactly what you want. It's their hospital, their program to run.'

Together they have navigated roadblocks, permit delays and the uncertainty of operating in conflict zones. Tim describes the conditions with characteristic understatement. 'Even though it was a war injuries hospital, people would turn up with all sorts of medical issues and we couldn't turn them away,' he says of his time in Afghanistan.

'Kids with tetanus, women with severe maternity problems. Bullets and missiles flying outside. You got used to it.'

Kass offers a daughter's perspective on that composure. 'He's always very calm. I've never ever seen him get angry or panic. Ever,' she says. 'He never judges anyone and he makes friends with everybody – from colleagues and patients to soldiers at checkpoints.'



She recalls a hospital in Jenin where staff crawled along corridors to avoid gunfire through the windows. Her father was characteristically unfazed – in part, she admits, because his hearing meant he had not noticed the gunshots at all.

That time in Jenin also planted a quieter seed. Tim befriended a young man who used to visit the hospital to escape the surrounding violence. Years later, the man had children of his own, and Tim approached a local Perth school about educating one of the man's sons.

'The support for this young boy has been fantastic,' Kass says. 'He is staying with Mum and Dad while his English improves with language tuition, and the Palestinian community in Perth have been really involved as well.'

It is one of many commitments Tim does not mention himself. Kass notes he has quietly sponsored medical,

nursing and physiotherapy students through their studies in developing countries over the years.



Cambodia has drawn the family's sustained commitment, too. Tim and his wife **Jenny Keenan (Loreto Class 1955)** – a teacher of English as a second language, who created costumes for our College's musical productions for years – first went there more than two decades ago. Jenny began teaching staff English at HOPE Hospital in Phnom Penh and proved so effective the couple stayed for two years.

Tim remembers a city of dirt roads and no streetlights – and doctors forced to treat patients lying on mats on the floor with antiquated equipment. That frustration led to a conversation over coffee with **Pip Asphar**, a fellow St Louis classmate from the Class of 1959 and a Rotarian. The gap between what Cambodian hospitals lacked and what Australian hospitals were discarding struck both as a problem worth solving. Through Rotary





networks, Pip connected with hospitals across Perth, who donated surplus equipment. The project was funded by the Rotary Club of Osborne Park and several Western Australian hospitals.

In recognition of their service, His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia awarded Pip, Tim, Peter Lugg and Karen Dunlop the Monisaraphon Medal, Grand Cross – Cambodia’s highest civilian honour.

Tim and his brother **Christopher Keenan (St Louis, Class 1957)** oversaw the final stages of renovating and extending the hospital to include new operating theatres, consulting rooms and an intensive care unit, all of which are now in use.

Kass has since forged her own record, undertaking independent missions with the Red Cross to South Sudan and Pakistan. She now works part-time at Royal Melbourne Hospital, specialising in liver and pancreatic surgery, while raising two young children.

Looking back on her years at John XXIII College, she remembers the friendship groups most fondly. ‘We had such a good year group,’ she says. ‘I’ve carried those friendships through my whole life.’

Asked for their advice to share with younger members of our College community, father and daughter speak with a shared instinct. Tim’s counsel is grounded in six decades of practice: ‘Do something basic first, such as being an orderly, to see firsthand what it is like on the ground. Go overseas – to experience medicine at a different level and in a global context.’

Kass’s advice is simpler and no less direct:

‘There are so many different areas of nursing – there is something for everyone. Speak to people working in the profession for their insights. And always keep your humanity.’

Tim reflects on the values behind it all. ‘I think seeking justice is important,’ he says. ‘These days I do think the meaning of justice has gone out the window for many people.’

For a father and daughter whose combined service spans decades and continents, that conviction has never been abstract.



Close-ups with great whites

H Long before **Caroline Worner (Class 1997)** ever stood on the stern of a charter boat watching a great white shark rise from the depths below the Neptune Islands, she was a primary school student at John XXIII College doing projects on sharks. She still has some of them, somewhere.

'I always sort of feel proud that I was just a kid and didn't know much back then, but even as an adult, I knew that what I wanted to do was in my veins way back then, way back at school,' she says. 'Anyone who knew me always associated me with sharks.'

That thread – beginning in a Year 4 or 5 classroom in Mount Claremont and running all the way to the waters off South Australia's Eyre Peninsula – is the story of a life that took a long, winding route to where it was always headed.

Caroline graduated from school with the intention of studying psychology. She completed a Bachelor of Applied Psychology at Notre Dame, then returned to study at Curtin University part-time in her mid-twenties, earning a second psychology degree.

By that point, though, hospitality had taken hold. She had begun working in venues while still a student and found she had a genuine gift for it – the pace, the people, the energy of running a busy space.

'I sort of just realised that psych wasn't for me. I didn't really want to work in an office. I felt I had more to give socially and creatively,' she says.

She spent close to a decade managing hospitality venues before opening her own café in Scarborough – a chapter she remembers with real warmth. The JTC community rallied around her, with old classmates and families turning up to support the business.

'That was a very satisfying part of my career,' she says. 'It was the pinnacle of my hospitality days, what I had been working towards.'

After four years, and with the physical demands of running a small business taking their toll, she sold the business to new owners and moved into insurance and finance for a time to recover.

And then, in her late-thirties, she finally went looking for the sharks.

Caroline flew to South Africa to volunteer for two weeks with White Shark Projects. She saw her first bronze whalers and great whites in the water off Gansbaai Marina. The moment she saw her first great white, something settled into place.



'It was like seeing a celebrity – something you have been dreaming about forever. My brain just exploded. I just went, "Oh, this is it. This is all I want, every day, if I can."'

A few months later, she packed up her life in Perth and moved to Port Lincoln, the small city on South Australia's Spencer Gulf that serves as the base for the country's great white shark cage diving operations. She found work with one of the charter companies and spent more than five years on the water, doing three or four charters a week at the Neptune Islands. It is one of only a handful of places in the world with consistent great white sightings.

Photography was never the plan. It emerged from necessity.

'There was so much going on all the time – so many different sharks, so many different things – and I just wanted to be able to remember and log all those memories accurately. Taking quality photos became really important,' she says.

Working from the Marlin board and bait box on the vessel's surface, she taught herself the craft through sheer repetition. Every few months, she would descend into the cage with her camera. The practice of reading how sharks move, of anticipating where they would turn or rise, gradually sharpened her eye.

Years of watching individual sharks reinforced what she had long understood – that no two are alike. 'They've all got personalities and moods and we see them act very differently,' she says. 'They are not monsters.' It is that

understanding – of creatures that are neither mindless nor predictable – that she hopes comes through in her images.

After leaving the boats a couple of years ago, Caroline bought a house in Port Lincoln and set up a website to sell prints of her work. She now joins charters for pleasure when she can and photographs what she finds. She also holds two other jobs in town, giving her the flexibility to drop everything when the water calls.

The past two years have been unusual and frustrating. An algal bloom has changed the conditions around the Neptune Islands, and shark sightings in the region have reached their lowest levels in living memory. The sharks appear to have moved elsewhere, following food and comfort.

'We think they're just generally uncomfortable and chasing food somewhere else,' she says. 'We don't know how long it's going to last.' With Port Lincoln's waters uncertain, she is planning a trip to New Zealand, where shark activity has remained strong.

She is clear about what she would tell a current student drawn to an unconventional direction.

'Don't put so much pressure on yourself, and don't let others put pressure on you. What you want to do at seventeen, eighteen – you're so young, you don't realise how young you are.'

'If you follow your instincts and it's wrong at the time, that's ok. You can change your life in your twenties and thirties and forties. Don't feel locked in.'

She has reached every goal she set herself and says so plainly. School was hard, the career path unfolded on its own terms, and the life she has built looks nothing like what she imagined as a teenager. But it has taken her, eventually and exactly, to where she always wanted to be: face to face with the creatures that fired her imagination in primary school.

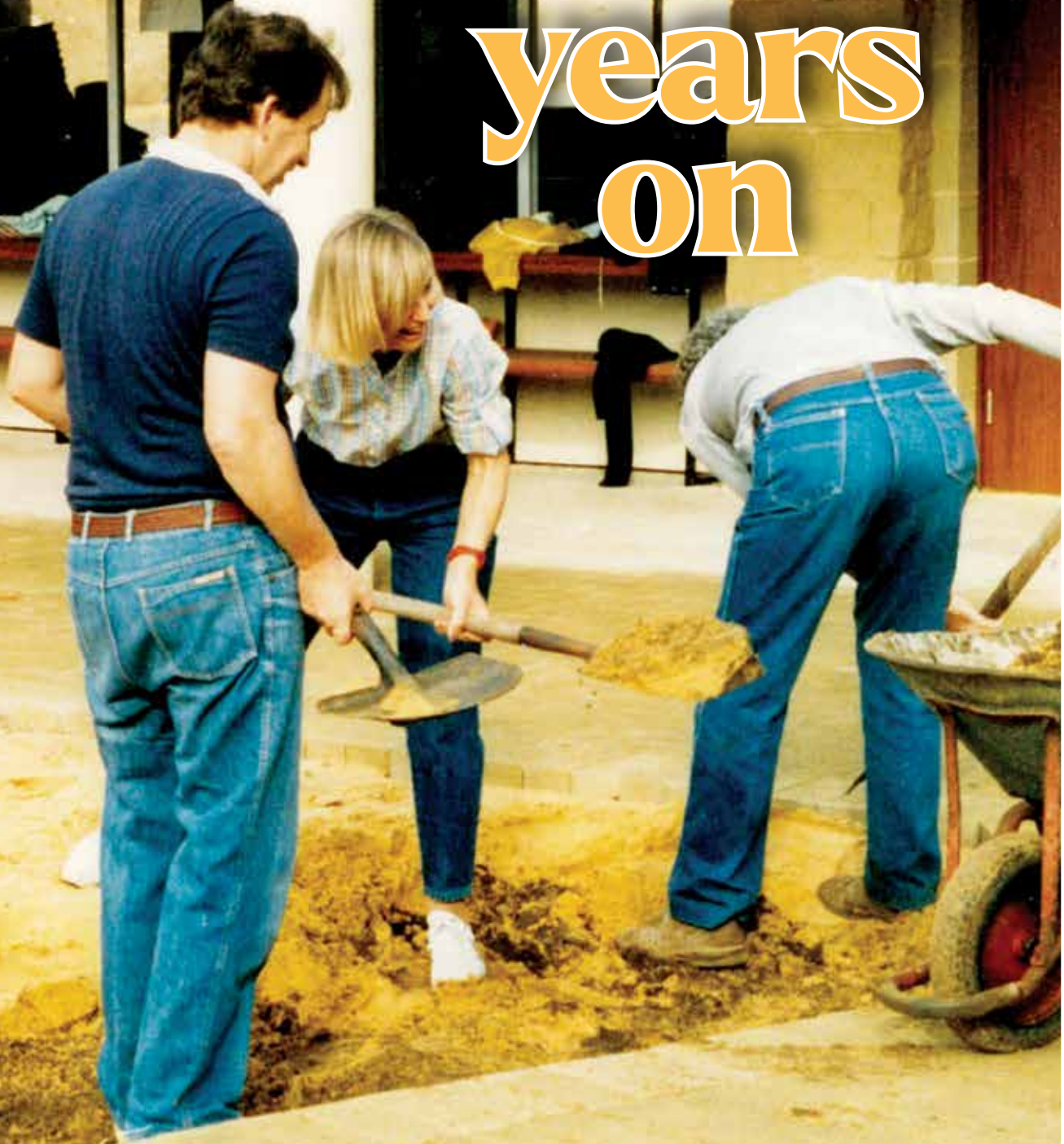
'I always knew in my heart what I wanted,' she says. 'I was lucky enough to be able to follow that.'

To see more of Caroline's photography, visit her gallery From Pooch at the link below and follow @frompooch on Instagram.

Visit Caroline's online
photography gallery



Our new home
40
years
on



H Forty years ago, John XXIII College began its chapter at Mount Claremont.

The campus was the product of five years of patient, principled work and a vision of Catholic education that began with one question: for whom are we building?

Opening Day: May 1986

On the morning of Monday, 12 May 1986, more than 1,200 students, having said goodbye to four school communities scattered across three campuses in Claremont, arrived at what was still partially a building site. The gymnasium was still under construction, there was no grass to be seen, and desks had just been unpacked. Staff had experienced the campus in detail just three days earlier, from above, as if peering over the edge of something vast and not yet theirs.



Sisters in 1897, and St Louis School for boys, opened by the Jesuit Fathers in 1938.

The College that emerged brought together four separate school communities across Claremont: Loreto, St Louis, Campion (originally part of St Louis) and Koolyangarra (originally part of Loreto). By any practical measure, the arrangement was unsustainable. The timetable had to account for ten-minute walks between campuses. The Junior Secondary at St Louis and the Senior School at Loreto had begun to calcify into permanently separate identities, with younger and older year groups rarely encountering each other.

‘Four campuses was a logistical nightmare. Non-restrictive thinking to make it work for the whole community. Relationships between everyone. That was the basis for the design of the new campus.’

– Bob Niven, Bursar

The schools also carried their own cultures into the merger, and some staff had never worked under a female principal. When Sr Denise arrived in the College’s third year of life, she was acutely conscious that the sense of separateness had not faded.

The Ignatian tradition – shared by both Loreto and Jesuit, grounded in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius – offered a common language. Rather than emphasising which founder each part of the school claimed, Sr Denise stressed the spirituality they shared: the examen, discernment, the Principle and Foundation, and the *magis*: not the pursuit of the highest score, but the pursuit of one’s best self.

Architect Keith Lodge had worked with the Catholic Education Office of Victoria, upgrading and modernising Catholic primary schools across the state. Due to his expertise in reconfiguring found space, he was engaged directly by John XXIII College to assess whether consolidating on the existing sites was viable.

His verdict was unambiguous: refurbishment would never produce a satisfactory outcome. The College needed to build anew.



Leap forward for new college

The State's newest college took a big step forward at Graylands last week on the site of the new John XXIII College. School staff, parents and children attended a dedication ceremony on the lawn next to the new school building, which is already under construction. Foundations for the school have been laid, and walls are built in some sections. The school is planning to start the first term of next year on the new site.

And yet, within hours, something shifted. Students moved through the new buildings with wide eyes – taking it all in, finding their lockers, working out where everything was. As Sr Denise Desmarchelier, Principal of John XXIII College from 1979 to 1987, later recalled: ‘Suddenly you could sense the pride with which the students were unified.’

That pride had been a long time coming. And it had been earned across nearly a decade of effort grounded in a set of values that were never incidental to the design. They were the design.

Four campuses, one College

John XXIII College was founded in 1977 from the amalgamation of two historic Perth schools – Loreto Convent school for girls, established by the Loreto



One day a week for five years

When the College Council negotiated the purchase of a 24.6-hectare site – formerly Graylands Hospital land and an adjacent tip, earmarked for redevelopment by the State Government – the real work began.

Planning commenced in 1981, and Sr Denise dedicated the equivalent of one full day each week for five years to the design of the new campus. She consulted at every



stage with campus heads and staff, as well as architect Tony Brand, Bursar Bob Niven, and Chair of the Planning Committee, Michael King. Every decision was filtered through a question she returned to repeatedly: for whom are we building?

It shaped not only the floor plans but the philosophy beneath them. The staffroom was to be the heart of the school – open to teaching, administrative, cleaning and grounds staff alike. The dignity of every person's work was equal. How students left a classroom for the cleaner, she told them, was an act of respect. How they left the playground reflected how they regarded the people who maintained it.

Keith Lodge had introduced a way of thinking that translated this ethos into spatial terms. Rather than asking faculties to compete over existing rooms, he asked them to draw circles – not floor plans, but spatial relationships. What did a maths faculty actually need to function well? What needed to be adjacent to what?

This principle became the foundation of a planning document Sr Denise called the 'organigram' – essentially a visual map of relationships rather than just floor plans – a model of relationships and adjacencies that guided every decision about the new campus. It was then refined through her sustained collaboration with Tony Brand, the architect selected after a careful shortlisting process.

Tony Brand, of the firm Brand, Deykin and Hay, was not a current or former parent and had no prior connection to the College. That was part of his appeal. Where some architects on the shortlist had produced schools that bore their fingerprints too clearly – the same solutions applied to different problems – Brand brought genuine curiosity. He asked great questions, did his research, and listened carefully to the education brief.

'Tony Brand was enormously respectful of the client. Really listening and hearing the education brief. But hearing more than what we were saying – hearing what we were trying to say but couldn't quite put into words.'
– Sr Denise Desmarchelier

He was also a town planner, and that broader perspective shaped the campus in ways that went beyond individual buildings. As Sr Denise recalls, his guiding insight was that any building is a variation of

squares and rectangles – it is the spaces between that define a place. Every enclosed courtyard at John XXIII has a vista beyond it. Every walkway leads somewhere worth going.

Bob Niven recalls: ‘Tony was the perfect architect for the job. He asked lots of questions, did his homework and research. He had a good understanding of what we wanted and he was thinking strategically of the future. The school will still be here in 100 years.’

The buildings were constructed by Clough Engineering Group. The decision to use sandstone besser blocks – which had just become commercially available – and Spanish-inspired terracotta tiles gave the campus its warm, Mediterranean character.

The colonnades, championed by Chairman of Council Terry O’Connor against competing budget priorities, were an act of faith in the long view. They were designed wide enough that grounds and maintenance staff could trolley along them freely – a practical specification that ensured the colonnades worked as well for the grounds crew as they did for everyone else.

Sr Denise reviewed the detailed plans on weekends. Which way did the doors open? Where were the power points and light switches? Did the classroom lighting run vertically or horizontally down the room? These details earned mild criticism from some Council members – and they are precisely the kind of details that determine whether a building works for the people inside it.

The soul of the site

If any single space captures the animating vision of the campus, it is the Chapel. For Sr Denise, its placement

was never a design decision – it was a statement of belief. The Chapel was to be the soul of the site, visible from everywhere, the focal point around which every other decision arranged itself. As Tony Brand designed the administration precinct, he created an open sightline from the entrance straight through to the Chapel. You could not arrive at John XXIII College without being oriented toward it.

Before handing over the keys to incoming principal Dr Tony Baker, Sr Denise spent several retreat days in the Chapel – a quiet farewell to the space she had spent years helping to create. The ceiling is a construction of floating elements – jarrah trusses bearing the structural load, with everything else suspended in apparent weightlessness. Tony Brand received an architectural award for his use of timber. In his own words, included in the award citation:

‘Wood has a warmth and intimacy that is ideal in this situation. By exposing the trusses, we created a structure which is as contemporary as the character and integrity of earlier churches.’

The brief had been precise: the Chapel must accommodate one person or 400 people, and each must feel equally at one with the space. The columns do not enclose – they suggest separation, creating intimate side chapels within a unified whole, so that an individual, a small group, or a full Mass inhabit the same room differently but equally well.

For Sr Denise, the Chapel was the physical expression of the Mary Ward values that underpinned Loreto education – freedom, justice, sincerity, felicity, and verity. In Mary Ward’s own words, it embodies ‘freedom



from all that would make one adhere to earthly things, an apt disposition for all good works and the freedom to refer all to God.'

The brief for the rest of the campus reflected the same values. The library was designed to span primary and secondary precincts – a deliberate act of community across year levels, and a practical expression of the belief that curiosity belongs to every stage of learning.

Careers, counsellor and chaplain were placed adjacent to each other near the staffroom, so that any student walking that way could be perceived as browsing careers material without having to declare that they were seeking something else. Accessibility and dignity were built into the floor plan.



The House names carried the old campuses forward. Koolyangarra – the Noongar word for 'meeting place of happy children' – gave the primary campus not just a name but a theology: the Trinity as a model of relationship, three persons in community, the meeting place as sacred. The Trinity, conceived by Sr Peg Flynn and placed originally atop the Koolyangarra building, eventually found its home against the trees of the new campus – Creator God, through the crucified Son, sending forth the Spirit.

The move

The relocation took place mid-term, in May 1986. It was a necessary choice: the construction company needed the old Loreto and St Louis sites released for redevelopment, and a mid-term relocation was planned to minimise disruption to students. In the end, the College lost only one student attendance day – a feat of planning that Sr Denise attributed entirely to Bob Niven.

The Friday before classes began, staff experienced the campus in detail and collected their keys. Each staff member held a key that opened only the areas relevant to their role – the staffroom universally, plus whatever



faculty spaces they needed. Sr Denise and Bob Niven held the only master keys.

On the Saturday, 500 parents arrived for a working bee that Sr Denise had organised in careful detail: each parent had pre-nominated their arrival time and what they were bringing – vacuum cleaners from home, buckets and cloths, gardening equipment, dusters. Group leaders directed them systematically through buildings in sequence, so that nothing was left undone and no one felt purposeless. As Sr Denise said: 'The school did not have to provide any equipment, and everything was accomplished.'

For Annabel O'Connor – wife of Terry O'Connor, and the parent who led the gardening effort that day – the working bee gave parents an ownership of the campus that a formal opening never could. They had cleaned it, planted in it, stood inside it on a Saturday morning and made it ready. The community that formed around those early shared efforts proved to be one of the most enduring legacies of the move.

Annabel O'Connor: 'It really developed relationships within the College community, and many of these relationships are still evident today – decades-long friendships. The community amongst the parents was strong from the very beginning.'

That community deepened quickly. Parents organised themselves into working groups that continued well beyond the working bee: a gardening group that met regularly, working alongside College gardener Phil O'Neill and the grounds and maintenance team to develop the landscaping in the early days; a sewing group run by parent Jenny Keenan that costumed many theatre productions over the years; and an informal cooking group led by parent Corrine 'Soosie' Thompson.

Plants had been chosen in consultation with Tony Brand, who advised on species that would complement the architecture and suit the sandy Perth soil. Some families donated trees; others bought them through

an informal fundraising arrangement – plane trees, Chinese elms – quietly investing in a landscape that would take years to establish but that was already, in intention, someone’s gift.

On Monday, year groups were staggered through the day so that staff could help students find their way. Tuesday, classes began. The library, which had been closed at the old site for a full month prior to the move, was completely operational from the first day. Science teachers had been asked to front-load all laboratory work before the move, accepting that the new labs would be unavailable for the opening weeks on site.



The early weeks brought the inevitable adjustments. Staff who had occupied four compact, familiar staffrooms suddenly found themselves in one large one, alongside colleagues they barely knew. The chalk was in the wrong place. Sr Denise recalled her experience of the Grand Canyon – the overwhelming scale of it that makes you reach for something small and familiar, like a sparrow, to ground yourself. The chalk was the sparrow on the thorn bush. The complaints were not really about chalk. They were about belonging. And belonging, in the end, came quickly.

What the campus made possible

The Years 1 to 12 library became one of the campus’s most-loved spaces. Year 1 students arrived holding hands, in pairs, causing Years 11 and 12 students to stop and watch. Reluctant secondary readers discovered *Asterix*. English students in Year 11 were assigned to write stories for primary-aged readers – and were thereby given permission to read fairy tales themselves. Outstanding primary readers finally had access to shelves other than the ones they had outgrown.

The campus also made possible something the multi-campus arrangement never could: a genuine sense

of one united school. Staff and students who had existed in separate departments, separate buildings, and separate cultures found themselves sharing a staffroom, a library, a Chapel, and a playground. The pride that emerged in those first weeks was not manufactured. It arose from the place itself – from the dignity built into its design, the relationships its spaces encouraged, and the sense that this campus had been made for them.

The campus also extended the College’s reach in ways that mattered beyond its own community. John XXIII was a reception school for non-English-speaking students, and the new campus made that welcome more generous. Timorese, Vietnamese, and Polish students found in the College a place that saw their dignity and asked something of them in return. The campus, with its open design, accessible grounds, and lack of perimeter fencing, was itself a statement about the kind of community the College intended to be.

Tony Brand was invited to speak with staff about the design decisions – the Mediterranean monastic reference, the colonnades, the vistas. He sent them outside for forty minutes with a single instruction: find your God space. Find somewhere on this campus that is yours, that you can return to when the day has been hard. It was an invitation that expressed something Sr Denise had believed from the beginning – that a school which asks its students to attend to their interior life must first create the conditions in which interior life is possible.





The Heritage Council of WA has since recognised the campus as a significant example of late 20th-century school architecture – a place where quadrangle-based college design was executed with genuine care for the human experience of moving through it.

Passing on the keys

In 1988, when Sr Denise handed the keys to incoming principal Dr Tony Baker, she was completing the first chapter of a much longer story. The foundation she had laid – both philosophical and physical – would prove strong enough to support all that would follow.

'By the time I came here, the grass was green – and you couldn't fail to be impressed with the campus.'

– Dr Tony Baker, Principal 1988–1993

What Sr Denise handed over was a worked-out answer to a question about what Catholic education, in the Ignatian tradition, ought to look like when given a blank site and the freedom to start afresh. Every adjacency, every sightline, every key that opened only what its holder needed – all of it expressed a set of convictions about how people flourish and what they owe each other. It was a framework designed to be inhabited, enriched, and built upon.

And that is exactly what has happened. The gymnasium that was still under construction on opening day is long finished. The labyrinth that now exists was not in any of Sr Denise's plans. Technology has arrived, areas have been renewed, enrolments have grown. Each principal and each community has brought something of their own to a site whose original vision was generous enough to embrace all that would come.

Forty years on

In 2026, John XXIII College marks forty years on the Mount Claremont campus. The site that was once a hospital, a tip, and a source of community anxiety is now, simply, home.

The green grass that took years to establish, the colonnades that had to be argued for, the Chapel that had to be built before anything else could be fully understood – they are all so familiar now that it takes some effort to remember they were once choices.

Our motto **Seek Justice** is not just a slogan. It is a description of a way of being in relationship: with oneself, with others, with the world, and with God. It was written into the staffroom policy, the library design, the placement of the chaplain's office, the key system, and the welcome extended to families navigating a new country. Justice, as Sr Denise understands it, is never

legalistic – it is a matter of being in right relationship.

A person who is not in right relationship with themselves cannot fully be in right relationship with God, or with the people they encounter, or with the environment they inhabit.

That understanding is embedded in our campus's very structure: in the internal garden that gives a vista to the person answering the telephone, who does not need to be accessible to anyone but still deserves to see the sky; in the corner of the grounds where weekend visitors from the nearby hospital sat companionably in a sheltered peaceful corner.

The campus was never fenced. It was never meant to be.

The students who arrive at John XXIII College in 2026 inherit all of that. They walk the colonnades and the expansive green lawns. They reflect in a Chapel that someone spent three days in, alone, so that she could hand it over in freedom. They find their own God spaces, whether or not they use that language for what they are doing. They are, whether they know it or not, living inside someone's very long answer to a very simple question.

'To hope is to wait actively.'

The College that was built in 1986 was an act of hope – active, detailed, collaborative, and faith-filled. What the next forty years makes of it is the task now given to the students, staff, and families who call it home. The foundation is sound. The spaces are generous. The question that built it remains as good a guide as any for what comes next.

For whom are we building?

For them. And in 2026, as we mark forty years on this campus, the answer remains the same: for every student who walks through our gates, seeking justice, finding community, and discovering their own God space in the colonnades and courtyards that have quietly shaped generations.

Watch a 40 year retrospective video of the campus.





The facts and figures of the big move

THE HUMAN STORY

● **Dedicated to details:**

Sr Denise Desmarchelier CJ devoted the equivalent of one day every week, for five years, to the planning of the new campus. Her involvement extended to details most would never consider: the placement of light switches, the angle of windows, the quality of light in every room. The result was a campus built from the inside out.



● **A moving experience:** One teacher described arriving at the new campus as 'walking from shadow into light'.

● **Simple pleasures:** Year 7 student Caitlin Broderick declared the 'icy cold' drinking fountains 'terrific'.

THE BIG NUMBERS

● **Impressive volume:** Over 1,200 cubic metres of items made the journey to Mount Claremont - including 11 pianos, 800 cartons of books from four libraries, and the contents of multiple chapels!

● **People power:** 600 desks moved in just 25 minutes, by students on the last day of term. Teamwork!

● **Record breaking:** At the time, this was the biggest building project in the history of the Catholic Church in WA, a \$12-13 million investment in education.

● **Community spirit:** More than 500 parents turned up to a two-day busy-bee the Saturday before the College opened, and more than 3,000 people gathered for the official blessing and opening.



THE VISION

● **Long game:** Negotiations for the Mount Claremont site began in 1981 – five years before the move.

● **From dump to dream:** The site was purchased at market value from the State Government. It had previously been a rubbish dump. The 1981 brief called for 'at least 10 acres of the rubbish dump, together with a right to the 20 acres adjoining the dump'.

● **Earth works:** In 1985, the site was cleared and earthworks began, transforming wasteland into what would become a 25-hectare campus.

● **A new neighbourhood:** The suburb was renamed from Graylands to Mount Claremont in 1985 – the same year the College site was being prepared.

College is sold

The John XXIII College has agreed to sell its four valuable sites in Claremont.

The purchaser is the A. company. Clough Engineering. The company plans to redevelop the land for housing. The deal is understood to be the biggest suburban land deal ever. The final agreement depends on two factors: Ratification by a meeting of college rents on Tuesday of this week. Re-zoning by the council of Claremont to residential zoning. The Claremont council has already agreed to zone the land. But the new zoning is retained in Claremont's new Town Planning Scheme, which

still has several hurdles to cross. Agreement between Clough Engineering and the school council was reached last week after two months of negotiations. It includes a deal where land is swapped for construction of most of the new school building.

Price

Clough Engineering will build the new school. The agreed price has not been disclosed, but is believed to be equivalent to the wholesale price of the residential land. It is considerably less than

the \$10 million tag put on it at the height of the land boom.

The POST understands that the price is not quite high enough to pay for the construction of the new \$4 million school on the Brockway Road land in Graylands.

The POST understands that the school council is happy with the price. It will enable most of the new buildings to be constructed, with the shortfall to be provided from other sources.

There is a shortfall of about \$1m.

Earthworks for the new school are expected to begin at the end of this year.

The agreement could well be the property deal of the decade. Its impact on the western suburbs will be felt for a long time to come.

The college owns four sites in some of the choicest parts of Claremont, totalling 9.8 hectares.

One is Koolyangarra

College sale: Cont. from P. 1

in Bindaring Parade, a 3,800 square metre site extending to the high water mark of the river.

The site, which now houses the junior school, covers three separate blocks.

Proposed zoning will allow residential land to R30 density, with bonus provisions to R60, this would allow medium density units.

The 3.5ha Loreto site is between Bindaring Parade and Stirling Highway.

It is the site of the old Osborne Hotel, and some of the hotel's original buildings are still used by the school.

These are classified by the National Trust.

Several buildings on the St Louis campus are also classified.

These may be moved by the new owners.

The fourth site is the playing fields in Shenton Road on Lake Claremont, totalling 2.9ha.



● Four into one:

The move brought together students and staff from Loreto, St Louis, Campion, and Koolyangarra: consolidating four prime Claremont sites into one 25-hectare campus in Mount Claremont.

THE MOVE

● Planning marathon:

Downard Pickfords spent 60-70 person-hours planning the move alone – during their busiest time of year.

● All hands on deck:

More than 200 parents and staff helped relocate the College from its Claremont sites over five days, beginning 8 May 1986.

● **Mid-term move:** A six-month delay pushed the relocation to mid-term. The entire College arrived at its new campus in May 1986 with building still fresh around them.

● **Casino capers:** 'I was very sad that we couldn't move sooner because the workers from Clough were at the casino,' wrote one Year 7 student – a wry nod to the Burswood Casino project, which had caused the delay.

THE FIRST DAY

● **12 May 1986, Student Orientation Day.** Students arrived by private transport, with buses available after school. Public transport began the following day. Year groups were staggered throughout the day.

A moving story for Peter's feet

It took removalist Peter Harper six and a half hours just to walk around John XXIII College just to list what has to be moved.

"My feet were aching at the end of the day," he says.

But that is nothing compared with the size of the operation when the school starts to shift to its new site in Graylands next week.

It's a moving job of a type and scale that is probably unique in Western Australia.

A shuttle service of trucks will shift more than 1200 cubic metres of an incredible array of items.

The collection represents scores of years of accumulation.

It includes 11 pianos, hundreds of desks, all the science lab equipment, 800 cartons of books from four libraries, sports equipment, lockers, gym equipment and the contents of the chapels.

It will be like a military operation, with each item colour coded and numbered so that everything turns up in the right place at the other end.

"If they wanted to, the classes could start again within half an hour of us finishing the job," says Bob Hancock, sales manager of Downard Pickfords.

"It has taken us 60-70 man hours just to plan. In a job like this you have to call on all your resources, especially as this is the busiest time of the year for all removalists."

Downard Pickfords won the contract after intense competition between Australia's leading removal companies.

Bob says that the job is unique in his 25 years of experience in the removal industry.

The firm's previous biggest job was moving the TAB headquarters from Perth to Scarborough Beach Road.

That took two to three hours to list.

But the college job is completely different.

For a start, it is spread over three campuses.

John XXIII is an amalgamation of the old St Louis and Loreto schools, separated by a few kilometres of Stirling Highway.

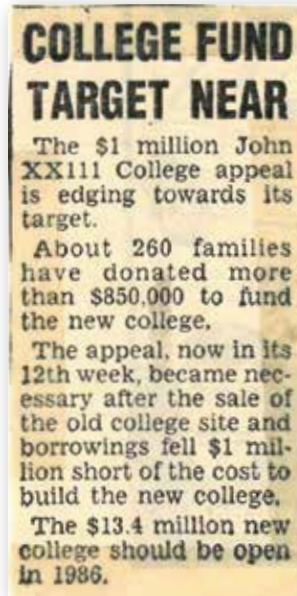
Over its long history the school has collected an incredible accumulation of equipment, a challenge to any removal man.

When school ends next week, the first section to be moved will be Koolyangarra, the primary school on the river side of Bindaring Parade, Claremont.

Most of the move will take place in January, when the rest of the new classes at Graylands are completed.

THE DETAILS

- **Ingenious design:** Those colonnades you walk through every day? The pillars are concrete-filled sewer pipes – a cost-saving measure that became one of the campus’s architectural signatures.
- **Timing everything:** During the planning stages, every movement was timed – including how long it would take staff and students to walk between classes. Staff were consulted on exactly what they needed.
- **The Tip Times:** Senior students launched a ‘zine documenting school life at the new campus. The title was a knowing nod to the former rubbish tip.
- **The Chapel:** Placed as the spiritual focal point of the campus, the Chapel won an award for its use of timber.

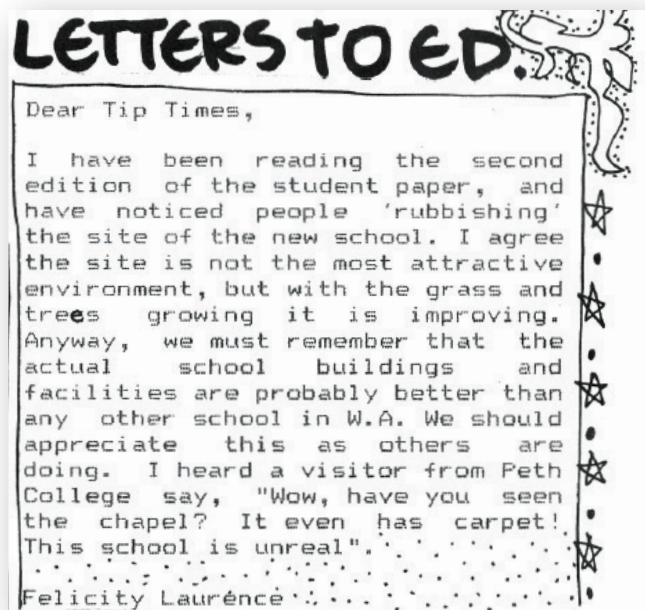


THE MONEY TRAIL

- **Extra mile:** The College ran a campaign to raise an additional \$1 million towards building costs, on top of existing loans.
- **Smart swap:** The College traded its four prime Claremont sites for the new building by Clough.
- **Parent power:** Parents raised an extra \$3,000, spent on turf and beautifying the raw new gardens. When students arrived, there was no grass, just lots of sand.

THE PEOPLE

- **1,250 students** relocated from four Claremont campuses.
- **129 staff members** made the move to Mount Claremont.
- **Principal:** Sr Denise Desmarchelier CJ led the College through the transition.
- **Architect:** Tony Brand of Brand Deykin and Hay designed the new campus.
- **Inauguration Committee:** Led by John Worner, the committee organised a wine release and other events to mark the move.
- **Parent volunteers:** A sewing group, a gardening group, regular cooking sessions in the tuck shop – all made up of parent volunteers – helped establish the new campus.



- **The staffroom:** Designed as the ‘heart’ of the campus – the place where the community gathers.
- **The admin building:** Designed as the ‘head’ of the campus, both geographically and metaphorically.
- **What came with them:** The move included hundreds of desks, all science laboratory equipment, sports gear, lockers, gym equipment, and the contents of multiple chapels and libraries.

STUDENT VOICES

- **Year 2 student, 1986:** ‘Everywhere you go there’s a roof so when it’s raining we won’t get wet.’
- **Year 6 student Amy Niven:** ‘I like the thought of being one of the first students at the new school. As I get older I will be able to tell my grandchildren that I was at the school when it had first been built.’

Video: The Mount Claremont campus in Autumn





40 years of
stories from

Mount Claremont



H This year marks a remarkable milestone: 40 years since John XXIII College opened its doors on the Mount Claremont campus.

On 12 May 1986, students and staff relocated from four separate sites to a partially completed campus that had once been a rubbish tip. What followed was an extraordinary transformation, shaped by the vision and generosity of our College community.

These pages capture some of the moments, places, and people that have made our campus what it is today. From the iconic sculptures that greet visitors, to the sustainability initiatives that make us leaders in environmental stewardship, to the individuals who dedicated decades to our community, each story reveals a piece of our shared history.

As we celebrate 40 years on this beautiful site, we invite you to discover the remarkable journey from wasteland to the thriving educational community we know and love.



THE BEGINNING: 1986

From rubbish tip to remarkable campus

Our 25-hectare campus has an unlikely beginning. In 1981, when negotiations for the Mount Claremont site began, the College expressed interest in acquiring 'at least 10 acres of the rubbish dump.' By 1985, the site was cleared and earthworks were underway, transforming former landfill into what would become one of Perth's most distinctive school campuses.

Through the eyes of students

In 1986, students wrote about the move to Mount Claremont:

'It's Monday 12 May and today we moved into our new school. Everywhere you go there's a roof so when it's raining we won't get wet. All of the buildings are in the same colour, so wherever you go you know it's John XXIII College.'

Another student found comfort in familiarity: 'I felt so lost, then I saw my classroom. The carpet was pink and



warm and I knew everything would be alright when I saw the same old tables and chairs.'

Year 4 student Patrick Rohr had high expectations: 'I feel good leaving Campion and going to the new school. My expectation is a hotel.'

Year 5 student Cathy Willcock reflected: 'Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to be in a country at war. I wonder if I'd ever go to such a peaceful place as JTC. I wonder if any other school is as lucky as the people in the new John XXIII College.'



The library's journey

On 5 May 1986, six library staff entered the new Library Resource Centre to find 'boxes and boxes, and more boxes' – about 800 in total – spread across the floor, interspersed with stacks of unassembled metal shelving. Library Coordinator Miss Judy Hartigan recalled: 'It was like all one's worst experiences of moving house on a grand scale.' Four separate libraries were merging into one whole-school centre. The Koolyangarra junior primary library had already been packed in 1985, only to be unpacked again when the move was delayed. By 19 May 1986, thanks to a team of willing parent helpers, the library was ready for its first borrowers. Today, the renamed Ignatius Centre has grown into a dynamic learning hub – a considerable distance from the 800 boxes that greeted staff on that first morning.



The award-winning Chapel

A year after opening, the John XXIII Chapel won an Architecture Award for best use of timber internally in a non-residential building. The engineering firm received a special commendation for excellence in timber engineering. The cruciform roofs feature glue-laminated jarrah – chosen deliberately to reflect the Western Australian setting. Sr Denise Desmarchelier was insistent that the Chapel be focal – visible, she said, from absolutely everywhere. Tony Brand delivered on that brief.

Treasures in our Chapel

Within the Chapel, the heritage of both founding schools is present in the detail. Altar rails from Loreto welcome visitors at the main entrance. Lanterns from the 1938 Loreto Chapel are placed near the Mary statue, the tabernacle and the main entrance. The Cross is made of small mosaic tiles designed by architect Geoffrey Summerhayes for the St Louis Chapel in 1958, with the Christ figure by sculptor Margaret Priest – who also created the Pioneer Woman in Kings Park. The tabernacle from Loreto Claremont houses the Blessed Sacrament. The bell came from the Loreto Chapel Bell Tower, and the Cross on the Bell Tower came from outside the St Louis chapel.

PEOPLE WHO SHAPED OUR STORY

Terry O'Connor

Chairman of Council for 22 years, Terry steered the College through amalgamation and relocation. As Chair of the Building Committee, he was at the centre of the decisions that shaped the Mount Claremont campus – including one that proved prescient. When the question arose of whether to include the colonnades or redirect funds to the gymnasium, Terry was clear: parents would always find money for a gym; they would not always find money for the colonnades. The colonnades were built. They have defined the campus ever since. His parting hope? That students would ‘participate in all school

activities, whether sporting, cultural or spiritual...to gain fully from school life.’

Bob Niven

College Bursar Bob Niven commenced at St Louis School in May 1973, just after the Jesuits announced their closure. Fr Daven Day SJ was the principal, and Bob’s immediate tasks included administrative work and fundraising for the new Junior School (Campion, completed in 1974). From 1974 to 1976, he was heavily involved in the reorganisation that led to the amalgamation of St Louis and Loreto into John XXIII College in January 1977. From 1981 to 1986, Bob was a key planning team member who recommended and executed the decision to relocate to Mount Claremont. He was described as someone always present and willing – as comfortable moving furniture as developing long-term financial strategy – and a servant of the College in the truest sense.

Dick Bryant

In 1992, Principal Dr Tony Baker appointed Dick Bryant as John XXIII College’s first Archivist. Dick established a computer recording system and spent years collecting, sorting and cataloguing the treasures of our history. Thanks to Dick’s dedication, we have preserved photographs, documents and artefacts that connect us to our Loreto and St Louis roots. Every *Heritage* publication, every anniversary celebration and every historical display owes a debt to his meticulous work in those early years.



Alan Morris

On John XXIII Day 2010, we farewellled Mr Alan Morris after 19 years as yardman. *Heritage* wrote that it was ‘not the most glamorous job in the school because it meant that Alan spent most of his working day emptying bins and picking up rubbish!’

Yet his optimism never faltered. He ‘always expressed the deepest pride in how beautiful the grounds looked, and his willingness to do the simplest and most

mundane jobs with a positive attitude won him the respect of the entire community.' Alan left with 'the respect, appreciation and affection of the students and staff of John XXIII College.'

Jenny Keenan

Led the sewing group which costumed many theatrical productions over many years.

Corrine 'Soosie' Thompson and Sally Clohessy

Spearheaded a group of mothers who voluntarily cooked family favourite meals in the canteen that were frozen and sold at fundraising events.

Annabel O'Connor and Rose Chaney

Part of a gardening group that collaborated with grounds staff to plant and maintain the new gardens. Many families generously donated plants in the early days.

THE 1990s: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Susan Knox: a legacy of courage

After the 1991 World Aquatic Championships, the College was offered Challenge Stadium's warm-up pool, and parents raised funds in record time. The pool was named in honour of **Susan Knox (Class 1986)**, whose courage had shaped the community's understanding of what determination looked like.

At age 12, Susan had her leg amputated due to a vascular tumour. Six weeks later, she was riding her bike to school. In her final year, she entered the 800m race at the Athletics Carnival. When her prosthetic leg fell off after 1½ laps, her friend Tamara carried her the final 200 metres to a standing ovation.

Susan went on to win Silver at the 1988 Seoul Paralympics and was twice named Sports Star of the Year. She passed away in 1992 at age 23.

The House revolution of 1992

Gone were Chisholm, Ward, Xavier and More. In came six new houses honouring the College's dual heritage: Koolyangarra (Green – Loreto Primary School), St Louis (Red – Jesuit School for boys), Ward (Gold – Mary Ward, founder of Loreto Sisters), Champion (Purple – St Louis Primary, named after English Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion), Loreto (Blue – Loreto Osborne for girls) and Loyola (White – St Ignatius Loyola, founder of the

Jesuits). The old homeroom system was replaced with tutor groups of four students from each high school year, staying together for all five secondary years. *Heritage* reported: 'The year twelves have now been asked to 'guide' the younger years, and give them something to look up to. This system will hopefully, over the years, promote unity.'

First game, first win! 11 May 1994

John XXIII's new sports oval was christened on 11 May 1994, when the College won the first football game ever played on the ground! The John XXIII side, captained by **Jeremy McManus (Class 1994)**, defeated Aranmore 9.7 to 1.5. Coach John O'Dea was pleased: 'It's great to be playing at home. Hopefully, we'll engender more interest and attract more spectators.' The oval had been levelled, re-grassed and reticulated – the first of three upper playing fields to be completed. Two more ovals would be ready the following year, alongside three lower playing fields already in use for cricket, rugby, hockey and softball.



Loreto Drama Centre

On Sunday 19 June 1994, the Loreto Drama Centre was officially opened and blessed, providing Drama Studies with a dedicated home after years of making do in shared spaces. Sr Deirdre Rofe, Provincial of the Loreto Sisters of Australia, travelled from Melbourne to perform the official opening. Approximately 100 parents and senior students attended the blessing by Monsignor James Nestor, followed by musical recitals from performing arts and music students.



The project was largely funded by the College Foundation, chaired by Mr John Edgar. As Principal Greg Clune noted at the opening, the Centre would ‘provide tremendous opportunities for our children to develop and strengthen their studies in this important field.’ In 2016, the Centre underwent further development, continuing the College’s commitment to excellence in the performing arts.



Sustainability from the start

Long before sustainability became a common concern in schools, John XXIII College was taking action. From 1994 to 2004, the College extracted methane gas from its playing fields – built on former landfill – to power a 2MW generator that heated the then Challenge Stadium pools through a heat exchange system. Challenge Stadium won the National Energy Award in 1994. In 2004, the College upgraded to a geothermal solution, drilling 750 metres to access 43-degree Celsius water. The \$1.5 million investment saves the College \$220,000 annually and earned a Watercorp Award in 2014. As the 2014 POST reported: ‘Water from John XXIII College does a lap of the nearby Stadium pools before it is used on gardens and ovals at the College.’

When Pre-Primary came to campus

March 1995 marked a significant milestone: Pre-Primary classes commenced at the College, opened by Mrs Temby, Director of Catholic Education. Building had started in July 1994, and the result was a purpose-built centre housing a double-stream program with 46 students aged 4–5. Teachers Miss Laura Di Sabato and Mrs Amy Conacher (née Kerlin, a former

John XXIII student who graduated in 1989) led the program. *Heritage* noted that the addition of Pre-Primary had been ‘a long-time dream that has now been fully realised’ – creating a true K–12 campus. In 2013, the College welcomed its inaugural group of three-year-olds in Pre-Kindy.

Help Our Precious Earth (HOPE)

HOPE began in 1995, founded by teacher Dr Margaret Yoon to encourage students and staff to engage with their local environment and act on what they found. A native garden was planted in the A Block carpark that first year. A herb garden followed in 2003, now a kitchen garden. By 2020, the club marked the milestone with a time capsule burial and tree planting. Teacher Adrian Sims continues Margaret Yoon’s legacy as Sustainability Coordinator, leading the Sustainability Club, with the Containers for Change scheme – proceeds directed to the College’s charity partners – among the more recent initiatives. HOPE has made environmental responsibility a consistent part of College life over three decades.

THE 2000s: BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

2002: building for the future

The year 2002 saw one of the most significant capital building programs since the campus opened in 1986. Between 2002 and 2005, the College completed multiple major projects that transformed its educational facilities.

Mary Ward Secondary was purpose-designed for Special Education services, providing students with access to practical learning opportunities alongside mainstream education – a demonstration of the College’s commitment to inclusive education.



The Gonzaga Barry Lecture Theatre (GBLT) seats 215, with a cinema-size screen, audio-visual conference capability and front floor space for small music soirées and House dramas. Large enough to accommodate an entire year group, it became an essential venue for assemblies, guest speakers and performances.

Video: Sustainability:
Season of Creation



The Thomas More Exhibition Centre (TMEC) serves as an examination centre, exhibition venue, function space and assembly area, with dedicated use for Visual Arts displays.

New art rooms, Design and Technology workshops and a commercial-standard Food and Hospitality kitchen – where students have produced meals for more than 500 people in a single event – completed the precinct.

THE TECHNOLOGY JOURNEY: 2003–2005 AND BEYOND

The Technology and Enterprise Centre development, part of the 2002–2005 program, represented a shift in how the College approached education. As *Heritage* explained, the Centre was designed to develop ‘technological, vocational and entrepreneurial skills’ and to ‘encourage lateral thinking, promote individual development’ and prepare students for a fast-changing world. The Centre integrated with the refurbished art rooms and the new Design and Technology facilities, creating a precinct where hands-on, creative and technical learning could sit alongside each other.

A place in every name

In 2005, during Founders’ Time celebrations, multiple campus locations received names connecting the community to its heritage:

Gonzaga Barry Lecture Theatre Mother Gonzaga Barry led the first Loreto Sisters to Australia in 1875, establishing the first Loreto school in Ballarat

Roncalli Hall The family name of Pope John XXIII

Companions Wing Honouring St Ignatius’s first followers and Mary Ward’s Circle of Friends

Ignatius Centre (Library) Patron saint of Jesuit education

Xavier Wing St Francis Xavier, companion of Ignatius and missionary to India and Asia

Chisholm Pavilion (Canteen Courtyard) Caroline Chisholm, Australian pioneer who served the poor and disadvantaged

MacKillop Room Mary MacKillop, Australia’s first saint, teacher and founder of Sisters of St Joseph

Mary Ward walks with us

Between 2006 and 2009, identical sculptures of Mary Ward were installed at all Australian Loreto schools, including John XXIII College. Adelaide sculptor Meliesa Judge captured Mary mid-stride, reflecting her ‘spirituality in action’ and those famous 2,400km walks to Rome. The sculpture is rich in symbolism:



the backpack represents her journey; the small cross and rosary beads in her right hand symbolise faith held close and her defiance of English law forbidding Catholics to carry rosaries; the lemon recalls how she wrote invisible messages in lemon juice while imprisoned; and the paw prints honour the small dog that saved her party when guides lost their way crossing the Alps. Mary’s open left hand may be reaching for a child’s hand – reaching, perhaps, for us.

Julia de Sales Field: pioneering spirit

When Year 7 moved into secondary school in 2009, their new centre was named for a true pioneer. Mother Julia de Sales Field led the first seven Loreto Sisters to Western Australia in 1897. Born in Ireland in 1846 as Julia Field, she was 50 years old when selected for the mission – described as ‘a wise woman...with experience in education and government, kindly and dependable.’ She opened Loreto College Adelaide Terrace in February 1897 with just two students (27 by year’s end). In 1901, she led the move to the Osborne Hotel in Claremont, serving as leader until 1910. The 2009 Julia de Sales Field Centre, incorporating the Osborne Room, honours her leadership and the pioneering work that made John XXIII College possible.

THE 2010s: CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

A statue born of gratitude

The Pope John XXIII sculpture that greets visitors at the Mooro Drive entrance has an origin unlike any other on campus. Vietnamese sculptor Khoat Van Nguyen created and gifted it to the College in 1989 as thanks for educating his five younger children. Khoat had fled North Vietnam in 1954, graduated from Saigon Art School in 1963 and escaped by boat with his family in 1978. Sr Dympna McNamara found them in a refugee camp and helped place the children at John XXIII College. Khoat worked on the sculpture in his North Perth garden, where



it rose well above his front fence. The names of his five children (B.Tuyet, K.Minh, K.Thu, S.Thao and T.Michael) are inscribed on the school case, and the cricket bat symbolises Australian fair play and welcome.

The Koolyangarra dove comes home

The Holy Spirit dove, created by sculptor Robin Macfarlane-Reid, was a prominent feature of the Loreto Koolyangarra Primary School building. When the College moved to Mount Claremont in 1986 and the House system was established in 1990, Koolyangarra students requested the original sculpture be brought from storage and erected on the Mount Claremont campus. Koolyangarra is an Aboriginal word meaning 'meeting place of happy children' – a name chosen in 1970 by Sr Margaret Mary (Peg) Flynn when the Loreto Claremont Primary School was rebuilt. She wanted it to be 'a community-minded school where students could learn at their own rate and develop their creativity and potential.' The dove symbolises God's spirit of love and joy. The Koolyangarra House motto reads: Strength, Spirit and Justice.

The fetes that built community

In 1988, the College held its first major fete on the new campus. Billed as 'The Grand Affair', it raised

more than \$120,000. Parents, students and community members filled the grounds, browsing stalls stocked with goods that several of the College's parent groups, plus students and staff, had spent months producing. For those who wanted something more memorable, a special-effects stall offered fake injuries and scars, sending children home looking considerably worse than they had arrived. 'The Grand Affair' raised more than the money. It forged friendships that, according to those who were there, are still evident today.

After more than a year of planning, the March 2010 fete proved the scale of what the community could do together. Led by Devon Harding and a large committee of parent volunteers and College staff, parents contributed 1,700 cakes and cupcakes, 7,000 servings of food and more than 2,000 jars of chutneys, jams and sauces, spending countless hours on arts, crafts and garden stalls. The result was an enormous crowd and more than \$200,000 raised – \$180,000 reinvested into College facilities, with generous donations to Loreto and Jesuit missions.



Angelo's Village

Named for Pope John XXIII – born Angelo Roncalli, who grew up in a small farming village in Bergamo, Italy – Angelo's Village opened in 2010 as the junior cubby playground. Federal Government funding through the National Schools Pride Programme and the pro bono work of Campus Architect **Eamon Broderick (Class 1988)** made it possible. Children can play shop, run a café,



fix cars, perform in a theatre or tend the garden. As Principal Anne Fry noted at the time: 'It is our hope that this will be an inclusive playground where children of every different physical strength and dexterity can play...to engage the imagination – one of the precious and undervalued gifts of childhood.'



Opening our doors

On 26 March 2011, John XXIII College hosted its inaugural Open Day, responding to consistent demand from prospective families. Students gave tours, teachers showcased interactive displays, the music department performed, and parents provided hospitality.

Mary Ward: expanding inclusion

Mary Ward has been part of John XXIII College since 1996, when the Loreto Primary School's Special Needs program transferred to the Mount Claremont campus. In 1997, the program expanded into secondary education. The 2002 Mary Ward Secondary provided significantly improved facilities. In 2011, a further building program delivered the Mary Ward Primary extension – increasing space, incorporating small withdrawal rooms, a modern staff office and new facilities. Each development reflected the College's deepening commitment to Mary Ward's vision: that education should be available to all, adapted to individual needs and delivered with dignity. Mary Ward stands as a living expression of that value.

Water savings: the results

After a comprehensive upgrade of the College's reticulation system under the Community Water Grants program, water consumption fell from 42,000kL in 2009 to 16,000kL in 2010 – a saving of \$24,000. The following year, the College saved a further 3,500kL. The system features holding ponds on the eastern boundary, using an aeration process to

remove iron content from the groundwater. In 2011, the College also installed a 27kW Grid Connect Solar Energy system with 144 panels. As Business Manager Des Hardiman noted: 'John XXIII College was already a leader in some aspects of design and use of resources on the campus.'

Nature-based wonderland

In 2012, Pre-Kindy and Kindy children gained a new nature-based playground, designed by Landscape Designer Vanessa Margetts in consultation with Early Childhood staff, the Maintenance Team and Kidsafe WA. Early childhood research shows children who play regularly in natural settings are more physically active, less frequently ill, more resilient and more willing to take appropriate risks. The playground includes a climbing rock wall, water pumping station, double slide embedded into a rock slope, large sand pit, bike track, semi-hidden quiet spaces, fruit trees, logs, an outdoor blackboard and shade areas.

St Louis Sports Centre: bringing the bell home

On 22 February 2013, the St Louis Sports Centre was officially opened at a full College Assembly. The blessing was conducted by Fr Daven Day SJ, the first John XXIII College Principal, who shared stories about

the old campus. Dr Tim McDonald, Director of Catholic Education in WA, performed the official opening, acknowledging the Australian Government's \$3M grant under the Building the Education Revolution initiative. Seven members of the first class of students to attend St Louis College in 1938 were present, marking the 75th anniversary of the Jesuits establishing a school in WA. The bell from the old College was installed in the gym. At the end of the ceremony, Mr Fred Preshall had the honour of ringing it.

Ignatius the listener

The 2014 Ignatius Loyola sculpture – also by Meliesa Judge – shows a young man at a crossroads. He has laid down his sword and shield, renouncing violence. He walks forward but turns his head, listening for God's voice. Sculptor Meliesa Judge reflects: 'We can see ourselves in Ignatius. We have no idea how our lives will turn out...Ignatius reminds us to listen for God's guiding voice within us.' When students join the



College decades from now, Ignatius will still be here, inviting them to pause.

Canonisation celebration

When Pope John XXIII was canonised on 27 April 2014, the College celebrated with an Italian-style carnevale on the last Sunday of the school holidays. Bishop Don Sproxton celebrated Mass in the gymnasium at 4.30pm, alongside founding Principal Fr Daven Day SJ, College Chaplain Fr Wilson Donazetti and other priests connected to our College. Afterwards, chairs were cleared and a band, jugglers, face painters, stilt walkers and balloon twisters took over, echoing the celebrations in Sotto il Monte, John XXIII's hometown. The evening ended with a fireworks display. Every student and staff member received a commemorative badge, designed collaboratively by Visual Arts teacher Ms Louise Hoy and Year 12 Art Captain Emily Sanders.

The fresco: a renaissance in Perth

To commemorate the canonisation, the College commissioned Italian artist Dr Alan Pascuzzi to create a traditional fresco in the Chapel – painted on wet plaster in the centuries-old Renaissance technique. The work features Pope St John XXIII surrounded by symbols and images that embody the College story, including saints such as Aloysius Gonzaga and Edmund Campion. Sr Tess created a series of reflection guides to help the community understand how the symbolic elements link saints past and present with the College's geographical, religious, educational and architectural heritage.



St Francis Xavier Playground: learning through play

Opened in 2015 and officially blessed at the March 2016 Family Picnic, this nature playground for Years 1–3 was designed by Andrew Baldrey and constructed by Exclusive Landscapes Australia. The centrepiece is the 'Santiago', a Spanish-style sailing ship, surrounded by bridges, ropes, tunnels, slides, flying foxes and ladders. Education is woven throughout: children discover place

names, dates and words telling the story of St Francis Xavier, who knew that 'children could learn the good news of the gospel while they played.' Funded by the Parents' Association and the Capital Levy, it has been accredited by Play Safe Australia.



Technology: four decades of change

In 1986, library staff unpacked 800 boxes of books by hand in what Judy Hartigan described as 'pre-computer days when hand-lettering was required.' By 2013, iPads had been rolled out for Years 5–10. In 2014, the College introduced the Cisco Meraki cloud-managed network across campus. By 2016, Year 10 Magis students were testing Virtual Reality headsets, exploring the solar system and journeying through the human body. The pace of change across four decades gives some indication of what may lie ahead.



Read about TRCB's architecture for our 2022 redevelopment



THE 2020s: LOOKING FORWARD

2022 redevelopment

The 2022 redevelopment transformed the administrative and support services of the College: a new administration building, a collaborative staffroom, an upgraded Ignatius Centre and a dedicated Secondary Student Administration and Wellness Centre. The Wellness Centre brought together student services in a purpose-designed space, recognising that wellbeing sits at the centre of learning. The upgraded library reflected the evolution from a traditional book-lending service to a dynamic learning hub. Designed by TRCB Architects, the project maintained the architectural character of the campus while providing contemporary working and learning environments.

Becoming: where past meets future

The 2024 *Becoming* sculpture, located near the formal entry, took 18 months to create. Sculptors Nicole and Alex Mickle collaborated with senior Visual Arts

students to design the piece. Two intertwined lines rise between earth and sky, representing the amalgamation of St Louis and Loreto. The fluid forms interact with daylight, casting ever-changing shadows. 'We see the form as a visual representation of the openheartedness and freedom of spirit the school community values,' explains Nicole Mickle.

HONOURING HERITAGE

Mooro Drive: honouring first custodians

Mooro Drive in Mount Claremont is named after the Mooro people of the Whadjuk Noongar, the traditional custodians of the land in the district, including the present-day suburbs of Claremont and Mount Claremont. The Mooro people inhabited the Swan Coastal Plain and Swan River Valley for thousands of years, moving along established routes to access seasonal food and water sources. The area around Lake Claremont was an important campsite and hunting ground, providing various plants and animals for sustenance.

Circle of Friends Café

The Circle of Friends Café takes its name from an illustration known as *The Painted Life*, depicting Mary Ward and her companions sitting in an open circle, welcoming newcomers and engaging in open discussion. The café is a community gathering space – a place where staff can meet, where the act of sharing a meal strengthens the bonds that make John XXIII College a genuine community. Mary Ward understood that her mission required companions on the journey. The Circle of Friends Café continues that tradition.

Class of '86: the pioneers return

In November 2026, the Class of 1986 – the first Year 12s to graduate from the Mount Claremont campus – will return for their 40-year reunion. They had the honour and the challenge of being the inaugural graduating class at the new campus. At their 10-year reunion, they found the campus green and flourishing with many new buildings. When they return this year, we look forward to hearing what they find.



Video: Creating the
Becoming sculpture





What we grow together

H There is something quietly powerful about a group of people gathering on a Saturday morning, tools in hand, ready to dig in – not for themselves, but for something larger than any one of them.

That is exactly what happened in March, when students, staff, parents and alumni came together behind our Science Garden for a Community Garden Care and Maintenance Day. From 8:00am to 9:30am, they planted seedlings and tended to existing beds in support of one of Australia’s most endangered birds: the Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo.



Forty years in the making

When our College relocated to its current 25-hectare campus in 1986, the grounds were raw and largely bare. The community brought them to life. Parents rallied together, raising an additional \$3,000 for turf and garden beautification. A dedicated gardening group – made up entirely of parent volunteers – worked alongside the Grounds team and a landscaper to establish and maintain the gardens in those early years. Families gave their weekends willingly, and what they planted then is still growing today.

The HOPE Legacy

In 1995, Dr Margaret Yoon founded HOPE – Help Our Precious Earth – with a clear vision: to give students and the wider College community a deeper awareness of their environment, and to encourage staff and students to think globally and act locally.

What followed was decades of quiet, consistent action. A native garden took shape in the A Block carpark that same year; trees went in near our College’s cooling pond the year after. By 2003, a herb garden – now the well-loved kitchen garden – had been established. Balga bushes took root behind A Block, students planted in the Labyrinth area, a Silver Princess was

added in the Pre-Primary area on World Environment Day 2017, and in 2020 a tree was planted to mark the burial of a time capsule. Each of these acts told the same story: this is a community that cares for the place it calls home.



Today, Mr Adrian Sims carries that legacy forward as Sustainability Coordinator, leading the Sustainability Club and overseeing initiatives that span worm farms and utilities management to the Containers for Change recycling scheme – with proceeds supporting our College’s charity partners in East Timor, Cambodia, India and the Northern Territory. As Adrian says:

‘Margaret Yoon planted more than trees when she founded HOPE thirty years ago. She planted a way of thinking.’

‘What moves me most about our planting days is that the same spirit is still here – students, parents, staff and alumni all showing up on a Saturday morning because they genuinely care. That is not something you can manufacture. It has been grown, slowly, over decades, and every plant we put in the ground is part of that continuing story.’



Open to the whole College family

The planting days are open to the whole College family. No prior experience is needed; all tools are provided. Just bring comfortable clothing, closed footwear, a hat and sunscreen. For students, participation may also count towards Christian Service-Learning (Roncalli Service) hours.



Why it matters

The Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo is listed as endangered, and its survival depends on native food sources such as banksias and other indigenous flora. Our College community has already established more than 400 native plants over the past three years, and Carnaby’s Cockatoos are now feeding on banksias growing at the northern end of the campus. Every plant is a small act with a lasting effect.

As Pope Francis has called us to care for our common home, these Saturday mornings offer a quiet, practical response to that call – grounded and genuinely local.

Join us next time

Community Garden Care and Maintenance Days are held throughout the year. Keep an eye on College communications for the next date. We would love to see you there.



H John XXIII College is defined by its people – not just students and staff, but those who willingly give their time in service to others. This spirit of generosity strengthens every aspect of College life.

A community that gives

We are blessed with a remarkably supportive community. There are many ways to give to our College, and volunteering is one of the most precious gifts we receive. Every contribution, whether through time or expertise, helps strengthen the fabric of our College family.

In today's world, where families juggle work commitments, household responsibilities and the demands of modern life, it is encouraging that so many alumni and parents still find the capacity to volunteer. This willingness to serve, despite busy schedules and competing priorities, reflects our shared values and commitment to something greater than ourselves.

Modelling being 'people for others'

When parents and alumni volunteer, they do more than help organise events or serve on committees. They model for our young people what it means to be 'people for others' – a fundamental principle of our Catholic educational mission. Students witness firsthand how their parents and community members

prioritise giving, demonstrate compassion and build something larger than themselves. These are lessons that cannot be taught in a classroom but are learned through example and lived experience.

This spirit of service is central to our identity as a Catholic community. We are called to look beyond ourselves, to recognise the needs of others, and to respond with kindness and love. Our volunteers embody this call in countless ways throughout the year.

Celebrating our volunteers

Every year in October/November, we hold a special event to celebrate and thank all who have given their time during the year at the College. It's a wonderful opportunity to come together, to recognise the



incredible contributions made by so many, and to reflect on the difference that volunteerism makes to our community.

Our parents do wonders

We would like to acknowledge and thank the consistent dedication shown throughout the calendar year. While there are too many to mention individually, we wish to say an enormous thank you to all volunteers who helped with:

- **Friends of Music and Drama (FOMAD)**
Championing our vibrant performing arts programs
- **College Council and sub-committees**
Serving on Finance & Risk, Property & Planning, Foundation Board and Foundation Investment Committee
- **Parents' Association Committee**
Guiding the broader volunteer network and organising social activities
- **Parents' Association Liaisons**
Welcoming new families and fostering connections within year groups
- **Rowing Club committee**
Backing our rowers on and off the water
- **Netball Club volunteers**
Supporting our players and promoting teamwork and school spirit on the court
- **Roncalli Care coordinators**
Providing practical assistance to families facing illness or tragedy
- **Inspire coordinators**
Organising parent education and enrichment programs
- **Event volunteers**
Families who give their time at rowing regattas, netball matches, carnivals, barbecues and countless school functions
- **Musical production teams**
Those who assist with make-up, costumes, set design and backstage support

We could not achieve what we do without our dedicated volunteers. Their involvement demonstrates what a strong community we have and how parent engagement makes a real difference within our College.

Roncalli Care: Kindness in action

In 2008, inspired by Pope John XXIII's legacy of 'friendliness, openness, kindness and willingness to meet the needs of the community,' parents formed Roncalli Care. This volunteer network supports families experiencing disruption due to illness or bereavement

by cooking meals, providing carpooling and making school lunches.

The aim? 'To keep a student's life at school as normal as possible despite the disruption at home.'

Roncalli Care exemplifies the very best of what it means to be a Catholic community – neighbours caring for neighbours, families supporting families, and compassion expressed through practical, meaningful action.



Friendships formed, community strengthened

Beyond the tangible contributions volunteers make, there is something even more profound at work. Through volunteering, lasting friendships are formed. Parents who might not otherwise cross paths find themselves working side by side at a barbecue or planning a welcome event for new families. These connections enrich the entire community, creating networks of support and friendship that extend well beyond our campus.

Our Catholic faith teaches us that we are not meant to walk alone, we are called to be in community with one another. The friendships forged through service reflect this truth and become a source of joy, encouragement and strength for families throughout their years at our College and beyond.

Thank you

To every person who has given their time, energy, and heart to John XXIII College: thank you. Your generosity makes our community stronger. Your example inspires our students. Your presence reminds us all of what matters most. We are blessed beyond measure to have you as part of our College family.



A Golden Ticket to
**musical
magic**

H The curtain rose on John XXIII College's spectacular production of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in early Term 2, delivering six sold-out performances that captivated audiences with their energy and spectacle.

This year's musical proved once again why this beloved event remains a highlight on the College calendar, bringing together over 90 students at auditions, with 46 securing their place on stage. From Years 9 through 12, the cast embodied Roald Dahl's cherished characters with commitment and skill under the expert direction of Head of Learning Area – Drama, Mr George Tsakisiris:

'A school musical, like all of the Performing Arts, teaches more than lines and songs – it builds confidence and resilience through rehearsal and collaboration. In learning to perform together, students discover discipline, creative thinking, empathy, and the courage to contribute their voice; shaping skills that last well beyond the stage.'

'The students involved in this year's production proved to be a terrific group of people who all shone brightly, both as individuals and as part of an ensemble. They were wonderfully talented, passionate and committed to ensuring the success of the musical. They made us all very proud.'



The annual musical exemplifies the collaborative spirit that defines John XXIII College. Students from diverse year levels worked side by side, with younger cast members learning from their senior peers while forming friendships that transcended traditional year group boundaries. This cross-generational approach creates a learning environment where leadership and mentorship develop organically through shared creative work.



Behind the scenes, an extraordinary coalition of staff, alumni, current and past parents, and students worked tirelessly to bring Willy Wonka's fantastical factory to life. The production crew, led by dedicated staff and alumni expertise, crafted stunning sets that transported viewers into a world of imagination.

'We had a skilled and committed backstage crew who brought the scenic design to life,' Ms Kiri Moore reflected. 'The scenic art this year, inspired by optical art, presented real challenges in scale and pattern complexity. Having such a creative group realise the vision was essential to transforming the stage into Willy Wonka's world.'

The 12-piece musical band, under the direction of musical director Mr David Dockery, delivered the beloved score with precision and flair. Choreographer Miss **Molly Rowbottam (Class 2019)**, Year 1 teacher at the College, added dynamic movement throughout.

'Watching the cast grow in confidence and collaborate throughout this process has been a real privilege,' Miss Rowbottam reflected. 'Through the choreography, they developed teamwork and self-belief - qualities that extend far beyond this musical. I am immensely proud of the dedication every student brought to their performance.'

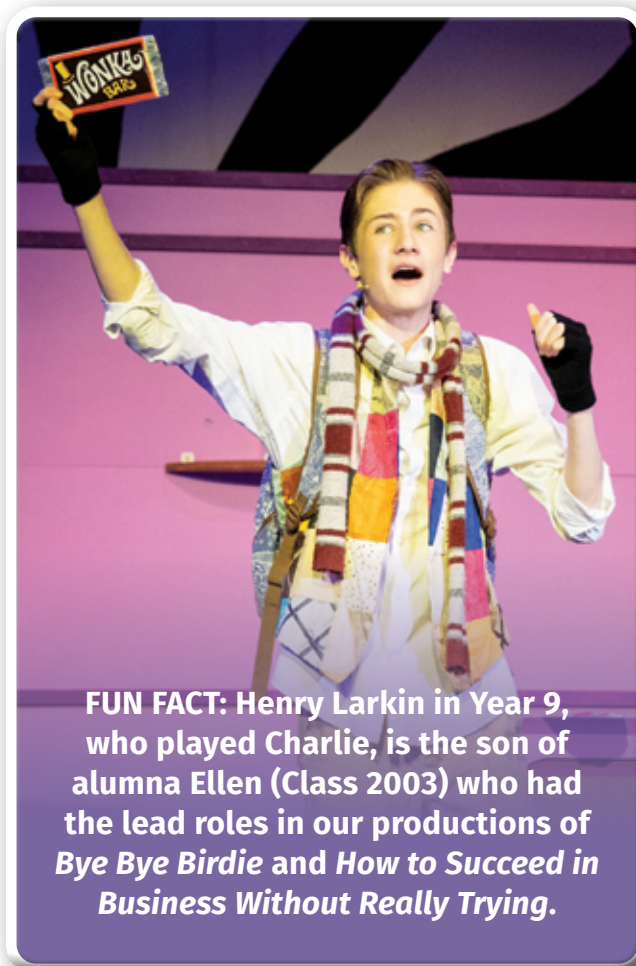
The technical crew ensured seamless lighting and sound throughout each performance, while the make-up and hair teams transformed students into Oompa Loompas, golden ticket winners, and all manner of whimsical characters. At the front of house, the tireless volunteers from Friends of Music and Drama welcomed audiences with warmth and efficiency, ensuring all patrons felt the anticipation from the moment they arrived.

This teamwork showcases one of the musical's greatest strengths: the opportunity for each participant to contribute their particular skills and talents. Whether crafting sets, conducting musicians, designing costumes, managing technical elements, or performing centre stage, each contribution proved essential to the show's success.

As the final curtain fell on the sixth sold-out performance, the standing ovation that erupted reflected not just appreciation for a wonderful show, but recognition of the dedication each person contributed to this classic story.



For those who took part both on stage and behind the scenes, the experience offered lessons in collaboration and creative expression that will resonate long after the applause faded. For many in the cast, particularly the younger students experiencing their first major production, the week marked the beginning of what they hope will become their own four-year journey on the College stage.



FUN FACT: Henry Larkin in Year 9, who played Charlie, is the son of alumna Ellen (Class 2003) who had the lead roles in our productions of *Bye Bye Birdie* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.





Reuniting with a gentle light

H Fr Gaetan Pereira SJ served as Chaplain at John XXIII College from 2007 to 2012.

His name graces both our Interhouse Cross-Country Carnival and one of our College's rowing boats – honours that speak to the lasting impression he made on our community during those years.

When he returned to Perth in March 2026 to concelebrate the wedding of alumnus **Antony Mani-Xavier (Class 2017)**, a visit to our College was a natural addition.

It is fitting that a man who once ran the City to Surf should have a running carnival in his honour. A self-described 'marathon maniac', Fr Gaetan brought that same enthusiasm to his chaplaincy – blessing every sports carnival, making himself available to students, staff and parents at any hour, and encouraging anyone who sought him out to sit with their questions rather than rush for answers. In his words:

'I did not have all the answers. But I encouraged question asking and soul searching.'

In many ways, our open campus reflected its Vatican II-inspired foundations – a community built on

accessibility and genuine openness. Teachers were welcoming, and his presence on the grounds was a constant. He celebrated the sacraments with students across our College, including those from Mary Ward and the primary school, and baptised students during his time here. He recalls those moments with tenderness. 'The most vulnerable time is when God comes to us,' he reflects. Among our younger students he witnessed something he found quietly profound – glimpses, as he puts it, of the concept of God.

During his visit, Fr Gaetan joined former teachers Sr Selvi Adaikalam CJ, Murray Graham and Dr Marg Yoon – along with current teacher Peter Mazur – for breakfast in Subiaco. Marg recalls the morning fondly. 'There were so many laughs and deep soul conversations. Fr Gaetan still has his unique sense of humour and a real tenderness in listening and sharing with each person present. We feel truly blessed to have been in his company.'

He came to Australia in 1994, answering what he describes as a generous 'come and see' from the then Jesuit Provincial, Fr Bill Uren SJ. After his time at John XXIII College, he continued to serve at Nedlands Parish, remaining in the area until 2017 when all Jesuits were recalled to Victoria.



Fr Gaetan is a man shaped by the spirit of *aggiornamento* – the Italian word for renewal that became synonymous with Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council.

He speaks of Pope John XXIII as someone who bravely opened the Church and dared to think beyond. He witnessed that shift firsthand: as an altar boy in South India in the mid-1960s, he experienced the moment the priests turned from only facing the altar to face the congregation – small in gesture, profound in meaning.

That openness has characterised his ministry ever since. During the Christmas periods of 2009 and 2010, he volunteered with the Jesuit Refugee Service at Christmas Island, offering company and dignity to refugees held in a detention centre on a street named, with painful irony, Vagabond Street. He found the experience deeply rewarding and continues to encourage others to reach towards those on the margins.

Even after stepping back from his chaplaincy role, he remained close to the community he had served. In 2014, current Mary Ward Secondary staff member and alumna **Daniela De Witt Hemala (Class 2004)** asked Fr Gaetan – then based in Melbourne – to travel to Perth to officiate her wedding.

She observed:

‘Wherever Father Gaetan goes, he carries a gentle light with him – the kind that makes people feel seen, valued, and at home.’

‘We knew we wanted that same heart and warmth at our wedding, which is why we asked him to officiate our ceremony. It meant the world to us that he not only accepted, but travelled all the way from Melbourne to be with us on our special day.’

Antony Mani-Xavier – the youngest of four siblings who all attended John XXIII College – had tracked Fr Gaetan down in Adelaide to ask him to concelebrate his wedding at St Joseph’s Church, Subiaco. A large percentage of the wedding guests were alumni. ‘I still remember Fr Gaetan doing headstands for all of us at JTC. At the wedding, he brought that same energy to the Mass – the same energy I remembered from Year 7.’

Now based at St Ignatius’ College in Adelaide – having ministered in every Australian capital city except Canberra – he remains a vivid presence in the lives of those whose paths he has crossed. He is still practising yoga; shoulder stands remain part of his regular practice, though headstands, he concedes, are a concession to age. Still moving. Still asking questions.



Meeting the future of Loreto

H This March, our community had the privilege of welcoming Sr Veronica Fuhrmann CJ, General Superior of the Congregation of Jesus, to John XXIII College.

Sr Veronica joined us for Community Mass before touring the College with Archivist Sr Tess Elliott, taking in the history of our College and its deep connection to the Loreto story. The visit was a vivid reminder of the living global tradition we are part of – one that stretches back four centuries to the vision of Mary Ward.

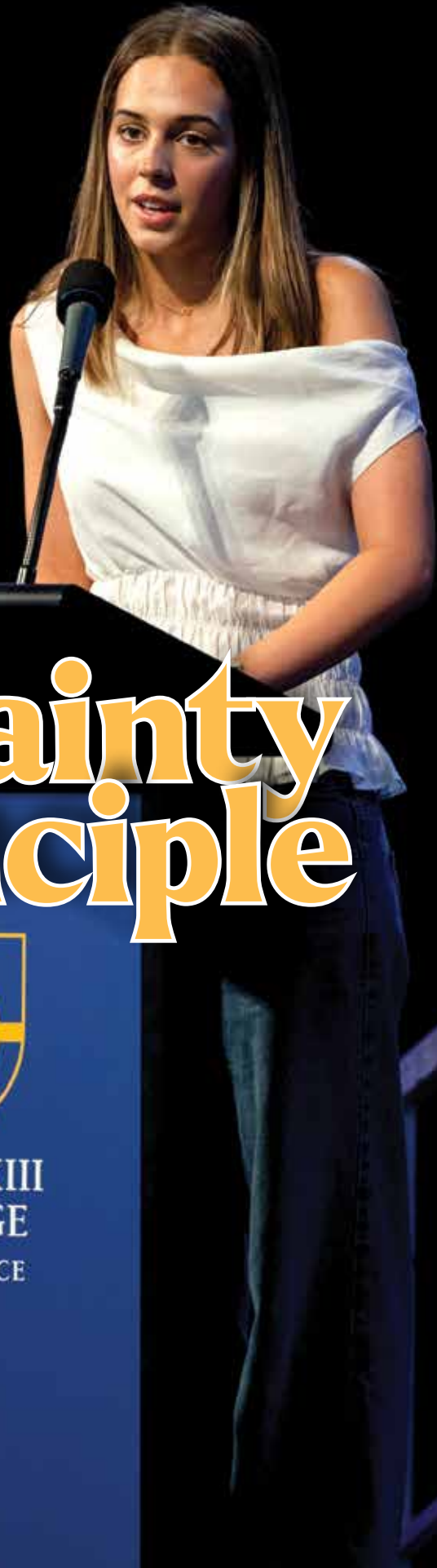
A member of the Middle European Province of Germany, Sr Veronica was elected General Superior in August 2022 and will serve a nine-year term. Based in Rome, she will travel to all 40 countries where the sisters are active – a commitment of pastoral presence that spans every continent.

Her visit carried particular resonance. On 4 November 2025, the Congregation of Jesus and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) – the Loreto Sisters – merged into one congregation at a special Mass in Loyola,

Spain, bringing together approximately 1,880 sisters worldwide under the one name of the Congregation of Jesus. The unification fulfilled the 400-year-old vision of their founder, Venerable Mary Ward – the dream she never saw realised in her own lifetime. Sr Veronica described it as ‘a profound act of healing and hope.’

As one unified congregation, the sisters continue working in education, social justice, pastoral ministry, and advocacy for women and those on the margins. The name Loreto remains present in this broader mission – part of our history and alive in our identity.

We are grateful for the time Sr Veronica gave us and wish her every blessing as her journey through Australia and the world continues.



The
**uncertainty
principle**



JOHN XXIII
COLLEGE
SEEK JUSTICE



Returning to the stage at our High Achievers' Assembly, 2025 College Dux **Bianca Petsos** chose to share something she wishes someone had told her years ago: uncertainty about the future is not only normal, it is common. Speaking to our College community, Bianca reflects on the pressure to have life mapped out before leaving school and shares her own journey of choosing curiosity over certainty. Her message is one of gradual growth, embracing opportunities, and recognising that readiness often comes not through perfect planning but through taking the next step forward.



Good morning everyone, and thank you for having me back.

I feel like I should get a few things out of the way because I've heard enough of these speeches to know that it wouldn't be a dux speech without them. So: find balance, develop good study habits from early on, say yes to every opportunity, and remember that your marks don't define you.

All of that advice is incredibly important. But you've heard it before – and you'll continue to hear it from plenty of people over the years. So instead, I want to talk about something I wish I had heard a few years ago.

And that is, that you don't need to know what you want to do when you leave high school.

From as early as Year 9, we're introduced to career expos, pathway meetings, uni incursions and excursions, and ATAR subject pitches – until assemblies become dominated by acronyms like TISC, TAFE, ATAR, SCSSA, WACE, and more. And the point of all of this is a good one: to show us the huge range of opportunities available to us, and to help prepare us for what's ahead.

But what happens when you're actually there?

Every year, I've watched the graduates who come back to this stage to recognise their results. Somehow they always look older and more grown up, even though they had only graduated a few months earlier. Hearing their university degrees announced alongside their names

and ATARs made it seem like school was already firmly in the rear-view mirror, and that they knew exactly where they were headed next.

And while that's the case for a lot of the amazing people here today, I want to share my experience, and pull that image apart a little for anyone who still feels uncertain.

As someone who has never really known what I want to do after school, I always expected that by the time I finished Year 12, that would change. But now, I realise how common – and how normal – it is to still not know. So many people begin university degrees not because they have a perfectly clear end goal, but because they are curious and following something they're passionate about. Others, such as myself, take time off (a gap year) to work, travel, and open up more opportunities before choosing a direction.

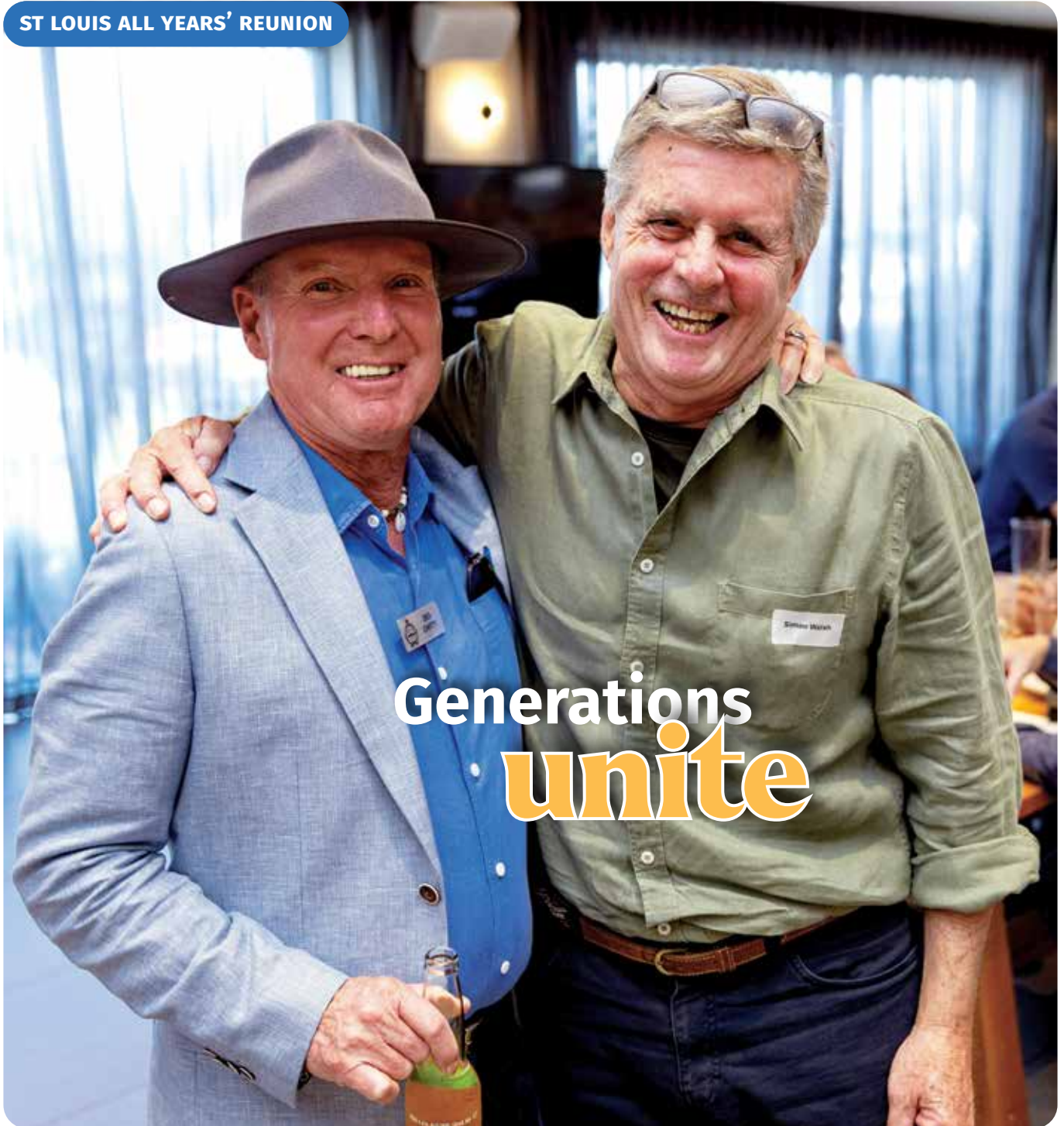
High school shouldn't feel like a ticking bomb – where by the end of it, you're expected to have your entire future mapped out. Instead, school is a place where you're given tools, experiences, values, and relationships that help you start figuring out not just what you want to do, but who you want to be.

And when I think back to starting ATAR, that felt just as daunting as this next phase feels now. But what that's made me realise is that at every stage, we're often looking ahead to something that feels distant and unreachable, without noticing that we're already living a life we once thought we'd never be capable of. In Year 1, the Year 6's seem so powerful, and then suddenly, you become one – only to feel small again, clapped through the spirit tunnel as a Year 7, convinced the Year 12s were smarter, more confident, doing classes you thought you'd never understand.

But then, those ATAR classes become the ones you walk into every day, the three-hour exams become something you walk out of, and even when you don't feel ready, somehow you are. And that doesn't just apply to academics. For me, it applied to sports, art, leadership, music, pilgrimage, even writing this speech – and, to return to the cliché, taking the opportunity will give you so much more than just knowledge of what will come next.

Reaching those moments never feels like crossing a clear line where everything suddenly makes sense – you don't become a different person – but you grow into them quietly, by putting in the work, setting goals, leaning on the people around you, and working to contribute to something bigger than yourself.

And you're all lucky to be part of a College community that helps you do exactly that. Thank you for letting me be part of it, too.



Generations unite

H St Louis alumni spanning multiple decades gathered for the second All Years' Reunion on Tuesday, 1 April, 2026, at The Camfield. The event, organised by John XXIII College, brought together graduates from all St Louis classes up to 1976 to connect, share stories, and celebrate their shared heritage.

Held at the riverside venue next to Optus Stadium, the lunch saw alumni from the earliest St Louis years through to the final graduating class of 1976 come together in a vibrant celebration of community. Conversations flowed easily between generations as attendees discovered common experiences and viewed memorabilia that shaped the school throughout its history.

This All Years' Reunion format allows our community to strengthen bonds across the entire St Louis alumni network, rather than focusing on individual class years. The relaxed atmosphere encouraged spontaneous networking, with alumni exchanging professional insights and rekindling old friendships while forming new connections across different graduating years. The success of this second gathering confirms the appetite among St Louis alumni for events that bring the whole community together.

**Ready to reconnect with your graduating class?
Contact John XXIII College at alumni@johnxxiii.edu.au
to start planning your own reunion celebration.**



OLD GIRLS TENNIS COMPETITION



Still in the game

H John XXIII College had the honour of hosting the 2026 Independent Schools' Old Girls Tennis Competition at Cottesloe Tennis Club on 26 March, continuing a proud tradition that brings together alumnae from some of the competition's most spirited players. The day was completed in full despite a blustery afternoon, with PLC claiming the shield.

The competition has its roots many decades back, when graduates of several Perth girls' schools began meeting simply to play and stay connected. After a period of inactivity, it was formalised around 2000 and has run every year since. Open to women aged 40 and over, it now draws close to 70 players whose school pride and long-standing rivalries are matched only by their enjoyment of the occasion.

The John XXIII/Loreto team was organised by Class of 1984 graduates **Vanessa Ellis** and **Delia Monti**, who have been friends since Year 2 at Loreto Koolyangarra. Both went on to John XXIII College where they played tennis and have continued to play pennant tennis together at Cottesloe Tennis Club for many years. Delia first joined the competition in 2017 and eventually took over as team captain. Joining Delia and Vanessa on court as

part of the 2026 John XXIII/Loreto team were **Jen Olson (née Edgar), Sarah Lewis, Elise Gray (née Anstey), Mary Hodgkinson (née Hooper), Liz Peterson (née Paxton), Sally Hall (née Hooper), Anne Harridge (née Hooper)** and **Skye Palmer**.

For Delia, one memory from those early years stands apart. 'One highlight of my years in the competition has been playing alongside Margaret Robinson – WA Champion and Australian Tennis Seniors Hall of Fame inductee – who at 85 was still our most valuable player and winning most of her sets. Watching the reaction from the younger players as she taught them all a lesson was something I will never forget. Tennis is a game for life, and she proved it.'

Morning tea included handmade sweet treats crafted by John XXIII senior Food Technology students and a hearty lunch gave players from all schools time to reconnect over a shared history that stretches back well before any of them picked up a racquet for this competition.

Iona College will host the 2027 competition. Anyone interested in joining the John XXIII/Loreto team is welcome to contact alumni@johnxxiii.edu.au – we will put you in touch with the organisers.



Note these dates for 2026

- 5 August - St George's Cathedral Concert featuring John XXIII
- 7 August - Ron Logan Cup Alumni -v- First XVIII
- 7 August - Theresa Elliott Shield Alumni -v- College
- 7 August - Past and present staff sundowner
- 9-10 August - John XXIII College Music Eisteddfod
- 29 August - Loreto Class 1976 | 50 Year Reunion
- 2 September - Class 2025 | 1st Year Reunion
- 11 September - Spring Soiree
- 18 September - Loreto Class 1966 | 60 Year Reunion
- 21 September - Combined Independent Girls Schools (CIGS) Golf Day
- 15 October - Grandparents' Picnic
- 19-24 October - Visual Arts Exhibition
- 22 October - St Louis Class 1966 | 60 Year Reunion
- 4 November - Loreto All Years' Reunion
- 6 November - Alumni Community Mass
- 14 November - Class 2016 | 10 Year Reunion
- 14 November - Class 2006 | 20 Year Reunion
- 14 November - Class 1996 | 30 Year Reunion
- 14 November - Class 1986 | 40 Year Reunion
- 20 November - St Louis Class 1976 | 50 Year Reunion
- 27 November - Year 9 Alumni Careers Conversation Event
- 27 November - Christmas Concert



stay in touch

Are your contact details up to date?

Please take the time to ensure we have your most up-to-date details.

Help find lost Alumni

As part of our efforts to stay in touch with our extended College family, we are always looking to expand our Alumni database. Can you help?

alumni.johnxxiii.edu.au/#missingmembers

This page lists Alumni from your year group whose contact details we are missing. If you can help us reconnect with any of them, simply click 'lost' under their name. Use the options at the top of the page to search for missing Alumni from other years.

To update your details online visit alumni.johnxxiii.edu.au

1. Login
2. Under the top navigation select 'Your Account' and click 'Update Your Details'
3. Enter your updated contact information and then click 'Save'.

Alternatively, contact our Alumni Office with your updated details:

- 08 9383 0520
- alumni@johnxxiii.edu.au

Stay connected

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