

# inspired

THE SACS MAGAZINE | ISSUE 5

## Engaged in learning

A school where the community is  
engaged and growing every day



heart  
mind  
life



ST ANDREW'S  
CATHEDRAL  
SCHOOL  
FOUNDED 1885



**inspired**

The St Andrew's Cathedral School  
Annual Magazine 2017 (Issue 5)

## Engaged in learning

A school where the  
community is engaged  
and growing  
every day

*The people behind the publication*

### The Magazine Team

**Managing Editor**  
Alison Walburn

**Editor**  
Melanie Collins

**Design**  
Rachel Heriot

**Contributors**  
John Chapman  
John Collier  
Lucy Crook

Richard Ford  
Susan Hando  
Lyn Jarvis  
Julie McGonigle  
Penni Maher  
Anna Owen  
Greta Pigott  
Lucy Robson  
Brad Swibel  
Karen Swibel  
Ric van Wachem

### Special Thanks

Wayne Brazel  
Tom Hetherington-Welch  
Naoko Keatley (OA 2000)  
Brad Murphy  
Rhonda Robson  
Ralph Wilcock  
Kya Wiya

### Cover Photo

A group of SACS students  
in Sydney Square in 2017.  
Photo by Daniel Fewchuk

### Photography

Thanks to the SACS  
Media Crew, Phillip Pain,  
Myf Austin-Eames, Lucy  
Robson, Karen Swibel,  
Lucy Crook, Melanie  
Collins, John Chapman  
and Daniel Fewchuk.

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# Contents

## 02 Overview on Engaged

St Andrew's employs a range of initiatives and programs that aim to engage students in their learning journey, writes John Collier.

## 03 Expanding our footprint

Our campus is growing and will add Level 4 of St Andrew's House from 2018. Lyn Jarvis reflects on our school's colourful campus history.

## 04 New learning framework

Brad Swibel details the major changes taking place from 2018 that will shape the graduates of tomorrow.

## 06 Gawura celebrates 10 years of closing the gap

The SACS community joined in the celebrations as Gawura marked a major milestone in its history. Lucy Crook reflects on the vision of Gawura's founders and its extraordinary success today.

## 10 Academic improvement

Julie McGonigle explains how a teacher's expectations can have a profound impact on student engagement and achievement.

## 12 Learning Pit leads students to 'Eureka' moments

The Junior School this year implemented a learning strategy that has been enthusiastically embraced by students.

## 14. Staff development and learning

Richard Ford reveals some of the amazing achievements of St Andrew's staff outside the classroom.

## 17. Discovering the magic of science

Year 11 IB science students spent a day sharing their love of science with Infants students.

## 18 Transformational journey

The 20-day Kosi to Coast outdoor education experience has challenged and changed many lives.

## 20 20 years of snow camp

Ric van Wachem recalls the first steps of a program that has become a signature experience of an education at SACS.

## 21 Exploring the Gospel

Zedge camp is a fabulous annual three-day camp for students seeking to have some fun while also learning more about the Christian faith.

## 22 Ralph prepares to put down his baton

An emotional Ralph Wilcock spoke to Melanie Collins about his 13-year journey at SACS and his passion to see lives transformed through music.

## 24 Old Andean inspires violin students

Several of our talented strings students were treated to a private lesson with professional violinist Naoko Keatley (OA 2000).

## 25 Old Andean profile: Naoko Keatley

London Symphony Orchestra violinist Naoko Keatley speaks with Karen Swibel about her career and her fond memories of St Andrew's.

## 26 Career Conversations

The inaugural Learning the Ropes event was an inspirational evening for the students and SACS community alike.

## 28 Choristers united by unique experiences

Susan Hando chats to Oscar Smith and Nick Bell about the joys and challenges of chorister life.

## 29 A very long engagement

Foundation Director Wayne Brazel tells Lyn Jarvis about his 39-year journey at SACS.



# Engaging our students in the enjoyment of learning

**It is absolutely obvious to all the school community that we seek to fully engage our students in order to help them deliver their best efforts in all that they do while at school. Traditionally, Australian students have not been known for being particularly engaged, especially when compared with counterparts in some Asian countries. How then are we proceeding with this goal?**

In recent years, we have applied, under licence, the important motivational work of Professor Andrew Martin from the University of NSW. His material identifies those aspects of student behaviour and attitude which boost their performance and those which inhibit and even self-sabotage. Senior students are most familiar with this discussion and with their individualised positive and negative attribute and attitudinal wheels. This is a very helpful tool. It has been complemented by a program we have run as an offshoot of the Black Dog Institute, which has been designed as an important contributor to positive teenage mental health.

As our software has improved, we are better able to track student performance over time and identify both upward and downward trends. This is enabling us to work individually with students to set targets, monitor progress and inform parents. (Read more about this and our SACS Character Framework on pages 4-5). We are finding substantial improvement in subjects where students target a desire to improve. Our young people are identifying areas such as avoidance of procrastination as essential for them.

SACS is applying the emerging research in education. Professor Carol Dweck has

developed the concept of a growth mindset, where student ability is not fixed but malleable and where real academic improvement is possible with the determination to grow as a student and as a person. Senior students in particular are well aware now of this research. Similarly, Professor John Hattie has undertaken massive studies which provide empirical support for the quality of the individual teacher in the individual classroom as the most important factor for the engagement and subsequent success of students. Our desire is to place the very best people as teachers in front of students, and we continue to equip our staff with in-service training and development. (Read about all the behind-the-scenes work and academic study of our teachers on page 14).

Part of engaging students is to excite and empower them with a narrative of hope. Without this, young people can often drift in life, disengaged, with no particular purpose or destination in mind. Hope engages. It is part of our Christian mission to not only imbue students with a sense of hope and purpose, but to help them come to a sense of mission as they seek to serve and therefore look beyond self-focus. Ultimately, of course, we believe the best hope is found in Jesus Christ.

Research suggests that students who immerse themselves in the co-curricular life of a school (performing arts and / or sport and / or outdoor education and / or of service ministries) have a higher sense of motivation and engagement and do well academically. This appears to be because the sense of community and belonging, which comes from heavy involvement in the life of the school, reverberates into commitment across their range of endeavours in the school. At SACS the co-curricular offerings are now very substantial and are mostly very well supported by student participation.

The engagement of students is multi-faceted and works best when there are many possible triggers for student participation and enjoyment of school life, where success is supported and showcased, where pathways to the future are obvious and where young people can imagine a hopeful future emerging from their current engagement in school life. This process works best with an integration of academic quality, pastoral support, welcoming of diversity and celebration of successful passage through youth into adulthood.

**Dr John Collier**  
*Head of School*



# Expanding our footprint

Having experienced nine campus moves in its first 90 years, SACS and its leadership never take for granted the current stability of our main school campus in St Andrew's House. With steady growth in recent years, a new chapter in history begins in 2018, when Level 4 of St Andrew's House becomes part of our school campus, writes *Lyn Jarvis*

When St Andrew's Cathedral School opened in 1885, it had no building of its own that could be used for a school. Its physical location remained uncertain for the first 90 years of its history.

The first building SACS occupied was the Baptist Church "furnished with the most dilapidated of old school appliances". The school moved in 1906 to Pitt St and then into the old Worker Building in 1937. St Andrew's had 100 students enrolled in 1954, and a decision to increase enrolments led to the first real proposal for a school building. A public appeal to raise funds was launched by the Lord Mayor of Sydney in the Town Hall on 27 August 1956. Mr Vincent Fairfax became Chairman of the appeal. By 1960, enrolments had risen to 250.

As a result of the success of the appeal, in 1965, the school's 80th year, a purpose-built school building to accommodate 400 boys, was opened by the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. and Right Hon. Michael Ramsey. It was three storeys high and located between the Cathedral and Kent St, with Bathurst St frontage. In 1967 the academic program was expanded to allow students to graduate from Year 12 and complete their HSC, further increasing the school's size.

Known as the "New School", the building was demolished less than a decade later to make way for St Andrew's House. With no home once more, the school was again in temporary accommodation, occupying the CENEF Building on the opposite corner of Bathurst and Kent Streets.

The original concept for St Andrew's House was to build an office tower, but the height requirement (that it could not be taller than the Cathedral's spires), excluded this. The next consideration was for the school to have a "vertical slice" down the side of the building. This was also rejected and by 1971, the school was excluded completely from the St Andrew's House plan. In fact, the school was threatened with closure and removal from its city location. "For the

whole of the year, the fate of the school seemed to be hanging in the balance" wrote Canon Melville Newth. With no other site proving feasible, it was finally decided to build a less elaborate school on the top two floors of St Andrew's House. Finally SACS had a home.

From 1976, we occupied levels 7 and 8 and the rooftop playground. It is interesting to note that the windows on levels 7 and 8 are different to the rest of the building. This was because they were built to be opened for ventilation, as the idea of an air-conditioned school was not conceivable to the planners. In 2000 the school expanded to Level 6 of St Andrew's House, taking the top three floors and the rooftop. The formal entrance was a later addition, with the foyer and library being developed in 2006. Prior to that everyone entered the school from Kent Street.

Various different spaces and shopfronts have been leased over the years for specific purposes as the school has expanded. In 2012, with the exit from St Andrew's House by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, SACS took over Level 5, consolidating the school into our two current campuses, St Andrew's House and the BBC.

In 2016-17, SACS continued to see a growth in student numbers and our need for more space became apparent. As a result, we are thrilled to announce that the school's footprint in St Andrew's House will include all of Level 4 from 2018. Extensive and exciting plans are being drawn up, creating a home base for each different pastoral stage. This will not only ensure learning is productive and inspiring, it will create a sense of ownership and belonging for the students and staff, promoting wellbeing and learning. We can't wait to show you.

St Andrew's House





# Character development is key to St Andrew's education

St Andrew's is set to launch a new Learning Framework that builds upon our strong student wellbeing programs, awards system and graduate attributes. It will integrate "positive education" and the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile into the strong SACS programs currently in place. Deputy Head of School *Brad Swibel* explains the new direction and how building character helps develop a student's full potential.

*"Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."* Martin Luther King Jr challenged the world with these words 70 years ago. He asked us not to judge by outward appearances but by the "content of character". At St Andrew's, character education is at the core of Heart, Mind and Life.

Character education creates an environment for students to grow morally, spiritually and intellectually to flourish individually, in community and society. It is central to our school vision for students to "fully develop their gifts and abilities to serve in the world". St Andrew's is committed to teaching 'character in action' where students can contribute to others and individually flourish. Character education equips young people to grow in wisdom and hope, being discerning of what is true and good and developing strengths to meet the needs of a changing world. Students are equipped to strive and thrive, to be better than they think they are and strengthen their character day by day. Character development is fundamental to our pursuit of academic excellence and is at the heart of our teaching and pastoral care, taught explicitly and implicitly through classes, role-modelling, leadership and relationships. It has a legacy far beyond school, benefiting our

students and those they meet both now and into the future.

## Research

Many educational systems have seen the importance of character education in the development of 21st Century skills needed by students. Canadian, American, UK, European and Australian schools have adopted character driven frameworks developed in association with governments, churches and universities. Certain educational frameworks have character development at their core, calling them such things as learning dispositions, virtues, values, strengths and habits of mind. The Australian Government developed a national character based approach to education in 2005 and linked this to the National Curriculum in 2010. However, this has still not been fully implemented across Australian schools.

Pennsylvania University professors Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson are well known researchers in the field of Positive Psychology, identifying 24 character strengths. Positive psychology, rather than categorising deficits and disorders, classifies positive strengths in an aim to make people's lives more fulfilling. This approach to



character strengths has led to research into positive education that has been adopted by many schools around the world and has influenced our approach at St Andrew's.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) has character development at the core of its education. The IB programme calls this the 'Learner Profile' and identifies 10 attributes that are embedded throughout its curriculum. Through character education, the IB develops inquiry skills, creativity, critical thinking, communication, teamwork, service, and international mindedness in students. These are all vital tools for young people to thrive in a modern society. The IB is taught in almost 5000 schools and is the fastest growing education system in the world.

## Development

Heart, Mind, Life has been the bedrock of the St Andrew's wellbeing program, merit system, discipline code, learning model and award system for many years. It has been expressed most fulsomely in our Graduate Attributes which identifies the character traits students develop at school.

Character education is fundamental to St Andrew's. In 2016 we expanded our International Baccalaureate Diploma by introducing the Middle Years Programme (MYP) to Year 7. The IB will ultimately run in Years 7-12 with the option of studying HSC in Years 11 and 12. IB skills and approaches to learning are also taught through our primary years.

The IB has strengthened our approach to education by realigning our Learning Model, Wellbeing program and Graduate Attributes into one integrated framework with Heart, Mind, Life at the centre. The new SACS Learning Framework integrates positive education, the IB and the strong SACS programs currently in place. More will be published on this soon.

## Character

One of the philosophical fathers of character, Aristotle, stated that "character is that which reveals moral purpose". Character is deeply rooted in our attitude, our intentions and our actions – our Heart, Mind and Life. As a Christian school, we want our students to be educated for life in all its fullness (John 10:10), to be transformed by the renewing of minds (Romans 12:2) and to love and care for one another and the world (1 John 4:19).

Our approach to character is centred on building strengths. This focus on character strengths is influenced by positive education, Carol Dweck's work on *Growth Mindset*, Daniel Pink's work on *Drive*, Angela Duckworth's work on *Grit* and John Hattie's study on educational expectations and efficacy. Over the last 18 months, the school has worked with Year 9-11 students on goal setting, using data dashboards. Students have had GROWTH conversations, with staff looking at student academic and social data to set individual goals and strategies. GROWTH stands for Goals, Reality, Outcomes, Will, Tactics and Habits. Growth is central to building Character

Strengths because in using character in a considered way, to set Goals from our current Reality, developing Outcomes, strengthening Will, and establishing supports and Tactics – we ultimately begin establishing Habits that make our strengths part of who we are.

Central then to character is growth. At St Andrew's we don't just accept our character, we seek to grow it!

Growing Heart, Mind and Life comes from a range of successful evidence based strategies, programs and practices. These are integrated throughout the pastoral, academic and co-curricular parts of the school. Character growth comes from role modelling, relationships, service and leadership.

Students and staff grow character strengths together.

Character development will be integrated in class, pastoral time, chapel, assemblies and other parts of school life. Students and staff will identify their Heart, Mind and Life strengths that they wish to grow and select strategies to do so. Secondary school students have their own Growth Learning Plans where they use their GROWTH strategies to develop their selected character strengths.

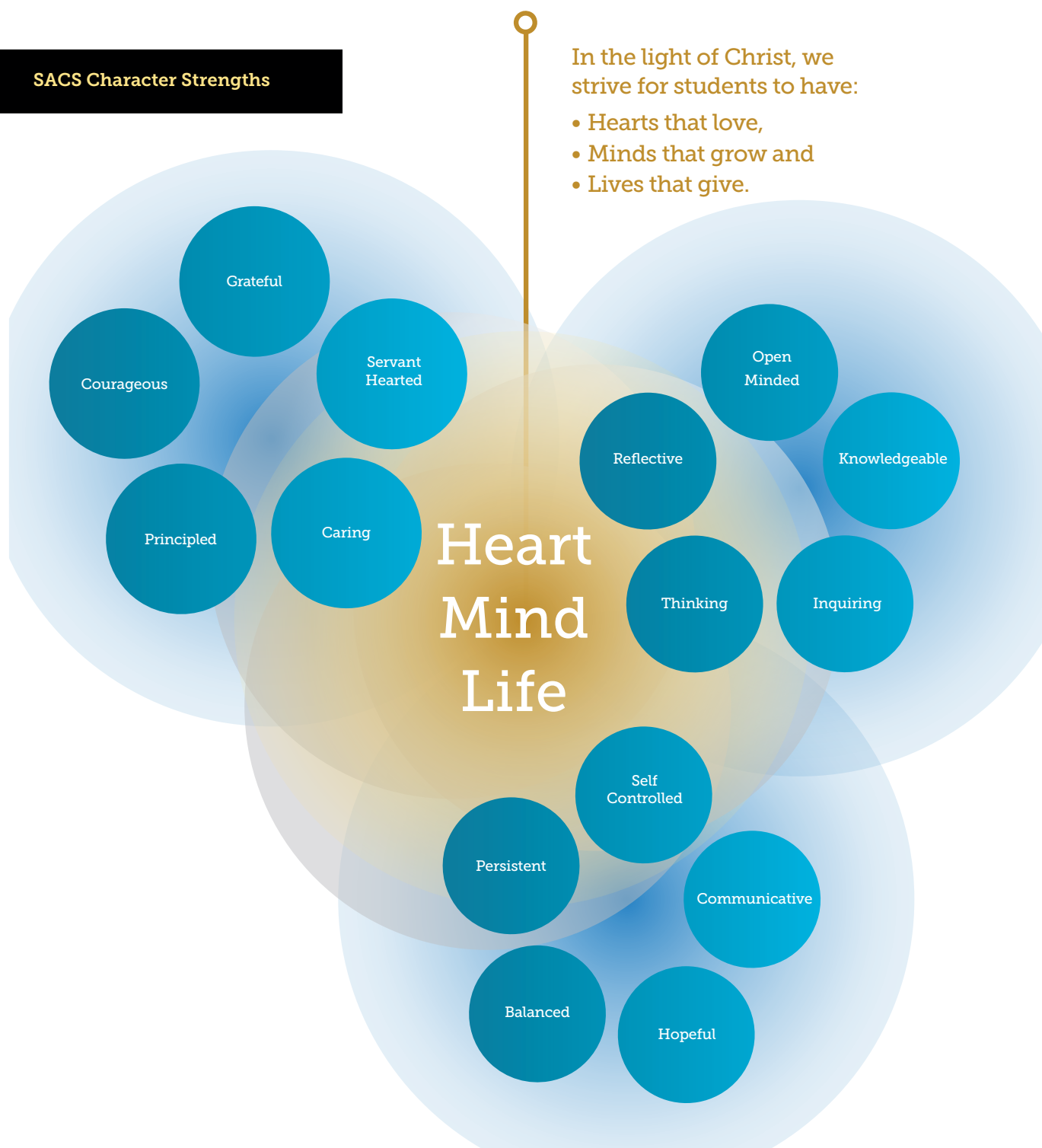
Already we have been delighted with the 2017 results from Year 9-11 students, who improved by 13 per cent in their Growth Learning Plan target subjects.

But character is more than just the mind – it is about our heart for others and life in all its fullness. Intelligence plus character is our goal.

## SACS Character Strengths

In the light of Christ, we strive for students to have:

- Hearts that love,
- Minds that grow and
- Lives that give.





# How we celebrated

**Gawura's 10th anniversary in 2017 was celebrated throughout St Andrew's Cathedral School from the start of the school year at term services, parent welcome/information evenings, P&F evenings and assemblies.**

In June, our major 10-year anniversary event was a marvellous celebration of unity in diversity in Sydney Square and the Cathedral.

*Babirra ngumbaay Ngadhu, Ngindhu, Ngiayanhi Australian (... and sing with one voice; I am, you are, we are Australian).*

Starting with a moving Smoking Ceremony in Sydney Square performed by Uncle Stephen Williams, accompanied on didgeridoo by Gawura's first graduate, Ivor Rigney-Sebastian, Gawura's founding member Sharon Minniecon welcomed guests to the auspicious occasion. This was followed by Jacqueline Jacky (Year 11) giving the Acknowledgement of Country. Witnessing the ceremony were the Gawura and SACS communities, family, friends and donors and volunteers of Gawura.

The gathering then moved into the Cathedral, where Dr Collier and guest speaker Professor Larissa Behrendt eloquently summed up the significance of the occasion, as did Rev Kanishka Raffel

who finished with a prayer of reconciliation and unity.

The Gawura students performed *Tiddalick*, a play they created under the guidance of Peta-Joy Williams. Then the Gawura students and SACS Years 3-6 Junior School voices sang together *We are Australian* in Wiradjuri and English. There was not a dry eye in the audience as the students stole the show. Special thanks to Kaylia Keegan for introducing the song, to Auntie Beth for translating the words into Wiradjuri, Peta-Joy Williams for teaching the students and Kate Robertson for conducting.

Special achievement certificates were presented to Gawura students (Kindergarten through to Year 12) by Gawura alumni, Rachel and Georgia Durmush. The Cathedral erupted when Gawura Year 12 student Kade Dawson received a special 10 Year Anniversary Award for his outstanding dedication and commitment to his academic studies.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community – students,

parents, carers and teachers – then recessed out of the Cathedral to the sounds of the didgeridoo played by Ivor Rigney-Sebastian.

A lovely afternoon tea followed, where the gathering sang a hearty *Happy Birthday* to Gawura. The students didn't take long to demolish the delicious cake made by former SACS mum Anthea Leonard. Thanks to Robyn Yates, from the Association of Independent Schools, and Sharon Minniecon, we also officially opened the Gawura Ngara Centre.

It was a wonderful celebration and a fantastic display of unity, respect, collaboration and inclusivity.

We now look forward to our 10 Year Anniversary finale at the Evening of Celebration and Prize-giving at the end of the year, where Gawura Ambassador and Indigenous Opera singer Deborah Cheetham will sing an aria she wrote especially for this auspicious occasion.

## PHOTOS

- 1-4 *Smoking ceremony led by Uncle Stephen*
5. *Gawura graduates Kelsi, Ivor and Georgia join current student Izak*
6. *Rev Kanishka Raffel, Dr Collier, Sharon Minniecon and Uncle Stephen*
7. *Students and staff sing Happy Birthday.*
8. *Kade Dawson with Sharon Minniecon after being presented with a special award of excellence.*
9. *Gawura students display their achievement certificates*



2017





2



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4



5



6



7



8



9





2009



2008



2007



2010



2011



2014



2012



2013



2016



2015

#### PHOTOS

- 2007 Smoking ceremony led by Uncle Max
- 2008 Students perform Pipi Dance at Government House
- 2009 Geoffrey and Sally White from Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation visit Gawura
- 2010 Gawura students with their new books from Books in Homes
- 2011 Keon Dawson plays solo guitar at the Gawura NAIDOC Awards ceremony
- 2012 Waiting for the Gawura bus with Dr Collier, Mr Kightley and Dennis
- 2013 Students perform at the Gawura NAIDOC Awards Ceremony
- 2014 Dame Marie Roslyn Bashir AD, CVO visits Gawura during NAIDOC week
- 2015 Pastor Ray Minniecon at the Gawura Cocktail Party – Macquarie Bank
- 2016 Mary Alice Foundation's Rosy Sullivan joins TJ and David North in front of the new Gawura bus funded by the Foundation.



# Reflecting on 10 years of remarkable achievement

**Gawura's Director of Development Lucy Crook reflects on Gawura's first 10 years and how much she has enjoyed being part of what was a fledgling idea to the current success of having 13 students graduate from Year 12.**

Working for the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation gave me excellent insight into many remarkable charities across Australia and the life-changing work they all do. Decisions on who to financially support are difficult but there is a process based on the Foundation's criteria combined with significant due diligence on each program. What is the vision? What are they trying to achieve? What gap are they trying to fill? Is anyone else already filling that gap? Is leadership committed? Is the program sustainable? Can it be replicated?

All these questions needed to be answered when making the decision to provide risky start-up funding in 2007 to a new program in Sydney called 'Gawura'. The need was evident – Indigenous children were still way behind the eight-ball in terms of educational outcomes; the program was unique – the first 'school within a school' in Australia; demonstrable commitment from leadership – a taskforce of Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders with the backing and excellent vision of St Andrew's Cathedral School – to provide an education in a nurturing, culturally enriching environment, with parent participation providing the

foundation for these children to make their own choices for their futures.

The Directors of the VFFF Board were in favour of supporting the program and Gawura came into fruition in 2007 with a Smoking Ceremony in Sydney Square marking the opening of the new school. It was a moving event with the merging of two cultures and our first Aboriginal graduate, Ivor Rigney-Sebastian, playing the didgeridoo as a bright-eyed young boy about to start an exciting journey at a new school with six other students.

Pastor Ray Minniecon, Founding Member of Gawura, Ambassador to Gawura and member of the SACS School Council explained the vision for Gawura and why Indigenous children have been at such a disadvantage in our educational system.

"It's the system that has failed our children. In Aboriginal culture, our children were never considered failures. Put them into the western system of education and all of a sudden they are considered failures," he said. "We need to provide a new system for our children – we need to provide them with a culture of learning which is culturally appropriate and where our community – parents and carers – play a

key role. This is what Gawura provides for our kids. This is the way of the future."

After three years of watching Gawura grow and being excited by the progress of the children, an opportunity to join the school as the fundraising manager emerged. I jumped at the chance and on my very first day, I was literally squashed into the lift with 30 SACS students – their excited chatter brought back wonderful memories and I felt a sense of excitement. What an uplifting place to work! Shortly afterwards, I met the Head of Gawura, Mr David North, who was brimming with energy, which was very contagious. Before I had the chance to say 'hi' he ushered me into a seat next to a Gawura student and got me to help with their reading. "David does that to everyone," commented Rachel Crealy, the Stage 1 teacher from Canada. "You'll get used to it!" I loved reading with the students in the mornings and dealing with their creative delaying tactics. "Miss, you have a spider on your shoulder!" exclaimed Jacqueline as I jumped up and ripped my jumper off. "Just joking!" she said afterwards. "I need to get a tissue," said Izak. I answered, "You've already gone to get three tissues. I don't think you need another one right now – let's concentrate on finishing the next few pages first." He continued, "But I need another tissue to concentrate." I gave in: "OK, one more tissue then we will knuckle down."

It wasn't too long before we set up a volunteer program and convinced staff from corporate organisations, which tower over our school and sticky beak into our rooftop playground, to join our morning reading program. We now have 70 volunteers who come and read to students each week. We couldn't do without them and luckily they appear to get just as much out of the experience as the students do.

Meeting the Gawura families and hearing their stories is always inspiring. The sense of family and connectedness to community and the sense of support they provide each other, no matter where in Australia they live, is phenomenal. They provide a better version of

AirBnB than AirBnB and have been doing it for 60,000 years.

Listening to the families' feedback on Gawura is also inspiring: "Gawura makes a huge effort to connect with our people through teaching our culture and while they don't always get it right, they work really hard at it," said Taminya, parent of Jenarose (Year 1).

"Gawura has taught my Wol so much in such a short amount of time that it has inspired myself, my brother and my mother to go and study," said Charmaine Wellington, parent of Wolmorry (Year 7).

It's hard to believe Gawura is celebrating 10 years this year! Izak is not chasing tissues anymore but focussing on working hard so he can go to university and follow in the footsteps of his older brother Ivor – the bright-eyed boy who played didgeridoo at our first smoking ceremony in 2007 and who returned to play at our 10-Year Anniversary this year. Ivor took time off work at Westpac and study at UTS to be a part of the special celebrations. Jacqueline is an excellent role model for the younger Gawura students and keeps the secondary Gawura students in line as she prepares for the HSC next year. At the end of 2017, a total of 13 Gawura students will have graduated from Year 12, with the majority choosing to do further study at university.

At Gawura, we do not always get it right but we try hard every day and our partnership with the Gawura parents and community keeps us on the right track. We look forward to the next 10 years of Gawura!

*We would like to thank our founding donors VFFF and the Hunt Family Foundation for making Gawura possible. A huge thank you to all our donors and volunteers.*



**"You're better  
than you think  
you are"**



**'Hope has been identified as one of three primary drivers impacting student performance – and yet only 48 per cent of Australian students surveyed have hope!'**

Throughout 2017, British educator *Dr Julie McGonigle* had input into the academic direction of St Andrew's in her role as Deputy Head of School (Academic Improvement). Here, she reflects on how a teacher's expectations can have a major impact on student achievement.

In my early teens, the mother of a friend of mine looked at me and said, "you're better than you think you are." At the time, I thought it was an odd thing to say. She didn't expand, explain or deepen her observation, it was just left hanging. Over the next few years, as I got to know that family, she would intermittently repeat the same statement. Again, no explanation or further conversation, just that one exclamatory statement left hanging in the air, like a subtle aroma persuading you to consider its source. It challenged me. It challenged me to think. It challenged me to think about my expectations of myself.

'Expectation' is a greatly used word within the field of education. The much quoted Australian educational researcher, John Hattie, analysed over 50,000 studies into student achievement and concluded that the factor that has the greatest impact is 'teacher expectation'.

Teacher expectation influences student expectation, which impacts the entire quality of the learning and, of course, outcomes. When you walk into a room where the teacher has high expectations, the learning is well organised, fast-paced, enthusiastic and challenging. You can 'feel' in the atmosphere that everyone in that room is driving towards a goal and that everyone in that room is being supported to meet that goal: no excuses, no child left behind.

In the UK, one of the ways that schools have driven high expectations is by setting student targets. In that context, targets have been based on SATS (NAPLAN equivalent) and a school's individual standardised testing on entry (for subjects that do not have

a strong correlation with literacy and numeracy). These targets have then been communicated to students, parents and teachers, aiding a shared vision of academic outcomes for that school year. As each new set of data comes in, those targets are then reviewed and either stay the same or, in the case of students who have outperformed their targets, adjusted upwards (targets are rarely adjusted downwards).

This target setting process can be transformative. For many students it constantly reminds them that, 'they are better than they think they are'. For many staff, it raises their expectations of the potential of their students. It also brings parents into the learning conversation in a way that is empowering and enriching.

The teenage years bring a new set of challenges for young people. These present themselves in a variety of ways, some of which affect learning. The benefit of the target setting process is that it acts as a reminder to both student and staff member that, no matter what that student is presenting in class at that moment, they have a potential that far outweighs the current barrier. In the best cases, students and staff see targets as a minimum standard and therefore, consistently outperform their targets. (I have seen students go from relatively low targets to the very highest that could be set within three years of schooling.)

Over the past year at SACS, we have been trialling a number of ways in which we could set student targets. In recent months this methodology has then been translated into a new student dashboard which has been trialled by two year groups. On the basis of that trial, the dashboards will be re-worked, ready to be communicated with all students and staff members at the beginning of 2018.



However, this process is not solely about student outcomes: it is more importantly about hope.

Within Australia, Gallup Education Practice, who has studied the key factors that impact student performance for over 40 years, identify hope (as defined by ideas and energy for the future), as one of three primary drivers. Yet, when they summarise their findings from Australia as a whole, they conclude that only 48 per cent of students have hope. Hope is a key factor affecting student performance and yet reportedly the missing factor for over half of our students.

In psychological circles, hope has been defined as a person's ability to set goals, to see the best pathway to meeting those goals and to have the energy to complete the journey: the goal, the pathway and the agency.

The target setting process starts this process of hope. It gives the student a vision of what's possible for that year, provoking them to think about their own goals and the best pathway to get there. Then it is a team effort to support and sustain their energy towards those goals, which brings us full circle back to the expectations in the classroom.

Of course at St Andrew's we believe in a somewhat 'thicker description' of hope.

Theologically, hope, along with her 'sisters' – faith and love – is one of three primary virtues impacting not only performance outcomes but rather the whole of life. This does not take away from the validity of what is outlined above. Rather this target-setting process should provoke students to raise up their eyes; to think about their personal best within the context of academic achievement and to realise that 'they are better than they think they are'.

However, this 'thicker description' of hope takes those raised eyes and seeks to help a young person to think about ultimate hope. This time, not the goal, the pathway and the agency but rather, *'the way, the truth and the life.'* (John 14:6).

Theologically, hope, along with her 'sisters' – faith and love – is one of three primary virtues impacting not only performance outcomes but rather the whole of life.



## SACS Student Dashboard



## Junior School

# Learning Pit leads students to 'eureka' moments

**The Junior School has recently implemented a learning strategy called The Learning Pit that helps students engage more in their school work across all subjects. It allows students to take charge of their own learning in a way they feel most comfortable, writes Lucy Robson.**

The Director of Primary Education Mrs Rhonda Robson said Junior School and Gawura students have easily understood and eagerly embraced the Learning Pit. "It really encourages students to embrace the process of learning. Students are given a visual metaphor and a supporting language so they can take control of their own learning, even when it is hard and challenging," she said.

"They have at their disposal a range of shared tools or strategies that they can implement when they get stuck, which means they have entered the 'Learning Pit'. The students understand that when they get 'stuck', they have the means at their disposal to get back out of the pit and to also help others get out of the pit."

The concept, developed by James Nottingham, involves four steps which describes the journey of overcoming a challenge. Nottingham believes it "helps students to persevere, inquire, collaborate, and achieve an 'aha' learning eureka moment!"

Mrs Robson explains, "Students are more likely to engage with a challenge if they understand how to achieve it on their own. There is a greater sense of achievement when students are able to overcome a challenge through their own strategy."

"When students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort and perseverance makes them stronger. Therefore, they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement."

The Learning Pit has proved to be a success, with both students and teachers at St Andrew's and Gawura engaging with the strategy.

"We are so pleased to see that the Learning Pit has quickly helped to put our students in the driver's seat of their own

learning," Mrs Robson said. "It's all about helping students to understand how to move forward and knowing where to go to next. All students K – 6 can now explain the learning process through the Learning Pit analogy."

*To fully understand this learning process, it is helpful to view James Nottingham's fabulous animated video on The Learning Pit at: <https://vimeo.com/128462566>*





# Student reflections on The Learning Pit



This model of learning can be applied to any subject or challenge at school and at home. The following students spoke about their enjoyment of doing activities about the Learning Pit itself, as well as using the Learning Pit to help them when they struggle with a topic or question.



## 1. Lucas (5B)

"We watched a video about the Learning Pit and learnt about a bridge that goes straight across the pit, which is taking the easy way out. But it's better to use the Learning Pit because when there is something new or hard in class, you won't learn if the teacher just tells you the answer."

## 2. Edie (3/4L)

"I like to use it in maths with my friends, and we work it out together on a piece of paper and sometimes we even draw the Learning Pit by drawing the times tables in the Learning Pit. So if you don't know your six times tables, and the question is  $6 \times 3$ , you use the Learning Pit to help you out."

## 3. Christie (6RO)

"Occasionally for homework we will write what level we are on: Level 1 is a new subject, Level 2 is where you might be

struggling, Level 3 is you think you have the hang of it and Level 4 is when it's easy for you.

I enjoy learning what levels I am on, so I know if I need help with any other things or subjects. I also enjoy learning how to use it too. I think that all schools should use it, so the students know how they are going."

## 4. Patrick (6RO)

"The Learning Pit is a structured way for kids to think about their levels of learning, from a scale of one to four. This goes for all subjects both outside and inside of school. For example, long division is really hard for me, but with the Learning Pit, I have been getting better and better and now I'm good at it."

## 5. Russell (5V)

"I enjoyed how we got to do what we wanted when learning about it, we didn't have to just answer questions. I got a piece of paper and drew the Learning Pit and glued Lego to it. It helps you find a different way to learn it, by doing it the way you want to do it."

## 6. Joylara (3/4 Gawura)

"The Learning Pit has been fun to learn. For technology, we went down to the green screen room and took photos of ourselves to put into the Learning Pit and that was super fun. Everyone should use the Learning Pit because it helps a lot."

## 7. Peta-Lacey (K-2 Gawura)

"The Learning Pit is where you are stuck and you go through stages to figure out how to get out. When you are stuck, you say 'It's too hard' and 'I'm going to quit', then someone might say 'We can do this together' and after you get help, you say 'Now I get it!'"

## 8. Kaleb (K-2 Gawura)

"You can use the Learning Pit by asking your friends or your teacher to help you with a hard question. We used iPads to make the Learning Pit with photos and that was really fun."

# Teachers engaged in learning

**Our Deputy Head (Learning and Teaching) Mr Richard Ford has overseen the professional development of staff over many years and details some of the amazing achievements of SACS staff 'behind the scenes'.**

A Nobel Prize-winning Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore, once wrote, "a teacher can never truly teach unless still learning themselves. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame."

The lamp of learning is burning brightly in teachers at St Andrew's Cathedral School and the flame from these teachers often ignites a fire for learning in the students they teach.

St Andrew's desires every learner to be engaged and growing every day. Teachers work to make this vision a reality for students. The learning our students experience is underpinned by the professional learning in which our teachers engage.

**University study** – 17 teachers have completed postgraduate study in 2016 or 2017 (see details on page 15). Degrees completed by teachers include a Master of Educational Leadership, Master of Arts, Master of Education and Master of Gifted Education. Many more staff will complete their postgraduate study in 2018.

**Staff scholarships** – Staff scholarships are awarded each year to staff members who are looking to engage in an international study tour to investigate an aspect of learning that relates to the Strategic Plan and improves learning for students. Recent recipients have focused on interdisciplinary learning, neuroscience and learning technologies. These scholarships are partly funded by the P&F.

**Presenting at conferences and workshops** – staff presented on more than 30 occasions at conferences and workshops across Australia and internationally in 2017. These invitations to present reflect the quality of learning at the school and the culture of sharing which exists among staff.

**Professional reading groups** – teachers have met again this year to discuss professional readings. The main book this year was co-authored by Professor Michael Anderson, an alumni of the school. Anderson's latest book, *Transforming Schools: Creativity, Critical Reflection, Communication, Collaboration* has provided teachers with practical strategies for developing students' creativity, critical reflection, communication and collaboration skills.

**Making thinking visible group** – conscious that education is "not the learning of many facts, but the training of the mind" (Einstein, 1921), a group of teachers has met throughout the year to support each other in embedding Harvard's Visible Thinking Routines in their classes. This research-based approach seeks to integrate the development of students' thinking across subjects.

## Applying neuroscience to engagement in learning

**The Director of Enrichment and Learning, Penni Maher, used her staff scholarship to attend a number of workshops in the USA and discovered how recent developments in neuroscience are being applied to learning.**

The focus of my study tour to the US was recent and ongoing developments in neuroscience and its applicability to learning. This growing field comprises experts from a broad range of disciplines, including neuroscience, psychology and education. Until recently, these experts have conducted research and discussion in their silos. Today, recognition of the need to 'bridge the gap' between brain research and the classroom is increasingly important. This collaboration has begun to combine important work on emotion, mindset, memory, attention, motivation, focus, creativity, skills, knowledge, disability, self-regulation, reading, numeracy, notions of giftedness and measuring progress.

The underlying aim of the tour was aligned to the SACS goal of every learner engaged and growing every day. Cognitive neuroscience is providing a clearer picture of how individuals respond to sensory stimuli and perform cognitive tasks, which has allowed for a better understanding of the brain's neural systems and how they relate to focus, learning and creative problem solving. Given the large numbers of St Andrew's students identified as Gifted and Twice Exceptional, this approach is vital in challenging and engaging diverse learners.

The first workshop, Neuropsychology of Learning Disabilities, focused on meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties by developing and evaluating evidence based teaching interventions. We have a lot of

students at SACS who have been identified as requiring adjustments to learning in the National Collection of Consistent Data, and there are more than 50 students who have identified disabilities. This week-long workshop was designed to address specific learning difficulties in reading, writing and mathematics.

The second workshop, Neuroscience and Classroom Engagement, was a four-day intensive program that addressed teaching pedagogy in the light of neuroscience research. Dr Judy Willis, a neurologist and teacher, used her expertise to explain what works in the classroom and why. With a focus on maximising and maintaining attention, focus and cognition, this has had implications for all learners at SACS, including us as adult learners!

The key concepts of early intervention, intensive/targeted programs and effective assessment/monitoring were reinforced. This provided a real sense of confidence and validation for the kinds of work we have been building in the Junior School and Middle School at SACS.

The possibilities neuroscience offers has implications for all learning to be challenging, allowing all students to explore creative solutions for their own learning – cognitive and social/emotional. This in turn develops students into the graduates we want; with emotional intelligence, self-regulation, resilience, a growth mindset and creative passion.





## 2017 Conference presentations



**Corinna Bailey**

*AIS NSW DigiSTEM Conference* – use of design thinking and OneNote.



**Tara Ball**

*Australian Library & Information Association Information Online Conference* – Murder in the library: Using genre based promotions to promote fiction. *Teacher Librarian Conference* – Genre based promotions.



**Rebecca Collett**

*AIS Science and Technology Conference* – Effectively using your learning management system to teach science.



**Lucy Crook**

*AIS NSW State Conference* – Bridging the Gap. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Transitions Criterion Conference* – Outcomes and successes of the Gawura program.



**John Cross**

*School Growth Planning and Delivery Conference* – Initiating a cultural shift around school planning and design. *Learning Environments Australia* – SACS as a vertical school.



**Emily Edwards**

*World Council for Gifted and Talented Children* – Acceleration.



**Clinton Gribble**

*School Learning Spaces Design Conference* – Creating 21st Century learning environments within limited space.



**Tiina Hufton**

*AIS NSW History Conference* – formative assessment in the history classroom. *Reconceptualising Assessment AIS Conference* – assessment for good rather than evil.



**Jenny Kemp**

*EduTech Library Congress* – Using 1-1 devices to the advantage of the school library. *Teacher Librarian Conference* – Murder in the library: using genre based promotions to promote fiction.



**Penni Maher**

*Pearson Working Memory Conference (Sydney and Perth)* – building your capacity to learn.



**Julie McGonigle**

*Armitage Lecturer (Shore School)* – A consideration of how the theological virtue of hope can energise a school.



**Sharon Munro**

*IBO – IB Administrators Workshop for Principals and Deputies.*



**Bruce Perry**

*Educate Plus VIC/TAS Chapter Conference* – student retention. *Educate Plus NSW/ACT Chapter Conference* – the lessons I have learnt in enrolment best practice.



**John Ralph**

*AIS NSW State Conference* – Bridging the Gap. *National Indigenous Education Forum* – Examining the success behind Gawura's program.



**Sue Salier**

*The National New Australian Art Educators Conference* – Creative writing in the gallery and the classroom.



**Elle Smith**

*AIS NSW* – Teaching Stage 6 PDHPE for the first time; Technology for enhancement of school sport; Innovative teaching practices for road safety; Flipping PDHPE.



**Eleni Tatsis**

*IBO* – Language A Literature Category 1 and 2 Workshop (Singapore); Language A Literature Category 1 Workshop (Adelaide).



**Peter Tompkins**

*Future Schools Conference* – Leveraging technology in Mathematics.



**Rolfe Kolbe**

*MANSW conference* – Using technology to enhance, enrich and extend maths learning. *EduTech* – Content creation for learning. *STEM Symposium* – Innovative maths teaching using different technologies.



**Kate Layhe**

*Woodleigh School* – Introduction to the MYP.



**Bow Robertson**

*AIS NSW* – Beginning the Stage 6 journey.

## 2016 and 2017 Post-graduate study

Name	Award	Institution
Nikki Bowden	Graduate Certificate in Education (Gifted Education)	University of New South Wales
Derek Champion	Master of Educational Leadership	Macquarie University
Teegan Colusso	Graduate Certificate in Education (Gifted Education)	University of New South Wales
Emily Edwards	Master of Education (Gifted)	University of New South Wales
Kylie Ford	Master of Education (Literacy)	University of Wollongong
Tim Gardiner	Master of Educational Leadership	Macquarie University
Tiina Hufton	Master of Educational Leadership	Macquarie University
Kirsten Macaulay	Master of Education (Leadership)	Western Sydney University
Brad Murphy	Master of Information and Communication Technology in Education	Charles Sturt University
Michael Neate	Master of Arts (Ancient History)	Macquarie University
Phillip Pain	Diploma of Photo Imaging	CATC Design School
Sirje Perendi	Master of Arts (Germanic Studies)	Tampere University, Finland
Cathy Phipps	Master of Leadership and Management in Education	University of Newcastle
Kate Robertson	Graduate Certificate in Education (Gifted Education)	University of New South Wales
Tace Stevens	Diploma of Creative and Indigenous Writing	Charles Darwin University
Eleni Tatsis	Professional Certificate in Teaching (Clinical)	University of Melbourne
John Tung	Master of Teaching	University of Technology Sydney

# Connecting with Indigenous culture

Christian Development teacher and CRU group coordinator *Anna Owen* recently visited a remote Aboriginal community to gain a greater understanding of Indigenous culture and heritage.

I have long been moved by the true story of the Aboriginal people of Australia. In my lifetime, I went from learning a peaceful version of the events of British colonisation while in primary school to the confronting realities of that time when I studied Aboriginal History at university.

I have had the privilege of visiting a number of Aboriginal communities in Central and Western Australia in the past 10 years and these visits have only cemented my desire to listen and to learn more from Aboriginal people about their stories. This is especially important in the Christian ministry I am involved in at SACS, serving in the Junior School and Gawura School through Chapel and our voluntary Christian lunchtime groups.

In the 2017 June/July holidays, the school generously arranged for me to attend a Spirit Journey lead by a current parent, Reverend Dr Geoff Broughton, out to East Arrernte country (Northern Territory) with

Aboriginal elder John Cavanagh. We went out for five days and four nights, sleeping under the stars in swags, visiting various places on John's country, hearing Dreaming stories from the land, along with the very sad stories of his family's treatment by the Government, pastoralists and the church. We also got to hear of John's faith in God and how that shapes his response of untold forgiveness for the wrongs done in the past, and his hope for a better future.

Our group of 18 came from diverse backgrounds but were all keen to listen and to learn more about Aboriginal people and their stories on this desert journey. Geoff Broughton was an excellent guide. He has shared a long-term connection and relationship with John and his family in Alice Springs and works closely with a team based in Alice Springs, at the Uniting Church, to make these trips happen. Together they not only organised all the logistics but helped the group to process the experience and

reflect on how we can be a part of a better Australia for Aboriginal people.

I would really encourage anyone interested in going on this trip to go! There was a lot of laughter and tears, there were the glorious scapes of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Western Simpson Desert and, of course, there was the chance to listen to the Aboriginal stories and God's amazing grace.





# Discovering the magic of science

**In September, Year 11 International Baccalaureate science students were tasked with creating a presentation that shared their love of science with the St Andrew's Infants school.**

Working in 16 interdisciplinary teams, the science students needed to come up with a 'magic' show or mystery presentation that explained a scientific concept in very simple terms.

The 16 groups of four students from across biology, chemistry, physics and sport, exercise and health science designed and then presented to small groups of K-2 students, who circulated the rooms at intervals to see different presentations. Some activities were a mix of all the sciences, while others focused on one discipline.

Deputy Head of Science Mr Brad Murphy said the aim of the Group 4 Project was to have students develop and apply '21st Century' communication skills.

"We wanted to challenge students to combine their creativity, collaboration and critical thinking skills to create a valuable learning experience for young children," he said. "Having to present to young children forced the students to

be really creative, to problem solve and come up with a visually engaging presentation that captured the K-2 students' interest and understanding."

Biology student Jessica Jenner and her group chose to demonstrate how water flows through flowers by using food dye in water. "I had a lot of fun with it because our experiment was simple but it looked really, really nice and for the little kids it was 'oh, wow, look at the colourful flowers, how did that happen? It's like a rainbow'," she explained. "We spent a lot of time making it look really good and when the kids came past, they were intrigued about how the flower changed colour. With little kids, it's difficult to explain stuff like covalent and adhesive bonds, so we had to find a simple analogy, like when you drink water, it goes inside you, it's the same thing with plants; they drink water and that's how they pick up the colours."

Chemistry and sport science student Louisa Bartsch and her team did a "dancing milk" demonstration with a bowl of milk, food colouring and washing



detergent. "When you put the washing detergent in the milk, it disperses and we were showing how the detergent can break the fat bonds of the milk and make the food colour disperse throughout," she said. "I think the kids really enjoyed it because they like things with colour and it really engaged them, so all the reactions were 'oh wow, that's so cool and so beautiful'."

Physics and chemistry student Samantha Backler said explaining the difference between acids and bases to younger children was challenging. "You really had to understand it thoroughly yourself in order to teach somebody who knows less about the topic than you do. So I think the ability to simplify it was challenging and you required more knowledge of the topic to actually do that," she said.

"So we started with the bleach (a base) and we added in the vinegar (an acid) and the pH indicator turned from pink to transparent (neutral) which really seemed to excite the younger kids. We explained it by using the analogy of lemons and toothpaste, so they could understand the contrast."

After the presentations, the students spent some time



reflecting on their experiments and their audience's response.

"We had to reflect on how we could have done it better, what we did really well and how we could have engaged the kids more," Sam said.

Mr Murphy said the excitement displayed by the K-2 students, along with the feedback from their teachers, made it clear the presentations were a resounding success.

"The Year 11 students, who should be rightly proud of their efforts, were enthusiastic in their group presentations to the young students, who enjoyed looking at and interacting with the presentations and displays," he said. "The interaction between the senior students and the infants' school students was invaluable, providing joyful engagement with scientific principles," he said.

"The Group 4 Project is about learning from the experience and reflecting upon it rather than necessarily having a perfect presentation," he added. "The Year 11 students clearly demonstrated the school's character strengths of: HEART (being Courageous), MIND (being Inquiring) and LIFE: (being Persistent)."

## K-2 students' favourite experiments ...

### Jonathan (1A)

"My favourite experiment was that one about sand [friction] because you had to try and get the sticks to the bottom and you can't. And the book, it sticks together, you can't pull it apart, it's really hard."

### Archie (1O)

"My favourite one was where I got to change colour just with texta and water. I liked it because I got to try some of their things."

### Kaleb (Gawura)

"I liked the egg one because it was cool to see an egg get sucked down."

### Eddison (KM)

"My favourite one was water guns because you get to shoot the cups with the faces and you have to shoot inside the mouth."

### Jamie (KM)

"I like the lava lamps because we got to put things in oil."

### Violet (KL)

"My favourite experiment was when the vinegar went into the baking soda and the cup vomited the mixture. It was so funny that a real life cup could vomit."

### Eloise (KL)

"I really like the fire one because it flew and it was really funny. I learned that it's magic."

### Charlie (2S) and Inness (2B)

"The Oobleck was so cool because you could put your hand in it and you would sink down and it was so soft, but when you got to the bottom it was hard. If you punched it, it was hard, but if you let it ooze in your hand, it was like water."



# Transformational experiences



The Outdoor Education program has long been a defining aspect of an education at St Andrew's, with the 20-day Kosi to Coast expedition being the pinnacle Year 10 experience. *John Chapman* explains why a growing number of students are choosing to undertake this gruelling journey.

On the morning of 19 November 2006, 13 Year 10 students (11 boys and two girls) stood at the carpark at Guthega village. Their group leader, Bel Crane, and the two Year 13 students, Frank Leonarder and Tim Swaverly were helping them with final preparations for the enormous journey ahead of them. This group were the first to undertake a program that has since become iconic for our school and a rite of passage for many. That program is the 20-day, Kosi to Coast expedition. To our knowledge, it is the longest continuous human powered expedition offered to students at any NSW (and perhaps Australian) school.

Before the Kosi to Coast, there were other fantastic Outdoor Education options for Year 10 students. There were hikes from Katoomba to Mittagong, over the Kosciuszko Main Range or canoeing on the Murray River, as well as others. So why offer a 20-day continuous expedition? Current Director of Co-curricular Education, Ric

van Wachem, who developed the program, explained: "I had run expeditions of a similar length in North America and knew the inherent value that comes with young people spending an extended amount of time on a journey in a wilderness setting," he said. "I wanted to bring a similar experience to the students of St Andrew's that also took in some iconic areas of the Australian landscape."

The route of the expedition has changed little since 2006. Participants start at the Munyang Power Station near the alpine village of Guthega. They hike over the Kosciuszko Main Range past Mt Tate, Mt Twynam and others on their way to summit the highest mountain in Australia. From there, the hike continues through the Rams Heads and down to Dead Horse Gap to continue along the Cascade Trail through the Pilot Wilderness. After nine days of hiking, the expeditioners arrive at the Snowy River, at a place

called The Pinch. Here they swap their boots for inflatable two-person rafts (although prior to 2011 they used plastic canoes) and begin their paddle. There are many amazing rapids and lovely campsites, especially through Tulloch Ard Gorge, which is a true wilderness highlight. Eventually the groups reach the finish at Marlo on the Bass Strait coast. The final 400m of the trip is a jubilant run over the sand dune to dip their toes in the ocean. It is a total journey of 290km, all completed under their own power (with some help from the Snowy River). Along the way, students are responsible for everything:- cooking, cleaning, setting and packing up camp, hiking, paddling, entertaining themselves and others and days where they act as the group's leader.

The true worth of this program cannot be measured in kilometres. The real journey is not one of hiking and paddling, but one of personal discovery. It is measured in the

friendships that are created and strengthened, the confidence that is gained from facing many challenges and the irreplaceable memories created along the way. It has grown in popularity from that group of 13 in 2006 to five groups – 56 students in total – in 2017.

Why is the Kosi to Coast so popular? Part of the reason is that older siblings who have completed the trip returned with amazing stories. I have completed the expedition twice as a group leader and have loved living in community with the students that chose this trip. Many friendships were forged and I remember fondly the discussions (often deep and profound) that were had.

One student, Tom Hetherington-Welch (OA 2017), who will be an Outdoor Education Trainee with SACS in 2018, said the Kosi to Coast was the highlight of the many camps offered at St Andrew's.

"The 20-day is one of the most defining experiences that has



created who I am today," he said. "On every SACS camp I made new friends, discovered new people and learnt more about myself. Every school camp I've been on has helped me overcome adversity – I've broken bones, strained muscles, lost expensive things, and cried endlessly – and I wouldn't have it any other way, because I've also laughed, gained connections with staff and students, and overcome personal issues while ticking off my bucket list some things I never thought I would achieve before finishing school.

"I thought the 20-day would be hard but it was also incredible and so rewarding in unexpected ways. There were two groups and I ended up in a group of people I didn't know that well rather than my mates, but that was really good because I think I would have gotten sick of my mates after five days! I think surviving with the same people for 20 days was hard – relying on each other and helping each other is more challenging than I expected, but I came away with some amazing new connections that I will have for a long time.

"I think it should be compulsory for every student to do the 20-day! It really is an experience unlike any other. It's 20 days away from family, away from

civilization, no phones or anything. It's an insane opportunity in Year 10 to do before you do your HSC and you may never get that opportunity again."

Kya Wiya, who also completed the 20-day with Tom and has decided to work as an Outdoor Education Trainee with SACS in 2018, said every student experiences a daily sense of achievement.

"One highlight of the 20-day is that you achieve the goals set every day. At the beginning of the day, we have to do this many kilometres and have lunch at a certain spot at this time, and you achieve that goal and at the end of the day, we make our own meals and we're doing everything – it's all up to us! So every day is rewarding," Kya said. "You learn a lot of new skills too – cooking, cleaning and all that comes with camping. Also, everyone spent a day leading the group and that was a good test because you have to decide when everyone stops and rests, when everyone eats and you also learn how to mediate and try to meet the needs of everyone, while still testing them and pushing them and getting to your goal as a team."

While it may be hard to know exactly why the Kosi to Coast



has become so popular at SACS, I suspect those who have completed the challenge (like Kya and Tom) are the ones recommending it to others. What I do know is that it will continue to remain a life-changing and defining experience for all those students who attempt it.

*Bottom: John Chapman (left) celebrates the final day of the tour with students.*

*Inset (top left): Tom Hetherington-Welch and Kya Wiya.*





# Iconic Year 9 snowcamp comes of age

## Director of Sport and Co-curricular Education, Ric van Wachem, reflects on his 20 years overseeing the backcountry ski program.

In 1998, I ran our first backcountry ski program for Year 9. We had small pyramid type floorless tents, 3m x 3m, where the staff cooked the food and handed the food out the door to hungry students. If there was a blizzard, the students would stay in their tents and their food would be tent delivered. There weren't any meeting tents, so we hoped for good weather to have group talks! Each morning our leather boots would be frozen due to water soaking through the leather and the overnight cold. The students would force their feet into the boots with the hope that their feet would warm up by midday! They were hard-core students in those days!

In 1999, I was instructing at a Ski Resort near Vancouver when I chanced upon a Mountain Hardwear Space Station. This is an Everest base camp tent, capable of holding about 30 people seated and 15 people sleeping. I promptly bought it for \$5000! This and its smaller version, the Stronghold, have become our mainstay group tents, whereby we build our snow city. Our activities are centred around these.

These, together with plastic ski boots that came in around 2001 and heavier more appropriate types of skis, have made the camp what it is today. We have had more than 3500 students over 20 years, experience an

amazing adventure in the snow for a week at a time. No other school in Australia, and possibly elsewhere, has taken this number of students, over this length of time for this duration for a whole year group.

I had a friend join us from his home in Breckenridge, Colorado, last year, who was previously an editor of a snowboard magazine and introduced snowboard ski patrol to Colorado. He sent me the following comment in an email: "the glimpse I got into the psyche of your countrymen through your incredible staff and those wonderful kids on the trip reinforced my admiration. There's no complaining, it's all smiles. An amazing experience for kids and one that I wish was replicated in my own town."

Generally, we have four separate groups of 12, with three staff. This amounts to one Stronghold meeting and cooking tent, two to three staff tents and four student tents. In total we have on the snow for a total of four weeks, approximately 30 tents, holding up to 60 people each week! It is certainly a unique environment. As with anything, there are some students who are totally into the experience and there are others that struggle. What is a wonderful thing to witness is the development of relationships, teamwork and care for each

other through the, at times, challenging experiences.

You would think that from a risk point of view, we would have had our fair share of injuries and issues. In 20 years and 3500 students, we have not had one case of hypothermia, and there has only been one broken ankle, foot and collarbone, two broken wrists, some sprained ankles, some sunburn and a few cuts from cooking! The main issue has been students who bring with them some type of flu virus that they spread to others!

I encourage students to look back at these trips in hindsight. Students who may have had a challenging week may not remember their expedition fondly but will have a tremendous sense of achievement.

So if you are at Perisher Valley Ski Resort in the last week of August or the first few weeks of September, feel free to trek to the SACS Snow City to witness our Year 9 students for an experience that few have but our Year 9 students do!





# Exploring the Gospel at Zedge Camp

Students at St Andrew's can explore what it means to be a Christian by joining one of the many voluntary stage-based Christian groups (CRU) running weekly across the school. Every year, the chaplaincy team also run a camp for any interested secondary students who want to learn more about what the Bible teaches while also having plenty of fun and making new friends. Anna Owen reports on this year's camp.

This year's Zedge Camp was a great success, thanks to the 14 staff and 75 students who made it so. We stayed at Long Point Conference Centre and were fortunate to have an extra day, leaving first thing Friday morning and returning Sunday afternoon.

The theme for the weekend was 'SACS to the World' which was all about mission – God's plan for us and God's plan for the world.

Our guest speaker, Topher Hallyburton, did a great job teaching from the Bible and explaining how incredible it is for us to be a part of God's story in bringing people to enjoy an eternal relationship with Him. His challenge to us will be taken up at next year's Engage Mission in Term 1, Week 7.

The weekend was packed with all kinds of activities from the sessions and talks, to discussion groups, workshops, outdoor sports, indoor games, painting and not to mention the Film Fiesta theme night hosted by the Year 12s, which provided plenty of fun and laughter.

The student leaders in Years 9-12 were sensational and really stepped up when it came to leading the sessions and discussion groups.

Special mention is to be made of all the staff members who gave up their weekend to be there and did a great job leading discussion groups amongst many other things. The staff included: Peter Wrench and Derek Cheng (both of whom co-directed the camp with me), Sam Hwang, Garth Hasler, Michael Bennett, Jenny Kemp, Tiina Hufton, Penni Maher, Michael Sahlstrom, Chris Kim, Phillip Pain, Bronwyn Zucker, Rebecca Leeds, Tracey Ireland and Jessica Knudson.

Many people were praying for the camp and we give thanks to God for His abundant provisions on this great weekend away.

## What are Cru groups?

Cru is a co-curricular activity offered to students of all ages who are interested in knowing more about the Christian faith or for those seeking to grow their Christian faith. Cru groups are led by Christian staff or students. Activities include small-group Bible studies and fun games and discussions.



## Camp reflections

by SACS CRU Captain Greta Pigott

Zedge camp was an amazing opportunity for the students at SACS to spend time with other Christians or learn more about God for the first time. There was a great mix of students from Years 7 to 12, both Christians and non-Christians, who were able to get a break from school, have some fun, get to know new people and learn about God.

It was a great chance to get to know students from other years, with lots of games, jokes, sport and food. The Year 12 students gave up their study time to organise music and lead and plan an awesome film fiesta themed night that had the whole camp (teachers included) having fun in movie themed costumes.

Topher, the guest speaker from Darwin, taught us about God's story and how we can be a part of it through Jesus.

There were many fruitful discussions about God and what Jesus means for us as students. Some students prayed the prayer to become a Christian for the first time and others bought their first Bibles.

It was an awesome weekend and an amazing encouragement for all the students and teachers.





# Ralph prepares to put down his baton

After 13 years at St Andrew's Cathedral School, Head of Music Ralph Wilcock feels he has achieved many of his career goals and is ready to embark on a fresh adventure in 2018. Melanie Collins asked Ralph about his most memorable performance, his favourite musical, what inspired him most in his role, and what he plans to do with all his spare time!

## How are you feeling about leaving?

It's going to be strange, bittersweet – I have mixed feelings. This place has been a big part of my life and I am going to miss so many things – the many great moments, the many strong friendships and relationships with the staff, music tutors and especially the students. It's a unique relationship of care and learning and I love it! I am going to miss the passion and reward that comes with perfecting or creating a piece of music with students but nonetheless, I still have a lot of years left in me and it's time for me to step back from it because it has been a very intense job and a rest sounds good!

## How did you come to first teach at SACS?

It has been a passion since university. But after almost 10 years at my first school, I got burnt out and left teaching altogether. I ended up leading the education division of Turramurra Music, dealing with schools and advising teachers on music technology. I didn't think I'd enjoy it but it was a perfect job for me in terms of personal growth. I went on to become the personnel manager and then manager, and I got to know and understand people so much better. This was particularly so for me as a musician because when you are writing or practising music, it's just you and the

music and you can spend long hours alone with your music, so I had never really developed a strong understanding of people. After 14 years in that role, I decided I had to teach again – I really missed it.

I applied for a senior teaching job at SACS and was interviewed by [Head of Music] Chris Belshaw and the [Head of School] Phillip Heath and began in 2005. In my first class, I remember I was really nervous teaching Music 2 but I discovered that the human brain is amazing and it retains so much knowledge from that early adult time. Amazingly, I still remembered all the terms, harmony, analysis skills just as if it was yesterday that I was at uni. And I quickly re-established that connection with students that I loved so much.

## How did your role at SACS change?

At the end of Term 1, 2005, Phillip [Heath] appointed me Assistant Head of Music and Chris went on leave for a term so I had to do the Showcase that year. Several years on and Phillip asked if I would be the school's technology (IT) integrator because he wanted someone who could make technology relevant to teachers and I'd had a lot of experience with teachers at Turramurra Music, so I did that for a couple of years.

Then when Chris got very sick, I came back as the Acting Head of Music.

Chris and I had different approaches to teaching music but we both believed in the power of music to inspire and help people. As Barack Obama puts it, music has the ability to capture that essential kernel of ourselves, that part of us that sings even when times are hard. Chris and I both understood the significance of music in the school and I absolutely agreed with her that music is good for every kid! It's good for children to sing and be involved in music – it focuses them, it gives them discipline, helps them be more organised and it develops the brain.

## You were the musical director of four musicals at SACS. How did you choose the musical each time and which did you love most?

My first musical was *Les Miserables* in 2007, with Phillip Heath directing. I remember being at the music camp and suggesting to Phillip Heath that I'd love to do the musical direction for *Les Mis* and that we had the students to pull it off. Phillip was keen and so we did it together.

What I love most about my job is working with the students – you really get to know them very well because you are working with them in the classroom and then in rehearsals, ensembles and the events.

I have always tried to match the musical to the skills and

An emotional Ralph Wilcock at the conclusion of a stunning performance of the last movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony at the 2015 Showcase – a triumph Ralph lists as a highlight of his time at SACS.

personalities of the students we have at the time and to gauge the student culture and what will work well.

I also love sharing the orchestra pit with a different group of students every two years – we have a ball. The pit is a journey of discovery and development – pulling it all together just at the last moment – it's really very special and very much a serving role, with the focus being on supporting the action on stage.

The next one I did was *Beauty and the Beast* in 2013 when I was Acting Head of Music. Two years later it was *Peter Pan*, then *The Wizard of Oz*. My favourite musical was *Les Miserables*, not because of the musical itself, but because of the experience, the production and the look of the show. As far as the music goes, it's also *Les Mis*.

## What have you loved most about organising the annual Showcase concerts and did you have a favourite?

It's the planning stage that I really enjoy. I love coming up with an idea and having a theme for a concert.

My favourite Showcase was in 2015, with the theme "Peace, Freedom and Justice". It was the first time we tackled a piece of music that was a little beyond us in the last (fourth) movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Leading up to the very first rehearsal of the orchestra, I'd



spent days adjusting the score – I wanted to have all the beauty of that piece and do the whole movement, not just the *Ode to Joy*. Anyway, the very first rehearsal was an absolute catastrophe and the kids said to me, 'Sir, we're never going to be able to play this.' And I told them we'd just chip away at it, bit by bit. After our performance at Showcase, I was very emotional because we went from 'we're never going to get this' to getting it done and it was amazingly good and sounded like a professional orchestra and choir. I always wanted to do that at a school and I always wanted to do the last movement of Handel's *Messiah* – *Worthy is the Lamb and Amen* – and we did that this year. So I feel that I've done everything musically that I have dreamt of doing.

#### **What is the favourite part of your job?**

I do like it all but the real joy for me is still in the classroom – teaching a concept and working together with students until they 'get it'. They are really special moments – when you share in that learning moment and when that spark of creativity or discovery is realised – that 'lightbulb' moment.

#### **The music department has long had a very good reputation for developing quality musicians. Did you seek to make any changes to the culture or organisation of music at SACS?**

I did inherit a very positive music culture and all credit to Chris Belshaw for that. There were four things I wanted to achieve: I wanted the music department to have a warmer, more inviting environment where every student could feel comfortable to be themselves and they could count on us to help them to grow and mature. I think they should be able to feel great comfort here if they're involved in some way with music – and the team of staff here is fantastic at bringing it all together.

The second thing that I wanted to achieve was to improve the quality of our academic results in Year 12. I wanted our academic results to be aligned with where we were at in performance and so our classroom teaching and programs became a lot more driven by that. I think I made some good staffing choices and over the years, our HSC results

in music have gone from below the state average to way above state averages – and it is now one of the star departments of the school! Last year, we had 12 Encore nominations and we only had 15 students doing the HSC, which was terrific. Part of this was to make the classroom teacher's job easier, with a strong organisation of resources so that teachers could find what they needed to do their job efficiently. I wanted all of our systems and files to be aligned and in order.

The last thing was to ensure the public performances of our students were consistently at a high level because sometimes that wasn't the case, and I feel like I've achieved all of those things, so I guess that's why I feel it's time to move on.



#### **What's next in 2018?**

I will be back at SACS in Term 1 2018 in a part-time capacity to get students ready for the music tour to the UK in April. We are going to have to raise the bar on the quality of our choral sound, so that's a big challenge. I will also spend time working as a mentor for new staff (across all departments). I also plan to spend some time bike riding, swimming and being active. After Term 1, I need to get my life back in order – organise my paperwork and files, complete my tax and routine things like that. Then I'm looking forward to moving on to something new – a couple of suggestions have loomed, from importing kayaks, to businesses in hospitality, or doing music consultancy work – so the future is unknown but exciting.



#### **Ralph Wilcock: How *The Wizard of Oz* was selected for 2017**

I create a short-list of musicals a year out from the production and this year, the musical was going to be *Bye Bye Birdie* but it is not an uplifting musical. Just before we announced the musical to our community, I reviewed the short-list again. Originally I'd dismissed *The Wizard of Oz* because I'd heard the stage show was clumsy, but I decided to investigate it again and asked the director his thoughts. He said he had just done it at Thomas Hassall and he could get around the long scene changes! So I spoke to [Deputy Head of School] Brad Swibel and he said, 'well it is kind of Heart, Mind, Life, with the Lion who's lost his courage, the Scarecrow who's got no brains and the Tinman who's lost his heart, so I was excited by that and it came to be! And for *The Wizard of Oz*, we had 150 students involved – the biggest number ever, so it was quite an undertaking.







# Violinist inspires students to follow their dreams

**Old Andrian Naoko Keatley (nee Miyamoto) (OA 2000), a violinist with the London Symphony Orchestra, spent a day with SACS music students in August sharing her expertise and passion for music with our ensembles and string students.**

Nine strings students (from Years 4-10) benefited from individual lessons and Naoko also worked with two of our Junior and Senior chamber orchestras. She was impressed with the depth of ability in our Senior Chamber Orchestra and was able to inspire the development of even more detail in the students' playing. Naoko also worked with our marvellous Junior School Chamber Group on a range of repertoire and was deeply impressed by the fantastic work this group has achieved under the direction of Mrs Kate Robertson.

Naoko's husband, Niall Keatley, who is a trumpeter in the London Symphony Orchestra, also got involved, delivering trumpet lessons to three of our gifted trumpeters in Years 9, 10 and 11.

"Our music students will benefit enormously from these workshops and lessons, not only in terms of their advice on skill development and expressive creativity, but also through the inspiration they provided," said our Deputy Director of Performing Arts Dr Christian

Watson. "It is wonderful for them to learn from an Old Andrian who is now performing in one of the world's top symphony orchestras."

The visit by Naoko and Niall followed recent workshops in the department by Dr Carolyn Watson (the Director of Orchestral Studies at Texas State University) and choral music specialist Dr Marshall Haning, the Assistant Professor of Music Education at Florida University.

The selected students who were fortunate enough to receive private instruction from Naoko and Niall Keatley were thrilled by the experience. Here are some of their comments:

*"I learnt a lot of things concerning my technique and phrasing. It was amazing to learn from a brilliant violinist and it was extremely inspiring"*  
Jarrod Choi (Year 8)

*"Niall Keatley was such an emotive teacher who made me think differently about the music I was playing ... amazing!"*  
Angus Hook (Year 11)



Old Andrian Naoko Keatley, and trumpeter Niall Keatley, shared their musical expertise with students

*"I received a lot of encouragement and helpful tips on how to better phrase in my pieces as well as how to maintain my technical skills."*

Bianca Stanica (Year 11)

*"It was really awesome to hear from someone at that level and for her to be able to come to us and give us that insight of how they do things, and talk about the processes they go through when developing a piece as an ensemble. It also gives us musicians some hope, because she started here at St Andrew's and the fact that she has made a career from it shows that it is possible, especially for students like Nick (Drozdowski) who are starting to do orchestral stuff outside of school."*

Noah Oshiro (Year 11)

*"It was fantastic to be able to get some very valuable tuition on some advanced techniques to help me with my AMusA program."*

Justin Chen (Year 8)

*"It was a pleasure learning from a world class violinist... I was inspired to continue my violin playing"*

Joshua Choi (Year 5)

*"The lesson inspired me to look even closer into the music than ever before."*

Zach Nguyen (Year 6)

*"I thoroughly enjoyed this unique lesson opportunity with Niall Keatley to learn more about my instrument from a professional perspective"*

Thomas Bootes (Year 10)

*"It's good to learn from someone with her experience. It is an inspiration – to think that she was once sitting in my spot is pretty amazing. Hearing about her tours and experiences performing and then getting that feedback is really amazing"*

Nicholas Drozdowski (Year 10)





# Up close with Naoko Keatley (OA '00)

St Andrew's helped launch gifted musician Naoko Keatley to the highest levels of orchestral performance. *Karen Swibel* spoke with her about her memories of school and what advice she has for young musicians.

## How old were you when you started playing the violin?

I was four when I started learning violin. My Mum just loved the violin and my whole family loves music.

## Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to your younger school-age self (or other students)?

To my younger self, I would just say, "have faith in yourself", because I think when you are younger you only see this tunnel vision of what you want to achieve or what you think you want to do, but in the real world I've realised there are so many different ways to achieve what you want and also so many other things to achieve that you didn't even realise that you wanted to achieve. In music, there are so many different avenues to go down and different types of music to play and you don't realise that fact when you are younger, you just think that you want to go in one direction.

## What advice would you give younger students about learning an instrument and practising?

I am now very grateful that I did practise when I was little because I think it does mean that I don't need to practise so much now; and I think that it definitely sets you up for life. Even years later, you feel the foundation of all that practising you did when you were younger, which I am only just starting to realise now.

## You were one of the first cohort of girls at SACS. What was that experience like?

It was amazing! We got a special pin from Mr Heath and we felt really special as there were only 30 of us. I came from a girls' school so it was a massive difference for me. All the school and staff were really trying to make it work and

make it the best for us and it was a really nice feeling. Apparently, the boys were all really well behaved because we were there.

## You were at SACS for Years 11 and 12. What made you decide to come to St Andrew's?

It was quite an easy decision actually. I had heard that St Andrew's was really good at supporting musicians and I was doing a lot of international and national competitions and having to take a lot of time out of school and it was affecting my schoolwork which I didn't like. I did quite well at school but I didn't have the time to always hand things in on time and St Andrew's was amazing at just extending deadlines for me so I didn't lose marks if I had to hand something in late and I ended up getting a very good HSC mark. I got a lot of support for my external commitments and was even missing school one day a week in Year 12 – I was really happy how it all turned out.

## Is there something special about SACS and your experiences here that you most enjoyed?

I think it was actually the family feeling in the music department; we were quite a close-knit musical community and we always knew that we could

come here and I definitely spent most of my time in the music department.

## I'm sure you've had many wonderful performances and learning experiences in your life. Are there any highlights or really special moments that you've particularly cherished?

I always remember my Wigmore Hall recital in London because I grew up with Wigmore Hall in my head, I saw it in videos, I saw famous people playing there and when I first moved there I went to see Leila Josefowicz, a really famous violinist and it was near the Royal Academy of Music. When I was studying, I wondered if I'd ever play there and I did end up doing a recital there and it was like a dream come true. I also played a solo with the Philharmonic Orchestra and that was a great experience as well.

## Do you have any particular things you want to achieve in the future?

I would like to have a family quite soon, but I think now that my husband has joined the same orchestra as me, I think we are going to enjoy doing a bit of touring together and also a little bit of travelling and then it might be time to settle down a bit, whilst still carrying on playing!

## Biography of a gifted violinist



Naoko Keatley (nee Miyamoto) made her first appearance as an orchestral soloist at the age of eight, playing Bach's *Concerto for Two Violins* with Henry Pisarek and the Sydney Youth Orchestra.

Since then, she has performed in many prestigious venues around the world. She has appeared as a soloist with some of the world's leading orchestras including the Philharmonia, New Zealand Symphony and Queensland Symphony, and has also won prizes in competitions in Australia, Germany, Poland and New Zealand.

After finishing school, Naoko premiered the Matthew Hindson Violin Concerto with the SYO, performing it in the Sydney Opera House before taking it on tour around Denmark and Sweden.

In 2001, Naoko was awarded a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she studied with Diana Cummings and Maurice Hasson and received the Vice-Principal's Prize for Excellence. Naoko was a Tillet Trust Young Artist Platform award winner in 2008, and through this she made her debut appearance at the Wigmore Hall to great acclaim. She is also an avid chamber musician.

As a full-time member of the London Symphony Orchestra, Naoko regularly performs at the Barbican and tours around the world.

Naoko's debut CD, playing Hindson's *Violin Concerto* with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, is available from Trust Records.





# Career conversations

Motivated by a desire to inspire senior students about the world of work opportunities that exist after school, the inaugural Learning the Ropes event had the added bonus of bringing together the entire St Andrew's community for a 'greater good' that benefited all who attended, writes *Lyn Jarvis*.

For some time, the Old Andreans Association (OAA) has been keen to give current students a better understanding of the many different and varied educational and vocational pathways and possibilities. After much planning, in July this year, they launched *Learning the Ropes: in conversation with industry professionals*. This unique initiative brought together 85 industry professionals from a wide range of different vocational areas to share their career stories with our students.

President of the OAA, Darcy Bray, said they were seeking to give students a better idea of the variety of careers on offer. "We focused on what we wish we had known when we were students at SACS, and that was our driving motivation," he said. "The aim was for real conversations. What excited me most was that it became an entire community event. We brought back lots of Old Andreans, but also current parents, even those of infants' students came and volunteered. We had the Hessian Club (former parents) and staff give their time – it was one of the most exciting events I have been to at SACS, and certainly the one I am most proud of as President of the OAA."

The volunteers came from a wide range of professions and were loosely categorised into the career divisions of health, business, law, engineering and IT, sciences, defence, government, hospitality, design, architecture, building, welfare, performing arts, media and communications. Each

division set up in a different area of the BBC, and students and their parents came and chatted to them about what work is really like. Our volunteers were able to talk informally about their career successes (and failures) and recall some pivotal life lessons. It was an opportunity to learn accurate and current facts about job opportunities, hours worked, diversity, career pathways, leadership, travel, life/work balance and how each industry was evolving. Peppered around were current university students who could give an insight into university life and adjusting to tertiary study. To help conversations, a catalogue with brief biographies of the volunteers was provided and a list of helpful questions given to both students and industry professionals.

Year 11 student Kathleen Thomas said the evening was enlightening. "Something that I took away from the evening was a sense of the wide range of opportunities that are available to me after school. I found that most of the professionals I spoke to had previously worked in other areas prior to their current professions and some expressed the possibility of changing again," she said. "Overall, I really enjoyed the night and felt that both the professionals and university students were happy to answer any questions I asked them. I really hope that I can have another experience like this in the future and I'm glad that I now have a wider sense of the opportunities that are available to me after school."

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Year 10 student Nate Griffiths said it was great to hear how people's careers had changed from their original starting point. "It was a fantastic way of seeing what the possibilities are in the subjects we can choose," he said. "It was a great experience – talking with people working in different areas of science and hearing stories of what they did to get where they are now and how the path they chose was just the starting point."

The evening began with a key note address by Greg Cowell (OA1998) sharing his reflections and experiences at work, including a gentle lesson that sometimes when you reach the goal you were aiming for, you find that isn't really what you wanted after all. There was also an opportunity for students to attend specific workshops on resume writing, interview techniques and personal branding, conducted by experts in recruitment and presentation, and members of the SACS community.

*The OAA plans to hold the event again in 2019 and will open up the invitations to SACS students from Years 9-12 and also first year graduates.*





# Feedback from former students, parents and volunteers



"It was terrific to see so many people involved on both sides (presentation and "consumption"). I really enjoyed myself and I could tell everyone else was also really buzzing. I think the kids and their parents got an enormous amount out of the event."

*SACS parent*

"Well done on organising such a hugely successful event ... I think you have created one of those famous SACS legacies. I can see this will be on the agenda for years to come! It was of major benefit to the students – and to those taking part too ... so a win, win all round."

*SACS volunteer*



"It was an exceptional evening. The students were respectful and their parents seemed to appreciate the chance to assist their kids to consider options for the future."

*Hessian Club volunteer*

"I was completely blown away and in awe of the idea, all your hard work, the number of attendees, the excellent organising and the incredible value visitors must have received from the range of speakers."

*SACS parent and volunteer*

"I was impressed with the organisation and the set-up. In particular, I enjoyed meeting the students who were eager to learn and were articulate and polite."

*Old Andrian volunteer*

"The thing we weren't expecting was a reminder of how much we actually like our jobs! Sometimes it takes telling someone else about what you do to remind you that what we do every day is important and incredibly rewarding."

*Rachel Raschke, SACS parent and volunteer*

"I myself was blown away by the evening and the direct impact it had on him [my son] as he started the term with renewed motivation. I think that in itself was invaluable."

*Jen Gwynne, SACS parent*



**Bringing together the entire St Andrew's community**



Learning the ropes



IN CONVERSATION  
WITH INDUSTRY  
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# Generations of choristers united by unique experiences

**No one can deny that being a Cathedral Chorister is a big commitment. Susan Hando speaks to 11-year-old Nick Bell and Old Andrean Oscar Smith about the joys and challenges they've experienced as choristers.**

Year 6 student Nicholas Bell, 11, and Old Andrean Oscar Smith, 20, have many things in common.

They both currently sing with the St Andrew's Cathedral Choir, have each shared the experience of performing on the stage of the Opera House, and both aspire to have professional careers in music. They also agree that being a Chorister has made them better musicians.

Oscar, a former Chorister and organ scholar, is currently studying a Bachelor of Music (Composition) at the Sydney Conservatorium and remains an active member of the Choir. Starting as a treble when he was just 12 years of age, he has continued singing with the men of the Choir, performing three or more services each week.

"I did a brief stint as a tenor, but now really enjoy singing the alto and counter-tenor lines," he said.

Oscar is looking forward to setting music to the Evensong *Canticles* and would be delighted if it was sung by the St Andrew's Cathedral Choir.

On Thursdays, he comes straight from university and looks forward to the fortnightly "Choir Teas" that the men and boys share in Chapter House, after the regular traditional choral evensong service.

"I have been a member of the Choir for over eight years now – and really enjoy the community and the routine. The excellent standard of musicianship required enables new arrangements to be learnt quickly and for the Choir to

perform to a consistently high standard," Oscar said. "It is hard work. Choristers, some as young as eight, are treated as professional musicians, rehearsing and performing six days a week."

As a Chorister, he learnt how to sight-read complex musical scores – a skill which offers great advantages, as Oscar continues his studies in music.

"It doesn't get any easier. My advice to young Choristers is to listen and take the time to figure out how to read music. Hear how the music is reflected in the notation," he added.

Oscar also has fond memories of his involvement in four Opera Australia productions – *Tosca*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Carmen* and *La Boheme* – and highly recommends the experience.

Current Senior Chorister, Nicholas Bell, has been singing with the Choir for four years and also plays the trombone. Like Oscar, he also enjoyed the experience of performing live opera, and hopes to do more.

This year has been busy for Nick. He is Winchester House Captain, has performed twice with Opera Australia (*Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* and *Parsifal*), attended the regional HICES music camp, and was promoted to Senior Chorister in Term 2.

Nick has regular singing lessons at SACS with Josh Salter and as a Chorister participates in more than 12 hours of rehearsals and performances each week.

"The most enjoyable time of the year is Christmas. Choristers have to rehearse all the way up to Christmas Day, we sing some great music and we have fun," Nick said, recalling last year's Chorister trip to Luna Park.

Nick, who hopes to study and sing opera professionally, believes that being a Chorister has taught him a lot about the commitment needed to become a professional musician. "Being a Chorister is an amazing experience, and I've learnt a lot not only about music but about being in a team," he said. "We all have a real connection."



## PHOTOS

- 1 Nick Bell (L) and Oscar Smith (R) take a break from rehearsals to discuss music and opera.
- 2 The Very Reverend Kanishka Raffel, Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral, at the promotion of eight student Choristers.
- 3 The Choristers in their new blue polo shirts embroidered with the both the school and choir logos

## Rehearsals

The Choristers commit to a minimum of seven weekly rehearsals each term:

Monday	7.30-8.30am
Monday	4.15-5.15pm
Tuesday	7.30-8.30am
Wednesday	7.30-8.30am
Thursday	7.30-8.30am
Thursday	4.15-5.15pm
Sunday	9.30am-10.30am

## See the choristers in action

**Sunday morning Cathedral services**  
10.30am during term time.

**Monday Evensong**  
5.15-6pm during term - *Choristers only*

**Thursday Evensong**  
5.15-6pm during term - *Full Choir*

*The choristers perform in many special services and at external events throughout the year.*



# A very long engagement ...

Current parent and Director of the SACS Foundation, Wayne Brazel, is also an Old Andrean, experiencing St Andrew's under the leadership of Canon Newth and Dr Beavis. The former school captain has a son completing Year 12 at SACS, a daughter in Year 8 and a third son who graduated from SACS in 2015. **Lyn Jarvis spoke to Wayne about his 39-year association with SACS and why he still loves being involved.**

## How long has your family been associated with St Andrew's Cathedral School?

1978 was our family's first association with the school, when my brothers, David, Tom and I commenced in Years 10, 8 and 7 respectively.

## As a student, what was your favourite activity at SACS?

I really enjoyed most of school life, particularly the sport – cricket and soccer – and the camaraderie that was involved.

## What made you decide to send your own children to SACS?

I reflect very fondly of my time at SACS – the great environment, the commitment of the teachers, the fun playing sport with my mates. For me, however, this was just part of the story –

SACS was pivotal in my life. I was in the bottom of three classes in Year 5 in my local primary school and though I was identified as having potential, I left the extra effort to those in the top class. However, having been (in my mind) mistakenly placed in the top class at SACS and knowing the sacrifices my parents were making, the competitive side of me kicked in and as hard work began to yield results, I started to believe in myself and then success bred success. I was keen to provide my children that same great experience and opportunity.

**Is there one thing about the school that you think remains the same from your time here as a student to your children's time?**



SACS has always had a wonderful caring attitude towards its students and has always provided a holistic approach to their development and wellbeing. This was true of the school in the days of the wonderful Canon Newth through to today and is so wonderfully articulated in "Heart, Mind, Life".

## Do you think your daughter has had a different experience to her older brothers?

Each of the children has had a different experience. It is one of the great strengths of SACS that each of the children has the opportunity to find their own niche and what can give them a sense of pride and accomplishment.

## What kinds of activities are you involved in at school?

I am involved in a number of areas. As a parent, I've really enjoyed watching the sport over the years, particularly the 1st XV who made the grand final for the first time in many years, and attending the various trivia nights, Father's Day events, and the valuable parent information nights conducted by the likes of Michael Carr-Gregg. As an Old Andrean (I can't say Old Boy these days!), I've participated in the Learning the Ropes night to help students understand their career choices and I've tutored Gawura students and now Middle School students in mathematics and I've enjoyed being a member of the Foundation Board.

## As a Foundation Director, what hopes and aims do you have for SACS?

St Andrew's has a magnificent history and has had an amazing impact on people's lives over the years. As Canon Newth titled his book, St Andrew's is "Serving a great cause". It provides

remarkable opportunities for students to learn and develop into valuable members of society. But more than that, St Andrew's has always provided a living example of Christian care and values. I would like to help continue this legacy into the future.

## Why did you choose to volunteer at Gawura?

I saw that there was a reading program at Gawura, but noted the absence of any mathematics program. Being in the Financial Services industry, which relies so heavily on maths, I wanted to make a difference to the students in this area.

## Would you recommend other parents or Old Andreans get involved at SACS?

I think volunteering is a fantastic opportunity for Old Andreans to continue to be involved in the school that has meant so much to them over the years. You do feel part of the 132 years of tradition and being involved provides an opportunity to leave a legacy for those to come. It was such a great joy to return to St Andrew's and introduce my children to Mr Gower, my Year 12 maths teacher!

From a parent's perspective, volunteering gives you the opportunity to be a bigger part of the school life and tradition that will be such an influential and meaningful part of your child's life that will last for years beyond when they graduate. It also provides the opportunity to understand the environment of the school and offers a little more insight into what your children experience.

In many ways, SACS is a family, more so for the students, but as parents we can be extended family members through our involvement.

## 2018 OAA events

7 Mar	AGM
17 Mar	1 year reunion (OA2016) – SAH Rooftop
25 Mar	Choir Sunday – Heath Centre
5 May	5 year reunion (OA2013) – offsite
21 Jun	Diamond Lunch – Heath Centre
17 Aug	10 year reunion (OA2008) – SAH Rooftop
14 Sep	20 year reunion (OA1998) – SAH Rooftop
19 Oct	30 year reunion (OA1988) – SAH Rooftop



# St Andrew's:

St Andrew's Cathedral School is a coeducational K-12 Anglican school, located in the heart of Sydney's CBD.

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St Andrew's Cathedral School  
Sydney Square, Sydney NSW 2000  
ABN 34 429 367 893

phone +61 2 9286 9500  
fax +61 2 9286 9550  
email [info@sacs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@sacs.nsw.edu.au)

CRICOS Registration: The Council of  
St Andrew's Cathedral School 02276M

[www.sacs.nsw.edu.au](http://www.sacs.nsw.edu.au)



ST ANDREW'S  
CATHEDRAL  
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