

# Communitas

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School Community Magazine



St Paul's  
ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

# Message from the Principal

Approaching the end of every school year, I find myself amazed that, once again, I can be surprised by just how much a great school seems to be able to fit in! Everywhere you look, new initiatives are being implemented, new buildings are popping up and new students are joining our community.

Following the adoption of our Strategic Plan – Pursuing Potential 2023–2028, it has been heartening to see the amount of work already undertaken by each of our sub-schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Our teachers have continued to pursue their potential in order to better assist each and every one of our students with skills and experiences that can help them reach theirs.

Our plans to grow our school proceed apace with the new Futures Centre reaching completion in Traralgon, ready for students next term, and it is exciting to see that earthworks have now commenced in preparation for our new Early Learning Centre and Primary School in Drouin.

Our students have been out and about, taking advantage of leadership opportunities, growing produce in our kitchen gardens, and giving back to the wider community. The wonderful work of Team Timor, now spanning more than two decades, continues to support a community far less prosperous than ours, and is a credit to all staff and students who have worked tirelessly to bring their many achievements to fruition.

Our alumni, as always, have been keen contributors not just in the wider world but also by inspiring our current students with a range of guest speaker appearances. Students give great weight to the words of alumni speakers and sometimes a comment might provide the perfect impetus to explore something new or abandon something that is no longer serving them – sparking them to be

optimistic and courageous as they plan for their futures.

It is a privilege to lead St Paul's and to work with so many wonderful staff, students and families – read on and enjoy just a few of these stories in this edition of *Communitas*.

Cameron Herbert  
Principal



## St Paul's is coming to Drouin!

Opening in 2025, St Paul's will be offering a new Kindergarten and Primary School campus in Drouin.

Discover a place of learning that is committed to the growth, development and potential of all students, whatever their academic level and wherever their futures may take them.

**Enrol now for 2025 and beyond**

[stpaulsags.vic.edu.au/discover/drouin](http://stpaulsags.vic.edu.au/discover/drouin)





- \* from motivational talks
- \* through regular, short study sessions
- \* by having a set of study strategies modelled and explicitly taught
- \* when homework is conflated with study
- \* when classroom teachers re-in strategies
- \* having structured, routine opportunities to set study goals and organise study
- \* from being afraid to do lots of it or that they're coming against students who are studying for dozens of hours each week
- \* vague references to 'taking notes' or 'revision'
- \* being given lots of wellness tips (like stay hydrated, take plenty of breaks and get a good night's sleep)

# An educational evolution..

The transformative effect of our educators' growth has been a key benefit of our new strategic plan. Our dedicated educators are continually seeking to enhance their knowledge and teaching skills in the quest to provide a better educational experience for our students.

In an informative session this year they engaged with James Pinnuck from Ticking Minds, with a focus on refining their approach to teaching students how to study. Delving into strategies for effectively communicating the difference between homework and study,

they also learnt techniques for guiding students in task prioritisation. With our educators engaged in the concept of acceleration from a variety of different angles, students will be able to further personalise their learning experience, both in the classroom and at home.



## A world of future career choices

Whether they work for a company or are self-employed, our students benefitted from a diverse array of amazing alumni and parent speakers throughout the year, inspiring them to dream big and clarifying the boundless potential that lies ahead. We were fortunate to be able to welcome professionals

spanning various vocations such as veterinarian, swimming instructor, outdoor education provider, physiotherapist, lawyer, financial planner and scriptwriter to name a few.

Class of 2008, Adrian Salvatore, was our guest speaker at this year's Year 10 Careers Conference at

Phillip Island. Adrian spoke about his remarkable achievements and inspiring journey to financial planning. His compelling story motivated our students to pursue their passions, set their goals, embrace failure and obstacles, and appreciate the importance of education and training.



# Amazing avocado abundance

The Warragul Junior School's established Kitchen Garden is the most loved and popular location that proud students lead their grandparents through during Grandparents and Special Friends Day. The garden's avocado tree has produced a bumper crop this year and in a paddock-to-plate initiative, Kitchen Garden Coordinator, Louise Leighton, has been providing our Warragul Campus canteen with fresh, plump avocados, ready to be transformed into mouth-watering and nutritious sandwiches and focaccias. The tree has been in the garden since at least 2009! If anyone would like to share their memories of the Warragul Junior School Kitchen Garden, please email [alumni@stpaulsags.vic.edu.au](mailto:alumni@stpaulsags.vic.edu.au).



## A St Paul's adventure

Meet Freddie and Lucas, friends of Year 4 student Hayden. Freddie and Lucas embarked on a journey from Korea, stopping over at our Warragul Junior School to immerse themselves in the life of a Year 4 student at St Paul's. Our Head of Warragul Junior School, Rowan van Raay welcomed them for a day of adventure and discovery!

## Exciting times for Traralgon

These are certainly exciting times for our Traralgon Campus - just look at how it is growing! We hope you are as excited as our students are to see the Futures Centre progressing in readiness for next year. Our Early Learning Centre expansion is also going full steam ahead, with the expansion enabling two or three-day Pre-Kindergarten and three or four-day Pre-Prep programs from 2024.







# Extending education beyond borders

In the heart of our community, a group of devoted and compassionate teachers with a boundless passion for education have taken on an incredible mission. They lead the student Team Timor group, dedicated to raising funds for educational programs and projects in East Timor. Their focus between 2020 and 2022 was to raise money for the construction of an English Language Study Centre (ELSC) in the picturesque Malimea Village and Team Timor successfully raised over \$25,000 during that time.

Team Timor's and the Friends of Ermera's united vision became a reality when construction on the ELSC was completed in June 2023. Team Timor's fundraising also financed the building's furnishing and the training of three staff to run the English Language program. Friends of Ermera had digitally provided Team Timor the English program details and Team Timor printed, labelled and laminated these materials.

During the mid-year school holidays, St Paul's teachers Andrea Heard, Kirsten Enders and Noriko Teranishi ventured to East Timor. Their objective went beyond delivering the printed English program and other educational materials, as they also personally imparted their teaching knowledge to the new ELSC staff who will carry the knowledge forward. Their journey stands as a true testament to their compassion and unwavering determination, making an enduring impact on education that extends far beyond our local community.

Here is their story of their journey:

*The first two days were spent registering the English program in the Gleno township, nestled between treed mountains and surrounded*

*by rice fields and veggie gardens, one hour south of the capital, Dili. We joined with the Malimea staff and the English staff from the established Gleno ELSC to create an inventory of every item; each individual worksheet, the games and associated teaching resources and every item of technology (headphones, MP3 players, memory sticks loaded with audio tracks of stories and nursery rhymes) were all recorded manually in a bound book. It was a time of connection, collaboration, learning and mutual respect as we organised this educational treasure trove over freshly brewed cups of Timor coffee.*

*After leaving Gleno we tackled the bumpy but always picturesque Timor roads in a four-wheel drive driven by our skilled driver Joko, to reach Ponilala, a mere hour's deviation from our journey. Here we visited the local pre-secondary school St Paul's assisted building in 2007 and then the two-storey addition completed in 2020. Felix, the English teacher, and his community, have always warmly welcomed us with much appreciation for our support and this visit was no different. We began with sharing a cup of coffee, a welcoming ritual, and this was followed by lunch and a surprise visit from four of the boys Team Timor had sponsored many years ago. It was heartwarming to see how these young men have succeeded and grown after finishing university in 2018. Their gratitude is one of the many things that keeps us, and Team Timor, driven.*

*After one and a half days of travel, we arrived at Malimea to finally see the ELSC for ourselves. What a wonderful building this community has constructed with the money raised by Team Timor over the last*

*three years! Manuel, the English teacher in charge and his two assistants, Adriana and Sebastiana, watched on proudly while we took it all in, the new orange building cheerfully ready to welcome many future students. Working together we shared ideas on the placement and labelling of the English program items then followed an afternoon of staff training as we explored the English program, connecting the resources to maximise understanding. We are in awe of the progress these individuals have made with their training to date and know that once students begin their own English journey in January 2024, they will be in good hands.*

*Team Timor is forever grateful to the St Paul's community for helping Team Timor to support the Malimea ELSC. We would also like to thank Marg Cox, a grandparent at the Traralgon Campus, for reading and recording many stories to be enjoyed by students on their English learning journey. We will continue to fundraise for the ongoing costs of wages, more teaching resources, maintenance of the building, technical items (printer, computer, MP3 players) and more.*

For more information, please reach

out to Kirsten Enders  
kenders@stpaulsags.  
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or Andrea Heard  
aaheard@stpaulsags.  
vic.edu.au to join them  
with their projects!



# Memorable reconnection



There was an incredible surprise for a few Year 11 Peer Support Leaders during this year's Warragul Friendship Morning. They were reunited with their former Prep buddies for a morning of fun, connection and newly discovered memories, with the senior students having the opportunity to mentor these 2024 Year 7 students just as they had mentored them six years earlier.



## Connecting generations, generating leaders

It seems wherever you go, you are bound to run into someone you either know or have a connection to. That's what fourteen of our Year 11 students experienced at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre as part of Ecumenical Schools Australia's Year 11 Leadership Day.

Project Rokit delivered the leadership seminar, but the highlight was undeniably an inspiring presentation from Class of 1996 alumnus adventurer and explorer,

Tim Cope. The St Paul's connections didn't end there. Adding an extra layer of excitement, students Charlotte Brown and Georgia Chapman, whose mothers were in the same year level as Tim at St Paul's, had the honour of introducing Tim to students and staff from attending schools.

By personalising their learning journey through the pursuit of leadership, our future leaders found the experience enriching

and enjoyable. Max declared that his favourite part of the day was, "Having Tim Cope share some of his amazing adventures over his life. I learnt from Tim that it is important to live life in the moment and embrace every experience that may come your way."





# Caitlin's prestigious award

Caitlin Powell, an educator and Head of Year 12 at St Paul's, has been honoured with a prestigious award from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education – the Early Career Alumni Award.

This award honours graduates of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education who have excelled in their fields while also contributing



significantly to the Graduate School, the university, or their communities. Caitlin believes the award recognition stems from her commitment to developing Indigenous programs in schools alongside her leadership roles. Caitlin said, "I love putting myself into a school community and participating in as many things as possible. I have always pushed myself forward in this field with determination and passion. I have become more comfortable with my teaching and leadership pathway with each new skill I have learned."

After school, Caitlin followed her passion for art by studying for a Fine Art degree at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). It was in 2014 that she discovered her calling to become a teacher. "Teaching wasn't my first choice", she revealed. "After my undergraduate degree, I worked at Docklands Stadium in hospitality. I remember someone saying, "You would make a great teacher". The next day I applied for the Masters of Teaching with Art as my teaching method."

While completing her masters at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne, Caitlin studied Indigenous Education as one of her subjects. "I made it one of my goals to always teach inclusivity and cultural understanding regarding First Nations culture", she said. Caitlin was eager to make a difference in Indigenous education, and beginning her teaching career at Kyabram P-12 College she assumed the role of Year 8 Coordinator, an experience she describes as both challenging and rewarding. She also led the school's Indigenous program in collaboration

with the school's Koorie Education Officer.

Caitlin joined St Paul's in 2020 and quickly progressed to become the Head of Year 11 mid-year of 2021, ultimately commencing in the role of Head of Year 12 in 2022. Her teaching responsibilities include Photomedia (Years 7 to 10) and Humanities (Years 7 and 8), and she has taught VCE Art in the past.

Beyond the classroom, Caitlin's dedication extends to co-curricular activities. She has led an art club at St Paul's and plans to initiate a photography club in 2024. Caitlin's fulfilment in teaching comes from helping students achieve their goals. "I love that I can help students reach their goals in both a social and academic sense. As a Head of Year, I am honoured to help students whenever they are in need, working with them to reach solutions, and offering our school's wellbeing team for support or just being a caring ear to them."

Every day in her role is unique and Caitlin thrives on the unpredictability of her profession. "Every day is different, but that is what I love. All sorts of things could come up in a day and you must be prepared. I work with a great team at St Paul's that is very supportive and always willing to help. I am very lucky that I have this help and support for when anything challenging comes up."

Caitlin officially received her award at an official ceremony on 21 November. We congratulate Caitlin on her wonderful achievement.

## Our growing community

Our August Drouin Campus Information Evening welcomed newly enrolled families and the wider Drouin community, all keen to learn more about the new campus. The event buzzed with conversations, fostering connections between our staff and families.

Head of School, Rowan van Raay and Director of Early Learning Centre, Richelle Harris, highlighted the benefits of our early learning program and showcased St Paul's as an exciting educational choice for Drouin.

Families also provided insights into their thoughts on choice of school, sharing their top five school selection criteria that will inform our commitment to meeting the community's needs.

We are now taking enrolments for 2025 and beyond for our Drouin Campus and look forward to many more families joining the St Paul's community.







# Filmmaker's journey inspires students



Renowned as an adventurer and award-winning filmmaker, Beau Miles, Class of 1997, returned to St Paul's with compelling stories and inspiration for students to embrace adventure and storytelling. Beau provided an essential reminder to students about the value of recycling and environmental stewardship as he spoke about his documentary "Bad River" in which he kayaks along some of Australia's most unhealthy waterways.

He also sparked the imagination and curiosity of students with a riveting sneak peek into his latest yet-to-be-released collaborative project with Hamish Blake.

Students were fascinated to hear about how the two kindred spirits embark on an epic adventure that unfolds when they leave their hometowns, accompanied by their children, to rendezvous halfway to produce a podcast.

Engaging with his inquisitive audience, Beau gladly answered questions throughout the presentation, with students and staff keen to know all about the art of filmmaking, insights into his YouTube channel, his most cherished destinations and the path that led to his extraordinary career. Drawing from his own experiences, Beau used his personal journey to reassure

students who are unsure about what to do after school. He urged them to push beyond their comfort zones to uncover their own individual passions in subjects and co-curricular activities that they are interested in as a form of self-discovery.

Additionally, he emphasised that students should actively reach out to their valuable support network – their school 'family' of friends and teachers – as the beneficial knowledge and expertise from teachers will help them identify and pursue their own interests.





# Prefect power

Our Year 12 Prefects have truly been a force of action this year, leading by example in a whirlwind of events. From Push Up Challenges to braving an Ice Bucket Challenge, to a Shave for A Cure quest, they certainly gave it their all to foster school spirit and promote good causes for the wellbeing of others!



While our Prefects lead by example, they are also inspired by our Head of Warragul Junior School, Rowan van Raay and Deputy Head of Warragul Secondary School, Gordon Oldham. Both leaders were dunked numerous times at a winter community event, aiming to raise funds and awareness for MND Victoria. Some of our students had a little too much fun, donating to dunk Mr van Raay and Mr Oldham into the icy water, over and over again!





# St Paul's Alumni -



## Managing multiple pursuits

Jarra Davis, an alumnus of the Class of 2020, is balancing full-time legal studies with his work as a freelance producer and creator. He joined St Paul's in Year 10 and, even then, balanced co-curricular activities with studies by participating in chess, basketball, football, cricket, debating and many more activities. He remarked, "The process of constantly challenging myself and always developing new skills through those experiences and activities was such a great time". His favourite part of school was usually the bus trips to these events with his mates, treasuring the friendships he formed and the wonderful memories made.

He found certain teachers to be really inspirational. "Ms Bellis helped me so much throughout Year 12 whilst also allowing me to be creative and show myself and my personality through my work and writing. Mr O'Connor also, we just connected so well and he was always up for a chat about anything that interested me with regard to politics, history, philosophy and anything in between."

"I feel like I accomplished a lot academically and personally, but finding what I actually enjoyed and what I wanted to do would have to be my greatest achievement. Leaving my old school and joining a new environment where I was encouraged to be myself and try things really opened my eyes to a varied range of activities and interests that I never would have found without the environment that the school created, so harnessing that to find my passion was certainly a great achievement."

According to Jarra, he first followed the traditional pathway to a career, using his ATAR to study politics and law at Monash University. From then on, he has explored the area of creating digital content for mainstream and social media platforms as well as producing and directing TV series, podcasts, and other media. "Doing all of this whilst still maintaining my university studies on top of that has definitely made my pathway unique and interesting," Jarra revealed. "Due to the fact that it's such a new field, there was no training or course or established pathway, so it became an explorative journey. I'd say the training, beyond the requisite technical knowledge, is really just experiences and using those to develop an understanding of how people interact with media and content and learning how I can harness that."

"I chose this field because it is the second half of my personality. I've always known I was quite focused and almost scientific in my approach to studies which has led me to undertake a law degree. However, I always thought I had a more creative side to myself as well, so harnessing and catering to that has really fulfilled me as

a whole, so choosing this field ensured that I was truly following my passions alongside my university studies."

"I'm lucky that I actually work alongside the person who influenced me to take this path, Dylan Buckley, a former AFL player turned podcast mogul and businessman. His ability to cater to his interests no matter how varied, through his different podcasts and appearances on TV shows really sparked that desire to not put myself into a box and showed me that you can actually do both; you can feed all of your passions and interests no matter how vast or different they are."

Jarra loves the realm of digital creation. "Apart from working alongside my sports and media idols, the fact that I wake up every day and there's something to do or someone to talk to that is completely different from the day before makes it genuinely the best job in the world."

He does find working and studying to be a challenge. "Striking the right balance of social media work and university work was always my biggest challenge and still is now, especially around exam time and balancing the effort and attention I give to each to make sure I'm not neglecting either. However, I'm lucky to have such a good support system around me that it doesn't hinder me as much as it used to."

Even though Jarra enjoys creating digital content, he likes to disconnect from the online world during his free time. "Outside of work I really enjoy unplugging and going out into the world without phones, social media, radio, or anything, and just existing in the moment. Mostly I do this by going for a walk or going to play sport with my mates, just having good times completely removed from the online world."

"I've recently become really fond of the idea of detaching yourself from the outcome," he wanted to add. "Meaning that if you don't think about the possibility of failure, or what people think, suddenly the things holding you back from following your passions disappear."



*\*Information in profiles correct at time of collation.*



# let's keep connected

## Discovering the “write” path

Shanrah Wakefield, Class of 2002, explored a variety of careers before discovering her destiny as a screenwriter. Joining St Paul's in Year 7, Shanrah had a diverse range of interests at school including debating, netball, basketball and several school productions. She also assumed leadership responsibilities as Cross Country Captain, Friendships, Drama and English lessons, and “finding my tribe of quirky artists” are among her favourite recollections of St Paul's.

Her interest in writing was sparked by one of her teachers. She describes the support she received from her Year 12 English teacher, Rob Devling. “He was absolutely pivotal for me,” she reminisced. “He encouraged my writing so avidly, validated my skills so confidently, and had this zest for language and storytelling (and life!) that was contagious in every class. I reckon Devo was the first and key teacher who made me feel like my quirks were valuable. I'm forever grateful, and certain his influence is a big part of why I'm a writer today!”

She also remembers Sharryn Marshall who as Shanrah describes “encouraged all of us to let our inner weirdos thrive!” igniting an element of creativity.

The achievement of her target ATAR was the highlight of her academic studies at St Paul's. “In Year 12 I decided I wanted to get above 99 to get into Law at Monash and went into full beast mode. I did it! Finding out my result was a special moment.”

Since graduating, she has had a “long and winding” career path. “Writing was always my first love; I wrote fiction in every spare moment I could find. But it took me a while to embrace it as a realistic career. I knew I wanted to be in the arts/storytelling somehow, but, decided I should have a “sensible” backup plan so I did a law degree. Once I graduated, I went straight to Los Angeles to pursue acting. I thought that was my dream. I paid my rent by doing freelance journalism on the side. I wrote for feminist publications, celebrity gossip outlets and (gratefully) some more meaningful social commentary stuff that put my law degree to work. Between acting auditions, I started writing my own film and TV scripts for fun. I wound up landing my first real acting job and first screenwriting job in the same week, which was a strange crossroads. I did both jobs simultaneously, realised with a bang that I much preferred writing, and turned my focus exclusively to that. I started figuring out my voice and the kind of stories I wanted to tell and wrote a million terrible scripts until finally, one caught the attention of an agent. Now, too many years later to count (and too many scripts), I'm writing a movie for Universal Studios and sometimes I'm not really sure how I woke up here. It was a long road to the inevitable, but the twists and turns just give me more to write about.”

“Nobody ever said “you could be a screenwriter”. I loved stories and I loved watching movies, getting lost in new worlds that made me think. I made horror movies on the family video camera and made my friends and cousins act in them. But screenwriting wasn't exactly listed in careers guidebooks, so acting felt like the most obvious way in at first. It didn't even click that screenwriting was even a real job that actually existed until I was living in LA, immersed in the industry. A few pivotal mentors were very encouraging and now it feels obvious – of course, my weird little childhood obsession would become my career!”

“I think my most valuable training was done on my own as I searched for my voice and style. I learned the most from reading and studying great scripts by writers I admire, watching great movies by the same, and then just writing and writing and writing, trying and failing, writing and writing and writing some more.”

Shanrah cherishes that she has discovered a path in which she can be creative every day and finds it incredibly fulfilling. “I love being part of a cohort of driven, goal-oriented creatives. I get to work with people who are also passionate about putting the world we want to see on screen.”

“[Writing] is my passion and my best weapon! I feel empty if I'm not writing. I also believe that what we watch on screen can change our hearts and minds, and can influence culture. There's an inherent responsibility and power in storytelling and I feel driven to be part of shaping it.”

“It's a rollercoaster career path, which is part of why I love it but the unknowns can also be challenging. Feature film writing is also much more solitary than TV writing, so sometimes it's lonely. But there's a vibrant community of creatives, both here in Melbourne and in LA, and it always helps to plug into those networks and connect.”

In her spare time, Shanrah loves “travelling the world, lively discussions about culture and film, learning new things and inhaling art – continuing to make the most of every opportunity”.



St Paul's Alumni  
Association Facebook



St Paul's Alumni  
Association LinkedIn

We love sharing alumni stories that provide inspiration to current students – and teachers always love to hear what former students are up to now!

If you would like to share your story with the St Paul's community, or would like to mentor or speak with our current students, please reach out by emailing [alumni@stpaulsags.vic.edu.au](mailto:alumni@stpaulsags.vic.edu.au).



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