

Footprints

St John's Anglican College
DECEMBER 2025



Recognising Excellence

Through Scholarships at St John's Anglican College

At St John's Anglican College, we are committed to recognising and nurturing exceptional talent through our celebrated Scholarship Program. Our Scholarship Program empower students who demonstrate outstanding abilities, leadership, and dedication, providing them with opportunities to thrive academically, socially, and personally within our supportive and dynamic learning community.

We believe in rewarding excellence and fostering potential. Scholarships are available for students entering **Year 7 and Year 10 in 2027**, offering up to **75% remission of tuition fees**. These scholarships are more than financial awards, they are pathways to growth, inspiration, and future success.

Academic Scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate exceptional intellectual ability and a commitment to learning. These students are supported through extension programs, academic mentoring, and access to advanced learning opportunities that challenge and inspire them.

Sporting Scholarships recognise students who excel in their sporting disciplines. Beyond tuition support, student-athletes receive specialist coaching, and opportunities to train and compete at higher levels. They are encouraged to represent the College proudly in their sport and develop leadership both on and off the field.



Performing Arts Scholarships are offered to students who demonstrate excellence in vocal or instrumental performance. Recipients benefit from specialist tuition, ensemble and performance opportunities, masterclasses, and coaching from experienced industry professionals. They are encouraged to contribute to the College's rich cultural life through concerts, productions, and community events.

Through our Scholarship Program, St John's continues to support students who are not only high achievers but also active contributors to our vibrant College community. We invite aspiring students who are ready to embrace challenge, pursue excellence, and embody the spirit of St John's to apply and take the next step in their educational journey.

Applications for 2027 scholarships are now open. Visit stjohnsanglicancollege.com.au/scholarships to learn more and apply today.



Footprints

DECEMBER 2025 EDITION

Editor

Mrs Libby Duffin

Graphic Design

Ignition Creative

Photography

Mr Mitch Hollywood

Studio Kirby

Queensland School Photography

Contributors

Mrs Maria Mclvor

Sarbani Maitra

Izzak Chen

Rebecca Sharpe

Jayden Vierveyzer

Ms Brooke McLaughlan

Ms Karen Huffels

Mr Rider Stublely

Ms Cathy Furminger

Rev. Juliana Bate

Mr Robert Wilson

Miss Kai Hannah

Dr Justin Coulson

Mr Joshua Moloney

Miss Min Wang

Mr Josh Mulligan

AJ Antipordia

Ms Elizabeth Wilson

Mrs Bernadette Maullin

Acknowledgement of Country

St John's Anglican College acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we gather; the Yuggera (Jagera) people. We recognise their continuing cultural and spiritual connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We are grateful for the diverse cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their contributions, wisdom and memories.

From the Principal

I want to take a moment to reflect on something that quietly shapes the quality of our lives, our relationships, and our success, social intelligence.

We often hear phrases like **street smarts** or **people skills**, but at its core, social intelligence is the ability to understand and navigate human relationships with wisdom and empathy. It's about more than just getting along, it's about truly connecting, understanding, and responding to others in ways that foster trust, cooperation, and mutual respect.

But how do we cultivate this skill? How do we become more socially intelligent?

It begins with self-awareness. We must learn to tune into our own emotional states, our heartbeat, our breath, even the tension in our muscles. These physiological cues are windows into our inner world. When we understand ourselves better, we become less reactive and more intentional in our interactions.

Next, we must approach others with openness. Every conversation, every meeting, every encounter is an

opportunity to learn. People are not fixed events; they are evolving stories. When we let go of assumptions and allow ourselves to be surprised, we grow.

Empathy is another cornerstone. Putting ourselves in someone else's shoes isn't just a kind gesture, it's a powerful tool for understanding. When we consider someone's circumstances, constraints, and aspirations, we begin to see the world through their eyes. And in doing so, we build bridges of connection.

We also need to recognise the invisible dynamics at play in every social setting. Whether it's a workplace, a classroom, or a community, there are subtle hierarchies and relationships that influence behaviour. Understanding these helps us respond wisely and navigate complexity with grace.

And finally, we must learn to read the unspoken language, the gestures, postures, and expressions that reveal how someone truly feels. Emotions often speak louder than words, and nonverbal cues are the most honest indicators of someone's inner state.



Social intelligence isn't just a skill; it's a way of being. It's the key to meaningful relationships, effective leadership, and personal growth. And like any skill, it can be developed, with awareness, intention, and practice.

So today, I invite you to reflect: How socially intelligent are you? What small shifts can you make to better understand yourself and others?

Because in the end, our ability to connect is what makes us human. And it is through these connections that we find happiness, success, and significance.



Mrs Maria Mclvor | Principal

A blue speech bubble graphic containing the text "Join us" in a white, cursive font.

Our 2026 Open Days – Save the Date

Discover what makes St John's a vibrant, future-focused learning community. Across three Open Days in 2026, prospective families are invited to explore our campus, meet our dedicated staff and students, and experience the innovative programs that shape learning at St John's.

Join us to get a real sense of our culture, opportunities, and the exceptional education we offer.

Middle and Senior School Open Day - **March 5, 2026**

Kindergarten and Prep Open Day - **April 28, 2026**

Middle and Senior School Open Day - **August 27, 2026**



MEET OUR 2026 College Captains

Every year, our student leaders bring their own spark, strengths, and stories to the role, and the 2026 College Captain team are no exception. This group of remarkable young people leads with empathy, curiosity, humour and heart, each offering a unique perspective on what it means to guide a community in a year themed around thriving.

Izaak Chen College Captain

What's your superpower as a student leader?

I feel like I'm pretty good at empathising with people and seeking to understand where they're coming from. As a student leader it's impossible for you

to understand the experiences and perspectives of everyone you serve, so empathy is really important to me as it allows me to connect with others and see how I can best help them.

What's your motto or catchphrase that sums up your approach to leadership this year?

My leadership motto this year would be "Anything Can Happen If You Let It". And yes, this is plucked straight from the finale of the College Musical this

year Mary Poppins. As a student leader, I want to inspire my fellow students to pursue their passions and make the most of their high school years without placing any arbitrary limits on themselves.

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?

I love going on walks through Forest Lake and admiring the beauty of the natural world – the trees, the grass, the birds and of course the lake – it's really inspiring and fills my heart to see nature's beauty, power and mystery on full display.



Sarbani Maitra

College Captain

2026 is the Year to Thrive. What's one thing you do to make sure you're thriving at school (or in life)?

To thrive at school, I focus on setting clear goals, both short-term and long-term. When I know what I'm working toward, it's easier to stay motivated and organised. Goals give me direction and purpose, especially during stressful times, and remind me why every bit of effort and progress matters.

Jayden Vierveyzer

Vice Captain

2026 is the Year to Thrive. What's one thing you do to make sure you're thriving at school (or in life)?

The one thing I do to thrive in school is balance. I won't lie, it is hard to balance schoolwork, leadership, extracurricular,

What's your superpower as a student leader?

My superpower as a student leader is being an idea generator. At St. John's, I'm always thinking of new ways to improve events, programs, and student experiences. Not every idea works perfectly, but I've learned that meaningful innovation comes from thinking differently, taking initiative, and inspiring others to explore possibilities.

a part-time job, social life, and family, but it isn't impossible. All it takes is some good time management, and as Mr Bird would say: good mental health. I make sure to make time for me as often as I can to go for a walk, a run or a bike ride for a bit of downtime.

What's the funniest or most memorable moment you've had at school so far?

The best memory I have had recently in school (there are too many to choose from) was on Year 11 camp. There was one activity where we were had to make it to the other side of the "obstacle course". We failed repeatedly

What's the funniest or most memorable moment you've had at school so far?

Some of my favourite memories at school happened backstage during the last Mary Poppins performance. When the "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" scene started, everyone in the drama room who was not performing started dancing along with the performers as we were watching them live. We were all just laughing and celebrating our final performance as a cast, and having the kind of fun only theatre makes possible!

in minicamp groups, but eventually our whole cohort figured out we could work together, and the euphoria when we reached the end was impossible to dampen.

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?

I've told a few people this, but I not only have never left Australia, but never been on a plane! Luckily, we live in one of the countries in the world with so much to explore in our own backyard, and I am lucky enough to have done quite a bit of caravan travelling with my family. My dream is to one day tour Australia inside and out.

Rebecca Sharpe

Vice Captain

2026 is the Year to Thrive. What's one thing you do to make sure you're thriving at school (or in life)?

For me, thriving doesn't necessarily mean what looks great on paper. That can be important too, of course, but I think it's more about how you feel. Whilst I'm by no means the most charismatic person in a room, I find that I always feel best when I'm spending time with others – so it'd have to be that.

What's your superpower as a student leader?

I think I'm pretty good at striking a balance between progress and fun.

In my experience, both are equally important in getting things done – we're all so much more motivated to put in the effort if it's an enjoyable experience.

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?

Most of my friends will know this, but I love birdwatching. There's something so magical about being outside in nature and being able to know my way around different species makes me feel a whole lot more connected to the environment around me. I highly, highly recommend being a bird nerd – it's super fun.



International Baccalaureate World School – Primary Years Programme (PYP)

The International Baccalaureate World School – Primary Years Programme (PYP) Exhibition continues to serve as an inspiring and transformative experience that celebrates the culmination of each student’s learning journey through Junior School. Marking the 10th year of PYP implementation at St John’s Anglican College and as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, this milestone underscores the school’s ongoing commitment to fostering inquiry, collaboration, and international mindedness in young learners.

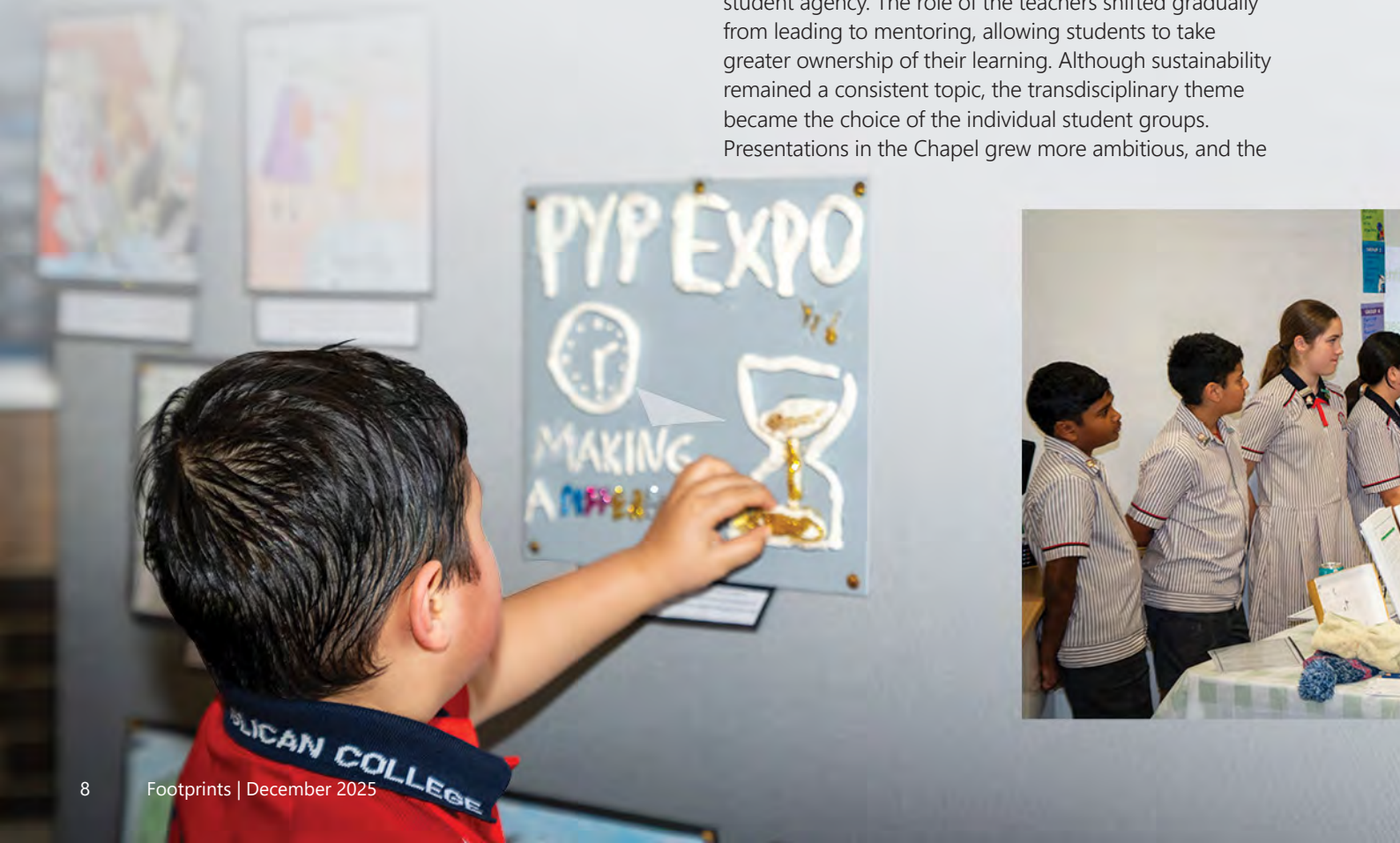
The Exhibition is the final, student-led inquiry within the Primary Years Programme, allowing learners to showcase the knowledge, skills and attributes to the learner profile that they have developed throughout their years in the program. It provides an authentic opportunity for students to explore real-world issues that are both personally meaningful and globally relevant.

It’s hard to believe that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the PYP Exhibition at St. John’s, a remarkable milestone in our journey as an IB World School.

The Primary Years Programme Exhibition is more than just an end-of-year project. It is a dynamic, student-driven exploration of real-world issues, designed to empower learners through inquiry, action, and reflection. It is a celebration of curiosity, critical thinking, collaboration, and the core values that define the IB philosophy.

When the exhibition first began a decade ago, it was new to everyone at St. John’s. Year 6 teachers and students worked side by side, navigating the process as true partners. The inaugural theme of sustainability, under the transdisciplinary theme Sharing the Planet, inspired students to research, collaborate, and present their findings in the Living Faith Chapel. Each group was supported by a staff member who offered guidance and helped students stay focused and on track.

Year by year, the process evolved. Annual reviews led to new goals and refinements, with a growing emphasis on student agency. The role of the teachers shifted gradually from leading to mentoring, allowing students to take greater ownership of their learning. Although sustainability remained a consistent topic, the transdisciplinary theme became the choice of the individual student groups. Presentations in the Chapel grew more ambitious, and the



focus began to shift from simply producing a project, to taking meaningful action.

As the sustainability theme continued, a realisation emerged: a large-scale production in the Chapel was increasingly at odds with our environmental values. This prompted a major review of the exhibition process two years ago — one that reaffirmed student agency and set out a bold, two-year plan for transformation.

Three key changes were introduced:

- 1** A shift in focus from the final presentation to the learning journey itself. Students now present in classrooms using digital displays, significantly reducing waste and aligning with our sustainability goals.
 - 2** The introduction of a new topic: Making a Difference. With the emphasis now squarely on action, students are challenged to take measurable, purposeful steps to impact their world in real ways.
 - 3** Full mentorship of student groups has been assigned to staff members across the school. Year 6 teachers now support the process as facilitators, while mentors guide the learning based on their shared interest in the students' chosen transdisciplinary themes.
-

This year's journey began not in the classroom, but in a vibrant afternoon gathering where each group met their mentor. The energy in the room was infectious — ideas sparked, collaboration began, and the sense of purpose was unmistakable.

Students develop their central ideas and lines of inquiry, delving into research, and preparing to design and implement meaningful, measurable action.

The PYP Exhibition has become an integral part of the St John's identity, a signature moment in our learners' journey. It is a powerful opportunity for students to rehearse what it means to be active global citizens, take real action, and embody both the IB Learner Profile and our own College values of faith, hope, love, courage, community, justice, and of course, service.

We are proud of how far we've come and even more excited for where our learners will take us next. We invited the community to join us on September 9th to celebrate this year's Exhibition.



College Creations Reflections

College Creations - Senior School

The annual College Creations exhibition showcased the outstanding artistic talent of our Secondary students. Visitors were treated to an inspiring collection of paintings, drawings, sculptures, photography, wearable art, mixed media pieces, digital artworks, and even interactive installations.

A heartfelt thank you goes to everyone who contributed to making the evening possible, especially Sze-Mun Golding, our dedicated Visual Art Technician, whose tireless efforts ensured every detail was perfect. Gratitude is also extended to the Senior Leadership Team, the Development Office, the catering team, Melinda Thiedeke, and the Music Department for their beautiful performances, and the Maintenance Team for their invaluable support.

College Creations continues to be an incredible opportunity for students to share their creativity and passion with the wider community.

2025 Senior School College Creations winners:

- **Painting:** *Alexandria Lewis* – Year 11
- **Drawing:** *Ashleen Arawattigi* – Year 11
- **Sculpture:** *Jazmyn Tregenza* – Year 12
- **Mixed Media:** *Hannah Madigan* – Year 11
- **Wearable Art:** *Amelia Toth* – Year 10
- **Digital Media:** *Jayvier Ward* – Year 11
- **Photography:** *Parwin Kakaei* – Year 10
- **People's Choice:** *Charlee Visser* – Year 11

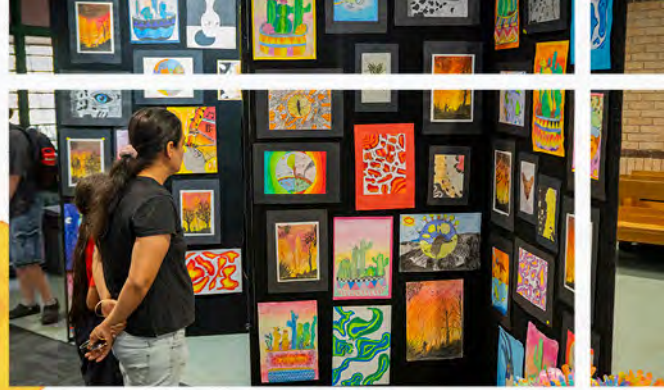
College Creations - Junior School:

The Junior School's College Creations exhibition was a vibrant celebration of imagination, colour, and creativity. Our young artists created stunning expressions of joy, curiosity, and wonder. From self-portraits to sculptures and landscapes, each piece radiated a fresh perspective and fearless experimentation. The exhibition not only showcased remarkable artistic talent but also the confidence and storytelling power of the students' growing voices.



2025 Junior School College Creations winners:

- **Kaley Chantawarangul**
(Early Years)
- **Amelia Bui**
(Upper Primary)
- **Kabir Berawala**
(Early Years)
Highly Commended
- **Sia Joshi**
(Upper Primary)
Highly Commended



Celebrating St John's Inaugural Year 12 Engineering Class

2025 marked an exciting milestone for St John's Anglican College, with the graduation of the very first Year 12 Engineering class. Among this pioneering group, six outstanding students achieved grades high enough to be recognised by Engineers Australia, earning prestigious certificates that celebrate excellence in the field.

Award Recipients:

Anh Bui
Craig Cadman
Shreeyani Ghimire
Phan Anh Minh Le (Mike)
Mahika Sood
Lisa Tran

For their teacher, Mr Rider Stubley, this achievement represents far more than the completion of a curriculum, it's the culmination of years of dedication, innovation, and teamwork.

"As the teacher of this inaugural Year 12 Engineering class, this milestone represents the culmination of a lot of hard work by not just the award recipients, but every student in the cohort," he shared. "It has been a collaborative effort by the class to identify what has been most effective for them, and they have worked together to build each other up and galvanise through the duration of the course."

Throughout the year, students have demonstrated remarkable growth, both personally and academically. The Engineering Program has encouraged them to think critically and creatively, developing their ability to approach challenges through a technical and analytical lens.

"The students have shown remarkable growth in their problem-solving and collaborative learning skills and have demonstrated a love of learning and a curiosity for the world they live in," Mr Stubley said. "Engineering looks at the how and why of the world they navigate through a technical lens, and they have risen to the challenge marvellously."

Recognition from Engineers Australia adds a further layer of prestige to the students' achievements. "It is an incredibly significant



achievement,” Mr Stuble explained. “The QCAA Engineering course is a very academically challenging Program, and to score over 90% in their internal assessments places them firmly in the upper echelon of Engineering students across the state.”

Looking ahead, Mr Stuble offered advice for future students who may be considering Engineering as a senior subject: “My number one piece of advice is to throw yourself fully into the subject if you are choosing to take it. Engineering is not a subject



where half-measures will lead to success. It is a subject where effort will always be rewarded far more than natural ability, and the graduating cohort of 2025 have demonstrated effort in spades. This includes the whole graduating class, not just the award recipients.”

As the inaugural class looks to the future, their success stands as a testament to their determination, teamwork, and passion for innovation, paving the way for the next generation of St John’s Engineering students to follow in their footsteps.



Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, provides a hands-on way to demonstrate God's love to children in need around the world. Each year, our community fills shoeboxes with toys, hygiene items, school supplies and fun surprises that are distributed in the name of Jesus Christ to children living in vulnerable situations.

This year, our Community Service Captains led the charge, visiting classrooms to collect donations. During their lunch breaks, they were joined by a team of enthusiastic Year Five students who helped pack the shoeboxes with care and excitement.



This fundraiser holds a special place in the hearts of our Junior Campus community. Operation Christmas Child allows St John's to share love, hope, generosity and the Christian message of Jesus Christ with children in more than 100 countries. For over 20 years, our school has proudly supported this meaningful initiative, bringing joy to countless children around the world.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff, Pam Boardman, Jo Hill and Bev Doyle, our generous grandparents who hand sew bags, and the church groups who lovingly knit dolls for the boxes. This year, we raised \$710.20.

Thank you to all staff and students whose generosity will go a long way in bringing smiles and joy to many children this Christmas.



Chaplain Reflection | Living the Mission: How Anglicare Brings Hope to Families and Young People



Within the Anglican Church of Southern Queensland, we have of course, our Parishes and Schools. These are places where we see a fundamental expression of our mission, “to witness to the love of Christ in our communities”.

A third and sometime forgotten area of the church, that also lives this mission every day is where people with hearts for others work tirelessly with individuals and families experiencing hardship, offering practical assistance, professional care and hope. Together these distinct areas form a shared ministry that responds to human need, nurtures faith in community, and offers a compassionate Christian presence across South-East Queensland.

The areas of support that Anglicare offers is vast; from working with aged care, seniors or disability support, mental health and wellbeing support through community based recovery programmes, counselling and therapeutic supports, community centres, emergency financial and food relief, housing and homelessness outreach services, foster and residential care services for children and young people, along with parenting support and early intervention services. One important programme that Anglicare provides is the Bail Support programme for young people in the

youth justice system. An area which our college is supporting this year through our annual Christmas Tree appeal.

Anglicare strives to keep young people out of custody and support families through crisis. The Bail Support Programme partners with courts, police and families to help children and young people meet bail conditions and address the issues that led them into the youth justice system. This is done through in-home and community-based support; from helping young people attend appointments and comply with curfews to connecting families with counselling, education, housing and drug and alcohol services. Workers provide crisis intervention, ongoing motivational support and parenting guidance so that families have the tools to restore stability and reduce re-offending. The program focuses on early intervention: supporting those at risk of remand and assisting young people exiting detention to re-engage with school, training and safe housing.

Currently, Anglicare runs the program in Logan and the Gold Coast, the aim is to build community



confidence that bail conditions can be met while addressing the underlying causes of offending. This blended approach of practical support and therapeutic care recognises that safe housing, stable family relationships and access to education or work are vital to long-term change. Indeed, this work is a tangible expression of the gospel value of compassion, offering mercy, practical care and second chances to vulnerable young people. Thank you to our community for your generosity's year's appeal, showing this Thank Thank you to our community for your generosity's year's appeal, showing this young people that they have dignity and worth.

Rev. Juliana Bate



Celebrating 30 Years of Teaching with Mr Robert Wilson



This year marks a remarkable milestone for Mr Robert Wilson, a much-loved Year 6 Teacher at St John's Anglican College, who celebrates 30 years as an educator with us.



Before joining St John's (then Forest Lake College) in 1994, Mr Wilson was already a dedicated musician and music teacher, roles that continue to influence his approach to education today. "In my past life, I was a musician and a music teacher, I still am actually, but classroom teaching is now my full-time job," he shared. "I have always been interested in the way students learn through guided experiences, whether that's making music or learning a new skill. That moment of wonder and discovery as they master something new is what keeps me passionate about teaching."

When the College began developing its strings program three decades ago, Mr Wilson saw an opportunity to bring his expertise to a new community. "I was aware that Forest Lake College was starting a strings program, and I knew I had the skills to establish something that would meet the school's needs. Little did I know that within seven years; I'd be teaching strings from Prep to Year 12 across three campuses. It was an exciting and incredibly busy time!"

Reflecting on his long career, Mr Wilson says his most memorable experiences aren't defined by a single achievement, but by the many connections he has made along the way. "I think back on all the people I've been able to influence in a positive way," he said. "Meeting a parent who tells me I once taught them, and that they remember not what was taught, but how they were taught, that's quite a circle of influence. It's an incredible responsibility and an honour."

Over the decades, Mr Wilson has witnessed the College grow and evolve in many ways. "Things have certainly changed, both physically and within the community," he reflected. "But one thing hasn't changed, we are still a collection of professional, like-minded people who are here to create a learning environment in which ordinary kids are empowered to do extraordinary things."

He's also seen major shifts in education, from technology and curriculum changes to evolving student needs. Yet, he believes the core of teaching remains unchanged.

"Students want to be respected and valued for who they are," he said. "They want to connect with

someone who genuinely cares about their learning. If you start from that place, everything else follows. Sometimes, the classroom teacher is the most reassuring thing in a young person's increasingly complex world."

Students want to be respected and valued for who they are

Looking back, Mr Wilson says he is most proud of the relationships he's built over his career. "I'm proud of the professional friendships I've made, the students who were at risk that we as a team were able to influence in a positive way, and the parents we've been able to support," he said. "It's tough being a parent in this digital age. If we can offer reassurance and practical guidance, that's something to be proud of."

When asked what advice he'd give to young teachers beginning their careers, his message was simple but heartfelt: "Be yourself. Kids can spot a fake from a mile away. Above all, allow your faith to shine. Teach with love, compassion, and authenticity, and always be the best version of yourself."

And, of course, after 30 years, there are a few light-hearted memories too. "I used to ride my very fancy road bike to school back when I was young and fit!" he laughed. "One day, I punctured my tyre twice on the way and had to walk the last two kilometres just to make it in time for class. The moral of the story? Never give up!"

After three decades of service, Mr Wilson's journey stands as a testament to the dedication and joy of lifelong learning. His impact can be found throughout the College community, in the programs he established, the colleagues he has worked alongside, and the many students whose learning he has shaped.



St. John's
STEM
INSTITUTE

Investing in Places That Shape People

St John's continues to invest in exceptional learning environments across both campuses. One of the most exciting projects currently underway is our Aquatic Precinct.

Stage 1 is progressing well to deliver purpose-built learning areas and a state-of-the-art program pool scheduled to open in early 2026. Construction of the main 50-metre pool will follow throughout the year, marking a major milestone in our long-term strategic vision for sport, recreation, and holistic student development.

These upgrades sit alongside the recent completion of the full renovation of the Secondary Campus amenities, following earlier upgrades at the Junior School. Together, these improvements ensure that students across all year levels have access to modern, safe, and welcoming facilities that support both wellbeing and the rhythms of daily school life.

We also opened our new Secondary Campus Yarning Circle on Foundation Day 2025 with a smoking ceremony, as well as the yarning circle at our Junior Campus. Both now serve as a visual reminder of our school values. Choosing community over competition, courage over silence. Sitting together, listening, reflecting, and showing up in service of one another.



Braydon Giles: A Systems Thinker Leading the Future of Middle School Education

Braydon Giles, Head of Middle School at St John's Anglican College, has been named one of The Educator's Most Influential Educators for 2025, and has also been included in The Educator 2025 Hot List.

In an era where the most impactful educators are no longer defined solely by academic results or leadership titles, Mr Braydon Giles exemplifies what it means to be a systems thinker. An educator who works across boundaries, transforms evidence into action, and leads with a bold, innovative spirit.

As Head of Middle School at St John's, Braydon has led transformative initiatives for students in Years 7–9, a crucial stage in their academic and personal growth. His approach prioritises the holistic development of each student, drawing on current research, community partnerships, and student voice to shape a learning environment that is both rigorous and supportive.

But Braydon's influence extends well beyond his school. He serves as Vice President of Adolescent Success, Australia's peak body dedicated to the education and well-being of young adolescents. In this role, he collaborates with national and international experts, helping to shape the future of middle years education. His former tenure as Treasurer of the Joint Council of Queensland Teachers' Associations (JCQTA) also speaks

to his commitment to system-wide collaboration and advocacy across the profession.

In 2024, Braydon was recognised with the New Voice in School Leadership Scholarship from the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, an honour reserved for those with an emerging voice and a strong vision for educational leadership. His insights have been shared through national and international conferences and published in leading journals and education magazines, establishing him as both a practitioner and a thought leader.

Braydon Giles stands out not just for what he has achieved but for how he leads: with vision, integrity, and a deep belief in the transformative power of education. As a systems thinker and change-maker, he is helping to shape a brighter, more connected future for schools, students, and the profession itself.



A Safer Digital Future: What Parents Need to Know About Australia's New Social Media Age Laws



Dr Justin Coulson

Dr Justin Coulson

Please note: This piece has been edited for length and tense for publication purposes. The views expressed remain those of the original author.

From December 10, Australia led the world in a major change to online safety. New legislation restricts children under 16 from creating or maintaining social media accounts including platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter).

It's a huge – and positive – step. And for many families, it will mean big changes to how kids connect, communicate, and spend their time online.

Why the Change?

The decision comes after years of accumulating evidence that social media while fun, engaging, and sometimes even educational — can also be deeply dangerous for children and teens. These platforms are deliberately designed to capture attention, keep users scrolling, and reward comparison. They elevate extremism and outrage. They expose children to violent and explicit content, cyberbullying, unrealistic ideals, and a steady stream of social pressure that can erode wellbeing.

As Australia's eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant

explained when she joined me on The Happy Families podcast, "Parents shouldn't have to fight billion-dollar companies to keep their kids safe online — the responsibility belongs with the platforms."

How it Works

That's what this law does. It shifts the onus off parents and onto tech companies, requiring them to take "reasonable steps" to stop under-16s from having accounts or being algorithmically targeted. This means parents won't face penalties. The responsibility — and the fines, which can reach nearly \$50 million — will fall to social media companies that fail to comply.

To be compliant (and keep under 16s off the various platforms), big tech companies who are on the "banned" list will use a combination of age assurance tools — think AI-based content analysis, behavioural signals, and layered safety checks. Regular identification can be used, but if people are uncomfortable with that, the platforms will supply other methodologies for age verification.

The law won't solve every problem. Kids will still find ways to connect, and not every unsafe corner of the internet will disappear. But this new baseline gives parents a powerful ally — and a clear message that childhood deserves protection.

What Parents Can Do:

1. Start the conversation. Talk with your child about what's changed, why it matters, and how it's designed to protect them — not punish them. Keep it calm, curious, and compassionate.
2. Highlight the risks. Explain how social media can fuel anxiety, comparison, or exposure to harmful content, and why limits help everyone breathe easier.
3. Stay informed. Visit esafety.gov.au for up-to-date resources, checklists, and webinars explaining how the legislation will work.
4. Watch for changes. Reassure them that they're not alone — no one under 16 will be able to use these platforms.
5. Know the exceptions. Messaging apps and most online games are currently exempt, so your child might migrate to those spaces. Keep guiding conversations about what's safe and what's not.
6. Understand the scope. The rules apply only to platforms with "social media" features — spaces designed for sharing and following others. New apps will continue to appear, so stay curious and connected.

Perhaps most importantly, create community. Build relationships. Find ways to encourage your children and their friends to be able to connect, communicate, and enjoy a play-based, rather than a screen-based, childhood. This takes effort on our part. But the effort is worth it.

Get to know your child's friend's parents. Arrange for phone number swaps. Organise playdates and hangouts. Create the space your child needs to spend real-world time in real-world activities with friends and family.



Academy of Music Production (AMP): Turning Up the Volume on Creativity

2025 saw the launch of the Academy of Music Production (AMP), a new program developing young musicians into confident performers, producers, and collaborators. Focused on band performance, studio experiences, and creative collaboration, AMP offers students a hands-on journey through the world of contemporary music.



The First Year of AMP

In its very first year, AMP has made a big impact, providing students with a vibrant platform to create, perform, and produce music in authentic industry settings. From competitions to studio projects, the program is quickly becoming a cornerstone of the school's performing arts community.

Battle of the Bands: A Grand Debut

The highlight of AMP's launch year was the inaugural Battle of the Bands, which brought together talented performers from St John's Anglican College and visiting performers from Sheldon College, Bremer SHS, and Northpine Christian College. The energy was electric as each band showcased their skills, and in the end, St John's Anglican College proudly took home first place!

Studio Sessions: Our Own Tiny Desk Experience

Drawing inspiration from the NPR Tiny Desk Concerts, AMP introduced its very own Studio Sessions, a series of six live performances held in the school's music studio. Each session featured a live audience, with performances recorded, filmed, and produced entirely in-house by AMP students.

Holiday Workshops: Expanding Musical Horizons

Over the school holidays, AMP hosted specialist workshops designed to help students expand their musical skills and knowledge. These included sessions on studio recording, keyboard skills, advanced theory, and the art of practice.

Song Writing Competition: Creating Original Voices

To top off an incredible year, AMP launched a Song Writing Competition, challenging students to compose and perform their own original songs. Guided by a songwriting workshop, participants learned how to turn ideas into full compositions before performing their pieces as groups. The winning song will be professionally recorded in the AMP studio, a huge step forward for budding artists eager to share their original work with the world.

From thrilling live events to creative studio sessions, the Academy of Music Production has hit all the right notes in its first year. With its focus on innovation, collaboration, and real-world experience, AMP is already shaping the next generation of musicians, and this is only the beginning. Here's to another year of music, creativity, and success at St John's Anglican College's Academy of Music Production!



From International Student to St John's Teacher: A Journey of Courage, Culture and Community

When she first arrived in Australia from China, choosing the right school was a big decision for Miss Min Wang and her family. For them, St John's Anglican College stood out immediately, not just for its academic offerings, but for the breadth of opportunities that would help her discover her passions and settle into a new life.

"We were impressed by the wide range of subjects and extracurricular activities," she recalls. "I had never seen subjects like Drama or Hospitality offered in my middle school back home. And the school's strong international community made it so much easier to feel supported while adapting to a new environment."

The transition, however, came with challenges. Learning to navigate daily life fully in English, from conversations to classroom instructions, felt overwhelming at first. She remembers sitting in homegroup during her first term, listening to the morning correspondence being read at a pace she could barely follow.

"I couldn't understand a word," she says. "I had to ask for the printed copy so I could check it myself. Thankfully, I had really kind peer buddies who helped me know when something important was happening."

But with time, persistence, and the support of those around her, she adapted, even choosing to take Modern History in senior school, a subject many international students shy away from. "It became one of my favourites," she says. "It gave me so many chances to practise reading and writing in English."

Reflecting on her years at St John's, one of her fondest memories is playing with the Wind Symphony. "I only knew how to play piano, but I joined the percussion section," she laughs. "I got to try instruments I'd never even seen before. I really miss those early-morning rehearsals."

During her time at the College, she was honoured with the prestigious St John's Award, something she describes as "still feeling like a dream."

"I was a quiet student and not very sporty," she admits. "But I always tried to help where I could, supporting classmates with their studies or joining activities. Receiving the award meant a lot. It showed that even small contributions matter and can make a positive impact."

For her, it embodied a belief she still carries today: "*True leadership is not about titles or positions; it's about influence, integrity, and service.*"

Her passion for education began forming during Mathematical Methods, where her teacher encouraged her to support classmates as a way of deepening her own understanding. "That experience helped me identify my own knowledge gaps and develop strategies to help others," she explains. Combined with the guidance of the many caring teachers she encountered at St John's, it ultimately inspired her to pursue teaching as a career.

Now a teacher herself at St John's, she uses her bilingual background and cultural heritage to enrich her students' learning. Her focus is on



building vocabulary, making meaning visible, and showing students that learning is a process full of trial, error, and growth.

“Being bilingual allows me to model what it looks like to learn new vocabulary and to reassure students that mistakes are part of learning,” she says. She often brings in cultural examples to help students see the world through different lenses.

To current international students walking a similar path, her message is one of patience and courage. “Value every opportunity and cherish small achievements,” she encourages. “It takes time to adjust, but every small step builds confidence. Greet your teachers the Aussie way, chat with classmates, learn new vocabulary, even I still learn new words from colleagues every day!”

She reminds students that their unique perspective is their strength, and that support is always within reach.

Above all, she hopes that local students recognise the richness that cultural diversity brings.

“Interacting with people from different backgrounds builds empathy, open-mindedness, and global awareness,” she says. “It helps students appreciate multiple perspectives and encourages collaboration and respect.”

Her journey from international student to educator is a powerful testament to resilience, community, and the transformative potential of schooling. And now, as a teacher, she continues to pass on the same kindness, guidance, and inspiration that once helped her find her place in a new country, ensuring that future students feel just as welcomed as she did.





Students Step Out for a Great Cause at the Crazy Socks Walkathon



The Crazy Socks Walkathon was held on the final day of Term 3 under beautiful sunny skies, creating the perfect atmosphere for a fun-filled community event. Students from Kindy to Year 6 proudly wore their craziest socks and hats as they made their way around the course, cheered on by our Year 12 leaders and the ever-popular dragon mascot.



Parents and grandparents joined in the walk, adding to the sense of celebration and connection across the college. Every student enjoyed a refreshing Zooper Dooper ice block at the end of their walk. These were served by our FOS volunteers and Year 6 Vice Captains Isla and Sebastian, who also stepped up to promote the event at chapel services.



The Walkathon is the major fundraiser for the Friends of the School (FOS) subcommittee of the P&F Association, and this year raised an impressive \$1,760 for the College. A big thank you to all families who supported the fundraiser and to our wonderful FOS volunteers who made the day possible. Congratulations to Prep L and 5M, the top fundraising classes, who each earned a pizza party kindly donated by Dominos Mount Ommaney!





Students Embrace Challenge and Community at HPE Week 2025

Mr Josh Mulligan

St John's Anglican College was bursting with energy and community spirit as students and staff celebrated the second annual Health and Physical Education (HPE) Week. Designed to encourage everyone within the College to try new things, win some prizes, engage with the community and, most importantly, get involved. The week was packed with fun and fitness-focused events.

Throughout the week, students competed in a muscular endurance week-long challenge, with boys tackling a 200m Row and girls testing their prowess on a 100m Erg Ski. Friendly rivalries filled the Dragon's Den as participants pushed themselves to set new personal bests and claim bragging rights over their peers.

Each day also featured lunchtime activities, from hand-eye coordination activities such as pass the ball competitions to social lawn games including (plastic) axe throwing, cornhole, giant Connect Four, mini basketball, quoits and giant Jenga. The atmosphere at lunchtimes was lifted further by the presence of community partners including Fitstop Richlands,

Goodlife Richlands, and Binnacle Training, who shared their expertise and fitness opportunities with students. Students were treated to a free sausage sizzle from Goodlife on the Monday if they successfully completed fitness challenges that were set.

The week wrapped up with the exciting Mr and Ms HPE competition, where students battled it out across events such as the standing long jump, table tennis, soccer juggling, and the inflatable obstacle course to be crowned College champions

With over \$400 in prizes and vouchers awarded across the week, the event was a huge success. It fostered camaraderie, healthy competition, and a love for movement. Planning is already underway for an even bigger and better HPE Week in 2026!



Shaping Brisbane's Future: Youth Voice in the 2032 Legacy



St John's student AJ Antiporda took part in the Brisbane Youth Legacy Speaking Event earlier this year, shining a light on the future of Brisbane with the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games fast approaching. Ajani saw the event as a chance for young people to influence how the city's legacy will unfold.

"I wanted to advocate for the youth body and ensure that we are not only heard but are a foundational pillar for The Games' operation and intentions," Ajani explained. "I wanted to look back at The Games and say, 'I assisted with their decision-making; I helped shape their legacy into what it became.'"

When Ajani learned they had been selected as a **YOUTHx speaker**, the moment brought both excitement and a deep sense of duty.

"I felt a sense of honour and excitement as I was presented with an incredible opportunity to speak on behalf of my peers," he said. "But I also felt responsible because I knew I was representing a diverse group of young people who also had many excellent ideas for the Games. The weight of that challenge fuelled my commitment to making every word count on the stage."

Ajani's speech centred on one clear message: that the 2032 Games should create lasting benefits for Brisbane.

"The main message I wanted to share was that we must treat these Games as more than just any other Olympics," they said. "We must put our community and long-term future first, cementing our city as a global leader in sustainability, accessibility, and economic opportunity for generations to come."

A focus of AJ' s work was local legacy, improving connectivity across the city through major public transport investments. "I spoke about striving for a connected community through meaningful investments in the general public transportation network, including buses, trains, and Brisbane Airport," Ajani said. In his speech, he emphasised that

“the sheer scale and timeframe of the Games demand a level of acceleration and a depth of integration that goes beyond business-as-usual but is truly optimised and expanded to deliver a far-reaching legacy for everyday Queenslanders.”

Looking ahead, Ajani hopes these ideas influence how Brisbane plans for its long-term future.

“It is important to build the appropriate infrastructure and provide the most

“The biggest inspiration for me was the sheer scale of the opportunity”

optimised experience for all the staff and athletes involved,” they explained. “But we must be careful not to confuse temporary necessity with lasting investment. Legacy planning needs to be long-term, shifting the focus from the two weeks of the event to the next decade.”

For young people, Ajani believes the Games bring extraordinary potential.

“With Brisbane going to be on the world stage, this will open doors for international trade, research partnerships, accelerated globalisation, as well as tourism,” they said. “For young people, this will enable exposure to new ideas, diverse career paths, and a chance to build a true global network without having to leave home.”

Reflecting on the experience, Ajani said the event reaffirmed their belief in the power of youth voices.

“The biggest inspiration for me was the sheer scale of the opportunity,” they shared. “Brisbane 2032 isn’t just a sports event; it’s a once-in-a-generation chance to shape our city for the next 50 years. Young people need to be at the table, not just watching from the sidelines.”

As a proud member of the **Lord Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council (LMYAC)**, Ajani said being part of the initiative showed how individual voices can drive real impact.

“It showed me the true power of a single voice when given the platform to advocate for change,” they said. “When many and diverse single voices come together to form one team, we establish an enduring legacy that will shape the future trajectory of our community.”

A lifelong BTS fan, Ajani even found inspiration in the band’s message of growth and collaboration.

“Being part of this LMYAC team made me think about the album *The Most Beautiful Moment in Life*,” they reflected. “The message of that album resonated with my experiences, proving that these moments of collaboration and advocacy were truly the most beautiful and impactful moments of my time here. I cannot wait to see what The Games bring us in 2032!”



Deepening Understanding: Supporting Student Wellbeing Through Education



As the recipient of the **Global Institute Research Fellowship in 2025**, Ms **Elizabeth Wilson** completed the *Graduate Certificate in Mental Health in Education* through La Trobe University, a program that explores how schools can support the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff,

and communities through evidence-informed, whole-school approaches.

The course combines current research in neuroscience, trauma-informed practice, and inclusive education, areas that align closely with St John's ongoing commitment to developing wellbeing-centred and inclusive classrooms.

What first inspired you to take on this area of study?

My inspiration came from a deep interest in how wellbeing and learning are interconnected. Schools have such a powerful opportunity to nurture not only academic growth but also confidence, connection, and emotional strength. I wanted to deepen my knowledge of specific mental health challenges and explore evidence-informed ways to support students through responsive learning environments.

How long was the program, and what kind of commitment did it involve alongside your teaching?

The program ran over 9 months and included four postgraduate subjects. It required commitment, time management, and plenty of caffeine, but it was incredibly rewarding. Balancing study alongside teaching and family responsibilities was a challenge at times, yet it reinforced my belief in lifelong learning and the value of continually growing as an educator.

What were some of the most valuable things you learned through the program?

I learned that mental health promotion is most effective when it's woven into everyday classroom practice and

relationships. The course highlighted the importance of teacher wellbeing, student voice, and collaborative approaches to learning. It also provided practical frameworks such as trauma-informed teaching, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

Did you have a particular focus or project within the course that stood out to you?

One subject that really stood out focused on developing therapeutic skills to recognise and respond to mental health challenges in young people. It provided practical strategies for noticing early signs, building supportive relationships, and responding in ways that promote safety and trust. This learning has been invaluable in strengthening my confidence and capacity to support wellbeing across all aspects of school life.

How do you think this experience has influenced your approach in the classroom?

It's shifted my focus even more towards relational teaching, predictability, and emotional safety. I see every interaction as a wellbeing opportunity, not just an academic one. I'm also more intentional about how I structure lessons, transitions, and feedback to reduce anxiety and increase engagement.

How do you think your learning might benefit students or colleagues at St John's?

A key goal is to strengthen professional learning about mental health through staff collaboration and shared reflection. Building collective understanding across teams helps ensure that wellbeing is embedded in everyday practice. I'm also keen to create opportunities to share this learning with parents and caregivers, so that our school community works together to support young people's wellbeing in consistent and informed ways.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about pursuing further study while teaching?

Choose an area that truly sparks your curiosity and connects to your daily work and what you value most as an educator. Plan your time carefully, accept that you won't do everything perfectly, and lean on your colleagues for support. Most importantly, remember that the learning is not just for you; it's an investment that benefits your students and your school community. I feel extremely honoured to have been chosen as the recipient of the Global Institute Research Fellowship in 2025 and I'd like to express my thanks to the Senior Leadership Team for this opportunity.

Book Week 2025

During Term 3, the College celebrated The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Book Week, with activities held across both campuses. The theme for the year was 'Book an Adventure', which inspired many fun activities, from making masks and solving puzzles to trivia competitions, scavenger hunts and debates.

The celebration of Book Week began with the annual Book Week Parade on the Junior Campus, with staff and students bringing the characters of their favourite books to life. This was followed by lunchtime activities including travelling to Colourville for colouring-in, creating masks for Masktopia and solving puzzles in teams.

Students on the Secondary Campus participated in the annual design a bookmark competition, trivia competitions, a writing competition and a scavenger hunt.

The Book Week Parade on the Friday brought many interesting costumes from both students and staff, with many students working with their friends to create team costumes. It was a loud and fun morning, completed by the photo booth which was popular with staff and students alike.

On the Secondary Campus, Book Week wrapped up with the annual Staff versus Student Book Week Debates

and assemblies. The staff won the Senior School debate, and the students won the Middle School debate. With the winners of all competitions announced, this wrapped up another successful Book Week for 2025.

Mrs Bernadette Maullin
Information and Library
Services Manager





ST JOHN'S Anglican College

St John's Anglican College

Junior School

Kindergarten to Year 6

Alpine Place, Forest Lake QLD 4078

07 3372 0888

Middle and Senior School

Years 7 to 12

College Avenue, Forest Lake QLD 4078

07 3372 0111

PO Box 4078 Forest Lake QLD 4078

ABN 14 060 936 576 CRICOS Provider #01406C

stjohnsanglicancollege.com.au

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