

ISSUE 16 - Semester 1, 2025

# ourplace

WYCLIFFE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

**DUKE OF ED  
AT WYCLIFFE**



**STUDENT  
ARTWORKS**  
FROM SENIOR SCHOOL  
AND HOPE TOPAZ

**DIGITAL  
HAPPINESS**  
REFLECTIONS FOR  
PARENTS



Sharing the stories of our school community

## 2025 Term Dates

### TERM 3, 2025

**Monday 21st July**

First Day of Term 3, Preschool

**Monday 28th July**

First Day of Term 3, K-12

**Friday 26th September**

Last Day of Term 3

### TERM 4, 2025

**Monday 13th October**

First Day of Term 4, Preschool

**Tuesday 14th October**

First Day of Term 4, K-12

**Thursday 11th December**

Last Day of Term 4, K-12

**Friday 19th December**

Last Day of Term 4, Preschool

## 2026 Term Dates

### TERM 1, 2026

**Monday 2nd February**

First Day of Term 1, Preschool

**Tuesday 3rd February**

First Day of Term 1, Years 1-12

**Wednesday 4th February**

First Day of Term 1, Kindy

**Thursday 2nd April**

Last Day of Term 1

### TERM 2, 2026

**Monday 20th April**

First Day of Term 2, Preschool

**Tuesday 21st April**

First Day of Term 2, K-12

**Friday 3rd July**

Last Day of Term 2

# CONTENTS

- 3 From the Principal
- 4 New Faces
- 5 Five Minutes With Ben Wright
- 6 Painting and Planes
- 7 Preschool Highlights
- 8 Grace in the Gaps
- 9 Hope School Highlights
- 10 Hope Topaz Art Projects
- 12 Digital Happiness: Reflections for Parents
- 14 Junior School Highlights
- 16 Our Kindy Buddies
- 18 "The Best Camp Ever"
- 20 Junior School Highlights
- 22 More Precious Than Gold
- 24 Sport Highlights
- 26 Ready to Ride
- 27 Activity Page
- 28 Senior School Highlights
- 32 Going for Gold
- 34 Senior School Artworks
- 37 ARTEXPRESS 2025
- 38 Camps and Excursions
- 40 Everybody's Watching
- 42 Mother's Day and Easter Hunt



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Cover: Art by Vera in Year 2  
This page: Art by Joel in Year 8



This edition of Our Place includes QR codes like this, which you can scan with your phone to watch related videos.



**Dave Johnston**  
Principal

## Hope for the future

Dear Wycliffe Families,

Whenever we take the opportunity to reflect on our learning community, we are consistently reminded of God's abundant provision and faithful presence in our midst. Writing an introduction for each new issue of *Our Place* is an opportunity to look back at the six months prior and consider the ways in which our good King has shown his faithfulness to us.

One of our key focus areas across both Wycliffe Christian School and Wycliffe Hope School is to diligently pursue rigorous learning, completely infused with the Gospel, for all students. Learning, and therefore our learning community, is formational: it helps to mold the person each student will one day become. The narratives that permeate the classroom cannot be separated from the topic being taught. Therefore, it is our hope that, in addition to acquiring the skills and knowledge to effectively step out into the wider world, each student will authentically encounter Christ during their time at Wycliffe.

In the pages ahead, you'll find many highlights from the gospel-infused learning that has taken place in the first six months of 2025. Connections between grades foster bonds of mentorship, as you'll see in our oldest Hope School students creating "pocket pets" for the youngest, or in Year 6 connecting with their Kindergarten buddies. Students use their creative talents to interpret God's creation, as seen in art projects in the Senior School, or the Indigenous painting studies by Hope Topaz. And throughout the year, we have enjoyed opportunities to gather as a community in celebration, whether for our annual Mother's Day breakfast, or in the parent-led Easter Hunt.

In collecting these highlights from the classroom and beyond, we don't just want to look backwards at the past. Each of these moments presents rich possibilities for the future. There is lots to look forward to with God working in our midst!

Yours in Christ,  
**Dave Johnston**



# New faces

Introducing the new staff members who have joined us at Wycliffe in 2025.



**Eadie Bennett**  
Senior School Learning  
Enhancement Aide



**Scott Barnham**  
Senior School Teacher



**Libby Frost**  
Preschool Childcare  
Worker



**Katherine Konemann**  
Junior School Learning  
Enhancement Aide



**Stacey Lowcock**  
Junior School Teacher



**Joshua McPhee**  
Senior School Teacher



**Sophie Pocknall**  
Junior School Trainee  
Teacher



**Matthew Snelson**  
Senior School Teacher



**Annelise Van den Elzen**  
Hope School Teacher



**Ben Wright**  
School Nurse



## Five minutes with Ben Wright

*Ben recently joined the Wycliffe team as our School Nurse, and can usually be found in the office taking care of unwell students and looking after the health of our community. We caught up with Ben to learn a little more about him and what drew him to this role.*

### **Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your family?**

I am wonderfully blessed to be married to Kayleen who works as a Teacher's Aide in Hope School. We have four children: Naomi, Evie, Josiah and Gracie, who are all at different stages of their journey at Wycliffe. We live locally in the lower Blue Mountains and I've had the privilege of working as a Registered Nurse over the last 19 years.

### **What do you enjoy doing for fun?**

I am an avid amateur beekeeper and enjoy most things outdoorsy - fishing, camping, bushwalking, and anything that helps me to connect with God's creation. I've also found great satisfaction in assisting with medical missions and was part of a team that facilitated the first neurosurgical services provided in the Solomon Islands.

### **How long have you been part of the Wycliffe community?**

In 2018, our son commenced in the Preschool after we moved into the area and we were immediately drawn to engage with what we saw as a vibrant Christian community.

### **What drew you to this role in the school?**

There's probably a dozen reasons why I applied for this position

but chief among them was the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the school. Knowing that Wycliffe plays such an important role in nurturing the faith and education of children and young people, I felt that by fulfilling the role of School Nurse I could support that. The reputation of Wycliffe's workplace culture for valuing their staff was also a factor. And I'd be lying if I didn't say that being able to work normal hours wasn't part of the attraction after spending nearly two decades doing shift work!

### **What's your favourite part of working at Wycliffe?**

Caring for our staff and students. It's such a privilege to be trusted to care for someone when they are unwell or injured and to be able to provide the health support that they need. I also thoroughly enjoy the joyful and exuberant way our Junior students approach life and being able to interact with them using humour brings great joy to me too.

### **What is your favourite Bible verse?**

1 Peter 2:2-3: "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." This verse had a profound impact on me as a young man after I had experienced God's grace in a powerful way. This verse provided an anchor in that it urged me to keep going back to find spiritual nourishment and guidance from God's word. It also alluded to the fact that the nourishing Word of God is the key to growing as a person which is something that I still need!



## Painting and planes

Easel painting has been a favourite activity at Preschool this term. We have painted our mothers, in celebration of Mother's Day; gardens and rainbows; and even some replications of paintings by famous artists.

The artwork for the National Reconciliation Week 2025 "Bridging Now to Next" campaign is a leaf shape, created by Bree Buttenshaw. It celebrates the resilience of Australia's native flora. It is decorated with images of the lemon myrtle, banksia, gum leaves, desert lime and kangaroo paw. These plants are known for their ability to endure harsh conditions, regenerate after fire and flourish through adversity. These plants represent the people and their ability to grow through hardship and look forward to the future.

We made our own interpretation of the artwork with our own large leaf shape. All of the Monday-Tuesday class were

involved to capture each child's creativity and ideas. We used gum leaves, dried kangaroo paw and lemon myrtle as well as images of banksia to signify our local flora and its resilience. Coloured strips of paper were added to represent the colours and patterns in the original artwork and to represent "Bridging Now to Next." What a beautiful and meaningful artwork we made together!

Another fun activity was dramatising with role play at a pretend airport. A couple of the children had recently caught planes overseas. We used their experiences to promote a play experience which encouraged storytelling and social connection. We used a cardboard plane cut out, and made real plane tickets, a security checking machine and a metal detector.

**Julia Findley**  
Preschool Teacher/Childcare Worker

## EVERYONE'S DIFFERENT

RIGHT: At the forensic science visit, Preschool students learnt all about fingerprints. They learnt that God made everyone's fingerprints different, and that every person is unique as we are all creatively and wonderfully made.



## PLAYING AND CREATING

LEFT AND BELOW: Some other special moments at Preschool this year have included making Easter crafts, learning about road safety, doing puzzles, and playing pretend with friends.





**Sarah Allison**  
Head of Hope School

## Grace in the gaps

This semester, God has been gently teaching me something I didn't realise I needed: a deeper kind of grace. Not just grace for the obvious challenges, but the kind that meets us in moments of misunderstanding, miscommunication and unmet expectations. It's the grace needed when plans shift unexpectedly, when conversations don't land as intended, and when relationships feel stretched thin. It's quiet, often unseen - but powerful in the way it softens our reactions and steadies our hearts.

Working in a school means living in the constant flow of relationships - learning beside one another, day in and day out. We see students at their best: overcoming challenges, caring for one another, showing resilience and creativity. And we also see the messy moments: tears over a broken routine, tense words spoken too quickly, work left incomplete, or a refusal to try when trying feels too hard. It's in these moments that I've felt God whisper: *grace belongs here too*.

Grace doesn't mean we ignore struggle or lower expectations. But it changes how we respond. It reminds us that a student's

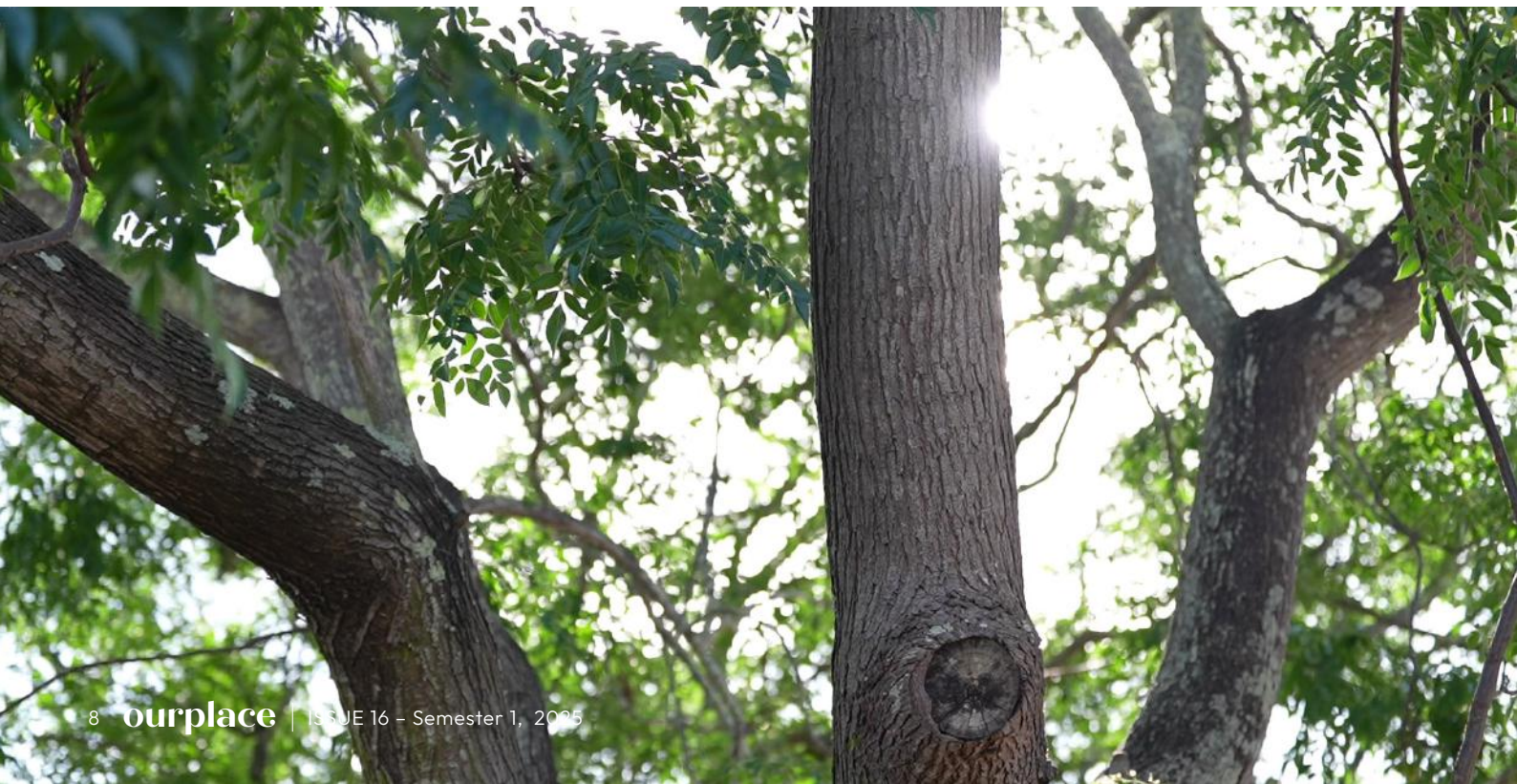
behaviour is not the whole story - that behind every moment of dysregulation or shutdown is a human being in need of connection, safety, and hope.

The gospel invites us to see as Christ sees: with compassion. Jesus didn't wait for people to sort themselves out before drawing near. He met them in their need and loved them in the middle of the mess. If we take that seriously, it reshapes how we show up for our students, especially in the hard moments.

I've been learning to pause more often. To notice the courage it takes for a student to try again. To celebrate small wins. To remember that learning and growth doesn't always look neat, but grace makes space for it anyway.

My hope is that our school continues to be a place where grace isn't just something we speak about, but something we live.

Yours in Christ,  
**Sarah Allison**





## ART CLUB

LEFT AND ABOVE: This lunchtime group provides our students with purposeful outlets and meaningful opportunities to engage creatively. One of the most inspiring aspects is how it fosters friendships between WCS and Hope students of all ages.

## POCKET PETS

RIGHT AND BELOW: Hope Ruby students created "pocket pets" for the Amber class, based on their own designs. The felt toys that were produced were incredible and Ruby students were very proud of their creations.



Learning Snapshot  
Pocket Pets

In our Term 1 art classes, Hope Topaz studied the work of Indigenous artist Bronwyn Bancroft. Students created their own paintings in her style, and then wrote reflections on their process. While investigating Indigenous artists, students also explored different mediums and styles of art. Some examples of the finished artworks and reflections can be found on these pages.

**Annelise Van den Elzen**  
Hope Topaz Teacher

First we looked at Bronwyn Bancroft's artworks. They were beautiful and had lots of colours. Next we grabbed our materials like watercolours and paper. I started painting the sun yellow and filled in the landscape. After this I added dots to our artwork. Lastly we let it dry and hung it on the wall.

**By Ryker**



We first looked at artworks by Bronwyn Bancroft. Then we painted the background using warm colours. Next we put them up to dry for the next week. After the paintings dried we drew dots onto the painting. My painting is now on the wall with a black background. The painting is made from warm colours such as red, orange, light pink and yellow.

**By Tom**

We added water colours and patterns to the picture. Then we painted the trunks black. Next, we painted the sun yellow. I named my artwork "The Sunset Storm". My artwork right now is on the wall in our classroom.

**By Temzin**





Lexi



Jac



Jac



Isla



Jia



Tom



Lexi

# Digital happiness: Reflections for parents

Chris Parker explores the challenges for young people posed by digital technology.

There is no doubt that digital technologies are delivering on their promise of greater efficiency, instantaneous communication, and wider networks of connection. It is right and proper for us to take a grateful attitude towards them as a blessing from God. However, it is increasingly crucial that we practise discernment as parents. We must continually ask big questions exploring how the effects of the fall (human disobedience towards God) are being expressed—not just through technology but through all cultural stories that are vying for our children’s hearts and

minds. Digital technology tells a captivating story of instant, and continuous, happiness for as long as we are connected. How much truth—and there may be some—is to be found in this ever-present claim?

In her book *iGen: Why Today’s Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*, Jean Twenge provides eye-opening observations of the digital generation. Her



research draws on the data of four major American studies of 11 million young people surveyed since the 1960s. She cites a fascinating array of trends, many relating to the increase in engagement with technologies; the extension of childhood into adolescence; a significant increase in the amount of time spent engaged with screens (no surprises); the decline in in-person interaction; and, possibly most importantly for us to consider as parents, the “sharp rise in mental health issues” (p. 3). She soberly suggests that iGen are “at the forefront of the worst mental health crises in decades, with rates of teen suicide and depression skyrocketing since 2011” (p. 3).

### Digital technology tells a captivating story of instant, and continuous, happiness for as long as we are connected

Every time we receive a text, check the latest news, browse our social media accounts, receive a comment or a ‘like’, we receive a brain chemical that provides a pleasant sensation. This has been studied and measured. It makes us ‘happy’. But it doesn’t last. We want to feel it again, so we keep on checking. We keep on replying and posting so that it increases the chances that we will get another ‘ding’ and a boost of dopamine. “Ah, that feels good!”

This is why Brad Huddleston titled his book *Digital Cocaine*. In his introduction he describes speaking to two girls after one of his presentations (p. 3):

“Both girls freely admitted to much of what I discussed that day. These confessions involved spending long hours every day on Facebook and spending most of their waking hours texting. They spoke openly about not being able to break the lock of digital connection to their friends. They slept very little each night, staying up late in their bedroom interacting with their smart phones. Those devices had gripped them and wouldn’t let go.”

Addictions have never delivered the happiness that they promise. This is no different for digital addictions. Addiction brings slavery not freedom; bondage rather than a cure for boredom. Ultimately, addiction brings despair because it is a bowing down to a false god.

One of the most confronting conclusions to Twenge’s research for me as a parent, was summed up in this conclusion after reviewing the data from 11 million young Americans (p. 300):

“If an activity involves a screen, it is linked to less happiness and more depression. If it doesn’t—particularly if it involves in-person social interaction or exercise—it’s linked to more happiness and less depression.”

How addicted are you? How addicted is your teen (or tween)? Maybe you could conduct a little family-based research. Why not cut your phone, social media, internet use by half for one week and replace the time with catching up with friends and family in-person and doing some exercise. Discuss at the end of the week if any of you are feeling happier, more at peace, more joyful. Maybe discuss prior to the experiment what do you predict the outcome will be? If you have younger children, make the experiment transparent to them as well and bring them into the discussions. You cannot start these discussions too early—even if you are committed as parents to holding off tech engagement to much later years.

Tim Keller reminds us that an idol is born when we take a good thing and we make it an ultimate thing. Technologies are a blessing, but too much of a good thing can result in us serving an idol that robs us of the freedom that God has paid a high price for in His son Jesus. Christian parents disciple their children to turn from bondage and use their freedom to live the ‘good life’ that God has designed for them; loving God and neighbour and seeking the Kingdom through dwelling in authentic relationship with others.

I finish with this powerful poem from Michael Leunig:

#### Hymn for Hymn

Greater love hath no man than this,  
That he lay down his phone for his friend  
And go to his side  
To care and abide,  
To hold and support  
and to mend.

---

**Chris Parker** serves on the Leadership Team as our Christian Foundations Leader. He also teaches VET Construction in the Senior School. Chris is an author (*The Frog and the Fish*, and various books on Christian education) and regularly speaks to parent, teacher and student groups addressing technology and its shaping influence.

A form of this article originally appeared in *Nurture* magazine.





## CLASS COLOURS

RIGHT AND ABOVE: One of the highlights of Term 1 is Class Colours Day, when our Junior School students dress according to their class name. It's always impressive to see hundreds of students forming a rainbow along the D Block steps!



## MUSICAVIVA

LEFT: Junior School students participated in an interactive concert by "Two Wheel Time Machine" from MusicaViva. Students were encouraged to sing, move and clap along with each song as a wonderfully imaginative story about a bicycle was woven into the musical items.

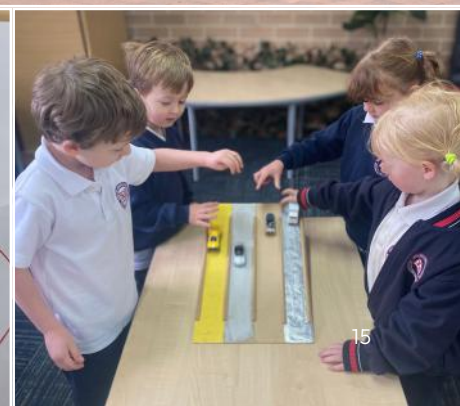
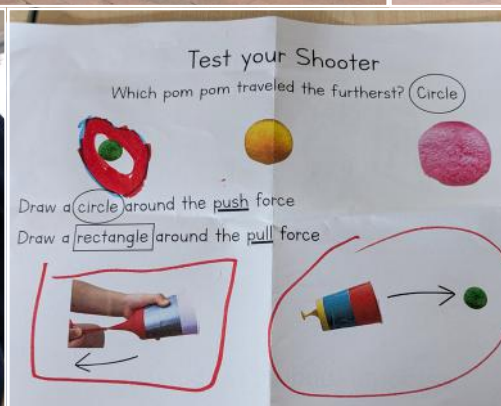
## CELEBRATING LEARNING TOGETHER

LEFT AND BELOW: This year in the Junior School, we've begun a new program called Learning Celebrations. Each of these special assemblies is run by a different grade (so far we've had Year 2, Year 5 and Kindy) and features a Bible message, some of their classwork, and usually a skit or song.



## MAD ABOUT SCIENCE

RIGHT AND BELOW: Kindy students enjoyed a special workshop run by Mad About Science, in which they experimented with forces like inertia and buoyancy. They also made their own pom-pom shooters and tested how far they could fire.





## Our Kindy buddies

Every year, the new Kindergarten students are assigned a Year 6 buddy. This buddy is someone they can play with and learn from, and who can help them when they need it. Once a fortnight, Year 6 students get together with their Kindy buddies for a special activity, and each Friday they eat lunch together.

Some of the things our Year 6 students have said about their buddies are:

"I enjoy seeing my buddy every morning because she always runs up to me." - **Ava**

"I know my buddy loves grabbing my hand, and taking me places and putting me in goal." - **Cooper**

"I enjoy talking about fishing and reading fish books with my buddy." - **Rose**

"My buddy is always very curious so he is always asking me

questions, in a good way." - **Daniel**

"I love when my buddy giggles, it is so funny." - **Isabella**

"I love playing 'TV shows' with my buddy, she makes me do shows like 'Elsa'." - **Lauren**

Kindergarten students also talked happily about their buddies:

"I like when we play goal with my buddy." - **Evelyn**

"I like when my buddy gives me piggy back rides." - **Emily**

"I liked when we made the massive flood in the sandpit." - **Oliver**

"I like playing with my buddy." - **Leonardo**

**Jemma Keast**  
6 Violet Teacher



# “The best camp ever”

*Students in Year 4 Khaki wrote their own reflections of their time away at camp in early Term 2.*

On Wednesday we got on the bus to get to Wedderburn Christian Camp. The bus trip was one hour and 20 minutes. When we got there, we put our bags on the balcony of the homestead which was the girl's cabin. We went to the lining up spot and got our morning tea. It was Tiny Teddy slice. Once we had finished morning tea we went to the first activity. I was in Group 3. My group did Initiative Games. We had to get the “bomb liquid” out of the circle but we couldn't go in the circle, so we tied our rope to a tree and pulled the rope on the other side. Ziggy climbed across the rope and grabbed the “bomb liquid” and we pulled him out of the circle. Then we saw the “police” coming so we ran but there was “lava” so we had to use stepping stones to get across.

After initiative games we had lunch. We had chicken wraps. Once the bell had rung, we had the second activity. The second activity was Laser Tag. I was on the black team. We won the first round. The other team, the camo team won the second round. After the second activity we had afternoon tea which was a fruit platter.

Then it was time for the third activity. For us it was Crate Climbing. When we got there, they told us we can only go to 8 crates high. I got to 8 crates then jumped and kicked the tower over. We had one turn each then we found out our cabins, then we had a shower. After free time we had dinner. It was nachos. Then we had desert it was jelly and ice cream. We had time to get dressed and then we had a fire. After the fire we went for a night walk. After that we went back and we got to roast marshmallows. Sadly, after that, it was bedtime. The bad thing was that the beds were very, very squeaky. We stayed up until 11:00pm. It was so much fun.

In the morning we got dressed and had breakfast. It was pancakes and cereal. Then it was time for the first activity. It was Bush Craft. I made a car, a person and a boat. Then it was

morning tea. We got cheese and crackers. We went straight to the second activity which was Zip Lining – super fun! The zip line was 50 metres long I almost got stuck. Then it was lunchtime – the lunch was amazing!

We went to Abseiling. We walked to the abseiling shed to put on our harnesses then we went to the cliff. I was the first person to go down the cliff. It was very easy and short. We had one go each. We went back for afternoon tea, cheese and crackers, and then we went BMX biking. The BMX biking was super fun we had three turns each – I was in the first group to go. Then it was free time.

My cabin all had showers but when we got out, it was so dark and cold. We had a roast beef dinner, then we had ice cream for dessert. Then it was movie time! We could bring our pillows and sleeping bags. We watched the movie *Cool Runnings*, then it was bed time. The only bad thing was the teacher came in and sat there until we were all asleep. We all pretended to be asleep.

In the morning, we got dressed and went outside for breakfast. We had bacon and eggs for breakfast and orange juice. We went outside for the first activity which was Rock Climbing. I was the first girl to finish the green wall. I was also the youngest and quickest to finish it. Then we had morning tea. We had a bit of free time and we went off to our last activity.

The last activity was Archery. I got to go first but I didn't get on the target. We got three turns each. I did get the target on the third turn. Sadly, I didn't get the bullseye though. Then we went back for lunch. We had a bit more time to pack up. We got on the bus and left. We were all so sad. I sat next to Aimee. We had lots of fun. When we got back to school all our parents and siblings were waiting. They were excited to see us. It was the best camp ever. We got our stuff and went home for the weekend.

**By Charlotte**





On Wednesday we went to Wedderburn for camp. We rode on the Wanderers coach. I sat next to Hadley. When we got there, we dropped off our luggage outside the tiny homestead. After that we went and got afternoon tea which was our yummy biscuit. Then we had free time in the playground. After free time I went with my group to the Crate Climb. Hadley got chosen to go first on the crate climb. I got to go soon after Hadley. I got 8 crates high before the teacher told me to get down. After that I got to go back on the belay team and then went back to have lunch. For lunch we had delicious chicken wraps! Then we had a little bit of free time. After free time we did Initiative Games. The first game we did was trying to get a bucket of water out of a rope circle with other ropes. We did it by putting a bunch of ropes around the bucket. We carried it out like that. Then we had to use some squares to get across the grass. Then it was afternoon tea - it was fruit. I got watermelon!

We had free time then it was Laser Tag. I was on the camo team so I was happy. First round my team got wiped out in the first

5 minutes. The second round we lasted longer. We spread out. We went pretty well. Our team lost though. Then we went back to the main spot to have afternoon tea - it was crackers. Then it was free time.

Later we got to see our cabins! We had some time in our cabins. My cabin was number 9. It was dinner time after that. We had nachos. They were better than I thought they would be. We then lit a fire and sat around it for a while. We went for bush walk after. Then we came back to the fire to roast marshmallows. We were sent to bed. All the boys' cabins stayed up late. Geoffrey, Eden, Hadley, Harry and Elliott were in my cabin. Elliott said, "I'm counting cows tonight... 10, 20, 30..."

"Be quiet!" said Hadley.

I fell asleep after that.

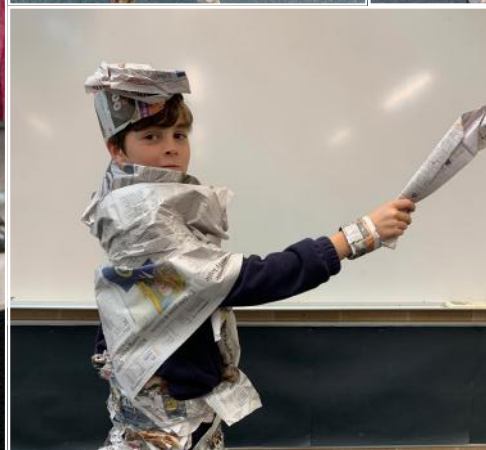
**By Samuel**



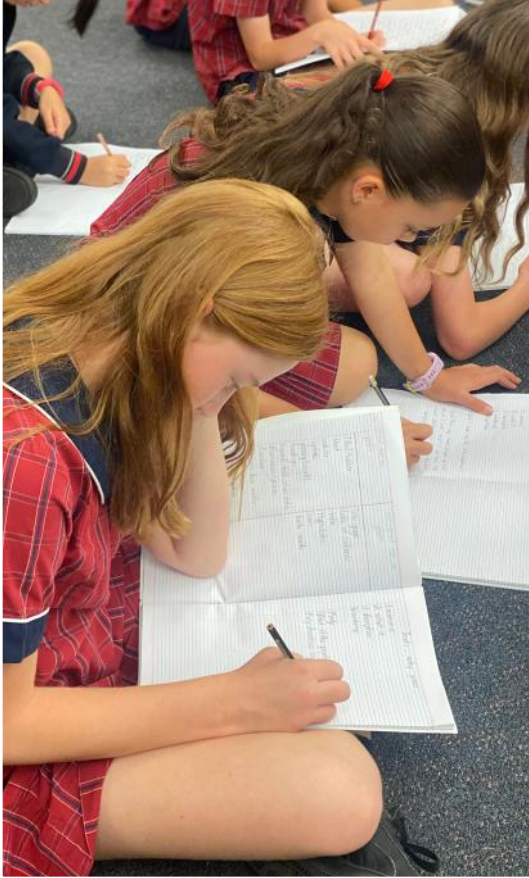
## WEIGHING IN

ABOVE: Year 3 had a fabulous lesson about mass with the help of three two-day-old guinea pig babies and their mama! Students had to estimate and then weigh one baby, then two, and then all three.

RIGHT AND BELOW: Some other recent highlights from the Junior School have included the Auskick AFL program, creating designer outfits with newspaper and sticky tape, and painting with friends.



**Learning Snapshot**  
The Egg Drop



## WRITING WORKSHOP

LEFT: In Term 1, Years 5, 6 and 8 and Hope Topaz had the opportunity to participate in writing workshops run by author Joel McKerrow. Junior School students learned about Joel's writing process, writing from memories and getting creative by asking "what if" questions. Year 8 focused on poetry, complementing their creative writing class.

## CROSS CRAFT

RIGHT AND BELOW: As part of learning about Easter and the resurrection, Year 6 visited the woodwork rooms where, with the help of Mr Parker, they created the base of a string art project using hammers and nails. Their creativity was evident as they made patterns with the string, resulting in a meaningful and decorative cross artwork.





# More precious than gold

Years 5 and 6 teachers share some highlights from the Stage 3 camp to Hill End.

Three weeks into Term 2 and Stage 3 were already looking for something to keep them busy!

We arrived at school bright and early, bags packed, ready for three days of fun, adventure and hopefully GOLD! We farewelled our distraught parents and climbed aboard our two buses: 52 Panners and 46 Miners.

Our travels took us out past Mount York Lookout, where we stopped for a pit toilet break – yippee, Bathurst, where we stopped for lunch – much better, and Sofala, where we walked through the oldest surviving gold rush town, taking in the old buildings and throwing a few rascals into the stocks.

On arriving at drought affected Hill End Ranch, we set ourselves up in our rooms and waited for the first rain in months to clear. Once the drizzle had eased, we headed out for an afternoon of investigation to the Hill End Heritage Centre and the old stamper battery.

Before dinner we had the chance to ‘rest’ after our very early morning. This took the form of playing frisbee, footy and tip. The boys were so tired that they only managed a couple of rounds of spotlight while they waited for the girls to have dinner. As soon as it was time for bed, a newfound energy hit that made it very difficult for people to go to sleep.

The morning apparently began at 4am and, after breakfast, led us into town where Kerri, our tour guide for our town adventure, dressed in the most amazing outfit, gave us some of the history of Hill End and the NSW gold rush. We were not at all distracted by the hundreds of kangaroos grazing nearby, ‘roo poo that was everywhere or being on the lookout for the deer and wild goats we had seen as we arrived the day before.

We were sent off on a scavenger hunt to discover some of the history of the buildings and information about the people of Hill End. It was well worth the effort with a golden reward for the winning team.

Eddie took us through the Bald Hill mine where, after tunnelling 80m by hand, the original miners had found nothing but quartz. As we looked to the afternoon our hopes were set on something more profitable. The bravest of us climbed out of the mine using the old 30m, vertical ventilation shaft.

After a quick visit to the cemetery, we hit the highlight of our camp – searching for quartz and panning for gold!

Our Panners (Year 6) definitely won the crystal hunt in Golden Gully while the patience of our Miners (Year 5) paid off in the search for gold. After discovering that they were panning for glitter sized pieces of gold rather than nuggets, several Year 6 began feeling rather dirty and needed to wash off in the small but deep pool that remained of the river.

On returning to camp with our finds, we devoured a lovely afternoon tea provided by our parents who we weren't missing at all, showered (supposedly) and enjoyed more running around before dinner.

The teachers seemed to require lots of fresh air that night. They

wandered around in the cold for a couple of hours listening for some strange creature which required every cabin to be absolutely silent. We don't think they ever found whatever it was because there was no mention of it the following morning.

Our final morning arrived far too quickly and, after the last of our devotionals, we farewelled Kerri who is retiring in July. She has shared her passion for and knowledge of Hill End with hundreds of students from Wycliffe over the past 30 years.

Our trip home took us on a not-so-quick circuit of Mount Panorama (the highlight of the camp for Mrs Lowcock and Mrs Dillen) and a play at the adventure park in Bathurst. The quick run home from there took us an hour and a half longer than expected, but at least it didn't take the seven days it had for the early gold seekers who first headed out to Hill End.

We had an amazing time away, learning and growing together, listening to God's word, making new friends and discovering ways to support each other – things far more precious than gold.

**The Stage 3 Team**





## SWIMMING CARNIVAL

Our 3-12 Swimming Carnival was held at Glenbrook Pool on a beautiful sunny day, and it was wonderful to see so many of our students jumping in and having a go.

*Some photos courtesy of Alexander Mayes Photography.*





## CROSS COUNTRY

LEFT AND ABOVE: A huge thanks to all the parents who joined us for our Cross Country Carnival, to the volunteers who helped make the day possible, and of course to all the students who took part and enjoyed some friendly competition together.

## SPORT HIGHLIGHTS

RIGHT AND BELOW: There's always something sporty happening at Wycliffe, whether it's our representative teams competing in local tournaments, or students progressing to zone, state, or even national levels with their chosen sport.



Learning Snapshot  
Movement Skills

# Ready to ride

Wycliffe has a small but dedicated group of mountain bikers who regularly compete in events around NSW. Below, Riley (Year 9) and Bailey (Year 7) share their reflections.

## How did you get into mountain biking and what do you like about it?

**Riley:** My parents have always taken me riding and I liked it, so I kept doing it and have always done it since then. I like riding bikes because it's a progressive sport and there are lots of different types of riding. I like riding downhill mountain bike trails and jumps.

**Bailey:** My first trip to Orange with my family and friends is probably what started it. I like the adrenaline rush and the challenge to push yourself harder, trying new tricks, trails and features. The focus is not academic or a traditional sports competition. Mountain biking is something new and different.

## What events have you been competing at?

**Riley:** I have competed in a number of the interschool races where you race against your own time to try and be quicker, and in your age group with lots of other schools. It's an enduro-style race where you ride up the hill untimed and you're only timed on the down hill sections.

**Bailey:** In the past year, I have raced the interschool competitions with Rocky Trail Academy at Mt Stromlo (Canberra), Narooma

(South Coast) and twice at Cringila Hills (Wollongong).

## What are your plans for the future?

**Riley:** I want to keep riding and racing and I would like to build trails.

**Bailey:** Hit bigger features and jumps and to get faster. I am always looking for new trails to try and would love to see something decent open in the Blue Mountains.

## What would you suggest to other students who are thinking about starting mountain biking?

**Riley:** To ride their bike more and start riding on something easy like fire trails, footpaths and easy trails and then over time progressively get to harder features and higher ability trails.

**Bailey:** Give it a go. Start on some easy trails and progress your way up.

## And to other students who already ride but are unsure about doing an event representing the school?

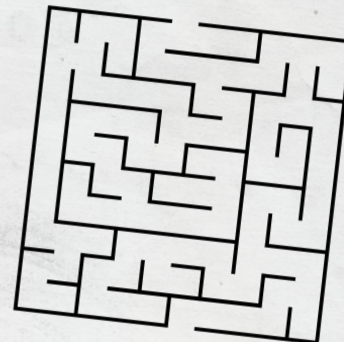
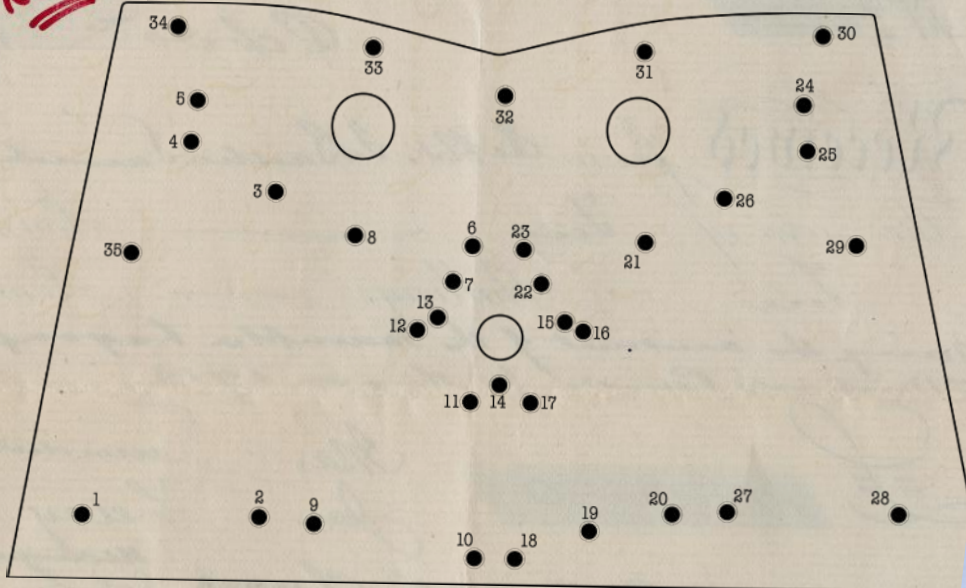
**Riley:** It's not very hard or that competitive, it's super chill. You don't need to race to be the best. You're mainly just trying to get a personal faster time and faster than other people as well.

**Bailey:** There is a wide variety of skill levels in the competitions. The race is about improving your personal time each run and doing your best.



# ACTIVITY PAGE!

CONNECT THE DOTS!



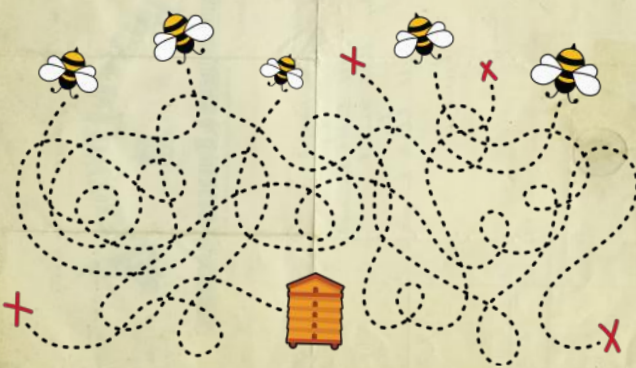
Fill in the missing shapes to complete these patterns.



Note to self: unscramble these words!

- UZPZEL \_\_\_\_\_
- ANERNLIG \_\_\_\_\_
- TNSTDUSE \_\_\_\_\_
- ILYFWCEF \_\_\_\_\_
- HCOTGOELNY \_\_\_\_\_
- UOVEELRNT \_\_\_\_\_
- PCSUTURLE \_\_\_\_\_
- WSMINMG \_\_\_\_\_
- CSNIEEC \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the bee which gets to the hive.



Can you find the **three** missing stamps hidden in this magazine?



An extra tough challenge for our tech-savvy Senior Schoolers... Can you crack the **SECRET CODE** hidden on this page?





## STAGE 4 CAMP

Year 7 and 8's camp was action-packed, full of new challenges and great times of delving into Christian faith with the excellent CRU leaders. The campsite at Lake Macquarie had a lot to offer: kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddle boarding, raft-building, sailing, fishing, rock climbing, archery, bush walks, ziplining and indoor games.





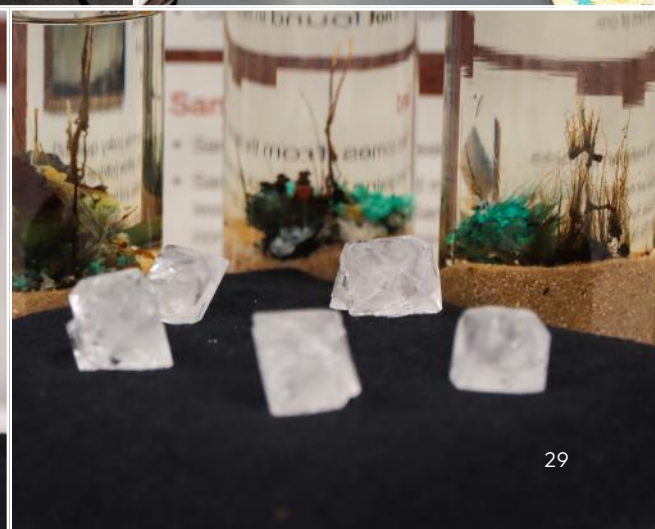
## CONNECTING WITH YEAR 2

Year 9/10 Child Studies students have been meeting with Year 2 as part of a buddy program which includes reading, craft activities, and games. It's a wonderful way for the Senior Schoolers to learn about caring for young children, and for Year 2 to experience a mentoring relationship.



## CRYSTAL CREATIONS

RIGHT: In Year 8 Science, students have been hands-on with geology, growing stunning alum crystals from scratch and designing their own vibrant crystal gardens. As part of their exploration into Earth's materials, they learned how to classify minerals, identify different types of rocks, and understanding the dynamic processes of the rock cycle.



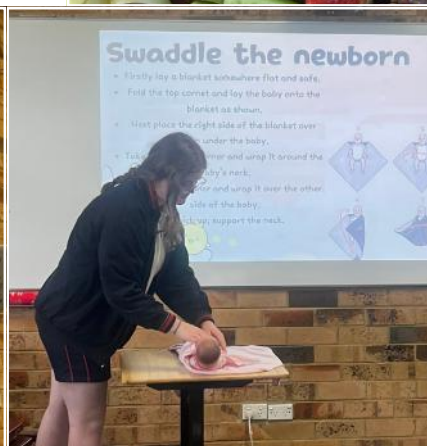


## GRAZING PLATTERS

ABOVE: Year 9/10 Food Technology students have been studying physical and chemical properties of food as part of a unit on food trends. Students used their knowledge on food combinations and styling to prepare a selection of delicious grazing platters for a staff morning tea.

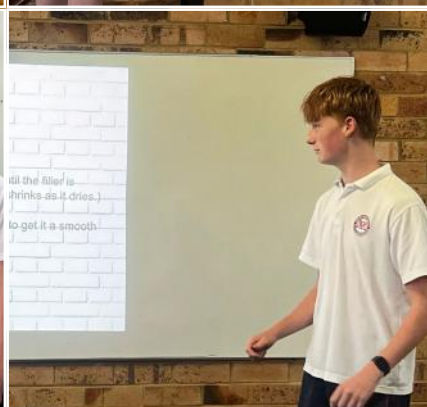


**Learning Snapshot**  
Grow, Prepare  
and Share



## HOW TO ADULT

LEFT AND BELOW: Year 10 Navigate students were asked to choose something that others may need to be able to do in their experience as adults, and create a brief step by step presentation showing how to complete the “adulting” challenge. Topics included how to make fried rice, how to fix holes in a wall, how to listen well to others, and how to swaddle a baby.



## UP FOR DEBATE

RIGHT: Wycliffe’s debating teams attended a CEN interschool competition in Term 1, with our Year 7s and 9s winning all their debates, and our Year 10s winning one of two!





## STEPPING OUT INTO THE WORLD

LEFT AND ABOVE: Learning at Wycliffe is supported by a range of excursions, camps and cocurricular activities. Recent outings have included watching the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Opera House; studying history at Sydney University; and marching alongside the Blue Mountains community on Anzac Day.



## BUILDING UP TO SOMETHING

The building project is progressing well, with the exteriors of the building expected to be completed by the end of July. In the latter half of the year, we'll be undertaking further interior fitouts of the classrooms and café, external landscaping works on the small oval, and the reinstatement of the K-2 sensory playground, in preparation for a staged occupancy later in the year. At present, we're planning for the café to open later in Term 3. We're deeply thankful for the partnership of our community and excited for what's ahead!





# Going for gold

**The relaunched Duke of Edinburgh program is seeing students push themselves to new heights.**

The Duke of Edinburgh International Award was officially relaunched at Wycliffe in August 2024. Just shy of a year since its reintroduction, the program has already gained tremendous interest, with over 27 students participating in the award scheme.

While the Duke of Ed program typically conjures up images of lengthy wilderness hikes, it has a far broader scope which aims to foster self-discovery and personal growth. This program is an extracurricular activity we offer at Wycliffe which gives students the opportunity to challenge themselves to learn a new skill, serve their community, engage in a physical activity and experience the challenges of an adventurous overnight journey - all while having fun and making new friends.

In the service component of the award, our students have been actively involved in impactful community contributions, including serving in children's ministries, supporting the vital work of the Rural Fire Service, and preparing meals for those in need. Among the many new skills they are working to develop

are learning a new language, developing camera recording and IT skills, crocheting and embroidery, and juggling; physical activities include bike riding, swimming, running, and dancing.

The great thing about the Duke of Ed program is that each participant designs their own award, allowing a great deal of flexibility for students to focus on their areas of interest.

We are incredibly proud of every student who has embarked on this journey. A special congratulations goes to Aravis, who is our first student to successfully complete the Bronze Award! We are excited to see her now embarking on the exciting next stage of her journey, starting her Silver Award.

It's been wonderful to see so many enthusiastic students joining the program, and we look forward to continuing to grow as students progress through the award levels.

**Caroline Bartlett**  
Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator

Aravis and Eliza, another of our Duke of Ed participants, spoke with us about their experience with the program.

**What drew you to the Duke of Ed program?**

**Eliza:** A big part of the program that drew me to it were the hikes, going out into the bush with my friends, having to navigate and figure out our own problems that we come across together as a group.

**Aravis:** My brother did it and that is how I first learnt about it. I already did similar activities that the Duke of Ed requires weekly and I enjoy camping so it seemed like a great idea. I mainly chose it because it included all the things I enjoy doing regularly.

**What types of activities does it encompass?**

**Eliza:** You can choose anything in the categories of a service to the community, a new skill to learn and a form of physical activity and participating in a practice hike and a qualifying hike.

**Aravis:** The Duke of Ed consists of regular physical activity, volunteering, skill practice, and a camp. The great thing about it is that you can choose what you want to do. I personally chose

Sunday school, flute practice, and running, but you can change the activity once you complete your set goal. The camp that I did was hiking and seeing lots of lookouts and waterholes in the mountains.

**What is your favourite memory from the Duke of Ed so far?**

**Eliza:** My favourite memory of Duke of Ed so far definitely has to be camping on the school oval after a sudden change of plans for our practice hike.

**Aravis:** My favourite part of Duke of Ed is the adventurous journey from Springwood to Glenbrook. Traveling with everyone and eating dinner together was fun, especially when the guys brought almost a kilo of bacon for dinner and breakfast.

**What would you say to younger students who are interested in the Duke of Ed program?**

**Aravis:** It is definitely a great program to do but it is on you to complete the activities and not a teacher or parent. The camp is a great deal of fun and you can learn a lot, the amazing views of the Blue Mountains are definitely worth it.

**Eliza:** It's definitely worth doing. It's fun, a great experience and a great way to try new things and build your life skills.



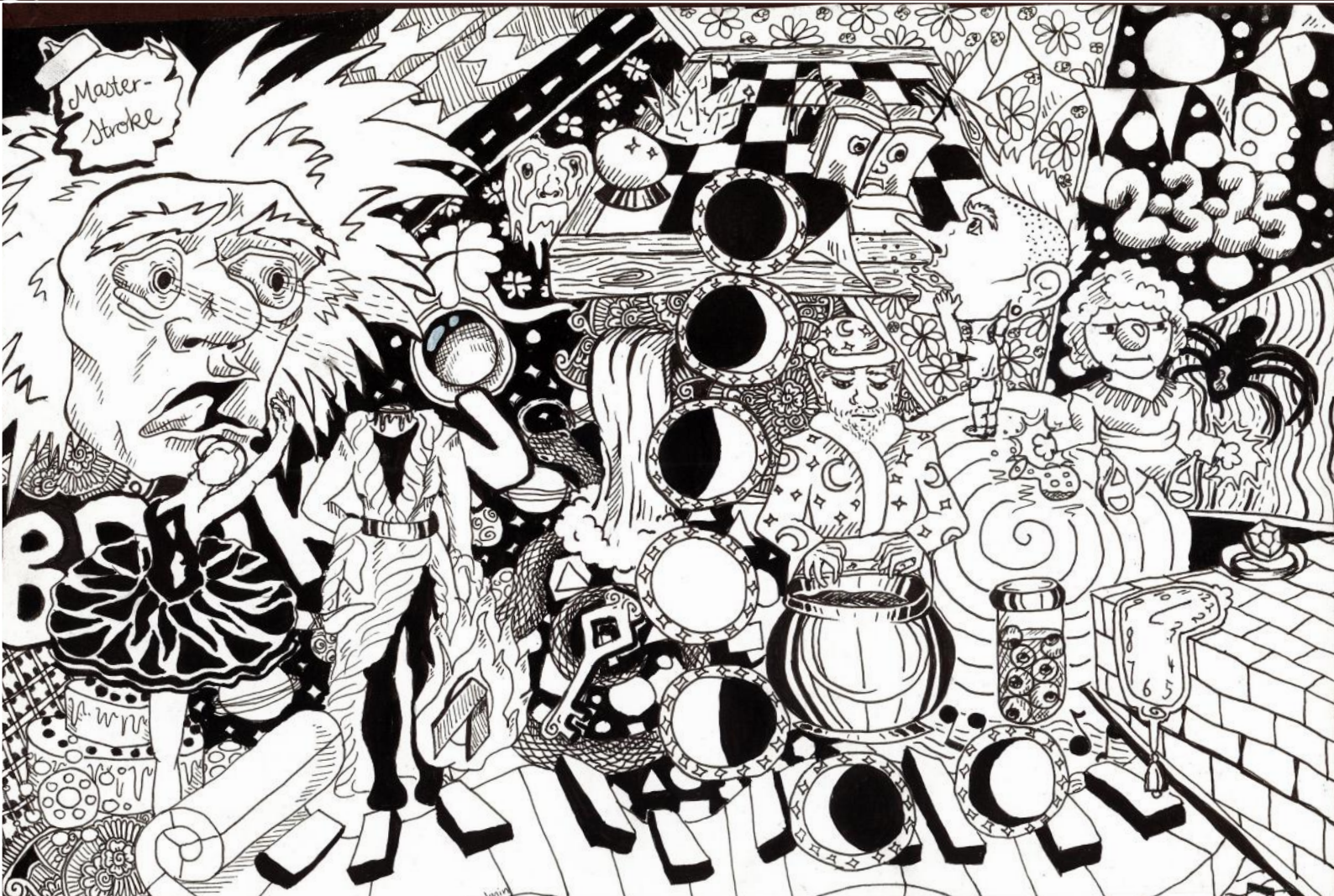


## SENIOR SCHOOL ARTWORKS

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Chloe, Year 10;  
Gemma, Year 8; Phoenix, Year 7.

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Catherine,  
Year 8; Joanna, Year 7; Ellie, Year 10; Emily, Year 10.







## CHARCOAL AND CLAY

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Edie, Year 8; Leila, Year 9; Summer, Year 8.

LEFT AND BELOW: Various projects by HSC Ceramics and Visual Arts students.



# ARTEXPRESS 2025

In Term 1, Year 11 and 12 Visual Arts and Ceramics students went on an excursion to see ARTEXPRESS, an exhibition of Year 12 HSC work from the previous year. The day began with a panel of three students who had their artwork in the exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW. They shared their ideas and art process with the assembled students from a variety of schools, and students were able to follow up with questions. Then everyone had a chance to view the exhibition.

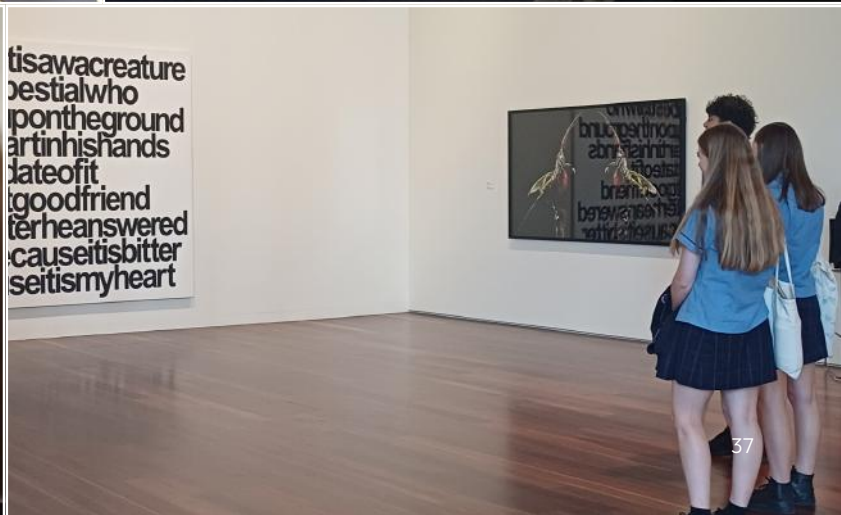
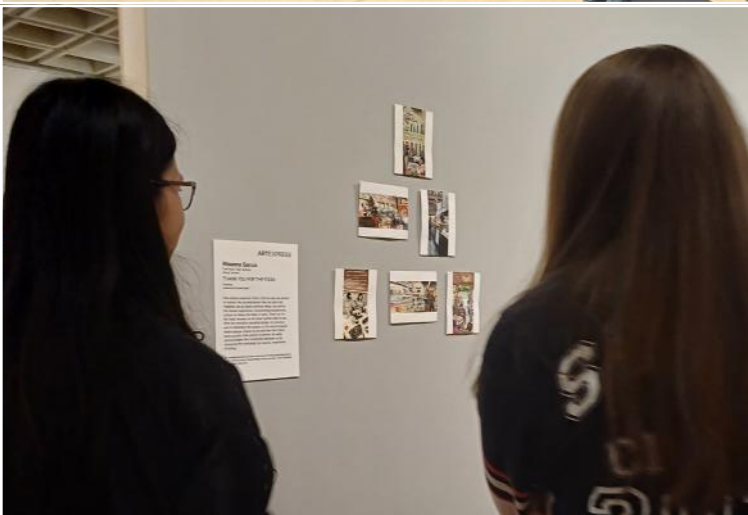
We also took the opportunity to explore the Yirribana (Indigenous Australian) gallery space and experience some contemporary work, including a spice-filled installation by Neto and a video installation work in the "Tank" gallery by Angelica Mesiti.

With their own HSC projects on the horizon, our Year 12s were invited not just to consider the artworks themselves, but how they might inform their own creative practice, and to critically evaluate their overall presentation in the gallery. They expressed their thoughts through the "critical reflections" they wrote afterwards. Please enjoy two excerpts from these critical reflections below.

"There is no denying the brilliant collection of concepts from

young minds, but... it felt almost random with where they were placed. A piece that followed a Japanese art style placed next to the busy graffiti-style art... When I found myself finding an interest in a certain style or theme that was displayed, my mind automatically wished to follow through to another piece that shared similar elements to not only ease my mood, but to compare concepts and how similar themes have been used to portray different concepts. But because of the arrangement, I would find myself marching back and forth from one end of the exhibition to the other..." - **Eli**

"The excursion to the NSW art gallery this Thursday was an experience that I had been readying myself for for weeks prior. However, I did not foresee how much I would learn about other artists' art practice and my own... I was especially provoked by the piece called '6 Backyards in Cowan'. I was encouraged by the artist's use of colours and shades to show similarities and differences between Australian homes and backyards. For example, some of the pieces had the road outside of the house painted orange, while others were pink. To reflect on the shadows from the houses and the powerlines, the artist used a darker shade of pink/orange on top of the original to convey visual depth and attention to detail." - **Isaac**





## URBAN ADVENTURE

In March, our Year 9s set off on an adventure around the city, solving puzzles, completing challenges, and connecting with their wider community. Students cooked over 200 meals for the needy and even found a bit of time for a surf at Bondi.





## YEAR 11 CAMP

The focus of Year 11 camp was on leadership and service. Students were challenged to consider the kind of leader they are, both at Wycliffe and beyond. They prepared meals for the homeless at Kids Giving Back in Paddington, heard from panel of professionals from the community sharing their approach to leadership in the workplace, and (also) had a surfing lesson at Bondi.



## BOBBIN HEAD

On a Geography excursion to Bobbin Head National Park, Year 9 learned about wetland biomes and sustainability. Students tested soil moisture, fished along the river bank, and took a bushwalk to a lookout over the river.





# Everybody's watching

## How do we support children struggling with social anxiety?

Anxiety is one of the most common mental health challenges faced by young people today. Social anxiety, as a specific type, affects over 1 in 10 Australians. While thinking about anxiety can sometimes evoke feelings of guilt or helplessness, it's important to remember that God meets us with kindness and compassion in our moments of distress. As Psalm 94:19 tells us: "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy."

### A WAY OF LIVING

To better understand social anxiety, imagine the difference between a student preparing for school and a student with social anxiety. For many, the morning might include having breakfast, getting ready, greeting friends, and settling into class. However, for a student with social anxiety, mornings can be filled with anxious thoughts: "It's almost time to go. Can I find a reason not to go today? No, I need to go. Lord, please help me get through the day. How can I walk into that classroom when I feel like this? Will anyone notice if I'm late? It would be so much easier to stay home."

Upon arriving at school, their worries may continue: "I don't want to walk in alone. What if everyone stares at me? Do my classmates even like me? They seem happier talking to others. I should find a seat near the back so I can leave quickly if I need to." For students with social anxiety, days are filled with these types of thoughts and emotions.

### WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BODY DURING ANXIETY

Part of understanding social anxiety is knowing how the body reacts. Anxiety serves an essential function—it's our built-in alert system that signals when something is not right. When we sense a threat, our brain triggers the fight, flight, freeze or fawn response, leading to increased heart rate and alertness. While this response is helpful in true danger, it can be exhausting when triggered repeatedly by perceived threats.

For children with social anxiety, everyday situations like speaking in class, participating in group activities, or walking

into a busy playground can feel threatening, even when they are not. The body reacts the same way to these perceived threats as it would to real danger, making it difficult for the child to stay calm and think clearly.

## RECOGNISING SOCIAL ANXIETY IN YOUR CHILD

Social anxiety is different from occasional nervousness. It's marked by persistent, excessive fear that impairs daily functioning. Signs to look out for include:

- Physical symptoms such as blushing, sweating, trembling, or a shaky voice
- Avoiding eye contact or speaking up
- Reluctance to join group activities or be in the spotlight
- Arriving late or wanting to leave school early
- Missing school events or avoiding social interactions
- Being self-deprecating or overly critical of others

It's important to recognise that social anxiety can look different for each child. Not everyone will experience the same symptoms or triggers.

## HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

If you think your child may have social anxiety, here are some steps to support them:

**Psychoeducation:** Help your child understand what anxiety is and why it happens. Understanding that anxiety is common and manageable can empower them.

**Emotional Regulation:** Teach techniques like deep breathing or grounding exercises to help your child regain control during anxious moments.

**Counselling:** Professional support through cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), or other approaches can help your child develop strategies to manage their anxiety.

**Exposure Therapy:** Gradually exposing your child to situations that trigger anxiety can help them build resilience and confidence over time.

For children with social anxiety,  
everyday situations... can  
feel threatening

**Healthy Habits:** Ensure your child has a routine that includes adequate sleep, nutrition, physical activity, and time outdoors.

**Medication:** In some cases, medication may be recommended alongside therapy. Always consult with a healthcare professional for guidance.

## WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If you notice signs of social anxiety in your child, consider speaking with your GP, or mental health professional. Early intervention can make a significant difference. Social anxiety can be a difficult journey, but with understanding and support, children can learn to manage their feelings and engage more fully in school and social life.

**Nicole Clark**  
Wycliffe School Counsellor

*This article has been written from seminar material developed by the Mental Health and Pastoral Care Institute, adapted for our school context.*



## WHERE NEXT?

Nicole recommends Momentum, which is a free online program developed by clinicians and mental health experts. Momentum is designed to help young people to learn how to manage anxiety and unhappiness.

Visit <https://www.momentumhub.org.au> to learn more.



## MOTHER'S DAY

We always love the opportunity to celebrate the mothers of our community together. A special thanks to the dedicated parent volunteers who ran the gift stall and decorated the hall for the breakfast.





## EASTER HUNT

Every Easter, we celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection. This year, our Community Engagement Team hosted an Easter Hunt for our families. It was a lovely afternoon, with games, sport, and craft activities for the kids, culminating in an egg hunt along the oval! Thanks to all who made this event happen, and to everyone who came along and enjoyed an afternoon of fun together.



# Find your place, find your purpose

Wycliffe Christian School and Wycliffe Hope School



WYCLIFFE  
*Hope*