

Semper

RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS | SUMMER 2025

Celebrating Grace ON LOVE RAVO DAY



Ravenswood
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

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HISTORY
OF DRAMA
AT RAVO

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CELEBRATING
100 YEARS
OF PARENTS'
ASSOCIATIONS

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RAVENSWOOD
NAMED ONE OF
THE BEST SCHOOLS
IN AUSTRALIA

PG 29
RECORD HSC
SHOWCASE
NOMINATIONS

Fun Fact:

Cricket Scores at Ravenswood Dance

With the Ashes series upon us, Archives was delighted to find this gem from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, reported on 9 June 1934:

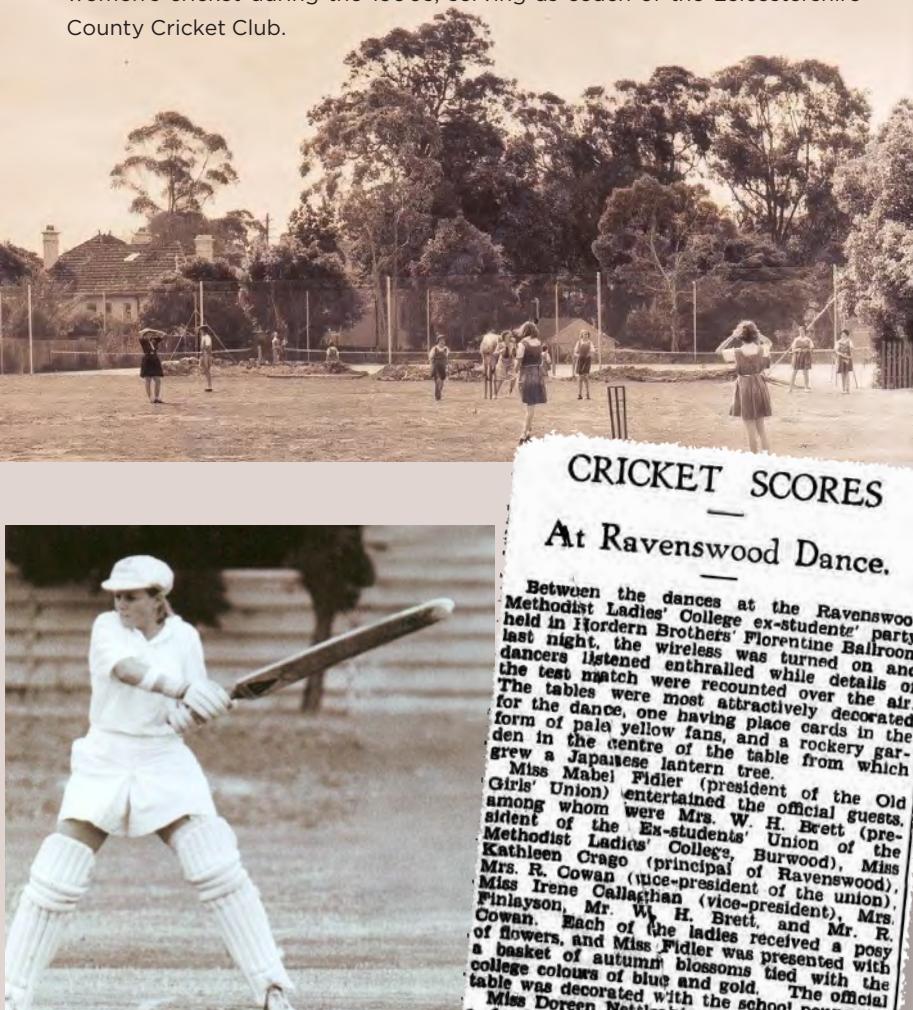
Between the dances at the Ravenswood Methodist Ladies College ex-students party, held in the Hordern Brothers Florentine Ballroom last night, the wireless was turned on and dancers listened enthralled while details of the test match were recounted over the air.

The match in question was the 1934 Ashes match in Nottingham.

Cricket had only been introduced at Ravenswood the year before. The 'Sports Notes' of the *Ravenswood Magazine* (1934) highlighted, 'in 1933, cricket was taken up as a summer sport. A cricket club was formed, and great interest is taken in it; there are a few very promising cricketers.'

By 1987, Ravenswood cricket had accrued an incredible legacy: four of the sixteen members of the Australian women's cricket team were Ravenswood Alumni. They included Lindsay Reeler (1978), Belinda Haggett (1980) and Sally Moffat (1982). Past Australian player Erica Sainsbury (1976) was team scorer and statistician from 1987 to 2003. In 1994, Trish Langsford (1989) served as captain of the Australian under-23 team.

Another Alumni, Ann Woods (1965), was described as a trailblazer for women's cricket during the 1990s, serving as coach of the Leicestershire County Cricket Club.



CRICKET SCORES At Ravenswood Dance.

Between the dances at the Ravenswood Methodist Ladies' College ex-students' party, held in Hordern Brothers' Florentine Ballroom last night, the wireless was turned on and dancers listened enthralled while details of the test match were recounted over the air. The tables were most attractively decorated for the dance, one having place cards in the form of pale yellow fans, and a rocky garden in the centre of the table from which grew a Japanese lantern tree.

Miss Mabel Fidler (president of the Old Girls' Union) entertained the official guests, among whom were Mrs. W. H. Brett (president of the Ex-students' Union of the Methodist Ladies' College, Burwood), Miss Kathleen Crago (principal of Ravenswood), Miss R. Cowan (vice-president of the union), Miss Irene Callaghan (vice-president), Miss Finlayson, Mr. W. H. Brett, and Mr. R. Cowan. Each of the ladies received a posy of flowers, and Miss Fidler was presented with a basket of autumn blossoms tied with the college colours of blue and gold. The official table was decorated with the school pennant, a frock of pale pink pebble crepe trimmed with silver, entertained a large party. Miss Maida Vicary (joint secretary with Miss Nettleship) wore oyster shaded mariette, and united with Miss Mira Wakler (treasurer), who wore patou pink mariette, in bringing many guests.



Semper, the Ravenswood School for Girls' magazine.

Established in 1901, Ravenswood is a leading Uniting Church School for girls from Prep to Year 12, with boarding from Year 7. As a Visible Wellbeing and Positive Education school, we focus on the whole student to build academic and co-curricular achievements while boosting confidence, resilience and physical health.

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Front cover
Grace Butterfly Garden on the Peace Lawn,
Love RAVO Day, Friday 5 September 2025



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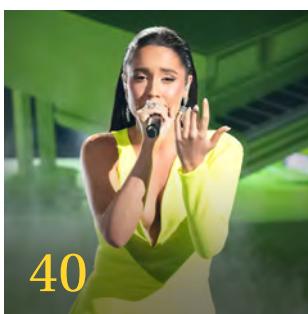
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Acting Principal's Message

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this uplifting edition of *Semper*. Within these pages, we are delighted to share with you the exceptional contributions and achievements of our students and to celebrate the warmth, strength and collective spirit of the Ravenswood community.

Our guiding theme for the year, *Grace*, has been a steady compass in both learning and relationships. It has inspired us to treat ourselves and others with compassion and kindness, and to draw on our inner strength and generosity of spirit when faced with challenges. We are deeply proud of the *Grace* our students have shown throughout the year, alongside their remarkable passion, creativity and zest in all areas of school life.

Our Year 6 students shone in their PYP Exhibition, tackling global issues such as poverty, equality, wellbeing and sustainability with maturity and insight. Their projects reflected the very best of inquiry-based learning as they applied creativity and critical thinking to address real-world problems and harness their curiosity for a meaningful purpose.

Most recently, our HSC students achieved an extraordinary 44 HSC Showcase nominations across Drama, Design and Technology, Textiles and Design, Visual Arts and Music – an historic high for our School! – and, as we go to print, one student has been selected for ARTEXPRESS. All students in HSC Drama received a nomination for their group performances, with seven also achieving individual nominations – a remarkable accomplishment! Behind every performance or major work lies countless hours of creativity, collaboration and refinement, as well as the unwavering support of our brilliant staff team.

Two students represented Ravenswood at the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships, with one progressing to the semi-finals in Persuasive Speaking. We are delighted that four students will represent Australia in this competition next year in the UK after achieving second place overall at the recent Australian championships. Meanwhile, in Junior School, a student placed first in the Interschool Public Speaking Championships.

Our Future Problem Solving students in both Junior and Senior School performed brilliantly at the national finals, including a first in Middle Division



Nationals Writing and Middle Division Onsite Writing, and a team first in Group Onsite Writing and Community Problem Solving. Their accomplishments reflect the intellectual rigour, teamwork and creative problem-solving that underscore our *semper ad meliora* mindset.

On stage, our talented students achieved tremendous success in music, including first place at the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall Competition and at the London Young Musician Competition.

Innovation also flourished in the realm of creative writing. A Year 6 student won the Whitlam Institute What Matters? writing competition and also received the Allen & Unwin prize, while a Year 3 student placed first in NSW in the ICAS Competition. In Senior School, a student was awarded first place in The Ethics Centre's Young Writers' Competition for her essay on how emerging technologies are reshaping love, and two students received a bronze and silver award respectively in The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, which this year attracted more than 53,000 entries.

On stage, our Senior School Dance Company dazzled audiences at the annual Sydney Eisteddfod Dance of Champions in the Concert Hall at Chatswood Concourse, taking home the People's Choice Award for the second year in a row. Meanwhile, a Junior School student has been accepted into the Australian Ballet School Interstate and International Training Program for 2026 – a program that draws applicants from around the world.

Our rhythmic and artistic gymnasts achieved some of the best results in Australian history, representing our country at the 3rd Junior World Championships in June, and the World Cup Challenge in Hungary, as well as at international events in Greece and Bulgaria. They also excelled in Beam, Hoop, Ribbon and Vault at the Australian Gymnastics Championships, achieving bronze, silver and gold. We are delighted that a student has been invited to join an Olympic Pathway Program in Los Angeles next year!

Our Ravenswood IGSA Gymnastics team was named overall 2025 Champions and also achieved first place overall in Rhythmic Gymnastics Division 1, and second place overall in Artistic Gymnastics Division 1.



There were also notable achievements from Junior and Senior students at elite state and national level across other sports, including swimming, softball, athletics and snowsports.

As a community, we celebrate not just our students' impressive achievements but also the tremendous perseverance and dedication it requires to follow your goals and aspirations with *Grace*. Moreover, we encourage them to celebrate the small wins in their learning and personal development, and to pursue their passions with joy, compassion and the quiet confidence of gentle strength. As author Mary Anne Radmacher once said, 'Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying "I will try again tomorrow".'



Grace was beautifully expressed on Love RAVO Day, when our Junior and Senior School students gathered in Houses to share their reflections on how we show and receive *Grace*. Across the Peace Lawn, hundreds of House-coloured butterflies created a kaleidoscope of hope and joy, each one inscribed with personal reflections on kindness, resilience, gratitude and togetherness. It was a joyful celebration of our unity and our shared values, grounded in respect, empathy, optimism and kindness. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to all the families who supported the students' chosen charity, the Cambodia 'Mums and Babies' program run by Compassion Australia.

In Term 4, all Year 10 students participated in the Ravenswood 'For the Future' program in which they engaged in diverse sessions to prepare them for life beyond school. As well as a careers day, sessions



focused on interview skills, resume writing, health and wellbeing, leadership development and service learning. The program also includes an academic component in which students engage with their selected pathway and subjects, completing a series of lessons carefully designed by our teachers to build foundational skills that will support their Senior School learning journey.

In Term 3, we farewelled the Class of 2025, who showed immense Grace and strength of character as they faced their final exams. Their motto, *Time to Inspire, Unite our Fire* captured the collective spirit of unity, optimism and vibrant energy that has defined this cohort's leadership. Their thoughtful parting gift to the School - three stepping stones engraved with 'Unite our Fire' - is a lasting symbol of their connection to Ravenswood. I would like to pay

special tribute to School Captain Zara West and Vice Captains Billie Fedden and Georgia Gray, who have led with immense compassion, zest and unwavering RAVO spirit. We wish each and every Year 12 student all the very best as they fly beyond our gates and embark on new adventures!

We also welcomed our new student leaders, whose vision for 2026 is *Our Spirit Roars, Our Love Endures, and Together We Soar*, a motto that reflects the sense of unity, joy and love in our community and the understanding that, together, we can fly higher. School Captain Abby McCutcheon, Vice Captains Jacqueline Mao and Millie Robinson, along with our Prefects and House Captains, are an inspiring team, ready to amplify our community's vibrant RAVO spirit. Regardless of whether a student holds an official leadership position or not, every student

has a tremendously important role to play in their own unique way. We look forward to seeing their motto of love and togetherness lift our whole community, always towards better things, as we move into a new year.

Ravenswood has always been a school that nurtures compassion and genuine connection, and we are truly inspired by our students' efforts to make a difference to others. The Gail Kelly Making a Difference Leadership Award, established by our former chair of council Dr Gail Kelly, continues to inspire purposeful action. Our runners-up championed Kit Bags for Kids (a charity that helps children access sporting gear) and Hear for You (supporting teenagers who are deaf or hard of hearing), while the winning submission will see \$10,000 go to Street Library, which brings the joy of reading and connection through literature into our wider community.

In addition to their meaningful work with Days for Girls, our students have supported a range of worthy causes and charitable organisations throughout the year, such as Compassion, RizeUp and The Salvation Army. Most recently for the latter, they made a tremendous effort to pack Christmas hampers for Australian families in need. Earlier this semester, 95 students from Year 6 to Year 9 participated in the Write-A-Book-In-A-Day competition, a team effort that raises funds for research into childhood diseases.

Service also underpins our involvement in the ever-growing Knox Ravenswood Army Cadet Unit, which challenges our students to strengthen their teamwork, grit and perseverance. We are delighted that a Ravenswood student has been appointed Senior Cadet Under Officer, the second consecutive year and third time this distinction has been earned.

Collective *Grace* and meaningful service was also enriched through the Red Earth immersion tour and Fiji immersion tour, where students strengthened intercultural understanding and sought to make meaningful contributions to these communities.

Meanwhile, our inaugural Year 7 to 9 Student-Led Wellbeing Conference, in partnership with our brother school Knox, was a tremendous success. Centred on the theme 'Rethinking Challenges - A Recipe for Growth', students explored the ingredients for thriving through hands-on workshops, creative wellbeing activations and inspiring keynote sessions encouraging them to lean into challenges together.

Our extensive academic, co-curricular, support and wellbeing programs have all contributed to *The Educator* naming Ravenswood as among Australia's most outstanding schools. The inaugural 2025 5-Star Best School award belongs to our entire community

as we work in partnership to support our students to discover their passion and purpose with *Grace*. For the seventh time in eight years, we were also awarded the 5-Star Innovative School Award, a testament to our brilliant staff team who go above and beyond to deliver enriching, inspiring educational opportunities for our students.

Our campus is flourishing, with the newly planted gardens around the Senior Learning Centre and Renasci Block in full bloom. Stage 1 of The Anne Johnstone Wellbeing and Sports Centre - named in honour of our former Principal, Dr Anne Johnstone, who championed our Positive Education approach - is well on track for completion by the end of 2026. In the meantime, we will have the benefit of an upgraded Oval with a more durable multifunctional surface from Term 1, 2026.

Community is at the heart of our RAVO culture and this semester we came together through a range of uplifting community events, including the Chantry Golf Day, annual Golden Girls' Lunch and our ever-popular Father-Daughter breakfasts. Most recently, our RAVO carols event showcased the genuine warmth and generosity of spirit in our community as we celebrated the hope and goodwill of Christmas. Across the year we experienced tremendous engagement at our Alumni reunions and tours, true to our strong bonds through many generations.

As I reflect on this semester of service as Acting Principal, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to lead our flourishing School community through a period of transition. I am so inspired by the dedication of our committed Council members, School Leadership Team and wider staff team, all of whom contribute to the dynamic and multifaceted nature of our School with distinction.

It has also been an honour to deepen my connection with our students, families and wider Alumni community, who so often express their heartfelt appreciation for the strong support, warmth and sense of belonging that enrich our students' educational journey as we work in partnership to help students fulfill their potential.

Looking ahead, it will be a pleasure to welcome Mrs Suzanne Floro as Ravenswood's 11th principal in January 2026. We look forward to the positive impact of her leadership and passion for girls' education. An exciting new chapter lies ahead for Ravenswood as we continue to *Kindle the Flame* for future generations, *semper ad meliora*.

Ms Sarah Guy
Acting Principal



Celebrating the Class of 2025

The Ravenswood community paid tribute to the Class of 2025 as they embarked on their exciting new chapter, holding a series of momentous farewell events during the final weeks of Term 3.

The Year 12 Farewell Staff Morning Tea in the Old Girls' Courtyard gave the students the opportunity to thank their teaching and non-teaching staff for the positive impact and contribution they had made to their education at Ravenswood. Staff and students enjoyed beautiful performances and speeches of thanks from Year 12 students over morning tea, as they reminisced together about their shared time at Ravenswood.

Other events included a competitive staff-versus-Year-12 netball game in the Gymnasium, attended by an enthusiastic cohort of colleagues and classmates. Students then celebrated their outstanding achievements and indomitable spirit in a moving Year 12 Final Assembly. They gifted the School

three stepping stones for the SLC gardens, each engraved with words from their 2025 theme 'Unite Our Fire'. At the conclusion, staff, Year 11 and the Class of 2025 Alumni mums formed a Guard of Honour, channelling students onto the Oval for the rite-of-passage tossing of Panama hats.

The six Year 12 Boarders bid farewell to the Ravenswood Residential College, their home away from home, enjoying a sentimental Final Boarders Chapel Service and Farewell Year 12 Boarders Dinner event with their fellow Boarders and Boarding staff.

The week concluded with the Year 12 Valedictory Chapel Service and Releasing of the Doves on the Peace Lawn. Students then joined their parents and guardians, and staff, in the evening for further celebrations and dancing at the Year 12 Valedictory Dinner at Doltone House, Jones Bay Wharf, marking the end of an era for the Class of 2025.







Jacqueline Mao (School Vice Captain), Abby McCutcheon (School Captain), Ms Sarah Guy (Acting School Principal), and Millie Robinson (School Vice Captain)

Message from Our 2026 Student Leaders

As student leaders, we are incredibly humbled and excited to be leading our vibrant community throughout what is sure to be a wonderful and enriching school year! We are looking forward to a year of new horizons, nurturing our strengths, and deepening the connections within our sisterhood.

As a student body, we recognise how privileged we are to be supported by extraordinary teaching and non-teaching staff, whose unwavering dedication and encouragement uplifts us in every area of our lives. We are incredibly excited to welcome Mrs Floro, our new Principal, to join our School community in 2026. Under her leadership we have no doubt that Ravenswood will continue to move from strength to strength, always towards better things. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our incredible Acting Principal, Ms Guy, whose warm, compassionate and graceful leadership this semester allowed Ravenswood to thrive with spirit and love.

This year, we invite the Ravenswood community to continue nurturing a joyful, loving and united spirit. As such, we are proud to announce our theme for the upcoming year: *Our spirit roars, our love endures, together we soar*. This vision is a celebration of the core values that underscore our School, encouraging

the sisterhood to collectively embrace the spirit and love of our community. The spirit at the heart of Ravenswood underpins our transformative education and reflects the School's exceptional nature. Moreover, as an internationally recognised institution, it is the love that runs through our School that makes RAVO so special. We encourage girls to embrace the connections fostered within this treasured place and the enduring relationships that are synonymous with what it means to be a RAVO Girl. Ultimately, this collective spirit and love of Ravenswood can only be actualised as a community. The final line of our vision reflects that only 'together' are we able to 'soar' and reach our full potential.

As we look ahead to the year before us, we are filled with gratitude, pride and an unwavering belief in the power of our community. Together, we step into this new chapter with open hearts, ready to embody the spirit and love that makes Ravenswood extraordinary. May this year be one in which our connections deepen, our collective spirit grows stronger and every girl feels empowered to soar. With unity as our foundation and our vision as our guide, we cannot wait to see all we will achieve together.

By Abby McCutcheon (School Captain), Jacqueline Mao and Millie Robinson (School Vice Captains)

Introducing Mrs Suzanne Floro, Ravenswood's 11th School Principal

The Ravenswood community will warmly welcome Mrs Suzanne Floro in January as she commences her tenure as Ravenswood's 11th Principal in the School's 125th anniversary year.

Joining Ravenswood from brother-school Knox Grammar School, where she has been the Head of the Preparatory School since 2018, Mrs Floro brings a wealth of experience. She is passionate about single-sex education, curriculum development and academic outcomes, positive psychology and wellbeing, and the inclusion of digital technology to enhance learning experiences and outcomes.

With a Bachelor of Education, post-graduate Diplomas in Psychology and Children's Literature, and a Certificate in Gifted Education, Mrs Floro is an award-winning educational leader.

Prior to Knox, she was Head of Junior School at MLC School, Deputy Master of the Junior School and Dean

of Primary Education at Trinity Grammar School, and Deputy Head of Junior School (Curriculum) at Tara Anglican School for Girls.

Mrs Floro is currently the President of the Independent Primary School Heads Association (IPSHA) NSW, and a board member of IPSHA National.

She received an Excellence Award at the 2019 Australian Education Awards for Primary School Principal of the Year (Non-Government). She also received the Prime Minister's Medal for contribution to Australian sport and was an elite athlete and netball umpire at the highest level.

The School welcomes Mrs Suzanne Floro – along with her husband Martin, and son (also named Martin) – into the Ravenswood community.

semper ad meliora!



RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS Principals

Mabel Fidler (Founder), 1901-1925

Ethelwyn Potts, 1926

Clarice Ashworth, 1927-1928

Frances Craig, 1928-1931

Kathleen Crago, 1932-1961

Phyllis Evans, 1962-1986

Coral Dixon, 1987-1992

Lorraine Smith, 1993-2004

Vicki Steer, 2005-2015

Anne Johnstone, 2016-2025

Suzanne Floro, 2026-

Protecting Our Current and Future Students

As young people spend more time online, and the Australian Government's social media ban for children under 16 takes effect, Ravenswood is continuing its commitment to providing a secure online learning environment for all students. This includes equipping families with the tools they need to confidently navigate the digital world.

Ravenswood recently started a new partnership with Linewize, enhancing the ability to keep students safe online while empowering parents with valuable insights and resources to support their child's digital skills. Linewize is an industry-leading technology that provides digital safety for schools and parents, enabling students to flourish both within and away from their educational institution.

Through its Qustodio app, Linewize gives Ravenswood parents a range of tools to protect and manage their child's personal device (for example, their phone). This includes content filtering, app and game blocking, custom routines for setting times of access, internet pauses, activity reports and guidance from online safety professionals and experts. Meanwhile, Ravenswood's bring-your-own-devices (BYOD) program continues to be managed on campus with Saasyan Assure.

Earlier this year, Ravenswood also updated its student mobile phone 'Away for the Day' policy. The existing policy, in which students turn off their phones as soon as they set foot on campus, and don't turn them on again until they leave for the day, has been extended to include students turning off digital headphones and smart watches.

The approach aligns with the School's award-winning culture of promoting wellbeing and Positive Education. The measures help to prevent students from being distracted from their studies and further encourage them to build high-quality, real-life connections.

Director of ICT and Computing Technology Teacher Ms Elizabeth Westley said, 'Ravenswood is pleased to offer our parents complimentary Linewize Qustodio subscriptions as part of our ongoing

commitment to student digital wellbeing and encouraging parents to partner with us by taking an active role in fostering healthy digital habits and a safe online environment for their daughter.'

Ravenswood has also held a range of insightful community forums this year, delivered by leading industry experts. These have helped students, staff, parents and Ravenswood Alumni to understand and adopt the latest insights, strategies and toolkits in social media safety, cyber-bullying, cybersafety and wellbeing. Recent forums have included those by groups such as Safe on Social and URSTRONG, and by esteemed experts like Susan McLean, Dr Judith Locke, Paul Dillon, Professor Barbara Fredrickson and Professor James Pawelski.

Parents and staff have already reported on the immediate and longer-term benefits of Linewize and the Qustodio app, both in terms of improving student attention and noticing any inappropriate online behaviour.

Staff have reported that the platform gives them deeper insights into how students are engaging online – both in their searches and in the way they communicate with one another. They say they can then identify emerging concerns early and address them directly – both in one-on-one chats and in targeted Year Group initiatives.

The platform has also enabled Ravenswood staff to intervene earlier in wellbeing matters, supporting students and families swiftly and appropriately.

As our technology-driven world and related laws continue to evolve, Ravenswood remains committed to evolve with them, putting the safety and protection of students and staff at the forefront of the School's philosophy. Recent feedback from parents validates this approach. 'We completely support these initiatives,' said one Senior School parent. 'Thanks to Ravenswood for supporting us to create a little "clean world" for those amazing brains that shouldn't be ruined by outside noise.' A Junior School parent applauded the School for 'supporting our girls' resilience and mental health. Thank you for spearheading this change.'





A Recipe for Growth

In September, Ravenswood School for Girls and Knox Grammar School launched the inaugural Years 7 to 9 Student-Led Wellbeing Conference.

Building on the huge success of the two schools' annual wellbeing conference for NSW senior students, the focus shifted to upskilling our own Year 7 students and community in 'wellbeing science'.

Hosted at Ravenswood and attended by 250 students from Ravenswood and Knox, the half-day conference deepened student engagement with Positive Education through authentic leadership opportunities and peer-to-peer teaching.

Modeled largely on the senior student conference (themed *Mental Toughness: The Power of Growth*) the focus of the Years 7 to 9 conference was Rethinking Challenges: A Recipe for Growth. This stimulated numerous ideas and honest conversations about resilience and wellbeing science.

The conference was co-designed and co-led by mixed teams of Years 8 and 9 students from Ravenswood and Knox. It included an engaging primer, inspiring guest speakers and student-led workshops.

The day opened with a dynamic drumming demonstration involving over 300 individual drums, which set the tone for collective energy and collaboration. The drumming also served as a metaphor for the power of shared rhythm, support and belonging when facing challenges together.

This was followed by inspiring keynote addresses. David Bott, expert in wellbeing science and co-founder of The Wellbeing Distillery, encouraged students to embrace challenges with curiosity and optimism. Later, Matthew Johnstone, author and illustrator of *Here's a Thought*, used storytelling and live illustration to guide students through strategies for managing worry and finding ways forward.

Years 8 and 9 students worked together to develop and deliver eight different workshops to groups of Year 7 students from the two schools. The content of each workshop was drawn from the Peer Support 'Rethinking Challenges' program and Ravenswood's Positive Education curriculum.

The lessons explored key concepts using scenarios and group chats. Concepts included perseverance, empathy, optimism, communication, critical thinking and how thoughts can influence behaviour.



Resilience was a key topic throughout the conference, with students encouraged to consider and embrace the 'Five Rs': Reflect, Reframe, Regroup, Rebound and Revitalise. These attributes each feed into a healthier and more well-rounded approach to life in and outside school, including the habit of focusing on positives, adapting to change, reacting with a positive mindset and fostering wellness through positive sleep and diet habits.

At recess and lunch breaks, students visited Positive Education and wellbeing 'activation' stations, such as the Ganbatte Strengths Bike, the Gratitude Station and the Resilience Jars. There was also a range of outdoor games such as juggling, chess, the Resilience Row Challenge and card games.

The innovative activation stations created an inviting space for students from Ravenswood and Knox to socialise and connect meaningfully.

Acting Principal Ms Sarah Guy said, 'It was so encouraging to see the tremendous level of student engagement, collaboration and agency as our Years 8 and 9 students guided their younger peers through practical strategies and meaningful conversations around wellbeing.'

'Their impressive depth of understanding reinforces the value of our commitment to Positive Education and student-led learning experiences at Ravenswood.'

Year 7 student Brianna Kol reflected on the occasion. 'I enjoyed learning and gaining an understanding of new ideas from different perspectives. It was helpful to be guided by older peers who had a deeper understanding of different topics in an interesting, thought-provoking way.'

'We gained confidence in communicating to peers our thoughts and ideas regardless of the age or gender difference. This highlighted to me the importance of communication in collaboration.'

As a multi-award-winning school for Positive Education and student wellbeing, Ravenswood is committed to student agency, positive psychology and innovative peer-led teaching models. The Years 7 to 9 Student-Led Wellbeing Conference not only empowered students to become active contributors to the wellbeing culture of the School, but also built valuable skills for students in leadership, collaboration and communication. This enabled greater confidence, reflection and positive peer impact.

Turning Ideas Into Action

One year on from the historic Turning of the Sod ceremony in December 2024, the construction of The Anne Johnstone Wellbeing and Sports Centre continues to gain momentum, with stage one of the project on track to be completed by the end of 2026.

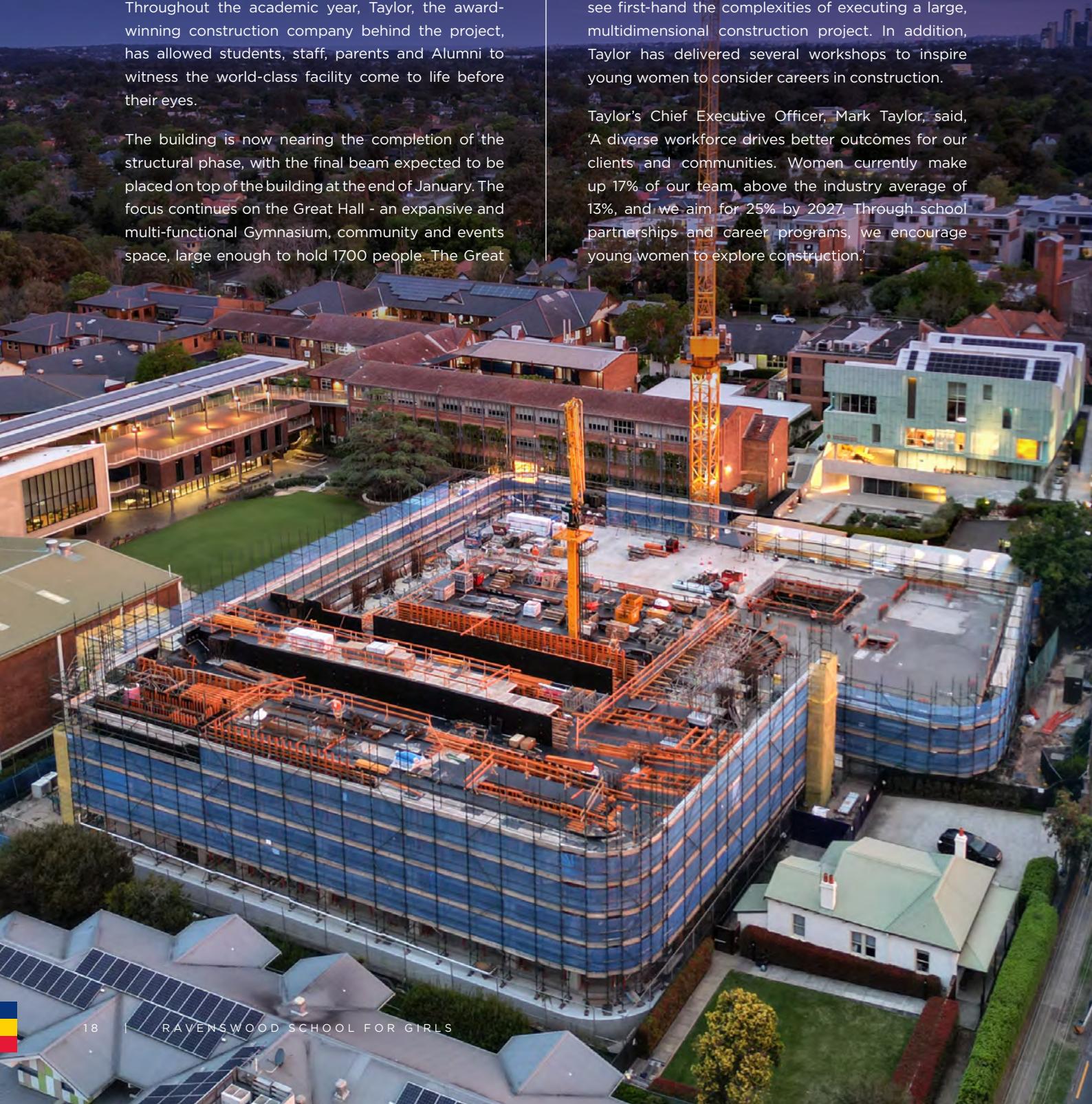
After a flurry of foundational activity before the start of Term 1, construction steadily progressed. Throughout the academic year, Taylor, the award-winning construction company behind the project, has allowed students, staff, parents and Alumni to witness the world-class facility come to life before their eyes.

The building is now nearing the completion of the structural phase, with the final beam expected to be placed on top of the building at the end of January. The focus continues on the Great Hall - an expansive and multi-functional Gymnasium, community and events space, large enough to hold 1700 people. The Great

Hall will also host two full-sized indoor Basketball courts, Badminton and Netball courts, and a new state-of-the-art Strength and Conditioning Centre.

Ravenswood students are also being exposed to pathways for women in construction through a range of teaching and learning initiatives from the Taylor Women in Construction program. STEM classes have visited the construction site, allowing students to see first-hand the complexities of executing a large, multidimensional construction project. In addition, Taylor has delivered several workshops to inspire young women to consider careers in construction.

Taylor's Chief Executive Officer, Mark Taylor, said, 'A diverse workforce drives better outcomes for our clients and communities. Women currently make up 17% of our team, above the industry average of 13%, and we aim for 25% by 2027. Through school partnerships and career programs, we encourage young women to explore construction.'



In Term 4, a group of Year 7 students visited the construction site and were challenged to apply their learning by designing, building and coding their own cranes across Science, Mathematics, TAS and PDHPE lessons. Exploring the mechanics of levers and pulleys (Science) and examining the effects of gravity, movement patterns and appropriate exercises for crane operators (PDHPE) provided an enriching, hands-on experience. Students also designed scale crane models using angles and measurements (Mathematics) while incorporating coding, systems thinking and design considerations (TAS) to bring their creations to life. Taylor also demonstrated to the students how the crane was chosen and the detailed logistics of installing such a large machine on site.

For 20 Year 9 students, Ravenswood staff and Taylor collaborated on a dynamic eight-week course to inspire and empower young women through a real-world challenge grounded in the construction industry. In the Design Thinking for Complex Problem-Solving Challenge, students worked in teams of four to tackle the central question: 'How can we make construction more inclusive and appealing to women and girls?'



The program fostered creativity, collaboration and critical thinking while highlighting the importance of gender inclusivity in the industry. Students gained valuable experience presenting their ideas – first at Taylor's head office in North Sydney, then to a panel of Taylor senior leaders on campus. The team of Alexa Loewy, Imogen Johnston, Grace Robinson and Alexandra Boulton (Year 9) was recognised for responding to the challenging brief with particular creativity and clarity.

Through hands-on exploration, guided workshops and mentorship from Taylor professionals, Ravenswood students gained rich insights into construction careers and produced innovative solutions aimed at driving meaningful change.

As part of The Anne Johnstone Wellbeing and Sports Centre project, and to support the installation of new stormwater pumps and sprinkler systems, the School Oval will also undergo an upgrade over the summer holidays, transforming it into a new, multifunctional playing surface before it is extended through to Ravenswood Avenue in the coming years.





Clockwise left to right: Sophie Maddock (Wright, 2008) left in 2005's *Hansel and Gretel*, Christie Bosch (2021), Emma Webster (2015), Mr Chris Bird with 2025 HSC Drama students.



Ravenswood's Flair for the Dramatic

Alumni Sophie Maddock (Wright, 2008) knows how it feels to stride across a stage before a packed stadium alongside Hugh Jackman. Or share a television screen with Stephen Curry and Nadine Garner. Or play the captivating protagonist in *Wicked* at Her Majesty's Theatre.

Before each performance there would be jitters. Just as there had been when she trod the boards in productions at Ravenswood.

'It's the same feeling – the same excitement of going out and wanting to tell that story,' says Sophie.

'I was going to say the stakes are at a different level, but maybe that's not even right – because when you're at high school, you think this production really is the most important moment in time right now.'

Mr Chris Bird, Ravenswood's Head of Drama for 22 years until his retirement at the end of 2025, appreciates Sophie's assessment.

'It's a natural way to feel,' he says. 'Even the greatest performers have that nervousness before they go on stage before a live audience. I always encouraged the students to accept that as part of the process.'

A former theatre professional himself, Mr Bird says he would encourage students to channel their nerves 'so that you're not crippled by the nerves but you can actually put that nervous energy into the performance'.

It helps that Ravenswood Drama students always enjoy exceptional support from their audiences, he adds. 'Audiences everywhere, and certainly at the School, want the performers to do well. They want you to perform at your best – they're on your side.'

Ravenswood has a strong history of drama success. This is not simply judged by the emergence of prominent Alumni such as Sophie, or former *Home and Away* television and film actor Tamsin Sursok (2001), or accomplished playwright and scriptwriter Debra Oswald (1976).

More importantly, Ravenswood Drama gives students unique opportunities to creatively explore themselves, their contexts and their communities. The School's approach is based on the knowledge that Drama promotes engaging deeply with the stories of others, encouraging empathy and understanding.

Drama has flourished at Ravenswood in recent decades, expanding from being a sub-branch of the English Department to its own department within Performing Arts.

Apart from its various annual Drama productions, Ravenswood offers Drama as an HSC and IB Diploma subject; theatre excursions; elective subjects and Theatresports® for Years 9 and 10; Drama Club for Years 7 and 8; and Drama in the Years 5 and 6 curriculum.

Deputy Principal – Teaching and Learning, Ms Jennifer Richardson, says Ravenswood is blessed to have exceptional performance arts facilities (including the soon-to-be-completed Theatrette in The Anne Johnstone Wellbeing and Sports Centre) and cutting-edge technological support. But she stresses that staff such as Mr Chris Bird are what make the School's program so profound.

'Chris has exemplified the contribution of a well-established, professional and experienced staff member who has empowered, supported and emboldened students to take risks,' Ms Richardson says.

'What he's done so well is encourage students of all abilities to see the benefits of studying Drama or being part of a Drama production at some point for their confidence, their ability to communicate and their ability to work collaboratively and to tell stories.'

The result is moments and days that become enduring and endearing memories for everyone at Ravenswood.

Former students Christie Bosch (2021) and Emma Webster (2015) took part in every Drama production on offer during their time at Ravenswood, and both have wonderful memories of those experiences.

Christie recalls 'pretty much creating a group performance from scratch' in HSC Drama. 'We would take it to crazy places and be laughing in hysterics about it and just go for something way out there,' she says. 'But always knowing we felt so comfortable with each other and with Mr Bird saying "great, give it a go, that looks awesome".

'Just that sense of always leaving those performances feeling happier and believing, "OK I can do this" – the sense of accomplishment and hope that it gives you.'

Christie, whose university studies brought her back to Ravenswood as a teaching intern in 2025, says she 'caught the performing bug' after playing the role of a 'mean flower' in the 2015 Year 6 Ravenswood production of *Alice in Wonderland, Jr.*

She later had fun taking on exaggerated characters such as a wicked stepbrother and an austere doctor.

But, she says, her Ravenswood Drama highlight was the tight-knit bond she formed with her small Year 12 Drama class during COVID-19.

While Christie opted for a career in education, Emma Webster (2015) pursued a university degree in medicine, and now supports children in the paediatrics department at Westmead Children's Hospital.

Emma's path towards being a self-confessed 'drama nerd' at school began when she auditioned for the Year 7 play. 'I had a role with two lines, I think, and just was hooked after that,' she says.

More roles and productions followed. Among the most memorable for Emma was her turn as one of the Brontë sisters in the Year 11 Drama production of *Brontë*, by Polly Teale. Directed by her friend and Drama Captain Zoe Sadler (2015), Emma says she was allowed to 'be creative in a way that is different to a lot of other forms of self-expression'.

Then in Year 12, when trigonometry and periodic tables were flooding her scientific mind, 'Drama was quite an outlet'. Emma says she thrived on the one-to-one mentoring and the rewarding nature of collaborating on group projects. Drama was 'a very different classroom' where the students connected and became 'very close as a cohort'.

'Looking back on school, I have the most fond and vivid memories of those Drama classes,' Emma says.

While Christie and Emma have retained their love of drama since graduating from Ravenswood, neither has since returned to the stage! However, both insist that the greatest benefit of their involvement in Ravenswood Drama is how it prepared them for life beyond the glare of the stage lights – and beyond the school gates.

'I was a fairly quiet child and teenager, and I think that Drama allowed me to really come out of my shell,' Emma says. 'Those skills – in particular the interpersonal skills – have followed me, and they are skills that I need to use a lot in my everyday life. I'm also working with children on a daily basis, so you've got to be engaging to get them to work with you.'

'I do think a lot of those foundations from Drama and performing have really shaped me as a person and my career.'

Christie says empathy is vital for acting: understanding 'why we do the things we do'. She adds that Drama also honed important public-speaking skills.

'It does give you that greater understanding of human nature and how the world works,' she says. 'And then also with that performing aspect it [has helped] so much with my public speaking and my confidence, because as a teacher you're always trying to be

engaging. I feel I'm using those drama skills all the time when I teach.'

Sophie Maddock also continues to benefit from her drama education in her new career as a psychologist. 'It has helped me as a psychologist, more than I expected it would,' says Sophie, who has traded the limelight for life on a farm in regional Western Australia with her husband and children. 'Just that sense of learning to use your voice and knowing how to stand with confidence and talking to various different people. Also learning to be open, or vulnerable, or take a chance on something.'

Mr Bird and Ms Richardson both stress the importance of the collaborative aspect of Drama. 'One of the biggest virtues of the subject is that we're the only Senior School subject that has a group project as a core part of its curriculum – both in the HSC and IB Diploma,' Mr Bird says. 'The skills the girls bring away from having worked with others will last them a lifetime.'

Ms Richardson admires the way older Drama students mentor the younger ones, especially in House-group productions. 'They have to work together in teams to come up with concepts and need to be able to navigate differing opinions and viewpoints. They might have to embark on difficult conversations, work collaboratively – all of those skills that they're developing are quite incredible and important.'

Not all Drama students put themselves in front of an audience. Ms Richardson highlights the co-curricular group Girls in Black, who spend the year developing their backstage craft, including sound and lighting skills, then stage impressively polished productions.

But for those interested in getting in front of an audience for the first time, our Alumni offer this advice.

'I would just say absolutely go for it, because at the end of the day everything is a little scary at first,' Christie says. 'Part of doing Drama and performing is you have to kind of let go of that fear of looking silly, or feeling embarrassed, because the moments where you really go for it and you shine, that's when your peers will say "Oh, you were so cool in that" and people will see that you have that kind of "go-getter" attitude and ability.'

Sophie suggests chatting to other students who have recently taken the plunge. 'Almost every performer's been in the same position,' she says. 'I would just say seek people out and chat to them and hear about their experiences.'

Emma adds: 'Just give it a go. Particularly if you're a quiet, shy kid – you don't realise what you can do until you put yourself out there ... I think you will often surprise yourself.'



Sophie Maddock (Wright, 2008) today



Emma Webster, right, in 2014's Year 11 Drama production



Christie Bosch (centre) in 2015's Year 6 Musical



Leave Your Legacy

Named in honour of tenth Ravenswood Principal, Dr Anne Johnstone (2016–2025), soon-to-be-completed landmark The Anne Johnstone Wellbeing and Sports Centre will provide state-of-the-art facilities for learning, wellbeing, sport, the performing arts and community events – an enduring tribute to Dr Johnstone's remarkable leadership and legacy.

The Ravenswood Foundation warmly invites members of the School community to leave their own legacy by securing a personalised seating

plaque within the Centre and being a part of this exciting new chapter in Ravenswood's history.

Every contribution, large or small, helps Ravenswood to build the next generation of learning and wellbeing spaces for students, now and in the years ahead.

Create an enduring gift and a lasting tribute to your connection with Ravenswood.

Leave your legacy as Ravenswood continues to build and provide deep and broad learning experiences and world-class educational opportunities – *semper ad meliora* – always towards better things.



Seating plaques are available in three unique locations within The Anne Johnstone Wellbeing and Sports Centre. Donors have the opportunity to choose their level of donation to the Ravenswood Building Fund and whether they would like their plaque to be placed:

In the **Great Hall Mezzanine**, which overlooks the new indoor, world-class sporting and events centre.

On the **Rooftop Tennis Courts** benches, where donors can take their place courtside to cheer on RAVO students as they fulfil their potential and flourish.

In the **Performing Arts Theatrette** – coming in Stage 2, a vibrant space where RAVO student talents will shine in drama, music, dance, productions, debating, public speaking and tech support.



Select your seat and leave your legacy by scanning the QR code

Donations of \$2 or more to the Ravenswood Building Fund are 100% tax deductible.
All gifts are gratefully acknowledged. Alternatively, you may wish to donate in confidence.



Garden stall at the Ravenswood Fete in 1937

100 Years of Connection, Community and Care: Celebrating Ravenswood Parent Associations

If you've ever strolled through the bustling grounds of Ravenswood on a Carnival and Fair day, heard the laughter spilling from a Trivia Night, or watched parents in blue and gold working shoulder to shoulder for a cause, you've witnessed the indomitable spirit of the Ravenswood Parents' Association.

For a century, generations of parents and friends have come together not only as partners supporting the School, but to nurture the sense of belonging that has shaped the warm Ravenswood culture.

The roots of this partnership stretch back to 1925, a landmark year in Ravenswood's history. It was the year the School's founder, Miss Mabel Fidler, after an inspirational 24 years as headmistress, sold Ravenswood to the Methodist Church, marking the beginning of a new era. It was also the year

a small but determined group of women formed the Ravenswood Ladies' Committee, the earliest incarnation of today's Ravenswood Parents' Association. Mrs Susannah Colwell was appointed president, Miss Dorrie Price was secretary and Miss Edith Fletcher served as treasurer. Their purpose was simple yet profound - to enrich the life of the School through service, friendship and a shared purpose.

In those early years, the committee's enthusiasm transformed the School community. The inaugural *Ravenswood Magazine* in 1925 proudly noted, 'great improvements are being made in our sports grounds, supported by the Ladies Committee who held a fete in November on the grounds to raise money for the new playing fields'.

The following year, the Ladies' Committee continued their work, organising a concert at Lindfield Church,



Members of the RPA Committee at the 2024 RPA Trivia Night

which raised 'thirty pounds and ten shillings', according to *The Methodist* newspaper. The efforts of the committee in those early years greatly assisted the School, providing a projector, gramophone, library books, linoleum for the Domestic Science School, a tennis court upgrade and a piano. It also supported the running of a tuck-shop, built by parent Mr Rupert Holloway.

In the 1951 publication *Ravo in Retrospect*, inaugural president Mrs Susannah Colwell reflected, 'I am sure Ravenswood will bear the impress of the beautiful spirit apparent not only in our meetings but in the hard work undertaken for raising funds.'

As Ravenswood grew, so did the strength of the parent community. By 1957, the Ravenswood Fathers' Committee had been established, later evolving into the Fathers' and Friends' Association in 1962. Members contributed their time, skills and energy to countless projects, from grounds maintenance to sporting events, further cementing the collaborative spirit that remains a hallmark of Ravenswood.

In 1967, the Ladies' Committee became the Ravenswood Ladies' Auxiliary, reflecting a new generation of parents eager to support the School community. They were hands-on in so many ways - running fairs, sewing costumes and decorating halls. Their efforts strengthened friendships and galvanised the Ravenswood community well beyond the school gates. In her 1967 Headmistress' Report in *Nuntius*, Miss Kathleen Crago wrote:

I am deeply indebted to the Parent Organisations of the School for their continued enthusiastic interest and their practical gifts of additional facilities. It is no wonder that Ravenswood parents are known far and wide, throughout other Independent Schools, for their generous support and thoughtful concern for the School's needs.

We witnessed a major transformation in 1991, when the Ladies' Auxiliary and Fathers' and Friends' Association merged to form the Ravenswood Parents' Association (RPA). Mr Ian Denny served as the inaugural president and the RPA launched at a special event featuring Mrs Katherine Greiner, wife of then premier Nick Greiner, as guest speaker.

In the same year, to celebrate Ravenswood's 90th anniversary, the RPA hosted its first major social event, the Blue and Gold Ball at the Hilton Hotel. As reported in *Nuntius* (1991), 'two hundred and ninety Ravenswood parents literally had a "ball". This was our official parents' birthday party for our 90th year and there was a tremendous feeling of school spirit in the ballroom'.

Beyond fostering deep social connections, the RPA continued to invest deeply in the education and wellbeing of every Ravenswood girl. Their contributions helped launch *Ravensword*, a student magazine encouraging original writing and creativity, and funded visiting writer and filmmaker programs. In 2005, they supported the development of the Strength and Conditioning Centre, then in 2007 helped fund interactive smartboards for Junior School classrooms.



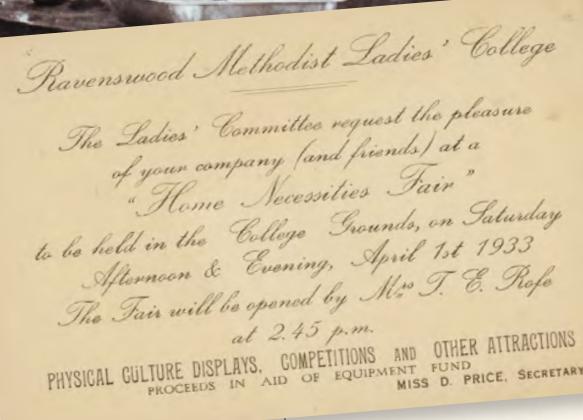
Fathers' BBQ at Sports Day in 1970

In 2014, the RPA gifted the Junior School a climbing frame, providing yet another space for joy and connection among girls. More recently, it has contributed audiovisual and stage upgrades in the Centenary Centre Foyer and Lorraine Smith Auditorium (spanning 2018 to 2024).

Throughout its history, the RPA has strived to foster a warm and inclusive school community, welcoming new families and encouraging all parents to take part. Each year, families are invited to participate in much-loved events. These include the Chantry Golf Day, trivia nights, and various class gatherings. Whether by assisting at school events, becoming a Class Parent, or preparing meals for families in need through Meals Made with Love, parents have many opportunities to support the School and embody the values of service, generosity, compassion and connection for their daughters.



Junior School Playground, donated by the RPA in 2014



Amanda Vince, former RPA President (K-6 President 2017-2019, RPA Vice President 2021 and RPA President 2022-2023) and current RPA Vice-

President, proudly reflects: 'The RPA embodies what makes Ravenswood so special – a community built on care and commitment. As we look to the future, we remain inspired by our predecessors' vision, to service with heart, to connect with others, and to make a lasting difference for generations to come.'

Nearly a century on from that first fete in 1925, the spirit of Ravenswood's parent associations remains as vibrant as ever. It is a story of connection, community and care, testament to generations of families who have devoted their time and energy to ensuring Ravenswood continues to flourish. The enduring sense of purpose first envisioned by the Ladies' Committee 100 years ago continues to kindle transformative initiatives and shine brightly today.



Ravenswood Fete in 1930



Schools Excellence Awards

Best of the Best

In September, Ravenswood was named one of the inaugural 5-Star Best Schools by *The Educator* magazine.

Pivotal to Ravenswood's recognition as a 5-Star Best School has been its pioneering approach to Positive Education and wellbeing.

The ongoing emphasis on Positive Education philosophies is testament to the School's commitment to the wellbeing of students, staff, Alumni and the broader Ravenswood community.

Ravenswood was also recognised for diversity and inclusion; forward-thinking professional learning programs for staff, delivered through the award-winning Ravenswood Institute; world-class facilities and an expansive co-curricular program.

'We are honoured to receive the inaugural 5-Star Best School Award,' Acting Principal Ms Sarah Guy said. 'This award reflects our unwavering commitment to educational excellence and

innovation and acknowledges our focus on evidence-based wellbeing and real-world readiness.

'This award belongs to our entire School community – in particular our dedicated educators, who bring tremendous expertise and innovation to Ravenswood, creating a culture of curiosity that prepares our students not just for exams, but also for life,' Ms Guy said.

Ravenswood was also recognised this semester with a 5-Star Most Innovative Schools Award, achieved for the seventh time in eight years. Following previous awards (2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023 and 2024), *The Educator* once again recognised Ravenswood as an Australian school at the forefront of change and innovation.

The award acknowledges schools that are reshaping the future of education, through everything from innovative teaching approaches to cutting-edge learning spaces and curriculum design.



Poetry in Motion

Ravenswood Celebrates Five Years of its Poets Laureate Initiative

The announcement of the 2026 Poets Laureate, Year 10 students Audrey Li and Heidi Thomson, marks the fifth year of the Poets Laureate program at Ravenswood.

Launched in 2022, the program was designed to give two incoming Year 11 Ravenswood students the platform to be advocates for the spoken word, promoting student appreciation for poetry, and invigorating the School community with their perspectives of the modern world.

The poets are given the opportunity to express their thoughts - on behalf of their cohort and the wider student body - for some of the School's most important and visible occasions, such as International Women's Day, Love RAVO Day, and the Year 12 Final Assembly. The poets' original works now also feature each year on the inside cover of *Semper*.

Introduced after one of the many COVID-19 lockdowns that so disrupted student life, the initiative originally encouraged the Poets Laureate to reflect on shared challenges and their newfound appreciation for human connection. One of the two inaugural Poets Laureate, Tiana Pendray (2023), wrote in 2022:

*Because we are embracing the love of one another
In a way like never before
The silver lining of it all
Is that it has opened our eyes ...*

The Head of English at Ravenswood, Mrs Stella Re, reflected on the Poets Laureate initiative and the powerful platform it has built for students, saying 'The Poets Laureate over time have embodied Ravenswood's values of celebrating positivity and legacy, and have shown an appreciation of the importance of our collective community.'

Ravenswood's Poets Laureate

2022 Zara Perry, Tiana Pendray
(Class of 2023)

2023 Laura Parker, Catherine Swemmer
(Class of 2024)

2024 Billie Fedden, Dixie Pan
(Class of 2025, pictured top right)

2025 Abby McCutcheon, Leda Subasi
(Class of 2026, pictured top left)

2026 Audrey Li, Heidi Thomson
(Class of 2027)

Record HSC Showcase Nominations

Following last year's historic high 29 HSC nominations, the Class of 2025 have again re-written Ravenswood's record books with an outstanding 44 HSC Showcase nominations.

Across Textiles and Design (SHAPE), Music Performance and Music Composition (ENCORE), Individual Drama Performance and Group Drama Performance (ONSTAGE), Design and Technology (SHAPE), and Visual Arts (ARTEXPRESS), the Class

of 2025 HSC students have had their outstanding major works and creative talents recognised for excellence in NSW.

As at time of printing, Year 12 student Priscilla Lam (pictured bottom right) has also achieved HSC Selection for her Visual Arts major work *Signal Lost* which will be exhibited at galleries across NSW from February 2026 as part of ARTEXPRESS.



Student Showcase

Chinese Debating

For the second year running, a cohort of Ravenswood Senior School students travelled to Hong Kong to participate in the Global Chinese Debate Championship.

The tournament invites teams from secondary schools from around the world who have a passion for Chinese language and culture to compete against likeminded students. More than 40 international teams competed, comprising more than 400 students from countries including Singapore, China, the United States and Australia.

Ravenswood's Group B (U16) team debated with originality and skill and were crowned Group Champions. They continued their strong form into the

knockout round before narrowly losing to Shanghai World Foreign Language Academy.

Year 11 student Isabella Chen (Year 12, 2026) also won the Overall Best Debater Award for the second year running.

评审团推荐奖



What Matters?

The annual What Matters? Writing Competition provides a national platform for young creatives to showcase their talent and passion for storytelling. In 2025, more than 6,500 students from across Australia submitted their writing to be reviewed by a panel of professional judges.

Rhea Zhu (Year 6) was named the winner of the Year 5/6 category – the most popular division in this year's competition. From a shortlist of 30 entries, Rhea's moving story, *Family and time*, was selected as the winning piece for its originality, creativity and insight.

Rhea's story was also crowned the winner of the Allen & Unwin Prize, judged on 'narrative skills, originality and how well [the] story takes the reader on a clear and compelling journey'.



Budding Illustrator Blossoms

Talented visual artist Olivia Johnstone (Year 9) has created the illustrations for a new children's book written by author, former staff member and founder of the Australian Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships, Jillian Burgess.

The Mumbling Gum Blossom encourages children to speak out confidently and to remember the value of friendship. The fictional story takes readers on a journey with the gum blossoms who live in Wattle Bush. Readers discover how the gum blossoms become friends and go on an adventure through the Australian bush. On the way, they support their new gum blossom friend Myrtle, who has just arrived in Gum Tree Street and has a tricky name she finds hard to say.

Olivia's captivating watercolour and black ink outline illustrations complement the story delightfully.

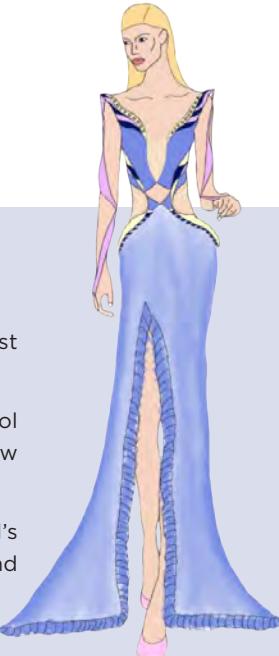
Student Showcase

Too Wool for School

Year 11 Textiles and Design student Sonia Chernyshova (Year 12, 2026) was awarded first place in the Senior Designer category of the national Wool4School design competition.

The annual student design competition encourages budding designers to use merino wool for innovative thinking and creative design. This year, the organisers asked entrants to draw inspiration from the diversity of plant life and nature's artistry.

Sonia said her design (pictured right) was inspired and intended to be worn by Lewis Carroll's character Alice, whose 'adventures in the absurd and often perilous landscape of Wonderland mirror the concept of remaining resilient and vigilant in the face of unpredictability'.



Writer of the Future

Lauren Woo (Year 7) was announced as one of the winners in the prestigious 2025 Young Australian Art and Writers' Awards, which is hotly contested by students across the country.

At a grand event hosted by the Children's Charity Network and the Handbury Foundation in Melbourne in November, Lauren's winning piece of writing, *All the Beautiful Things*, was singled out by judges for its style and grace.



Write or Wrong

Year 10 student Ariel Bai wrote the winning essay in this year's Young Writers' 2025 Competition (13-17 age category) hosted by The Ethics Centre.

Her essay, titled 'Love and the machine', contemplates the future of humanity in a world governed by AI, tech giants and isolation.



Problem? What Problem!

The next generation of change-makers took centre stage at Knox Grammar School in October for the national finals of the Future Problem Solving Competition.

Designed to provide students with academic challenges to stimulate new ways of critical and creative thinking, collaboration, problem-solving and ethical leadership skills, Ravenswood students from the Junior and Senior School embraced the competition and seized the moment.

Aanya Karunaratne (Year 9) was awarded first place in Scenario Writing (middle division), Anna Xue (Year 9) was adjudged Best Writer (middle division) for the Onsite Writing Competition, and Evelyn Chi (Year 6) was a member of the Best Group for the Onsite Writing Competition. Vicky Chernyshova (Year 7), Annabelle Liu (Year 7), Sophie Humburg (Year 7), Amelia Nicholls (Year 8) and Chloé Lucas (Year 8) also came first for Community Problem Solving (middle division).

Following this success, a number of the winning Ravenswood students have been invited to attend the International Future Problem Solving Competition at Indiana University in the United States, to be held in June 2026.

Student Showcase



Toky-OH!

Ravenswood Music Scholarship recipient, talented violinist Hannah Tsai (Year 7), has been on a world tour of competition success!

Hannah competed in Japan at the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall and was awarded First Prize in the Golden Classical Music Awards International Competition. She was also recently awarded the Annual Grand First Prize in the London Young Musician competition for the artist category (15 years and under).

London Young Musician is an international online competition that looks for talented musicians who have excellent musical skills, a strong personality and fantastic creativity in their video performance. It is open to all instruments, voices, compositions and ensembles.

Hannah was also awarded Harpist of the Year and Violinist of the Year at the London competition.

Director of Music Curriculum Dr Michael Varecka said, 'Hannah's dedication to practice on her numerous instruments can be seen through her personalised renditions of solo works and significant contributions to various Ravenswood ensembles.'



Keys to Success

Year 11 student Demi Deng (Year 12, 2026) achieved first place for her solo piano performance at the highly competitive Sydney Eisteddfod in July.

Performing in the Nineteenth-Century Music Section, 17 years and over, Demi's rendition of two pieces by Liszt and Rachmaninoff was highly regarded by the adjudicator, who praised her control and tone at the keyboard, as well as her emotional depth.

She followed this with winning the Penrith Eisteddfod in September, awarded first place in both the Pianoforte Championship and the Pianoforte Open Age Romantic Piano section.

Director of Music Curriculum and Co-curricular Dr Michael Varecka said, 'Demi has a real passion for Romantic piano repertoire and enjoys tackling significant works by the great composers. Her technical ability is well supplemented by her innate understanding of the style.'



Back-to-Back Champions

For the second consecutive year, Ravenswood has been crowned 'People's Choice' winner at the prestigious annual Sydney Eisteddfod Dance of Champions competition.

This year, Ravenswood's Years 7 and 8 Hip Hop Dance Crew took out the award, dazzling audiences at Chatswood's Concourse with their tenacity, rhythm and execution.

Ravenswood Dance Coordinator and Year 11 Coordinator Miss Ebony Keys said, 'Years 7-8 Hip Hop Crew is new to the Ravenswood Dance program and to have them invited to participate in Dance of Champions in their inaugural year is outstanding. A true testament to the dedication and commitment of our dancers and their teacher Miss Victoria.'

Student Showcase

Honk! Jr.

In November, Year 6 students performed a visually stunning and musically memorable rendition of *Honk! Jr.* in the Lorraine Smith Auditorium.

The musical is based on the classic tale of the ugly duckling. Ugly – an unusual looking duckling – embarks on a journey of self-discovery and learns that being different is not a bad thing.



That's So Grimm

The Years 7 and 8 play this year was a marathon of fairytales by the Brothers Grimm, spliced into a single presentation by author Don Zolidis.

The production saw 209 of the Grimms' most cherished stories retold in a wild, fast-paced extravaganza, including characters such as Rapunzel, Rumpelstiltskin, Hansel and Gretel, and Sleeping Beauty.



It's a Miracle!

A modern, tech-savvy retelling of the nativity by Mark, Helen and Naomi Johnson was chosen as this year's Kindergarten to Year 2 Christmas production.

Capturing all the beauty and wonder of the traditional Christmas story, *It's a Miracle* was a perfect setting for many of our youngest performers to make their stage debut.

Student Showcase

Let it Snow!

A group of five Ravenswood students ventured to Mount Buller in Victoria to participate in the 2025 Australian Interschools Snowsports Championships.

Chuchu Huang (Year 5) demonstrated great finesse on the slopes, finishing eighth in her age group in moguls, 32nd in alpine and 37th in ski cross. She also received the bronze medal at the NSW Championships, cementing her reputation as 'one to watch' in future snowsports competitions.

Taylor Durman (Year 7), Ella Hardwick (Year 8), Lucy Brown (Year 8) and Annika Boys (Year 12) also qualified for the national championships in a competitive field.

Director of Sport Mr Edward Ellwood-Hall said, 'Our students displayed remarkable determination and resilience on the slopes in 2025. Their performances at Nationals highlighted not only their talent but also their potential for the future. We are excited to support their continued success in the years ahead.'



Chloe Represents Australia on the World Stage!

Rhythmic gymnast Chloe Muntz (Year 12) was recently selected to represent Australia at the Rhythmic Gymnastics World Cup Challenge held in Szombathely, Hungary in September.

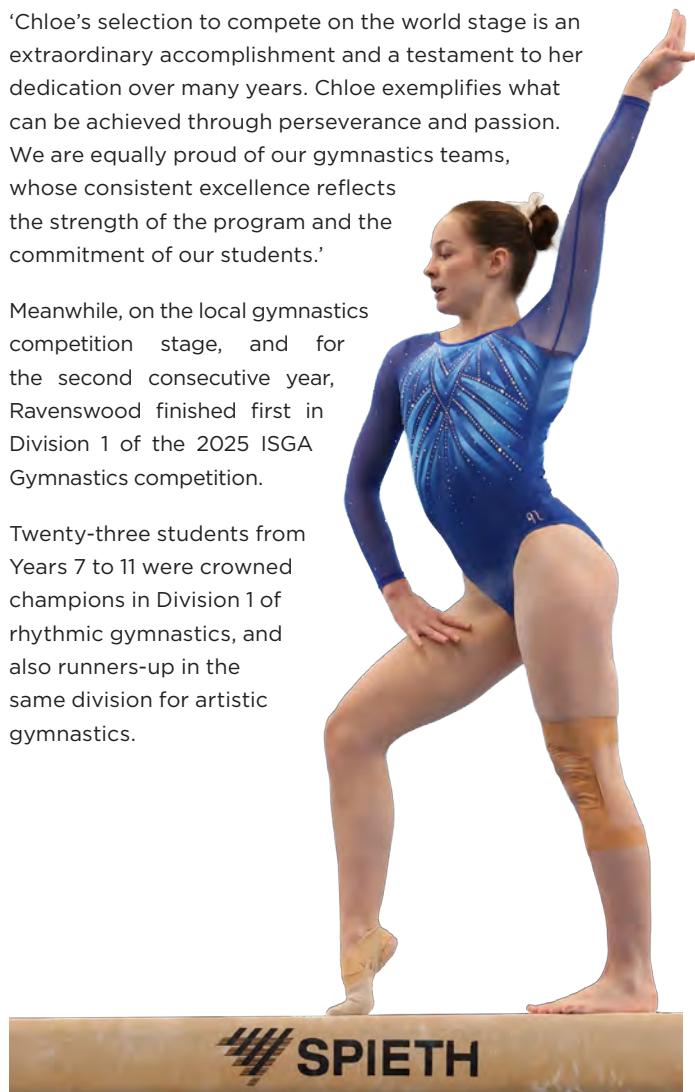
Recognised for her exceptional skill and artistry on the floor and balance beam, Chloe seized the opportunity to impress coaches and audiences as she continues to train and compete towards Australian team selection for the 2026 Commonwealth Games, to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, in July 2026.

Before departing for Hungary, just weeks before her HSC examinations commenced, Chloe was given a hero's farewell by the Class of 2025 and staff, celebrating her outstanding sporting achievements and the culmination of her Ravenswood journey.

Director of Sport Mr Edward Ellwood-Hall said, 'Chloe's selection to compete on the world stage is an extraordinary accomplishment and a testament to her dedication over many years. Chloe exemplifies what can be achieved through perseverance and passion. We are equally proud of our gymnastics teams, whose consistent excellence reflects the strength of the program and the commitment of our students.'

Meanwhile, on the local gymnastics competition stage, and for the second consecutive year, Ravenswood finished first in Division 1 of the 2025 ISGA Gymnastics competition.

Twenty-three students from Years 7 to 11 were crowned champions in Division 1 of rhythmic gymnastics, and also runners-up in the same division for artistic gymnastics.



Student Showcase

Handball Talent

Caitlyn Yu (Year 8) was recently selected for the Under-21 NSW Women's Junior State European Handball team, making her the youngest team member.

Reflecting her incredible acumen for the sport and the esteem in which she is held by her teammates and mentors, Caitlyn was also chosen to be co-captain of the state team for the National Junior European Handball Championships on the Gold Coast in July – which they duly won!



Reaching New Heights

Talented high jumper Saskia Ramma (Year 6) represented IPSHA at the 2025 CIS Athletics Championships and recorded a jump of 153cm – an increase of 11cm from her previous best of 142cm!

Saskia's extraordinary jumping saw her take first place, making her the best under-13 high jumper in NSW independent schools. Her jump was the second-highest jump for the girls 12 to 13 years category in the history of CIS Athletics record-keeping.

Saskia was selected to represent the CIS team at the NSW PSSA Championships in October.



Can't Touch This!

Eliza Williams (Year 9) represented CIS at the 2025 NSW All Schools Touch Football Championships, playing magnificently and helping her side to win the competition.

As a result, Eliza was selected for the NSW team to compete at the Australian Touch Football Championships in Ballarat in October, and was subsequently selected for the 2025 All-Australian Touch Football Girls 15-and-under team.



Alumni



Golden Day

In October, the School welcomed Alumni back to campus for the annual Golden Girls' Luncheon.

Now in its 35th year, the event is a reunion for Alumni who graduated from Ravenswood 50 years ago or more. This year, the Class of 1975 were inducted as the newest 'Golden Girls', with a record 38 members of the cohort attending.

Representing 18 different year groups who graduated between 1951 and 1975, more than 120 Alumni reminisced and revelled in the storytelling across the day. A complimentary luncheon hosted by Ravenswood was served by current Year 11 TAS students.

Year 5 students emceed and welcomed the Golden Girls to the event, and 2026 School Captain Abby

McCutcheon and Vice Captain Jacqueline Mao spoke of their appreciation for Alumni upon whose shoulders they now proudly stand.

Year 4 students made each Golden Girl a special Christmas gift, and Alumni enjoyed a curated exhibition display of archive memorabilia and photos showcasing Alumni and the School between 1951 and 1975.

Rounding out the intergenerational connection between Ravenswood students, Year 3 students sent our Golden Girls' Luncheon attendees a Christmas card reflecting on their love for Ravenswood.

Acting Principal Ms Sarah Guy presented a 'trip down memory lane' (from 1975 to today) before attendees enjoyed a guided tour of the School.



Alumni

Strengthening Connection: The Alumni Mentor and Business Hub

Ravenswood School for Girls and the Ravenswood Alumni Committee have launched a new Alumni Mentor and Business Hub, for Ravenswood Alumni to connect, mentor, network and collaborate.

The Alumni Mentor and Business Hub is a platform for all Alumni - from recent graduates to established industry leaders - to expand their professional networks.

The Hub allows Alumni to express their interest in finding a mentor, or becoming a mentor. Alumni can volunteer to be a mentor to share their wealth of skills and experience to help support Alumni and Senior School students. Current Ravenswood students entering the workforce and Alumni who are venturing down new career paths can express interest in being a mentee.

The Hub is also a complimentary service supporting Alumni-owned businesses and their organisations. Exclusively for the Ravenswood Alumni community, it offers the benefits of networking, promotion of special offers and discounts to Alumni families, advertising of

job opportunities and work experience, and increased exposure to future clients and customers.

Simply create an Alumni Hub account and register your Alumni business listing, or mentor listing, to feature on the new Ravenswood Alumni Mentor and Business Hub.

Outgoing President of Ravenswood Alumni Lisa Boyce (Clancy, 1990) said, 'I am incredibly proud to see the launch of the Alumni Mentor and Business Hub, establishing yet another way for past Ravenswood students to stay connected and involved with the School. As an Alumni myself, I can also see the tremendous value this site will provide for senior students nearing the completion of their studies seeking guidance for the next stage of their journey.'



Create a Hub Account and add your mentor, mentee or business listing today



Alumni



Senior School Presentation Ceremony

Esteemed Alumni Ms Catherine West MP (1984) joined Ravenswood Council member and Alumni Georgina Blix (2003), Acting Principal Ms Sarah Guy and the Ravenswood community in celebrating another successful RAVO year at Sydney Town Hall.

Catherine moved to the United Kingdom in 1998 and was leader of Islington Council, an inner-city London borough, from 2010 to 2013. She was elected to the House of Commons (the lower house of British parliament) in 2015, serving as Minister for the Indo-Pacific from 2024 to 2025. She now serves on the Treasury Select Committee and is a Labour Member of Parliament for the constituency of Hornsey and Friern Barnet.

As a Ravenswood student, Catherine was an active member of the orchestra and represented Ravenswood in softball, hockey, cricket and debating. She was elected in 1984 by her fellow students as a prefect and received a service prize.

After school, Catherine achieved a degree in Social Science and Languages from the University of Sydney, then a Master's degree in Chinese Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. A Mandarin speaker, she developed her

skills while teaching English as a second language in Nanjing, China.

Ms West reflected on her time at Ravenswood and inspired the community with her stories and words of wisdom, reminding the students, 'The heart of education is the education of the heart.'



Alumni Reunions

2025 Reunions



2026:

[Class of 2024 Recent Leavers Reunion: 5 February](#)

[Class of 2021 \(5-Year Reunion\)](#)

[Class of 2016 \(10-Year Reunion\)](#)

[Class of 2006 \(20-Year Reunion\)](#)

[Class of 1996 \(30-Year Reunion\)](#)

[Class of 1986 \(40-Year Reunion\)](#)

[Golden Girls' Luncheon \(50+ years:
Class of 1976 and prior\): 15 October](#)

[Class of 1968 \(58-Year Reunion\): 6 November](#)

[Class of 1966 \(60-Year Reunion\)](#)

[Class of 1956 \(70-Year Reunion\)](#)



Please use QR Code for
reunion information.



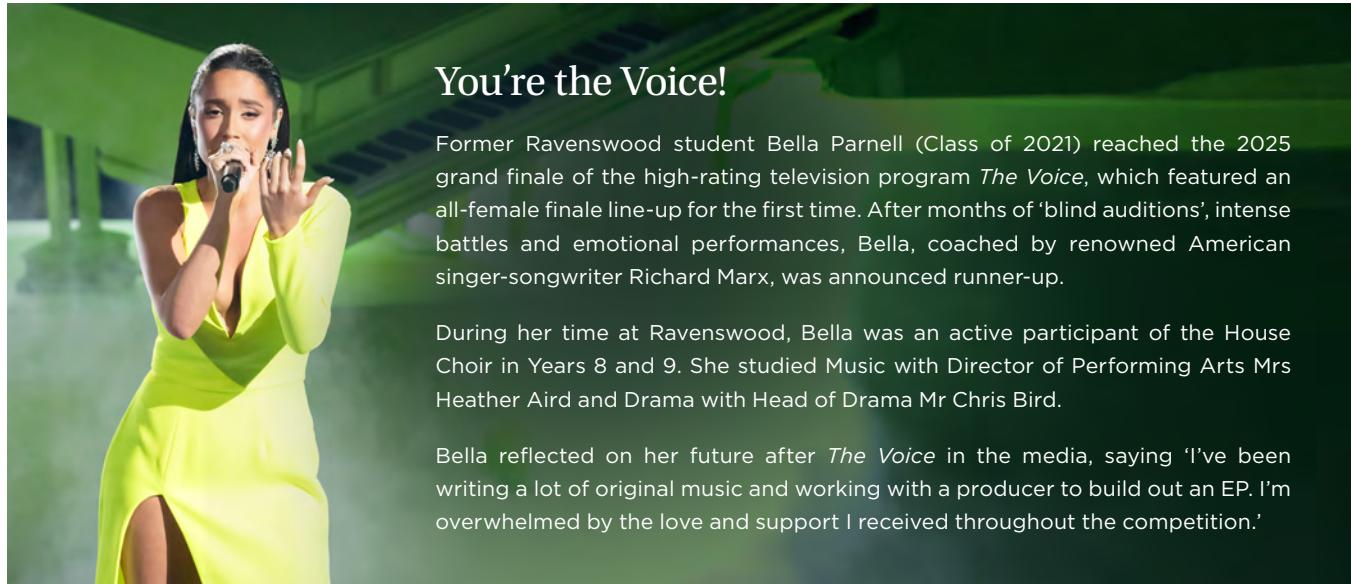
Alumni

Amazing Killeen

Author, actress, media personality and former School Captain Gretel Killeen (1980) has returned to our television screens on two programs on Network Ten.

Killeen competed on *The Amazing Race Australia: Celebrity Edition* with daughter Epiphany, finishing fifth. The pair raced to support the Hunter Medical Research Institute and raise awareness for women's health.

It has also been announced that Killeen will be the new host of the third season of the popular murder-mystery show *The Traitors*, scheduled to air in early 2026. The series is currently being filmed in New Zealand.



You're the Voice!

Former Ravenswood student Bella Parnell (Class of 2021) reached the 2025 grand finale of the high-rating television program *The Voice*, which featured an all-female finale line-up for the first time. After months of 'blind auditions', intense battles and emotional performances, Bella, coached by renowned American singer-songwriter Richard Marx, was announced runner-up.

During her time at Ravenswood, Bella was an active participant of the House Choir in Years 8 and 9. She studied Music with Director of Performing Arts Mrs Heather Aird and Drama with Head of Drama Mr Chris Bird.

Bella reflected on her future after *The Voice* in the media, saying 'I've been writing a lot of original music and working with a producer to build out an EP. I'm overwhelmed by the love and support I received throughout the competition.'



Wedding and Baby News

Natalie Moss (2011) married Joshua Bell in August 2024 at Athol Hall. Class of 2011 friends attending the wedding included Cecilia Coon, Jessica Bower, Camilla Cameron, Ella Madden, Caroline Mylonas (Cooke) and Lizzy Greenhalgh.

In May 2025, Natalie and Joshua celebrated the birth of their daughter, Heidi Rose Bell.

Vale

We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of the following Ravenswood Alumni:

Jo Harris OAM
(Law, 1950) (1934–2025)

Sylvia Anne Garrett
(Boaden, 1957) 1941–2025

Alycia Macqueen
(2015) (1997–2025)

Louise Manning
(1956) (1940–2025)

Margaret Denise Ross
(Rigg, 1954) (1938–2025)

Susan Short
(1968) (1950–2025)

Community News



A Claus for Celebration!

This year's RAVO Carols event was a jolly and festive affair, with the School's many talented vocal ensembles taking centre stage.

Hosted on the School's beautiful Peace Lawn, donned with seasonal decorations and ornaments, the Ravenswood community gathered to hear and sing new and traditional Christmas songs. The first half of the evening featured our

youngest carollers, from the K-2 Choir and Years 3-4 Choir to the Junior Vocal Ensemble and Year 6 Choir.

Led by the RPA, 'a roaring barbecue fed the community, as the Year 5 Choir, Middle Vocal Ensemble, Senior Vocal Ensemble and RAVO Voices rounded out the student performances. The much-anticipated arrival of Santa Claus heralded the concluding part of the evening – a high-spirited community carols sing-a-long.



Community News





Selected photos from The Australian Education Awards, Book Week Parade, Golden Girls' Luncheon, Class of 2025 Final Assembly and Morning Tea, HSC Visual Arts and Music Showcase, Father-Daughter Breakfast, RPA Trivia Night, Year 6 PYP Exhibition, Foundation Lunch, P-2 Gala Day and RPA K-2 Cupcake Day.



RAVENSWOOD
AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S
ART PRIZE 2026

10
YEARS
2017-2026

Australia's Highest Value Art Prize for Women

Janet Laurence, excerpt from *Moss Water Ice Temperature Rising* 2025 Professional Artist Winner

Professional Artist Prize **\$35,000** acquisitive

Emerging Artist Prize **\$7,500** acquisitive

Indigenous Emerging Artist Prize **\$7,500** acquisitive

Highly Commended Awards total **\$6,000** and
Peoples' Choice Award **\$2,000** plus **\$500** art pack



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Opening Night
15 May 2026

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Exhibition of Finalists
16 May 2026 – 31 May 2026

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