

# Footprints

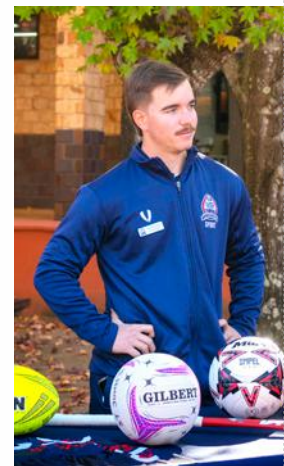
St John's Anglican College  
JUNE 2025







Join  
us



## Middle and Senior School Open Morning

We are delighted to welcome prospective parents and students to experience the many opportunities that await at St John's.

Discover how our students develop confidence, a growth mindset, and a genuine love of learning while gaining the essential skills needed to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Join us for our upcoming Open Morning on Wednesday 10 September 2025, where you'll have the opportunity to meet our dedicated educators, tour our state-of-the-art campus, hear from parent ambassadors and current students, and witness our vibrant co-curricular programs in action.

Our team will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about our academic programs, teaching approach, and the enrolment process.



Join us

**Wednesday  
10 September 2025**

9:00 am - 11:00 am

55 College Avenue,  
Forest Lake



## Footprints

JUNE 2025 EDITION

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Mr Egan Sun-Bin  
Mr Derek Chen  
Reverend Juliana Bate  
Anglicare Southern Queensland

### 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

**What a remarkable College this is! It will take a while for the reality of what we have achieved with our very first St John's Giving Day to sink in. Giving Day is more than just fundraising – it is about unity, the spirit of generosity and creating a legacy together. It is our chance to build something extraordinary. One day, One community, and a lasting legacy for generations to come. The total \$ 57,500 was no doubt thanks to all in our community who contributed so generously, so God bless you. It is little short of miraculous, but as the magnificent Walt Whitman reminds us:**

To me, every hour of light and dark is a miracle

Every cubic inch of space is a miracle

This year I marvel at the generosity of your hearts and spirits. I often talk about our College as being a microcosm of the world as a whole, a little mini world of our own. But perhaps I should more accurately claim that our College is a microcosm of what we might wish the world to become. We don't all know each other personally. How could we? We try through

our buddy programmes to acquaint students from different year groups, but in reality, we tend to stick for the most part with our peers. Yet we care about each other and if we see someone in trouble, whether we know them or not, we do what we can to help. We also have representatives from over 34 different countries in our student body – a United Nations in miniature, all of whom bring their precious cultures and backgrounds into the mix, so that we might learn from them and about them and thus dissolve those imagined boundaries that might keep us apart.

We are, each of us, unique and therefore different from each other. Yet we are united by inseparable bonds that help us to get along. By the impulse to be kind when we can; by the impulse to give where our gifts are needed; by the impulse to engage with life because we know our contribution is worthwhile. The world of St John's is a fine world, a happy and functioning world, and if we want the wider world to coexist in peaceful harmony as we surely do, then we must continue to reach out to those in need, and, in the words of the prayer of St Francis, bring hope to those who despair and light to those who live in darkness, and joy to those who are sad. In short, we must be instruments for God's peace, and thus in our own quiet way become those ordinary radicals who offer the hope of transformation. In bringing God's peace to the world we can't help but also bring peace into our own hearts.





It was Mother Theresa who said: *"At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in."* At St John's Giving Day we shared her sentiment.

One day. One community. And a lasting impact for generations to come.

*Maria L. McIvor*

**Mrs Maria McIvor** | Principal



**A special thank you to the generosity of our matched donors**

- Travis and Sarah Bishop
- Mr Eric Trieu

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## Year Six Gardening Club

**As part of our Sustainability Enterprise under the College's Strategic Direction, a group of proactive Year Six students have taken the initiative to launch a Gardening Club at the Junior Campus. Driven by their own passion and curiosity, they've created a space where students can learn about nature, teamwork, and sustainable practices.**

Here's what they had to say about their club:

### **What did you grow in your garden, and why did you choose those plants?**

We grew tomatoes because we wanted to see how high they could climb. Moreover, we knew we could end up with something yummy to eat and share with the tuckshop. We used a climbing frame to help train the vines to climb and grow. We chose a sunny spot to plant them because we researched and found out, that fruiting plants need lots of energy from the sun to grow their fruit. We also had mint, oregano, and chives that were already in the garden from last year. We even had a pineapple, which is still growing in a water bath in the classroom. We are planning to plant it out when summer returns and there is more heat and light, rather than just a warm classroom environment for it to live in.

### **What was your favourite part of working on the gardening project?**

The best part was working as a team, and to help our outdoor environment look beautiful. It was amazing to watch the lettuce grow so quickly as it sprung up from seed! We were lucky that our leaders of the gardening project, Diya and Elizabeth, helped us out with the gardening tools and equipment. That was a big help!

### **Did you learn anything surprising while taking care of the garden?**

We learnt that lettuce can self-sow! It was like magic. We didn't know where the new shoots came from until we saw the seeds on an old stalk of lettuce from the year before and realised that vegetables, such as lettuce can self-sow! We researched this fact to confirm our findings. Yes, we are amazing researchers! This linked nicely with the concepts of form and function. In other words, How Things Look and How Things Work! And guess what? This mini project linked with our Transdisciplinary theme of How The World Works!

### **How did it feel to see your plants grow and the garden come to life?**

It was super exciting and rewarding. We are looking forward to caring for the garden so that we can hand it over to the future leaders of the Junior School, our current Year Five students.





# Supporting Youth Experiencing Homelessness

At the beginning of the year, St John's made a purposeful decision to focus its charitable efforts by supporting a select number of organisations in 2025—enabling us to make a deeper and more meaningful impact. Anglicare Southern Queensland emerged as a natural choice, with a mission that strongly aligns with our values and a long-standing commitment to supporting vulnerable communities.

During Semester One, through various student and community fundraising initiatives, St John's raised a total of \$3,625 to support Anglicare Southern Queensland's Youth Homelessness Project—an ambitious and much-needed initiative responding to the growing housing crisis among young people in our state.

Anglicare are contributing to the construction of a purpose-built facility in Logan that will provide safe, supported, and long-term accommodation for young people aged 16–25 who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The facility will include individual studio and one-bedroom apartments, on-site staff available 24/7, and a range of support services to help residents gain independence, continue their education, find employment, and build strong futures.



## Youth Homelessness Project

LEARN MORE

TO SUPPORT



This project will deliver practical, and urgently needed, housing and wrap around services to support young people in the Logan region. It is a project that has been shaped by what the young people who use Anglicare's services have told the organisation that they need: privacy, independence and adults who champion them.

Beyond the bricks and mortar lies a new approach to supporting young people—one that celebrates their strengths, nurtures their resilience, and empowers them to reach their full potential.

St John's is incredibly proud to partner with Anglicare and play a small but meaningful role in this important project—knowing that every contribution is helping to build not just a structure, but a stronger future for our youth.





# Celebrating Culture and Collaboration Through Art

St John's recently commissioned artist Ambrose Scott Killian—a proud desert/Eastern Arrernte and Western Bundjalung man now living in Meanjin/Brisbane—to create an original artwork to accompany the College's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

To begin this creative journey, Ambrose led an engaging workshop with students from across the College. The session explored the rich traditions of Aboriginal storytelling and the history of Aboriginal art, providing valuable cultural context and insight before moving into the hands-on creative process.

Students were invited to reflect on the St John's values and express their interpretation using Aboriginal symbolism through visual art. They also explored elements of local 'Country,' incorporating native flora, fauna, and landscapes into their illustrations.

It was a fun and collaborative experience, with Junior and Secondary school students working side by side—sharing perspectives, ideas, and artistic interpretations. This partnership encouraged open thinking and diverse representation in the final concept.

Ambrose will now use the words and illustrations gathered from the students to develop a final RAP artwork, which will be officially unveiled at the St John's Foundation Day celebrations on Thursday, 31 July.

## About the Artist

Ambrose has always been a day dreamer and drawer, finding himself stuck sketching and drawing from a very young age—it is his vessel for communicating, connecting to Apmere/ country and translating and sharing stories of himself, ancestors and the notion of 'Country'.

"Art and creating has always been my safe space, letting me share my feelings and stories in a realm that lacks judgement and is only limited to one's imagination. My drive to learn more about the cultural significance of our art really began in 2010 when I created a large piece titled 'Grey'. This piece won the Indigenous Heart Foundation Student Award and toured QLD galleries for the remainder of the year. More importantly, it opened up my passion and drive to keep painting and learning about our art and culture, contacting my elders and being a pest for learning and sharing my knowledge for those who take the time to listen."





# SHAPING THE FUTURE

## ST JOHN'S HOSTS LARGEST-EVER INNOVATION CHALLENGE

On June 2, St John's Anglican College hosted its annual Innovation Challenge in the Performing Arts and Design Centre—a vibrant showcase of student ingenuity, collaboration, and bold thinking. This year's event was our biggest yet, with a record-breaking 36 teams from across the College presenting innovative solutions to real-world global issues.

The day was electric with energy as students set up booths, pitched their ideas, and impressed a distinguished judging panel made up of experts from academia and industry. Special thanks go to Dr Karsten Schulz, who led the panel, joined by Elizabeth Cleland, Dr Anita Milroy, Matthew Jorgensen, Sharmistha Dey, Kenisha Dsouza, Jamie Dunne, Daniel McGowan, and Isuka Muthumuni.

From sustainability to digital solutions, the calibre of ideas on display was exceptional, showcasing the creativity, critical thinking, and leadership of our future changemakers.

Congratulations to all participating teams and the winners, and thank you to the many staff, mentors, and support crew who helped bring the event to life. The Innovation Challenge continues to grow each year, providing students with invaluable opportunities to think big, work collaboratively, and shape the future with purpose.

The future really is in good hands.



# INNOVATION CHALLENGE WINNERS

## JUNIOR SCHOOL

**1st Place:** Waste Warriors (Year 6)

**Category:** Community Services

**Team members:** Liam Peng, Liam Bowden, Vincent Le, Ayaan Deshmukh, Aldridge Guzman

**Highly Commended:** Couch Potato Control (Year 5)

**Category:** Health & Nutrition

**Team members:** Thomas O'Neill, Toby Frame, Xaiver Samanes, Kieran Bullok

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

**1st Place:** Dripped (Year 9)

**Category:** Minerals, Energy & Environment

**Team members:** Veer Patel, Nils Halil, Ethan Nah, Devan Gupta, Eli Parsons

**Highly Commended:** In to the future (Year 8)

**Category:** Cyber-Technology & Security

**Team members:** Ishaan Tharayil

## SENIOR SCHOOL

**1st Place:** Lake Baker (Year 10)

**Category:** Health & Nutrition

**Team members:** Rory Charles, Eliana Thomas

**Highly Commended:** TrueGuide (TG) (Year 10)

**Category:** Health & Nutrition

**Team members:** Jasmine Williams, Elley Westerberg, Eliza Denner

## OVERALL

**Best Pitch (Individual):** Rory Charles (Year 10)

**Team members:** Lake Baker

**People's Choice:** Horizon Gate (Year 6)

**Category:** Aerospace & Aviation

**Team members:** Kush Patel, Aarush Shinde, Girivansh Chaudhary

## A Practically Perfect Performance: Mary Poppins Takes Flight

St John's has once again raised the curtain on something truly special. This year's College musical, *Mary Poppins*, was a dazzling display of talent, teamwork, and theatrical magic. From the moment the overture began, the audience was swept into the whimsical world of Cherry Tree Lane—where chimney sweeps dance across rooftops and a spoonful of sugar really can change your outlook.

Our students, who began rehearsals all the way back in July last year, delivered a performance that was as heartfelt as it was high-energy. Their months of hard work, late nights, and countless rehearsals culminated in a show filled with charm, humour, and genuine emotion. Every note sung and every dance step landed was a testament to their dedication and passion for storytelling.

More than just a nostalgic favourite, *Mary Poppins* reminded us all of the importance of family, kindness, and finding magic in everyday moments. The cast and crew embraced these themes with warmth and maturity well beyond their years.

Mr Russell Morgan, the show's director, says "It has been an absolute privilege to watch these young performers grow in both their craft and confidence. The collaboration and camaraderie they've formed along the way have made this production truly special. We are so proud of what they've achieved and are thrilled to share their hard work with you."

Congratulations to everyone involved in this supercalifragilisticexpialidocious production. Your efforts made the impossible seem practically perfect in every way.



Disney and CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S

# MARY POPPINS

THE BROADWAY MUSICAL

©Disney/CML









## A Week of Adventure and Growth at Year 8 Camp

This year's Year 8 Camp took place at Tyalgum Ridge Retreat, nestled in a lush valley in northern New South Wales. While the mountain views were often hidden behind misty clouds, the setting still provided a stunning backdrop for an unforgettable few days.

Despite the damp weather, the energy was high as students threw themselves into a range of activities—from building catapults and trying their hand at combat archery to orienteering, kayaking, and scrambling over creek-side rocks. Whether it was launching a can from a classmate's head with a homemade catapult, mastering a kayak roll, or pushing through a tough challenge, students embraced each moment with enthusiasm.

Evenings brought a chance to wind down and connect through games that sparked laughter and strengthened friendships. For many, it was a chance to see their peers in a new light and build bonds that extended beyond the campsite.

It was a camp full of shared experiences, growth, and memories that will stick with us long after the tents have been packed away.



YEAR 8 CAMP





# Year 11 Camp: Leadership in Action at Emu Gully

In Term Two, our Year 11 students headed to the base of the Toowoomba Ranges for three days at Emu Gully, the site of their Leadership Camp. Set against a rugged natural backdrop, the camp focused on building resilience, teamwork, confidence, and leadership—both in action and in reflection.

Across the three days, students faced a series of hands-on challenges, including tunnel crawls, low ropes courses, swinging logs, high bridge crossings, mud runs, and even paintball. Each activity was designed to test limits, encourage collaboration, and prompt students to think under pressure. While the physical challenges were memorable, it was often the moments of support, quick thinking, and quiet encouragement that stood out most.

The camp followed an ANZAC theme, with activities inspired by the endurance and camaraderie shown by servicemen and women. After each challenge, students took part in reflection sessions, exploring what leadership meant in the moment, sharing insights, and recognising personal strengths. These conversations created space for connection and growth, with staff on hand to guide, listen, and encourage.

Whether taking charge of a team, rallying a group through a tough task, or stepping up to support a friend, students discovered what leadership could look like in action. The camp left many feeling more confident, connected, and ready to bring those skills back to school life.





# St John's Students Go the Distance at Annual Cross Country Events

## HOUSE winners

St John's students showed grit, determination, and school spirit as they participated in the annual Junior and Secondary School Cross Country events held in Term Two. Set against the vibrant backdrop of our College's expansive grounds and local community, these events united students from across year levels in a celebration of endurance, teamwork, and personal achievement.

### JUNIOR

### SECONDARY

1st – Braithwaite

1st – Bow Qing Tian

2nd – Archerfield

2nd - Braithwaite

3rd – Delbeta

3rd - Delbeta

4th - Bow Qing Tian

4th - Archerfield

In the Junior School, students from Kindergarten to Year 6 gave their all, with many displaying incredible resilience as they tackled the course. The day was filled with cheering peers, colourful House banners, and a strong sense of camaraderie. Meanwhile, Secondary students from Years 7 to 12 took on a more challenging course around The Lake, demonstrating impressive athleticism and competitive spirit as they vied for House points and personal bests.

Beyond the competition, Cross Country is a vital part of our co-curricular program. It encourages students to set personal goals, maintain physical fitness, and develop mental toughness — all skills that contribute to overall wellbeing and academic success. It also strengthens our House system, offering students the chance to support one another, build friendships, and feel connected to a broader community.

Congratulations to all students who participated — whether running, walking, or cheering from the sidelines — you truly embodied the St John's spirit.







It's been a vibrant and exciting semester in Prep at St John's, filled with discovery, creativity, and foundational learning. Our youngest learners have embraced every opportunity with enthusiasm, curiosity, and growing confidence as they settle into the rhythms of school life.

### What has been the learning focus?

In our Units of Inquiry, we explored "Who We Are" and "Sharing the Planet." Our students have learned about ourselves—what made us unique, our families, feelings, and favourite activities. In addition, the students have focused on being kind friends, learning how to work and play together respectfully.

In our second unit, the students discovered how plants, animals, and people all shared the Earth. They explored about how to care for nature and protect the environment so everyone could enjoy and benefit from our world.

In Reading and Writing, they learned letters and sounds and used them to read and write simple words. The students enjoyed listening to stories, discussing books, and expressing their ideas through drawings and early writing.

And in Maths, they counted, sorted, and explored numbers and patterns to ten. This extended to how to measure length and sequence the days of the week.

### What have been the highlights?

This semester has been filled with memorable moments including our Street Science incursion, where the children were amazed as they made clouds in a jar.

We also had a wonderful time celebrating Friendship Friday, taking part in fun games and activities that encouraged kindness and teamwork. And of course, a very special memory was our Mother's Day pamper morning, where the students pampered their mums or caregivers with massages and handmade necklaces.



### What special events have the students particularly enjoyed?

The Prep students running their very first Chapel service! They were so proud to be on stage in the Living Faith Chapel—singing songs, reciting a poem, and presenting a beautiful photo slideshow that made many mums smile (and a few tear up!).

### What new teaching strategies have been introduced this semester?

As teachers we have loved changing up our art experiences this year. Whether it has been connecting projects to the letter sounds we learned or to our PYP units, our art activities were always linked to classroom learning. It was a creative and meaningful way to reinforce understanding and express ideas.

### What role has play-based learning played in the classroom?

Play-based learning played a big role in the classroom. It allowed the students to explore concepts, build new skills, and collaborate with peers in fun and imaginative ways.

For example, they loved pretending to be vets, learning how to care for animals as well as enjoying a dinosaur dig in the sandpit while learning the letter "d." These experiences helped develop their creativity, communication, and problem-solving—skills that supported learning in every area.

### What are you most proud of when you reflect on the students' journey so far?

We are most proud of how confidently the students have settled into school life. They showed curiosity, resilience, and kindness while making wonderful progress in reading, writing, and maths. It was such a joy to see their confidence and enthusiasm grow each day!

### Prep Teachers

Nikeisha Plumridge | Alison Lamb | Fiona Boudjema



# Academic Success

## Mr Andrew Landroth

Deputy Principal – Curriculum and Innovation

**It gives me great pride to highlight the outstanding achievements of our Year 12 graduates in the 2024 ATAR results. Their dedication and perseverance have led to some truly remarkable outcomes, reflecting not only their individual efforts but also the unwavering support of our exceptional teaching staff.**

One statistic that stands out is that 81% of last year's graduates received an offer of acceptance for their first or second university preference. Given that we encourage students to aim high and pursue their dream courses, this is an exceptional result and a testament to their ambition and hard work.

This year, Psychology, Engineering, and the Business/Commerce/Economics fields emerged as the most popular areas of study, with nearly half of our graduates' pursuing careers in these fields. Additionally, we celebrate our aspiring nurses, architects, and teachers who are stepping forward to shape the future.

Beyond tertiary pathways, our students achieved impressive academic results, with over 99% of all subjects studied earning grades in the A to C range. Out of 416 individual subjects, only four results were below a C grade—a truly remarkable achievement. Furthermore, five students achieved an A overall in all six of their subjects, six students scored 100% on one or more external exams, one student attained 100% in an entire subject, and another accomplished this in two subjects.

Looking beyond Year 12, our academic success is evident throughout the College. From Year 4 to Year 12, 83% of students achieved a GPA of B- or higher for the entire year. Most notably, the number of students classified as academically at-risk (with three or more subjects at C- or lower) has decreased significantly—from 6.6% in 2022 to just 2.5% in 2024. This steady improvement reflects our commitment to ensuring that every student achieves success in their academic journey.

Congratulations to all students and staff on what has been an exceptional outcome in 2024.

## Academic Growth 2020 – 2024

**At St John's, academic excellence is at the heart of our learning journey. The Australian Curriculum sets clear achievement standards for each year level, with a 'C' grade representing the expected level of performance.**

However, St John's students have consistently exceeded these benchmarks, demonstrating an average 13.2% increase in achievement across the College from 2020 to 2024 – well above the expected rate of development.

This outstanding growth reflects the College's commitment to high-quality teaching, tailored academic support, and an culture that encourages every student to reach their full potential.

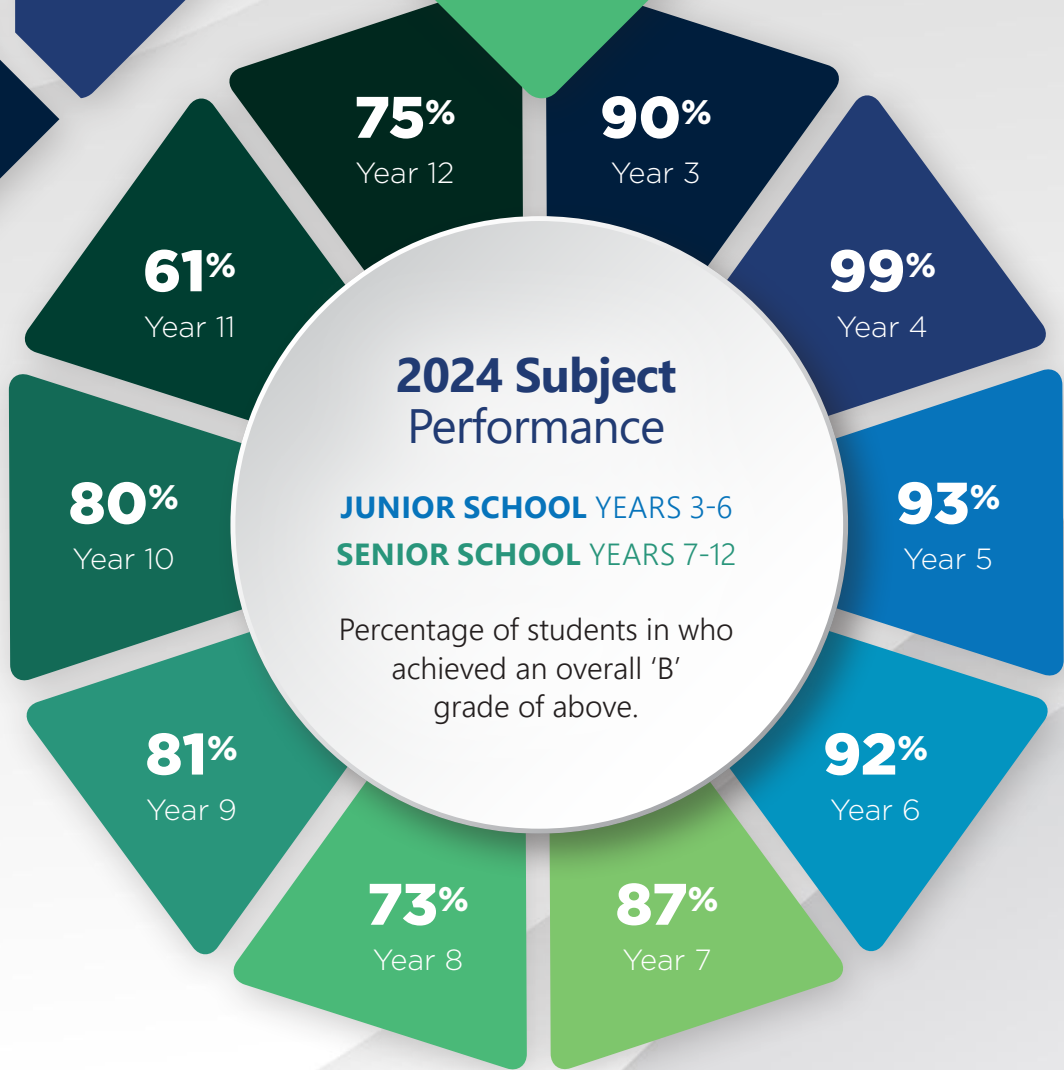
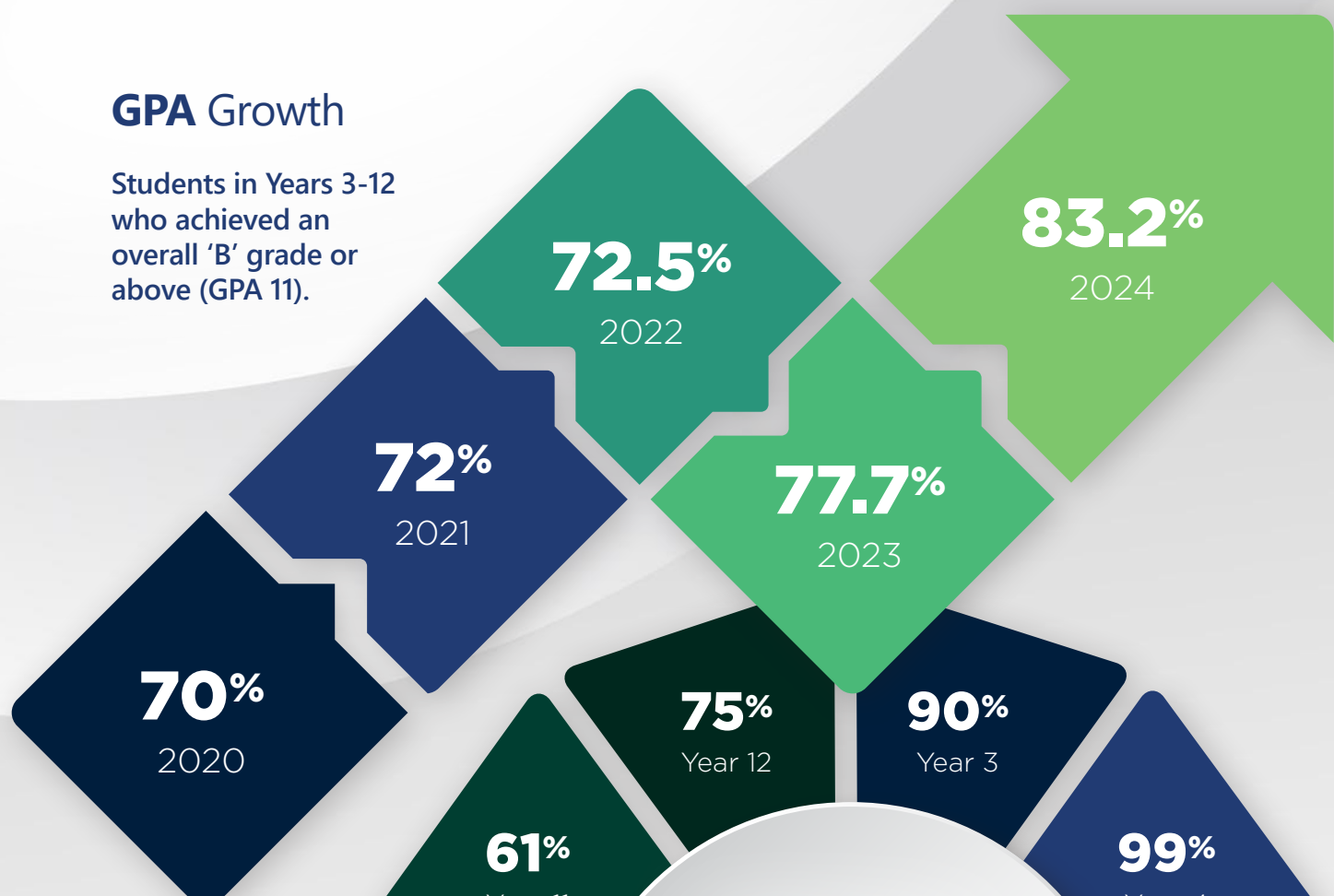


**13.2%**  
GROWTH



# GPA Growth

Students in Years 3-12 who achieved an overall 'B' grade or above (GPA 11).







## NEPAL Expedition

In December 2024, a group of 25 students and 4 teachers embarked on an unforgettable journey to Nepal – a two-week expedition combining breathtaking Himalayan treks, cultural immersion, and meaningful community service.

This was not your average school trip - it was an opportunity for all to step beyond comfort zones, build resilience, and forge global connections in one of the world's most majestic and spiritual landscapes.

The adventure began as we touched down in Kathmandu, meeting our friendly World Expeditions guide, Padam. To get the team immersed immediately into the culture of Nepal, we visited sacred sites like Boudhanath Stupa and Pashupatinath Temple, introducing the team to Nepal's rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

The next morning, the trek through the Annapurna Ranges began.

After a short flight into Pokhara, we started our trek to Landruk, surrounded by terraced fields, vibrant rhododendron forests and beautiful lodge accommodation. The trek continued through to Ghandruk and Tadapani, each day bringing new challenges, awe-inspiring views, and cultural encounters.

As the trail climbed higher, the snow-capped peaks of Annapurna South and Machapuchare (Fishtail) came into sight. One of the highlights from the trek was the climb to Poon Hill in the peaceful afternoon, enjoying sweeping uncrowded views.

From here, our trek took us to our highest point - 3313m – Mohare Danda.



After our intense trek, we began our service project in a small school in Lespar. Here, our team worked alongside locals to refurbish and paint Shree Salija Madhyamik School. The fundraising from the team contributed to brand new roofing and window frames, offering protection for the students from the weather.

*The time in the school, was a powerful reminder that service and solidarity transcend language.*

Highlights included learning some of the local language, playing games with the school children, and who could forget, the Nepal V Australia Basketball and Volleyball games.

After our time in the school, we began the descent through Ghibrang, through forest trails, and panoramic ridge-line views, before driving back to Pokhara for a much-needed rest, lakeside stroll, and the chance to explore vibrant Tibetan markets.

From the heights of the Himalayas on to the subtropical jungles of Chitwan National Park, we then spent time bird-watching, travelling on jeep safaris, and enjoying lectures on Nepal's unique wildlife. The contrast between mountain and jungle deepened students' appreciation for Nepal's environmental richness.

Returning to Kathmandu for the final night, the group enjoyed a farewell dinner in Thamel, the city's bustling tourist hub. With suitcases full of souvenirs and hearts full of stories and memories, students shared their reflections - the challenges they overcame, the new friendships they made, and the perspectives that had shifted.

Exhausted but transformed, the team were greeted with open arms by family and friends with our touchdown back into Brisbane, forever changed by two weeks of high peaks, hard work, and Himalayan hospitality.

This Nepal expedition was more than a school trip. It was a formative experience that blended adventure, culture, service, and self-discovery.





# The Power of Belonging: Why Feeling Connected at School Matters More Than You Think

By Dr Justin Coulson  
Author at [happyfamilies.com.au](http://happyfamilies.com.au)

**Feeling connected at school isn't just about friendships—it's about a deep sense of school belonging that shapes a child's confidence, motivation, and overall well-being. When kids feel seen, valued, and included, they're more likely to thrive both academically and socially. But what happens when that sense of belonging is missing?**

## The Hidden Power of School Belonging

We all want our children to be happy and successful at school. We focus on their grades, their friendships, and their extracurricular activities. But one of the most important factors for their well-being, both now and in the future, is actually their sense of belonging.

## What the Research Says About School Connection

A fascinating new study from Monash University has shed light on the profound impact of school belonging on long-term mental health. Associate Professor Kelly-Ann Allen, the lead researcher, followed over 1500 individuals from adolescence to adulthood, examining the link between their feelings of connection at school and their mental well-being later in life.

## How Belonging Affects Mental Health Long-Term

The findings were striking: those who felt a strong sense of belonging in high school experienced fewer mental health challenges in their twenties. This connection was evident even after accounting for other factors like academic achievement and family relationships. In other words, feeling like you fit in, that you matter, that you're part of the school community, has a lasting positive impact on your mental health.

## Why does belonging matter so much?

Think back to your own school days. Remember that feeling of walking into a classroom where you felt welcomed, valued, and supported? Or perhaps you recall the opposite—the sinking feeling of being an outsider, of not quite fitting in. These experiences shape not only our immediate well-being but also our long-term sense of self and our ability to navigate social and emotional challenges.

## The Link Between School Connection and Success

Beyond mental health, a strong sense of belonging also contributes to academic achievement and personal growth.

### Academic and Social Benefits of Feeling Connected

**Students who feel connected to their school community are more likely to:**

- **Engage in learning:** They're more motivated, attentive, and eager to participate in classroom activities.
- **Develop positive relationships:** They feel more comfortable interacting with peers and teachers, fostering friendships and a sense of community.
- **Cope with stress:** They have a support system to turn to when faced with academic or social challenges.
- **Build resilience:** They develop a stronger sense of self-worth and the confidence to navigate life's ups and downs.

## The Role of Teachers and Parents in Fostering Belonging

Educators and parents play a crucial role in helping children feel valued and included at school. Simple actions—such as acknowledging students by name, encouraging participation, and creating inclusive environments—can make a significant difference.

## How to Strengthen Your Child's Sense of Belonging

If you want to ensure your child thrives in school, fostering a sense of belonging is key.





# Practical Strategies for Parents and Educators

## 1. Partner with the school:

- **Open communication:** Stay connected with your child's teachers. Attend school events and parent-teacher meetings. Be an active participant in your child's school life.
- **Advocate for your child:** If your child is struggling socially or emotionally, don't hesitate to reach out to the school counsellor or other support staff.
- **Support school initiatives:** Get involved in school activities and events that promote a sense of community and belonging.

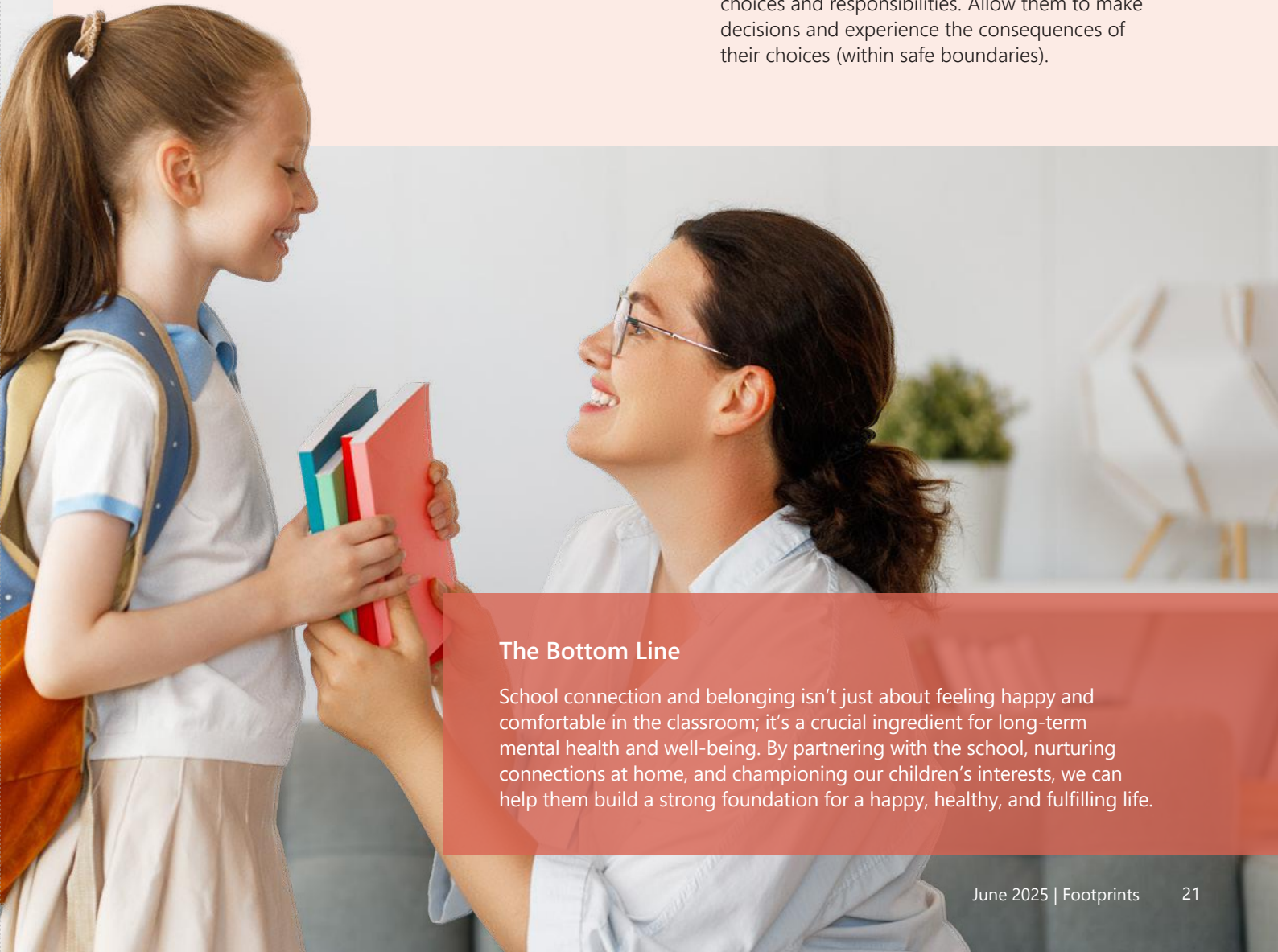
## 2. Nurture connections at home:

- **Family time:** Prioritise quality time together as a family. Share meals, play games, and engage in activities that foster connection and communication.

- **Emotional support:** Create a safe and open environment where your child feels comfortable expressing their feelings and concerns. Validate their emotions and offer unconditional love and support.
- **Social skills:** Help your child develop strong social skills. Encourage them to engage in activities that foster friendships and positive peer relationships.

## 3. Champion their interests:

- **Encourage exploration:** Support your child in exploring their interests and passions. This could involve extracurricular activities, hobbies, or simply pursuing their own unique curiosities.
- **Celebrate their strengths:** Focus on their positive qualities and accomplishments. Help them develop a strong sense of self-worth and confidence.
- **Foster autonomy:** Give them age-appropriate choices and responsibilities. Allow them to make decisions and experience the consequences of their choices (within safe boundaries).



### The Bottom Line

School connection and belonging isn't just about feeling happy and comfortable in the classroom; it's a crucial ingredient for long-term mental health and well-being. By partnering with the school, nurturing connections at home, and championing our children's interests, we can help them build a strong foundation for a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life.



# Empowering Futures: QATSIF Scholarship Supports First Nations Students in Achieving QCE and Cultural Pride

**This year, three Year 11 St John's students – Peter Fields, Isaac McAlpine-King, and Laqueesha Laurie have been awarded Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation (QATSIF) Scholarships to support their education in Years 11 and 12.**

This educational scholarship, valued at \$2,000 over Years 11 and 12, is designed to support eligible First Nations students in their senior secondary studies. Funded by interest accrued from unallocated stolen wages reparation funds held in trust by the Public Trustee since 2008, the scholarship helps ease the financial burden of pursuing a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). It contributes to expenses such as TAFE/VET programs, university and career-related visits or placements, as well as subject-related excursions and camps.

Beyond financial assistance, the QATSIF scholarship plays a powerful role in fostering cultural pride and a strong sense of identity among recipients. For many students, it not only makes completing their QCE possible but also reinforces community connection, confidence, and resilience throughout their educational journey.

## Meet the students

**Laqueesha Laurie** is from Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl heritage and is passionate about becoming an Aboriginal Social Worker to support Aboriginal families and communities.

**Peter Fields** is from Gumbaynggirr heritage, and his goal is to run his own business one day and provide opportunities by employing Aboriginal apprentices. He also strives to play professional rugby league for the Bulldogs.

**Isaac McAlpine-King** is from Bundjalung and Gamilaroi heritage and in Year 10 completed a TAFE course in Barbery, with the goal of one day owning his own barber shop. He too has a passion for playing professional rugby league.







## Emerge Concert Showcases Student Talent and Community Spirit

Earlier in Term Two, St John's students delivered an outstanding evening of music and entertainment at our annual *Emerge Concert*. The event was a vibrant celebration of student talent and dedication, featuring performances from our String, Jazz, and Wind Ensembles, Bellissimo and Corelli Strings, Capriccio Choir, Year 6 Concert Band, and Drum Line.

A highlight of the night was the enthusiastic involvement of parents, who joined in on stage to add a fun and memorable twist to the program. The concert not only showcased the musical growth of our students but also reflected the strong sense of community that defines St John's.







Olivia Wright far right

# RACING TOWARD BRISBANE 2032

OLIVIA WRIGHT NAMED IN AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR WORLD TEAM

**St John's is proud to celebrate Year 12 student Olivia Wright, who has been selected to represent the ARA Australian Cycling Team at the 2025 UCI Junior Track World Championships in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, from August 20–24. Olivia is one of just fifteen under-19 athletes named in Australia's largest junior squad for the event since 2013.**

Her journey began through the Queensland Academy of Sport's Youfor2032 program—a talent identification initiative supporting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane. After progressing through rigorous testing and development stages, Olivia found her passion in the sprint discipline of track cycling.

Remarkably, in just two years on the bike, Olivia has already become one of the country's top junior cyclists. She is a six-time Queensland State medallist, a three-time National medallist, and an Oceanian medallist. Most notably, she is a joint Australian National Championship and Australian Allcomers record holder in the team sprint—an extraordinary achievement in such a short time.

Cycling offers more than competition—it promotes resilience, discipline, and physical and mental wellbeing. Olivia's rise reflects not only her personal dedication but also the strength of pathways like Youfor2032 that are fuelling Australia's future sporting success.

With her sights now firmly set on the world stage, Olivia is well and truly on track for Brisbane 2032!



**OLIVIA**





# Global Learning in Action

Our 2025 Global Exchange with Millfield School in Somerset, UK, proved to be a deeply enriching experience for our two Year 10 exchange students.



Immersed in a vibrant academic environment, both day and boarding, our students demonstrated resilience, curiosity, and openness — adapting quickly to a different school structure and culture. They joined in classes aligned with the GCSE curriculum, explored co-curricular activities, and built meaningful friendships that extended beyond the classroom.

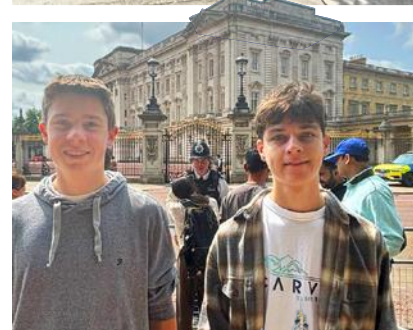
Earlier in the year, Max Rutherford-Currie and Amelia Moss welcomed their UK counterparts, Joshua Seager and Tilly Counsell, into their homes in Brisbane. As hosts, they shared the warmth of Australian hospitality, showing their visitors iconic Queensland locations and involving them in life at St John's. Their families went above and beyond to create a memorable and supportive exchange experience, laying a strong foundation for the reciprocal visit.

When it was Max and Amelia's turn to travel to the UK, they relished the opportunity to live and study at Millfield. Both students threw themselves into every aspect of school life — from settling into their host family homes on a farm, to participating in British classroom debates, and joining

weekend excursions to historic cities and the English countryside. Their adaptability and enthusiasm were noted by staff at Millfield, who praised their positive attitude and engagement. This visit reaffirmed the value of our partnership with Millfield; the opportunities for personal growth, cultural understanding, and academic enrichment are immense.

Accompanying teacher, Mrs Alysia Thomas, Global and Service Learning and International Coordinator, had the opportunity to visit several different schools across the country. This valuable experience allowed Mrs Thomas to explore new possibilities and develop further school partnerships, laying the groundwork for future exchanges throughout the UK.

Early in Term Three, families can look forward to more information about the 2026 Global Exchange Program, including an information night where interested students and parents can learn all about the exciting opportunities ahead.







# St John's Giving Day 2025 Smashes Fundraising Goal

St John's Anglican College's inaugural Giving Day 2025 was a resounding success, uniting the entire College community in support of the future St John's Aquatic Centre Precinct. Thanks to the generosity and spirit of students, staff, families, Old Collegians, and friends, the College raised an incredible \$57,500 in just one day.



Funds raised from Giving Day will contribute to Stage 2 of the Aquatic Precinct project, which will deliver an Olympic-sized, 10-lane outdoor swimming pool, complete with a grandstand and modern amenities. This landmark facility will be the first of its kind in the local area and will complete the College's Sporting Centre of Excellence, offering enhanced opportunities for student sport, competition, and community engagement.

The campaign was driven by a vibrant house-themed free dress day and coin drive, alongside an energised phone drive led by students, Old Collegians, and community volunteers. The result was a groundswell of generosity, school pride, and joyful connection.

The College extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated, volunteered, or answered the call. Your contribution will help create a lasting legacy and a world-class facility for generations of St John's students.

Giving Day 2025 showed what our community can achieve when we come together, and the ripple effect is just beginning.





# Parent and Friends Association

Another first for St John's was the inaugural Bush Dance supported by the Parents and Friends Association, Friends of the Arts subcommittee.

Held on The Deck at the Secondary Campus the event was a resounding success, bringing the College community together for an evening of fun, music and dancing. Families across the College joined in on the lively line dances, accompanied by performances from both our student and staff bands. The hay bales added the perfect rustic touch, creating an authentic country atmosphere.

The Friends of the Arts parent volunteers ran the BBQ keeping all guests well-fed and hydrated throughout the night.

The Bush Dance will now be a regular event in the St John's College calendar.





## Old Collegian Derek Yang

CLASS OF 2019

### Graduate's Film Lands on Amazon Prime Following Festival Circuit Success

'Who do you want to be when you grow up?', a question that I remain insecure about since it was posed to me in Year 10.

Under the advice of a few teachers at St John's, I settled into a Bachelors of Secondary Education at UQ majoring in Maths. It was an obvious choice: I was relatively good at the subject, and it is statistically the most employable teaching area. Undoubtedly, I fell in love with it the more I grew into the profession.

What I never grew out of, is cinema – and what it means to experience an unfolding narrative spectacle. While the two short films and two feature films I have directed have vastly improved in quality across each entry, I never changed my approach in chasing that same impulse. Some of my fellow classmates may recall that I used to draw comic strips. It was, for me, interchangeable with film storyboards that captured self-contained stories. Part of my after-routine routine involves researching a new director's filmography and renting them for the evening.

Year 11 was when I was determined to incorporate filmmaking in my life in some capacity. A few pivotal discoveries that impacted me were Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, David Fincher's *Fight Club*, Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and every Christopher Nolan film (just to name a few).

*Violet*, which recently premiered on 4 June to over 150 audience members at Palace Barracks Cinemas, is arguably my most accomplished work to date in terms of scale and technicality. As my second feature film outing, I was able to refine everything across visuals and performances in ways I never managed before. This ensemble character study chronicles a struggling playwright who recasts his lead actress in a make-or-break stage adaptation. As he grows closer to the newly aspiring actress, he must overcome his checkered past with her predecessor or risk losing his new flame.

What made the experience emotionally satisfying was its timing, released not long after my previous musical romantic-comedy *The Wing Girl* debuted on Amazon Prime, as well as my short *I Have a Boyfriend* still being shown across festivals in Melbourne, Seoul, New York, Rome, and Japan etc. *Violet* signified a culmination of a core group of people whom, during peak COVID-19 periods in 2021, trusted a first-time director without any film school credentials. The team has expanded ever since, which stemmed from their willingness to embrace my passions – all the love and achingly personal anguishes that comes with storytelling.

Shot across 12 different locations in Brisbane, *Violet* required me to stretch beyond what I have done before. Some of this includes shaping outdoor lighting in locations which restricts complicated equipment setups, eliciting rapid-fire reaction shots among a large group of extras, or communicating to cast and crew with ways that sustains them creatively until filming wraps at 2am. None of this could have been achieved without a collective goodwill. They could easily have said they needed to move on.

While *Violet* is currently the early stages of its festival run and distribution talks, I have yet to plan too far ahead into my career. That's why I wouldn't have an answer when people ask me whether I enjoy writing, directing, or editing the most, because I value each part of the process. Hence, I adopt a similar approach when tackling the challenges ahead: How can I source enough funding to tackle more ambitious genres? Is it possible to still maintain the same creative energy to actively write and research new material, to have something fresh to say, especially after a long day of managing children? While the possibilities are endless from here, I'll happily stick to the process for now.



Graduate's Film Reaches Amazon  
Prime After Festival Circuit Success  
- School of Communication and  
Arts - University of Queensland





## Old Collegian Egan Sun-Bin

CLASS OF 2017

### Making His Mark as a Rising Director in the Performing Arts

I've always had a knack for engaging people and performing. Back in school, I studied drama and music—not because I was especially talented, but because I loved creating stories that made people laugh.

I still remember delivering an entire speech in painfully awkward slam poetry about the science club and getting students to join. It was undeniably cringe—but it made people smile, and that meant something to me.

That experience stuck with me. I realised I wanted to take that passion and turn it into a career.

After graduating, I was lucky enough to be accepted in Queensland University of Technology (QUT) elite Acting Program. This program was highly exclusive at the time as I was accepted into a group of 14 from 800 applicants.

While studying, I was able to train as an actor work with extraordinary teachers and make industry connections such as working with companies like AFTRS, Screen Queensland, Debase, Queensland Theatre and Australian Theatre for Young People.

In my final year, I was given the opportunity to make my mainstage Acting Debut at Queensland Theatre in Our Town in 2021 and this really ignited my passion to be part of this industry.

However, living through a global pandemic meant I also had to watch my industry come to a standstill. The shutdown took a heavy emotional toll—not just on me, but on my friends as well. It's no surprise that the Arts and Entertainment industry was one of the hardest hits and watching the people I care about lose hope in pursuing their dream careers was heartbreaking.

So, I started to shift from acting to theatre making to give my friends a chance at a career. With the help of a QUT Scholarship, I was able to kick start The Reaction Theory, where I worked as a producer, writer, and director, creating works that addressed social injustices and offered audiences an emotional space to reflect, heal, and move forward.

After a series of successful productions, we were invited to take part in the Independents program at Queensland Theatre. There, I co-directed and co-produced *Scenes From a Yellow Peril*—a poetic mixtape of insights exploring the Asian experience in Australia and New Zealand.

Once it premiered, the show became a sold-out success and went on to receive two Queensland Matilda Awards in 2024: Best Independent Production and Best Ensemble. I was also honoured with a nomination for Best Direction.

*Now, at just 24, I'm returning to present the show at QPAC—marking my mainstage debut as a director.*

That's my story so far, but it's far from the end. I'm committed to continue creating meaningful change by addressing injustice—not only through my artistic work, but also across the wider industry. As an Industrial Organiser for the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, I advocate for the rights of arts workers across Australia so that everyone has the chance to make living.



# Charity in the Anglican Tradition: More Than Giving—A Commitment to Justice, Dignity, and Empowerment

Reverend Juliana Bate | College Chaplain



**As an Anglican school community, we are called to reflect the teachings of Jesus Christ. In our pursuit of justice, we recognise the inherent dignity of every individual, acknowledging that each person is made in the image of God. Our interactions with others are driven by compassion and love.**

In Galatians 5:13, we are urged to use our freedoms and advantages to support and care for those with less. It is important to remember that whenever we engage in charitable work, our actions should stem from love and quiet humility, rather than pride or self-promotion.

Historically, some models of charity have adopted a top-down approach, where aid is given without involving recipients in the decision making process. While well intentioned, such methods can inadvertently perpetuate dependency.

In the Anglican tradition, charity transcends mere giving; it embodies justice, dignity, and the empowerment of communities.

On my recent visit to the Philippines with the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM), I witnessed this approach firsthand. ABM collaborates with the Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP) to highlight and promote the unique strengths and insights of the communities they serve. This partnership recognises that communities are best positioned to identify their needs and devise solutions.

This philosophy is exemplified through the “Receivers to Givers” (R2G) program, a transformative initiative that fosters self-determination and sustainable development in community-led projects.

The R2G model, implemented by ECP’s development arm, E-CARE, operates on the principle that communities are not passive recipients but active agents of change. Initially, communities receive support to establish sustainable

livelihoods. As they achieve stability, they “grant back” the assistance received, enabling other communities to embark on similar journeys. This cycle transforms beneficiaries into benefactors, fostering a culture of mutual support and shared responsibility.

This approach resonates deeply with Christian teachings. In Acts 20:35, Paul reminds us of Jesus’ words: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” The R2G model embodies this blessing, as communities experience the joy and fulfillment of giving. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 8:13-14 speaks to the principle of equality in giving: “Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.” The R2G program promotes this balance, ensuring that aid is not a one-way transaction but a reciprocal relationship that uplifts all involved.

The R2G initiative has yielded remarkable outcomes. Communities have developed strategic plans, engaged in capacity-building, and established enterprises that not only sustain their livelihoods but also contribute to the well-being of others.

Programs like R2G teach us that charity involves partnership, respect, and belief in the inherent capabilities of every community. It serves as a reminder that we are not superior, but rather in a position of privilege where we can promote and work towards equality, to uplift, empower, and transform the lives of others.

The Christian calling is to love our neighbours as ourselves, recognising that true compassion involves listening, empowering, and walking alongside others in their journey towards flourishing. As we consider our own contributions, be it through fundraising, volunteering, or advocacy, we should keep in mind the promotion of dignity, community leadership, and encouragement of self-determination.

When we strive to empower others in our acts of service, charity evolves from a one-way transfer of resources to a partnership rooted in respect and mutual learning.



# SAVE<sup>THE</sup>DATE

FOR THESE SEMESTER TWO 2025 COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Foundation Day Celebrations**

Thursday 31 July

**Junior School Fancy Dress Ball**

Friday 1 August

**Night at the Movies PACE Showcase**

Friday 15 August

**Coffee & Connect**

**Father's Day Breakfast**

Thursday 4 September

**Dance Night**

Friday 5 September

**Middle and Senior School Open Morning**

Wednesday 10 September

**PACE Awards Jazz Night**

Friday 17 October

**Sports Awards Evening**

Monday 20 October

**College Creations**

Friday 24 October

**Kindy Graduation and Christmas Concert**

Wednesday 12 November

**Year of Celebration Prep to Year 2**

Tuesday 18 November

**Year 12 Graduation Ceremony**

Friday 21 November

**Year of Celebration Years 3 to 11**

Thursday 27 November





# 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](http://stjohnsanglicancollege.com.au)

*Connect with Us*

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