

inspired

THE SACS MAGAZINE | ISSUE 8 | 2020



How we overcame the challenges arising from a global pandemic

Our staff went to extraordinary lengths to ensure students continued to grow and learn every day through the 21st Century's most devastating health crisis.

heart
mind
life



ST ANDREW'S
CATHEDRAL
SCHOOL
FOUNDED 1885

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Cover Photo

The major drama production of *Jane Eyre* was filmed and presented to audiences online. Photo by Mark Heriot

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Photo by Mark Heriot

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Thanks to Daniel Fewchuck, Mark Heriot, Jack Toohey, Craig Proudford and the Marketing and Community Engagement teams for supplying images from 2020 which appear throughout these pages.

This magazine is a tribute to all the staff, students, Old Andreans, families and passionate supporters who ensured St Andrew's Cathedral School and Gawura School continued to thrive in 2020.

To keep up-to-date with all the latest news and events, visit our website
www.sacs.nsw.edu.au
and our Facebook page
www.facebook.com/StAndrewsCathedralSchool





Students were delighted to return to school on 11 May after a long period of remote learning, and were welcomed back with a beautiful display of origami butterflies, carefully made and erected by the Community Engagement team.

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Introduction by
Dr John Collier,
Head of School

Lessons learnt during a global pandemic



Late in Term 1, COVID-19 forced the cessation of student and staff attendance at school for a then unknown period of time. We found ourselves navigating in totally unfamiliar terrain. It was immediately apparent that our students could not afford to lose a year of schooling, whether that be foundational years in the Infants department, the final year of Year 12, or somewhere in-between. Accordingly, with very vigorous and splendid work by a number of people, such as our Secondary School Deputy Head, Mr Swibel, our Head of Innovation and Enterprise, Ms Hoermann, our Junior School/Gawura IT Integrator, Mr Ryman, and our Technology support team led by Mr Corvisy, we rolled out remote learning. This required training of staff and students in order for them to learn how best to utilise our systems.

During the many weeks of remote learning, the school, in terms of its senior staff, absorbed many lessons. Firstly, we have highly dedicated staff who went above and beyond to make this mode of learning as effective as it could be. It appears to widely be the case that remote learning virtually doubled the workload of teaching staff. This was due, in part, to the inability to deal with all students as a classroom group. Rather, a great deal of individual conferencing with students and parents was required. Further, the preparation

to deliver lessons through digital technology was extremely demanding and time consuming, particularly given the onus on staff to develop interesting and captivating lessons to sustain student attention while not physically present. These efforts were splendidly aided by support and administrative staff, some of whom were 'in attendance' remotely to also assist students. Remote learning included not just the academic curriculum, but pastoral contacts, and, as far as we could develop creative solutions, co-curricular and sporting activities.

Secondly, we had reinforced to us the diligence and commitment of most of our students and of the wonderful partnership with parents, who actively supervised our students' learning remotely at home. Just as staff had to juggle supervision of their own children at home, parents had to juggle supervision and assistance, as well as meeting the requirements of their own employment, while at home.

Thirdly, over time, we were reassured that our IT systems were sufficiently robust to cope with so many students and teachers online simultaneously. This was both a relief and an affirmation of the provisions made by our IT staff and our finance unit, such that our delivery was not compromised.

In the pages of this year's *Inspired* magazine, I'm sure you will find inspiration in the stories of resilience, creativity and community that are so strong within our unique city school.

Fourthly, we had powerfully confirmed that we are indeed social beings. God made us for community. We need one another and being locked away in physical isolation is no way to live. When students physically returned to school, many were heard to speak two utterances they never thought would pass from their mouths: "I missed school", "I missed my teachers". Our staff certainly missed them!

Fifthly, we now know that it is not essential for everyone to be on-site all the time in order for learning to occur. While it is not reasonable to expect staff to simultaneously teach in class and in remote mode, we are now more fully aware that online learning has powerful potential within regular schooling. We have also had confirmed that the professionalism of our staff is so strong that flexibility in their attendance and delivery of work are viable and consistent with the learning needs of students.

Sixthly, we have somewhat accidentally stumbled upon some possible improvements. One example is remote parent/teacher evenings, conducted at a mutually convenient time for parents and staff, with both parties able to conduct the interview from the comfort of their own home. With an eye to the future, we are keen to examine what other changes may apply.

Seventh, we have learned the value of social distancing and enhanced hygiene regimes in avoiding not just COVID-19, but other infections such as colds and flus.

It is clear that COVID-19 has changed the world of education. The full implications are still being played out.

Dr John Collier
Head of School

How our school leaders responded to COVID-19

The health crisis that was unfolding around the world at the start of the year gave Australia some time to prepare for the community restrictions necessary to stop the rapid spread of the virus. Deputy Head of School Brad Swibel spoke to Anthony Segaert about how the school responded and prepared for a period of remote learning.



Year 12 students leave assembly on their first day back at school after six weeks learning from home.

When did you first realise that COVID-19 might impact SACS?

In January I began receiving emails from associates in China who said the impact of the virus was very serious. We started getting quite concerned about how that might affect our school, particularly because we knew quite a number of our students and parents would be in China for Chinese New Year, visiting family and travelling. At that point, we brought in communication protocols and restrictions on returning to school for people returning from China. Of major concern was that we were in the final planning stages for some international tours happening in early April, including the China Tour. We saw that all of the cities we were planning to visit in China were in a perimeter around Wuhan, so we decided that the tour needed to be cancelled, and fairly soon after that, the other tours (to Japan for Music and to Italy for History) also needed to be cancelled.

What prompted you to start planning for remote learning?

My role as Deputy Head is to see how everything fits together and see what can go right and what can go wrong, constantly managing risk. So I kept asking, 'What is the risk of this getting bigger, and what do we need to do to

mitigate that risk?' And part of that answer is anticipation and mitigation. So we started to research what was happening in Hong Kong, and later in Italy and Europe, where we could access teacher forums and see how schools were dealing with the issues we were yet to face. That helped us to understand what was to come, and how to start preparing for that and build comprehensive risk management strategies around that. Eventually, one of those strategies to stop the spread of the virus was to stop staff and students from coming into school – but that has its own impacts which can affect the wellbeing of people and the smooth operation of the school. So, we needed to think about mitigating the risks associated with the risk strategy!

Was it a challenge for you to manage this period?

Part of dealing with a crisis is you have to gather together a very good team of people. We brought together Directors of Learning, wellbeing leaders, counsellors and IT managers. Pip Hoermann, the Director of Enterprise and Innovation and Lyle Corvisy, the ICT Manager, created a lot of solutions which made things easier for our staff to conduct remote learning.

Are you proud of how the school dealt with it?

Yes. In the workplace health survey, the Voice Project, the staff clearly expressed how they felt supported and trusted through this crisis, and that is a good thing for the wellbeing of the school. When staff have a great sense of team and belief in the vision of the school, the organisation becomes much more resilient. The staff believed they could overcome challenges. So, the school was in a very optimistic frame of mind and could respond very well to the different expectations we had. We had to tell the staff, 'you need to learn this new platform,' or 'please add this process,' and, in that frame of mind, they could do that.

You say you're a forecaster. What happens next?

Well, there's this idea that we live in a VUCA world – a world that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. It's a world in which we, as leaders, have to be continually nimble to adjust to changes. We have to prepare students to thrive in this kind of world – which is why we focus on character development. With a good, strong character you can be resilient and you can adapt to the different and unexpected things that come at you. We have to continue to anticipate and be prepared for the unexpected.

What does SACS' response to COVID-19 say about the school itself?

I think it shows we're a really strong community. It shows we have a strong character. For a long time the school has been a 'heart, mind, life' school and the fact that it does try to educate the whole child is an important part of our ability to respond to challenges. For example, with remote learning, we weren't just focused on teaching the curriculum and running assessments. It was also about how we cared for the students and kept in touch with them, and ensured that tutors checked in with them, and that they were sleeping, eating and exercising well. That points to the fact that we do take all aspects of our students' lives seriously.

Was the community supportive through this crisis?

I'm really proud of the staff, the students and their parents for their support throughout all of this. Parents have been enormously supportive, even though I know it has been really challenging for them. That gives us great confidence that we're doing something right: we'll keep putting in that effort and care that is required to ensure students are engaged and growing.

Introducing our next Head of School ... Dr Julie McGonigle



The Deputy Head of School (Strategic Improvement) and recently-named successor to Dr John Collier, will start her new role from January 2022. Here we learn about Julie's journey to SACS and some of her experiences and principles of education that make her an ideal choice to lead the school into the next decade.

You grew up in Northern Ireland and spent most of your working life in England. How did you come to work at SACS?

It was an ordinary Tuesday morning in June, 2012. I was working as Senior Vice Principal for a secondary school in Yorkshire, when Dr Collier arrived in my Year 11 assembly!

The school had been established in 2005, under the city academy program. The program aimed to revitalise struggling, inner city schools in areas of high social deprivation. I was one of the founding team and the genesis of the school was better than we could have hoped for. By 2008 it had gained significant national recognition and, while Dr Collier was on study leave in the UK, he was advised to come and visit us.

Dr Collier and I struck up an immediate rapport and after his visit, I had periodic contact with St Andrew's. At the end of 2015, we started a conversation related to educational research. One thing led to another and by the start of 2017, we were on the plane to Sydney.

You arrived at SACS in 2017 with an academic focus. Is that an area you are passionate about?

I am passionate about *learning*, which occurs both consciously and subconsciously in all of us. I am fascinated by how these types of learning occur, interact and impact our lives. When Dr Collier came to visit, he was impressed by how we track and improve learning, hence my focus in 2017.

I am also passionate about schools, which enable people to learn things that they wouldn't otherwise pick up from experience. That is a profound gift and, if done well, it empowers, enables and equalises (to some measure). Of course, the St Andrew's Gawura model seeks to powerfully exemplify this.

What are your thoughts on a Christian approach to education?

That is a huge question, and I don't have the space to adequately answer it in this article. However, I will say one thing. I believe that a good education enables young people to ask and debate the 'big questions' in life, eg. who or what am I? Who or what is God? What's wrong with the world? What will put it right? How do I know? It doesn't matter who you are or where you have come from, your conscious or subconscious answers to such questions will significantly impact your life choices and are therefore important to debate at school.

One of the benefits of a Christian school is that it helps this debate by providing a clear and explicit stance that can be debated with and against. A stance that, as historian Tom Holland elucidates, has been deeply formative in, '*the making of the western mind*.' Such debate is much more difficult in schools that are not explicit about their viewpoint. Even if it is not clearly stated, all schools have a view on these questions. No school is neutral. However, not all schools make their stance explicit.

In our current world of social media where debate is often crushed and overtaken by tribalism, giving young people the capacity to debate in a healthy, open-minded way, is more vital than ever.

You returned to the UK in 2018 but have continued to work part-time with SACS staff. What else have you been juggling since your return to the UK?

The school that I left in England in 2016 is part of a group of six schools (we call these groups of schools, Trusts). When I returned to the UK in 2018, I took up a leadership role across the Trust. I also moved into the governance space and have spent time governing in another Trust that has ten schools and in a single, independent, cathedral school. I also partly continued to work for SACS. Much of the work that I started in 2017 has been very ably carried on by the superb senior leadership team. From my remote position, I have been able to contribute to their thinking, assisting the development of some strategic frameworks in the areas of teaching, learning and leadership.



Dr Julie McGonigle (left) at the new leaders assembly in 2018 and (above and right) with her family – husband Andrew, sons Theo and Rafferty, and daughter Innes.

Tell us more about your family.

I always say that being a parent is the best job in the world and the second best is being an educator! I have two boys, Theo (13) and Rafferty (9), and one girl, Innes (11). My husband, Andrew, and I met whilst we were studying at Jesus College, Oxford. Andrew was reading for a PhD (D Phil as it's called in Oxford) in laser physics. He was a theoretical physicist by background but wanted to apply his knowledge to building lasers to measure atmospheric pollution. I was reading for an MSc and then a D Phil in Education, focusing on the transformational role of schools in areas of social conflict. We spent five years studying together in Oxford, getting married in year four of the five (a piece of advice – don't get married in the middle of writing up two PhDs!). On completion of our studies, we moved to Cambridge, where Andrew took up a university fellowship in volcanology, applying his remote sensing expertise to volcanic predictions, and I took up a leadership role in an international school. Eight years later, we welcomed our firstborn, Theo, into the world.

How do you feel about becoming the first female Head of St Andrew's Cathedral School and Gawura School starting in 2022?

Excited! So many emotions – responsible, called, privileged, but the greatest of all is peace. There are some things in life that happen in such a way that you just know it is the right thing – for me, this is one of those occasions. That brings with it an immense peace.

St Andrew's Cathedral School and Gawura School are schools of distinction. A lot of people talk about the distinctives of a school and my view is that SACS, as a total community, embodies distinction. This is because it is built on a different view of humanity. Schools, whether they are conscious of it or not, are built on a particular view of people. In a western liberal democracy, for many schools, that view is, humans can make progress and we celebrate them when they do. In many ways it is a 'survival of the fittest' model – those who make the most progress or achieve the most, survive. The deficit in that model is that each person



views themselves as never being enough and always in competition with the next person for the 'fittest' spot. I don't think I need to spell out the impact of this on our young people's health and wellbeing.

St Andrew's Cathedral School and Gawura School are distinct from this. We believe that everyone is precious. Everyone is of infinite value, not because

of their ability, achievement, race, wealth or physical attributes but because they are *Imago Dei* – made in God's image. This view impacts the approach to everything else at the schools and (I am delighted to say) there will be plenty of time to talk more about this in 2022!

On the road to academic excellence

The school has been on a strategic journey to ensure all students are given every chance to reach their academic potential. Melanie Collins explains how the school's Teaching and Learning Framework is impacting students and teachers alike.

For the past four years, St Andrew's Cathedral School has focused considerable resources on lifting the teaching and learning excellence across the school. To this end, Dr Julie McGonigle, who has a strong background in using academic data and the latest educational research to implement new and improved teaching practices, was brought from the United Kingdom in 2017 as the Deputy Head (Academic Improvement).

In the first year, workshops with teachers, Leaders of Learning and stage leaders discussed how teaching could be improved. They investigated the latest research around best teaching practice and created a teaching framework, which is now the teaching cycle within the SACS Teaching and Learning Model – the foundational platform that now guides how to plan, teach and evaluate the classroom learning being undertaken at SACS.

"In essence, the Plan-Teach-Evaluate framework has sub-categories within each section that are all based on evidence about what actions have the highest impact upon learning," Dr McGonigle explained. "It brings together the fact that the curriculum program and routines and rituals (classroom climate/discipline) have a strong impact on learning."

One of the first steps to ensure improvements could be measured was to collect data on student learning. This led to the introduction of data dashboards, driven by Deputy Head of School Brad Swibel, to analyse individual student performances across the secondary school,

which enabled students to set individual goals and teachers to assess those goals against individual and class achievements.

The next step in the implementation of the new framework was to ensure teaching practice was the best it could be. Former Director of Performing Arts and Pedagogy, Kirsten Macaulay, stepped into a new position as the Director of Teaching and Learning in 2018 and, along with a team of lead teachers, has introduced a variety of feedback and mentoring programs for teachers to ensure the very best elements of effective teaching practice are being delivered.

"We have introduced a number of strategies to lift the quality of teaching," said Mrs Macaulay, who is an assessor and supervisor of teacher accreditation for both the AIS (Association of Independent Schools) and NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority). "First is the teacher appraisal, where each teacher sets professional goals and also speaks about how they are achieving the school's teaching goals (aligned to the

framework of instruction, practice and feedback).

"All teachers also now have two formal lesson observations per year, where they receive immediate feedback and then have a growth conversation about what worked well and what areas could be improved further. Each teacher articulates what they are going to work on before the next observation, so we're supporting their skill development and also building teacher success."

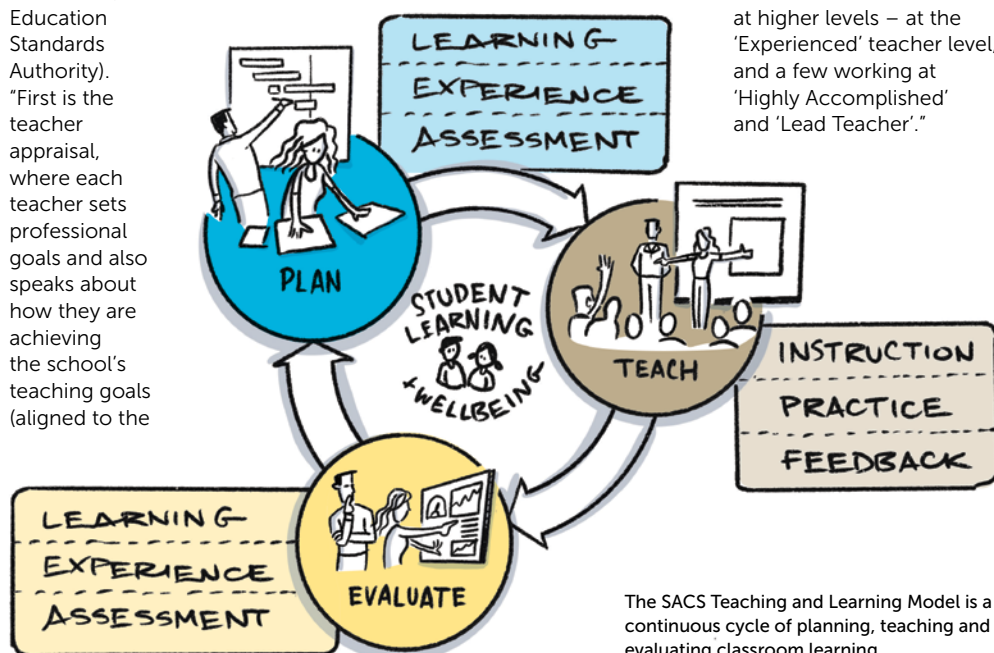
A strong learning coach program, led by Elle Smith, has been introduced to further build teacher efficacy and create more data for professional development. Teachers can opt into this program, which sees learning coaches (three in the Junior School and four in the secondary school) mentoring teachers one-to-one.

"Teachers also engage in Learning Walks, where they learn from one another by observing classes and discussing and moderating students' work, and we also facilitate classroom 'learning sprints', which are intense practical lessons to cement pedagogy," Mrs Macaulay said.

Throughout each term, Mrs Macaulay delivers a weekly NESA-registered professional development program, which ensures staff are progressing to higher levels of accreditation or maintaining their 'proficient teacher' status. The topics for professional development are based on evidence from lesson observations and discussions with the executive about what areas need greater focus.

"Full-time teachers have five years to reach proficient teacher accreditation level, and then they enter a maintenance cycle," Mrs Macaulay explained.

"We now have a number of teachers accredited at higher levels – at the 'Experienced' teacher level, and a few working at 'Highly Accomplished' and 'Lead Teacher'."



The SACS Teaching and Learning Model is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching and evaluating classroom learning.



HSC Science Extension teacher Mr Stephen Foster with Year 12 student Charlotte Owens.

Evidence of the success of SACS' strategies in lifting teaching excellence is the growing number of teachers who are being invited to present at state and national education conferences as experts in their content knowledge or teaching practice. "We have quite a number of teachers who are called upon to present at state and national conferences and professional associations. It is evidence of the excellence of teaching at SACS that it has so many teachers presenting at that level," Mrs Macaulay said.

"I'm very proud of the breadth of professional learning we have at SACS and how many experts we have in our school and we recognise and have the opportunity to build more experts in teaching within our professional learning program, so that's pretty exciting. There are certainly opportunities for professional growth here for every teacher at SACS. The school is very generous in developing the individual teacher to be the best educator, not only for our students, but to support the development of other teachers; so we are building leaders in their fields."

Dr Julie McGonigle, Deputy Head – Strategic Improvement, said the delivery of additional programs and systems to improve the quality of teaching at SACS is still evolving but has come a long way in four years. "It is developing rapidly. The next step is to align all of our training and processes with the Teaching and Learning Framework. Given the positive feedback from staff, as well as endorsement from external partners, such as John Hattie's Corwin research team, we know we have the structure right," she said.

Charlotte establishes new blueprint

If you're searching for an advocate of the new Science Extension HSC course, you need look no further than Year 12 student Charlotte Owens, who is the first at St Andrew's Cathedral School to complete the NESA-registered course, now in its second year of operation.

She says the course has been foundational in furthering both her passion for, and knowledge of, scientific inquiry.

"The theory and ideas behind science is fascinating in this course," she said. "It asks things like, 'what is science, or is there objective knowledge?' and deals with rationalism and empiricism."

The subject is similar to other HSC Extension subjects, including History Extension (which Charlotte is also completing), and has two major aspects: a theoretical study about the 'why' of science, and an in-depth research project which sees students form a research question, create a hypothesis and carry out research to develop a scientific response.

For Charlotte, that's the perfect subject.

"When I found out about Extension courses, I was

so excited," she said. "I genuinely loved the course. I was really happy with how the school trusted me to test the entire Year 11 cohort, and to even do the course on my own [she was the only student]."

"I'm so glad SACS gave me a shot. It's not something everyone can do. But I'm proud that I completed it and was able to produce a really good result. I've been the blueprint!"

Charlotte's teacher, Mr Stephen Foster, said she relished the opportunity SACS gave her to do an in-depth research project: "She has done this magnificent piece of research over a long period of time, involving a degree of sophistication, and she's been able to demonstrate a whole range of skills that the two-unit subjects are unable to extract."

Charlotte explored the correlation between colour and memory. She was inspired by the fact that, as someone with red hair, she seems to be very hard to forget! She found that:

"The colour blue had the greatest positive effect on performance, whilst the results from red were more correlated to self-confidence. Females

out-performed males for all three colours, despite their lower self-rating in confidence. The findings indicate that colour has a significant impact on the performance of high school students in their ability to recall information."

Part of these findings were based on research conducted on Year 11 students, assessing their capacity to remember various numbers with different colour varieties.

The results are fascinating, but the report and course weren't without their difficulties. Remote learning posed a unique challenge for the course, delaying research and changing plans, but Charlotte and Mr Foster persisted.

"He adapted my work really well," Charlotte said of her teacher. "Remote learning definitely changed a lot but it didn't impact my determination to complete the work."

The course is complete and her research has been submitted, but Mr Foster hopes that this is just the beginning for Charlotte. "I'd love to think that this course has provided a bit of a spark for Charlotte to get involved in research," he said.

Music's academic results soar to highest heights

St Andrew's Cathedral School, which has a history of excellence in music education, saw its best ever HSC and IB Diploma music results in 2019. This came as a result of a change of focus in the Music Department in recent years to ensure its students weren't just strong in performance and composition, but also in the academic analytical skills required in Years 11 and 12.

Year 12 summary of 2019 music results (IB Diploma and HSC)

- 100% of HSC Music 2 students achieved a mark in the top two performance bands (Bands 5 and 6)
- 100% of HSC Music Extension students achieved a mark in the top performance band (E4)
- 100% of IB Diploma Music (Higher Level) students achieved a mark in the top two grades (Grades 6 or 7), 80% of students received Grade 7s
- Seven HSC Music 2 students were nominated for Encore – a selection of the very best performance and composition HSC music students in the state. They were: Michael Anastassiou – oboe, Thomas Bootes – trumpet, Trystan Go – voice, Mu (Carter) Jia – piano, Seungji (Lavender) Kim – clarinet, Callum Knox – organ and voice, Yue (David) Zheng – violin. All are continuing tertiary studies in Music.

Callum Knox (OA2019) playing the organ in St Andrew's Cathedral. Callum was nominated for Encore, the HSC music showcase event, for both the organ and voice.



2019 HSC Music students nominated for Encore: Thomas Bootes, Callum Knox, Mu (Carter) Jia, Michael Anastassiou, Seungji (Lavender) Kim, Yue (David) Zheng, and Trystan Go.

The outstanding results of the 2019 music cohort are a wonderful reward for the many staff who introduced new approaches to music education in recent years.

Ironically, one of the elements needed to cement students' analytical skills was including a strong practical element. The Director of Performing Arts and head of the IB Diploma music program, Dr Christian Watson, explains.

"Every music lesson has a practical focus, right up to Year 12. We include singing in every stage and at every level, because if you are developing a student's ability to sing well, then they are developing their ability to use their natural instrument and also developing the biology of their system, which is their ears and their voice. And if you can develop your ears and your voice to analyse music and perform at a high level, you can transfer that to any context," he said.

"We started implementing this approach with Year 7 five years ago and it's up to Year 12 now and the results this year proved it has been successful – with all students in Year 12 getting strong results across all three areas – performance, composition and the analytical (academic) component.

"The practical element does taper off in Year 12 because of the need to analyse and write because that's what a lot of the exam format still is; but in Year 11 now, for instance, in a music class, students will be doing some very complicated singing for much of a class, which actually helps them with a lot of components of the written exam."

The secondary school's Leader of Learning (Music Academic), Mrs Jen Nelson, who has been at SACS for almost eight years, said the passion and expertise of staff, who are committed to the quality and teaching of music at every stage has also been a key component of their program's success.

"When I came to SACS, the academic area of music was not as strong as the outstanding performance and composition side, so that has been our focus over the past six years.

"I think we have a unique staff team here in that all of our classroom teachers really value being in the classroom and at the same time, they are incredible experts in the ensemble and performance arena, so because we have staff who are so dedicated and passionate about both areas, it means that our consistency across curricular and co-curricular is really maintained.

"The fact that our staff team (six staff, plus our accompanist and two administrators) is so unified means that when we do take on board new initiatives within our faculty that enhances our teaching, it really gains traction and therefore, it's very effective when it's implemented. I think we've seen proof of that with the student engagement in our classes. I can see that students now, compared to when I first started, really enjoy our classes a lot more and are learning a lot more."

Mrs Nelson said the 2019 music cohort were strong all-rounders as a result of working on their weaknesses and taking on feedback from staff.

"To do well in Music 2, students have to be strong in all elements of music, not just outstanding solo performers. It's about having musicianship skills, aural skills, sight-reading skills, written skills, history and music theory knowledge," she explained.

"Eleven out of the 12 Music 2 students last year achieved Band 6s, and 10 of them also did Music Extension and did extremely well, with seven being nominated for Encore – for outstanding HSC performances and compositions.

"They were the type of learners who really listened to teacher instruction and sought feedback to improve, so I think that made the biggest difference.

"They were also a very special group because there was such a diverse representation of instruments played, so it meant that when we were playing repertoire as a class, they sounded like a chamber orchestra and when we were just singing through a repertoire we sounded like a chamber choir because we had girls and boys able to sing the full four parts, so it meant that the richness of our lessons was really rewarding and enjoyable for me, as well as the students.

"Overall, I think their HSC and IB Diploma performances are a result of the long-term investment of staff and resources into the music program, which meant the students were really well prepared over the past six years."



RAP project under way



The development of a Vision for Reconciliation has been an emotionally challenging and hugely rewarding step in the planning for both Gawura and SACS.

How does a school ensure its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are valued participants within the school community? And how does a school ensure its students are instilled with a deep commitment to the healing of our nation through genuine reconciliation and restoration?

That's the vision for the school's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

"A RAP is a formal statement of an organisation's commitment to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples," explained Jackie Isenegger, the SACS Director of Marketing and Strategy. "But in practice, it's a much deeper process of self-examination and listening for the RAP Committee and many of the stakeholders whose opinions we have sought throughout the process."

Ms Leanna Carr-Smith, a Wiradjuri woman who teaches in the Junior School and Gawura, was involved in the development of

the school's RAP Vision and said it began with something simple: truth-telling.

"We acknowledged the truth about British colonisation and its impact on Indigenous peoples," she said. "We had hard conversations and answered tricky questions."

The reconciliation process is a bit like a building renovation TV show, she said. "You come in and everything's broken. You need to fix it! It's the same here. White and Black Australians' relationships are broken."

The RAP committee – comprised of parents, students, staff, First Nations Peoples, community members, Executive and School Council members – went through an extensive process of discussion and reflection, with particular insights coming from Gawura teachers Ms Carr-Smith and Ms Lavinia Williams, and the co-founder of Gawura, Pastor Ray Minniecon. The committee used the '*Uluru Statement from the Heart*' as a guiding document.

The long process resulted in a draft *Vision for Reconciliation*, which received an overwhelmingly positive response from all stakeholders, said Ms Isenegger. The next stage of the plan will see the RAP committee explore the RAP's impacts in three areas: in the classroom, around the school, and with the community.

The committee will follow the Narrangunnawali process for RAP development, looking at the three elements of relationships, respect and opportunities within each area of the school. The final document will provide the foundation for cultural governance and policy within the school and enable work to start on Gawura's Strategic Plan in 2021.

Ms Carr-Smith said the final RAP will be written in Gadigal language and she hopes to have it honoured with a special name – like the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. "I want the SACS community to say, 'this is our statement. It's big. And it means something,'" she said.

Strategic Plan on track

A new transparent method of measuring progress within the school's Strategic Plan is delivering strong results.

The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan is a detailed framework of the school's journey over the next three years, with benchmarks at every point to keep performance accountable.

Using the Balanced Scorecard methodology, we are able to track our academic, financial, societal and environmental progress, which ensures we know exactly where we are and where we are going at any given time.

Very few schools are held accountable for the strategic plans they put in place. But as a Christian school, we believe it is crucial to maintain our credibility and integrity as leaders and be accountable for reaching the targets we have set.

We're measuring staff and student wellbeing and engagement, staff turnover, student absenteeism, and academic progress, all alongside the more 'traditional' financial measures of performance. In Terms 2 and 3, we held our first Strategic Reviews of the plan. These reviews coincided with the four-yearly Voice Project Staff Survey, which returned our best results ever. Ninety-nine per cent of staff said they believe in the values and purpose of SACS, while feedback on engagement, flexibility, wellbeing and collegiality all ranked significantly above the industry standard. The survey's results also tie in with our goal to lift student engagement, with research proving that high staff engagement is linked to improved student wellbeing, engagement and academic outcomes.

View the Strategic Plan at: bit.ly/2G5gw0Q

Jackie Isenegger, Director of Strategy and Marketing

Old Andreans boost community spirit with virtual events

This year, Old Andreans have generously used their considerable talents and time to engage with the entire school community through the creation and delivery of several virtual events that lifted the spirits of all involved. Karen Swibel spoke to Old Andreans Association (OAA) Council member Kathleen Thomas (OA2018), to discover what inspired the OAA's incredible support of the school community in 2020.



Kathleen Thomas (OA2018) hosted the school's Giving Day livestream in Term 2.

How did COVID-19 affect the OAA Council's plans?

COVID-19 forced us to move things online. In terms of the meetings, this was straightforward. Like everyone else, learning how to communicate via Zoom was not easy at first but we quickly became used to it. In a time of very limited social interaction, I personally found our Zoom Council meetings to be a highlight of my week.

While our meetings ran smoothly, the real challenge came with thinking of ways for us to connect the Old Andrean community in a time of social distancing. One of the primary ways in which the OAA would normally achieve this is through organising reunions. But with reunions unable to go ahead, we came up with ways to engage the whole community online. These included a virtual community choir and a video presentation of some of the best Showcase performances over the past 15 years. We then extended these events to students, parents and staff so all the SACS community could be involved.

What did the Virtual Choir involve?

One of our first online initiatives, the Virtual Community Choir, was a great success. We had over

60 members of the SACS community feature in the choir, not to mention many who worked behind the scenes to make it come together. Our choir consisted of Old Andreans, Hessians (parents of graduates), students, parents and staff members. After each choir member recorded themselves singing our chosen song, *Seasons of Love*, we synchronised all the videos together to create a virtual choir.

It was a very large project, taking about three months to complete. We had a team of Old Andreans who worked behind the scenes to rewrite some of the music scores to suit Year 12 students, so they could participate. Mika Rosewarne (OA2016) worked on logistics, I focused on the visuals and Angus Hook (OA2018), with support from Jayson McBride, from the music department, did a fantastic job with the audio. After each performer recorded and filmed themselves performing the song, it was a matter of putting it all together!

What prompted the decision to create a virtual choir?

We felt it was important to provide an opportunity for our community to stay connected throughout such a difficult time. With so many co-curricular events and

music ensembles unable to go ahead at the start of the year, the choir gave students and other members of the community the opportunity to perform together (from the comfort of their own home).

How did Showcasing Showcase come about?

As Showcase could not go ahead as a live performance in Sydney Town Hall this year, we decided to hold an online event, *Showcasing Showcase*. Kelton Jarvis (OA2012) sourced archives, allowing us to feature a collection of some of the best Showcase performances from the past 15 years. It was great to see such memorable performances, like the drum-off from 2007 and the 2014 performance of *Minnie the Moocher*.

Over 1,000 people viewed *Showcasing Showcase*. During the premier of the video, we received photos and videos of groups of Old Andreans watching it together. It was particularly great to see them laughing and singing along to the performances. *Showcasing Showcase* touched so many people because it allowed them to come together, reminisce and even laugh at some questionable hairstyle choices.

The OAA also put together a video tribute to former student Kundayi Chiundiza, who passed away while in Year 11. How did that come about?

The video tribute to Kundayi was particularly important as 2020 marked the 10th anniversary of his passing and as his cohort could not gather together, we believed it was important for them and his family to be able to honour Kundayi in a meaningful way. Jack Toohey (OA2010) created a moving film tribute, interviewing some of Kundayi's classmates and teachers and interspersing it with archival photos and a beautiful recording of *Ukuthula*, led by Emma Rosewarne (OA2011).

What motivates you and the OAA Council to give so much to the school community?

I do it because I loved my time as a student at St Andrew's. It not only gave me many incredible opportunities but helped me to develop character. I feel so lucky to have gone to a school that impacted my life in so many positive ways and for that reason, I am grateful to give back to SACS through the OAA.

How staff nailed the transition to remote learning

“Remote learning. In January we didn’t know it existed. In February we dreaded it. In March we embraced it. In April we conquered it” – the Head of Innovation and Enterprise, Pip Hoermann, was instrumental in the school’s move to remote learning across Kindergarten to Year 12 and explains how the delivery of learning through technology all came together.

January

The school year commenced with its usual buzz, plus some extra excitement as we transitioned all students in Years 3 to 10 from iPads to Windows laptops. This alone would make 2020 a standout year for more effectively embedding technology to enrich teaching and learning at SACS. Looking back, it is strange to think that this did not end up being the defining technological change of 2020. But what a blessing that we made the change when we did!

We certainly would not have conquered remote learning like we did without these new student devices. Student and staff training for this change started in 2019 and was followed by extensive device introduction sessions at the start of 2020.

Students’ first impressions of the Surface Pro laptops were positive, and teachers were well prepared for the transition, embracing the new stylus technology with gusto.

February

Teachers in other countries started posting online about their remote learning experiences and senior staff began preparing for a potential move to remote learning.

March

It became obvious that a period of remote learning was inevitable. We hoped to make it to the end of Term 1 but knew that we needed to be prepared for an earlier transition ‘just in case’. Detailed guides, protocols and outlines for remote learning were developed. A remote learning trial day with Year 9 students tested these processes and teachers and students provided feedback. Initial teething issues which were addressed included: setting up laptops for staff who usually use desktop computers, getting the VPN set up for staff so they could access their files on the school’s server, ensuring staff had adequate Internet access at home and rolling out the Teams app to students earlier than scheduled for the delivery

of remote learning. Using video conferencing tools was also a new experience for most staff and students and presented additional challenges for many users in the trial days.

Another remote learning trial day was held, this time for all students K-12. The ICT team also worked overtime to provide students with the additional support and training needed to effectively use OneNote, Schoology and Teams. On Monday 23 March, students worked independently at home while teachers received additional training and prepared curriculum materials for the extended remote learning period which began the following day.

Remarkably, staff and students successfully transitioned from traditional teaching to remote learning in less than two weeks.

The Director of Teaching, Kirsten Macaulay, was amazed at what was achieved in such a short timeframe: “What we did deliver was beyond the expectations of what was thought possible,” she said.

Staff who were instrumental in the roll-out to remote learning

- ICT Manager Lyle Corvisy
- ICT Support Technician Michael Maggay
- Head of Innovation and Enterprise Pip Hoermann
- Junior School and Gawura Technology Coordinator Tim Ryman
- Executive Director of School Services Nicola Warwick-Mayo
- Deputy Head of School (Secondary) Brad Swibel
- Staff trainers Cathy Phipps, Amanda Hogan and Rachel George
- Helpdesk technical support: thanks must go to the ICT Helpdesk team of Michael Maggay, Nathan Knagge, Liam Biddlecome, Marjorie Alina, Zac Bailey and Angus Hook who worked 13-hour shifts over many weeks to ensure students, parents and staff could access technical support in a timely manner.



Left: ICT team members Liam Biddlecome, Isaac Harvey, Lyle Corvisy, Dan Levy, Michael Maggay, Zac Bailey and Marjorie Alina were among the key staff implementing the shift to remote learning.
Above: Students enjoyed a return to the classroom.



Top left to right: Mrs Susie Moffatt reads to her Junior School class; Junior School students were thrilled to be back in the classroom after many weeks at home; Technology Coordinator Tim Ryman. Left: Junior School teachers Miss Natalie Jones, Mr Selwyn Wu, Miss Erin McCormic and Mrs Joy Rohrlach were excited to welcome students back to school on 11 May.

Junior School teachers dig deep to teach remotely

The St Andrew's Junior School is usually abuzz on a normal school day, with 378 students busily moving between classes and activities, but all went very quiet on Levels 7 and 8 on Tuesday 24 March when a lengthy period of learning remotely began.

For Tim Ryman, the Technology Coordinator for the Junior School and Gawura School, the first day of remote learning felt "quite frantic" – but he deemed it a success.

"This period was so different to anything we'd done before," he said. "No one had ever experienced something like this. We were used to being very relational and collaborative. All of a sudden, people were working from their kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms. There was an entirely new dynamic in play."

He knew this year would be different when the Head of Junior School, Rhonda Robson, suggested early in Term 1 that they needed to get prepared. "The way things are going," she said, "I think we

need to start thinking through how we could deliver remote learning in the Junior School."

It seems like a long time ago, but he said it was the trigger for many conversations with Junior School teachers, asking some big questions about what teaching would look like if they were forced to go fully online: Would you video chat the entire day? How often do you check in with your class? What work expectations do you set?

"We did some trial days in both the primary and secondary schools," Mr Ryman said, "And we learned very quickly what worked and what didn't."

"Our new devices, which were rolled out in Term 1, were such a blessing in that they worked wonderfully. I spoke to friends at other schools who hadn't

prepared quite as well and had to change learning platforms halfway through. We were by no means perfect but we had prepared our technology and processes in a way that made the transition (to online) a lot easier."

Several months later, and Mr Ryman is thankful that the online experience wasn't extended. "It was so good to be back. I was reminded of how relational teaching is," he said. "As great as technology is, there's something so special about being in the same room with your students and fellow staff. Seeing the students each day, and having those conversations, is remarkable."

Mrs Robson said the efforts by staff to follow up every child in their class, to create

and deliver lesson plans online and to overcome some of the challenges of technology was incredible. "Staff always give 100 per cent effort. But in that period, it was 250 per cent," she said. "Everybody played a crucial role in getting things online with such skill and ease. And students were equipped to flourish and continue learning, despite the uncertainty and new learning approaches they faced."

And an unexpected outcome was the close bonds formed by teachers and students. "Going through such a monumental event together strengthened students' relationships and their sense of connectedness with their class and identity," Mrs Robson said.



Miss Ferguson and Talaara board the Gawura bus.

Community ensures students are not disadvantaged

The generosity of our school community was well and truly evident during remote learning in March and April when staff, Gawura donors and volunteers all pitched in to ensure Gawura students, secondary students on Gawura scholarships and Gawura families had everything they needed to deal with this challenging time, reports Catherine Gunning.

COVID-19 and remote learning uncovered wide discrepancies in Australian society and the impacts were not felt evenly around Australia, in Sydney or in our own community.

There are 32 students in Gawura from Kindergarten to Year 6 in 2020 and eight Indigenous Gawura scholarship students in Years 7-12. Many Gawura families had problems

with small things like an unreliable internet service or challenges with space at home, which made learning difficult.

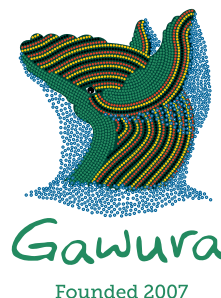
"In late March when we moved to online learning, Gawura students were lucky that through the generosity of donors, they had the equipment and capacity to do their schoolwork at home," Head of Gawura, John Ralph,

said. "Students from Year 3 up had their school-issued Surface Pro and we delivered iPads to all of our Kindergarten to Year 2 students."

During the first week of learning from home, Neal Flatley – one of the Gawura bus drivers – together with Lauren Ferguson, Gawura's Aboriginal Education Assistant and Catherine Gunning,

Gawura's Fundraising Manager, took the Gawura bus out to deliver iPads to Gawura's younger children, and books, pens and writing paper.

"We were missing the kids, so it was great to check in on everyone and to know that the kids had what they needed for remote schooling," Ms Ferguson said.





Gawura staff member Miss Lauren Ferguson visits students at home.



Gawura student Kailan shows his home learning set-up.

As the time went by, students found remote learning more challenging.

Mr Ralph said, "We asked all students to 'show up' and do the hard yards even when they were at home. Teachers had to learn a new way of working too, so it was a hard time for everyone. The workload certainly increased, as did teacher fatigue."

The Gawura bus made a second run to deliver art resources to students at home. The Junior School's art teacher, Miriam Daley, with the assistance of Ms Ferguson, created beautiful art packs to ensure students and their families could have a break from their screens and fill in some recreational hours each day.

Mr Ralph stayed in touch with families, answering questions and checking in on how each student's schoolwork was progressing. Top of mind was the wellbeing of the Gawura students and families.

"When students weren't completing their work, we took an audit to check which families had Wi-Fi problems at home," he said. "We were lucky that we had some funds to buy a wireless modem for every family who needed it, and to pay for three months of Internet access, so they could complete their schoolwork, which used a lot of bandwidth."

Generous teacher support on tap

Students on a secondary scholarship were provided with amazing support from Aboriginal Education Mentor, Matt Hammond. He went above and beyond for students by coming into school five days a week, when classes were all being delivered remotely. He emailed all secondary teaching staff, asking if any would be happy to volunteer extra time to personally assist the school's Indigenous students. The 25 staff who responded gave up their time, on top of an already very full load, to provide additional support.

"Some students have personal and organisational issues that make it hard for them to plan their day," Mr Ralph explained. "So under Matt's supervision, secondary students were able to come into the school and do their remote learning, and get one-on-one additional support when needed."

"In a conversation I had with a Gawura parent, who is also an Elder within our school, she was quite emotional to hear about the extra help Matt and the teachers provided to ensure our students continued to learn."

Fun student activities, like the Easter hat parade, were undertaken online and some were shared with Gawura donors, volunteers and

supporters to keep them in the loop. During National Volunteers Week, Gawura volunteers were sent a gifted teabag so they could have a cuppa on Gawura.

Students return to classrooms

When a return to face-to-face classroom learning was phased in, Gawura students returned for three days a week, from Monday 11 May. The extra guidance and assistance that students can only get through face-to-face learning had been sorely missed by students and teachers alike. Many extra protocols were put in place to ensure students' health was the top priority, especially considering many Indigenous students live with their Elders, who are in the 'at risk' health category.

Staff step up to fill volunteer void

"When school started back, we faced a new challenge," Mr Ralph said. "We couldn't resume our morning reading program with corporate volunteers, so we asked SACS staff if they could spare 20 minutes once a week to come into Gawura and listen to students read. We were overwhelmed, with 30 staff offering their time."

When the Gawura annual appeal took place in June, the school received incredible

support from a record number of donors. This means Gawura now has funds in the bank to attend to any additional needs of students, and to guarantee secondary scholarship places next year.

"We also had a very kind donation from The One Box through our supporters at the GO Foundation (set up by Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin) and we now deliver a box of groceries, fruit and vegetables each week to Gawura families in need," said Ms Gunning, adding, "These boxes are being delivered by SACS families."

When school returned, Souths Cares delivered two health seminars on hygiene and good mental health to students and they also had a virtual visit from 2019 AFL grand finalist with the GWS Giants, Wiradjuri man Zac Williams, who beamed in to see how the Gawura students were doing.

This year presented many new challenges for our Gawura community, but the love and care shown by the extended SACS and Gawura community has certainly shone through, brightening the lives of all of our students, their families and staff.

Year 12 leaders share their highlights and lowlights

Anthony Segaert spoke to 14 of our 2019-20 student leadership team to discover what they learned from their year in office.



Jess Luff
Salisbury House Captain

Best thing: Being able to work more with the house and everyone involved. All the events I worked on were very team-based, so it was great to work with other people and get to know them.

Worst thing: Motivation! Especially once we went online. Trying to get people who were at home to be engaged was really difficult.

What did you learn? Delegation, and not trying to take all the control and knowing other people have amazing ideas and learning how to combine several ideas into one.



Hugo Sebesta
Prefect

Best thing: We managed to do a lot of things still during isolation, and our social media presence was good. It was really good to talk with senior staff about things like the Acknowledgment of Country. I felt like we made a small difference.

Worst thing: Trying to get a lot of things done with all the interruptions and all the changes with remote learning. It was very difficult to do anything!

What did you learn? I learnt it's important to represent people and to know them well through strong relationships.



Matthew Butler
Sport Captain

Best thing: The food at our sport meetings! They were really good. Other than that, helping out the student body and making decisions that would affect them. It was important to do what was best for the student body.

Worst thing: The period where we weren't at school and trying to stay engaged at home. We tried to do some Internet fitness challenges but it was really hard to get off the ground.

What did you learn? I did learn about responsibility in leading – you need to get things done when you've said you will.



Olivia Thill
Sport Captain

Best thing: The best part was being inside of all the plans for the school – so much happens! And also the connection with new people.

Worst thing: That period of remote learning. But one of the things that stood out to me was the way we used Instagram to connect with our community – that was great.

What did you learn? Things are always more complicated than they seem! When you're in Year 7, you witness the Athletics Carnival but you never realise the masses of work that has gone on behind the scenes to make it happen. It's pretty extraordinary.



Natalie Newman
Music Captain

Best thing: I felt like I actually had some influence in the school. I love SACS so much – but there are always things we can do better. So I really liked being a part of that.

Worst thing: I felt like we had a disconnect between the team and the student body at times during isolation.

What did you learn? I learnt the importance of developing relationships – it's maybe the most important thing you can do! You can hype people up and make sure school is fun because of the relationships you have developed.



Eleni Newbury
St Paul's House Captain

Best thing: Learning how to communicate to students and lead in a pretty different way to how other student leaders had to lead.

Worst thing: Being disconnected! Not having a fantastic sense of community, especially during the holidays.

What did you learn? This too shall end. Things are bad now but there is always tomorrow and things will get better. We always tried to make things better.



Khulan Tong
Community Service Captain

Best thing: Being part of the community team and working to make a difference.

Worst thing: The isolation. That really messed up people's plans. We did a really good job with consistent communication but it was hard.

What did you learn? I learned a lot about working with other people and sharing ideas and brainstorming and getting organised – that was super helpful.



Freya Leach
School Captain

Best thing: Having a larger platform and having the chance to impact the school in a positive way.

Worst thing: Communicating remotely and not being able to see people's faces – but it's taught me the real value of community.

What did you learn? That community is super important and even though we can't see people in person, we can continue online.



2019-20 student leadership team.



Conor Magee
Prefect

Best thing: Getting to meet lots of people across different year groups and also staff members, and working on ideas and events with them.

Worst thing: That we had to spend a lot of time away from those people this year because we've been physically separated.

What did you learn? Engage however you can. It's really important to try to engage with people, using every platform and medium possible.



Angelina Farag
Durham House Captain

Best thing: Getting to know more people in my house, and everyone on the leadership team.

Worst thing: Adapting to communicating online. That was really difficult and it was sad because people who would usually put their hand up to do stuff weren't willing to do it remotely. But for those who did volunteer, there were even more ways to be involved. It was different but helpful.

What did you learn? I learnt that organisation was key. The most important thing about leadership is communicating well about ideas and plans.



2019-20 Year 12 graduates at valedictory in 2020.



Olivia Hayes
Prefect

Best thing: For me, it was having a sort of 'second home' – I actually enjoyed going to leadership meetings. I really loved the people in the group and it was a homely setting.

Worst thing: The most challenging part was working in a group! We had to work out how to work well and get people to communicate well.

What did you learn? How to work in a team. I've always known how to work individually but it's totally different to working in a team, where some people like speaking a lot and others don't. I learned how to overcome big problems together, and built perseverance.



Matthew Catanzariti
Prefect

Best thing: Despite the disruption of the year, being able to work together as a team was really rewarding.

Worst thing: I can't think of one – it was a great opportunity!

What did you learn? To be more decisive and collaborative, which ensures a better outcome for everyone involved.



Harry Carson
School Captain

Best thing: Working with people throughout the school, from Junior School to executive staff.

Worst thing: The hardest part was working with people I didn't know – from Junior School students and staff, to StartUp organisers, to rugby. It was a bit different working with people other than just Senior College students.

What did you learn? Strong communication skills means you can share your ideas more effectively.



Rory McClelland
Hereford House Captain

Best thing: It was great to connect with more people than I would normally.

Worst thing: We didn't get to do as many things the 'normal way' – SACS Factor, Big City Bake Off, etc.

What did you learn? I had to learn to lead my house on top of all the other normal tasks. So, in that sense, it was a bit of a test. And the change to remote events and learning also taught us to be very adaptable.

Entrepreneurial program builds momentum



More than 50 students, from Year 5 to Year 12, participated in this year's StartUp entrepreneurial program, developing the skills needed to turn an idea into a viable business proposition, reports Anthony Segaeert.



StartUp Finale 2020 participants.

The 21 student teams were guided through six weeks of online training in Term 3 where they heard presentations from business and entrepreneur experts, worked with their teams and met with their convenor. The workshops covered what innovation and enterprise means, how to research your market well, how to clarify your ideas and work well as a team, and how to pitch ideas to potential investors.

These workshops proved crucial in helping students reflect on their own ideas and adjust them accordingly. The two-hour workshops were divided equally between presentations from industry experts and time for groups to work together and ask their convenors and mentors questions.

Mentors – individuals in the school community and beyond – worked hands-on

with each team through the entire process. They generously shared their time and wisdom with students through weekly video calls in order to ensure the students remained on track.

The Finale in early August saw 13 student teams present their 'elevator pitch' ideas to camera. The three finalists also presented a five-minute pitch in front of an expert panel of judges and online audience – with Dash Drury and Roisin Carey (Year 9) declared the 2020 StartUp Entrepreneurs of the Year for their Bee Box sustainable kit.

Pip Hoermann, the Head of Innovation and Enterprise at the school, said the program's robust entrepreneurial challenges were exacerbated by the COVID-19 social restrictions and the occasional difficulties of remote learning – but students rose to the challenge.

"Not a single team had a cruise ride," she said. "Every student faced immense challenges at every stage: from coming up with solid ideas, to conducting market research and developing prototypes, to learning to work as a team online."

"I'm really proud of what they achieved," she said.

"Some students developed enormously in their confidence in a pretty short period of time. It was great to see some of them move from being very nervous about pitching their ideas and having detailed notes on palm cards to speak openly and with confidence without any notes, because they knew their business back to front."

And in the end, that's the beauty of StartUp: even if student businesses don't get off the ground, students come out of the process wiser, more thoughtful and with a

far greater appreciation of the hard work required to make something a success.

That's not to say students don't genuinely create businesses that work – they do! Last year, then-Year 9 student Max Harris won StartUp's Booster Award, given to pitches which have business potential but need to be developed further.

Since then, he's launched his own creative outlet brand, Grubs. It's an online store featuring a variety of Max's self-designed and made T-shirts, tote bags, photography and painting, which he has been developing over the past year.

"After the program I stayed in touch with one of the mentors," he said. "He gave me more advice on my business and the aesthetic that my brand was going for, as well as how I could achieve and push for my goals."

StartUp Finale shows incredible ingenuity

StartUp is all about innovation, pivoting and enterprise. It is about bringing ideas to life – and that exactly sums up the process of transforming our usual Finale into a multi-studio live broadcast this year, writes the Director of Community Engagement, Lyn Jarvis.

Visit Max's brand website:
grubss.bigcartel.com,
and his Instagram
account [@grubs.co](https://www.instagram.com/grubs.co)

This year's StartUp participants are already off to a great start. Several student teams were invited to be part of the Blast Off program, which sees students able to access their small cash prize and continue to work with industry mentors, in order to take the next steps to launch their ideas.

Year 7 students Edie Swibel and Ruby Burton developed a not-for-profit jewellery business, tiger.rose. They donate any profits to Gawura School. The girls have already started to make a profit and are in discussions with others about expanding their work to teach Gawura students how to create the earrings.

"It's been such a pleasure to watch the pair of them at work," says Karen Swibel, mother of Edie. "It's been amazing to see how much they've learned, experienced and grown."

The program has grown each year since its inception in 2018. And plans are already under way for an even bigger StartUp in 2021, with extra support for students and an equally impressive broadcast Finale.

"The world is uncertain right now, but students keep innovating," said Ms Hoermann. "And as long as they're innovating, we're supporting them in doing it well."

Community feedback

Below are a few of the dozens of comments that we received after the event:

- That was FANTASTIC! Every school event should be done like that. Congratulations to you all
- I just wanted to say how AMAZING the broadcast was! It was soooo exciting and compelling and very well done! All my family were watching and I could hardly hear the broadcast over my phone pinging with texts saying how amazing it was the entire time
- So exciting to be watching live! How entrepreneurial and innovative!
- What an amazing production and the student teams were outstanding! Loved it, thank you
- Great production tonight SACS and great effort to all the finalists.

Calling an initial one-hour meeting to discuss streaming the Finale, I was informed that the current plan would be, quite frankly, boring. It wouldn't hold the interest of either the audience or the participants, and it certainly wouldn't showcase the exceptional, innovative and creative aspects of StartUp.

Five hours later, I had committed to a multi-studio broadcast, loosely based on *Shark Tank* and *The Voice*,

complete with smoke machines, specialist lighting, multiple cameras, pre-recorded content and ... well, I wasn't all that sure what I had committed to.

What I did appreciate, very early on in the process, was that it was going to be an incredible amount of work to do this successfully. Looking around the room, I realised that each participant in the meeting was an Old Andrean – all confident that we could pull this off. How could I resist?



Thus began the process that in three weeks successfully put together a broadcast that logically should have taken three months.

A core team of Pip Hoermann (Head of Innovation and Enterprise), Anthony Segart (OA2017) as Director, Zac Simpson (OA2011) as Floor Manager and myself as Executive Producer focussed on creating a compelling story and video script that would ensure a wonderful experience for the participants and audience, while highlighting the amazing learning and accomplishments of the students and teaching staff. Every aspect of the event was rethought and reimagined to suit an online experience.

The complicated production included a 14-page scripted run sheet, a minute-by-minute call sheet with every camera angle, design of two studio sets, additional graphics, animation, pre-recorded content, props, an on-line voting system – not to mention an extensive AV equipment list that included cameras, microphones, TV screens, projectors, lights, switchers, encoders, auto-cues, headsets and a multi-channel communication system. The Old Andean production team

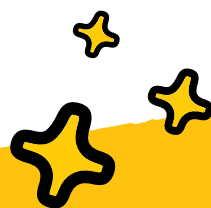
expanded to eight enthusiastic graduates. Without them, the broadcast simply would not have been possible.

Our volunteer MC for the night, Alex Watson (OA2014), has always been a supporter of StartUp and was a finalist judge in 2019. He had no experience working in front of a camera or hosting such a complicated live event. Despite the fact this easily quadrupled his time commitment, he joined the planning team and embraced the excitement of StartUp 2020.

Fortunately for us, our key judge, James O'Loghlin, had considerable broadcast experience, so not only was he very comfortable with the format, he was able to take a leading role in ensuring the evening flowed and that the judges' content was lively and interesting to our audience.

It was a wonderful success – so much so that the plan is to continue presenting StartUp as a live broadcast in future years – regardless of what COVID-19 has in store for us.

The broadcast was recorded and can be viewed on the school's YouTube page here:
bit.ly/SACSSStartUp



Top: StartUp Finale Entrepreneurs of the Year Dash Drury and Roisin Carey (Year 9) with their Bee Box sustainable kit.

Middle: The StartUp Finale Old Andean production team of Anthony Segart (OA2017), Angus Hook (OA2018), Lily Meek (OA2017), Matthew Watson (OA2017), Zac Bailey (OA2018), Zac Simpson (OA2011), Bindi Jarvis (OA2010) and George Cowan (OA2018) were instrumental in pulling the event together.

Left: The broadcast 'studio' where finalists presented their pitches to the three judges.

Getting creative with sport and exercise

While Term 1 saw many sports teams excel in the summer inter-school sport competitions, COVID-19 restrictions cut short the Winter sport season. Anthony Segaeert reports on some of the creative methods employed by staff and students during the remote learning period in Term 2 to ensure students kept moving.

At the beginning of the year – before the school went into remote learning – Athlete Development Manager Chris Watts worked with students who used the gym before and after school to transition their paper-based programs to an app. Using the TrainHeroic app, he was able to better monitor the progress of students and provide personalised programs.

When it was announced that the school would transition to entirely remote learning, Mr Watts created a profile for every one of the 1,200-plus students at the school, providing access to training resources from their phones. He then recorded workout instruction videos for students, which helped them understand how to correctly do the training at home.

In addition to the Sports Department's constant communication with sports teams and weekly challenges to gym participants, Year 12 sports captains Olivia Thill and Matthew Butler produced weekly 'Friday Fitness' episodes on the SACS Pride Instagram and Facebook pages. They also shared their experiences with students in a podcast series with the Director of Sport and Cocurricular Education, Ric Van Wachem, called SACS Sports Talk.

A key challenge was ensuring students did some form of exercise and weren't sitting at their desks all day. Even Dr Collier stepped up to the challenge and taught Junior School students how to have a 'brain break'.

Dr Collier leads Junior School students in a short "brain break".



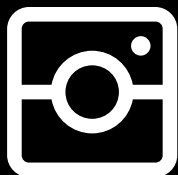
Cancellation and rescheduling a weekly challenge for outdoor education

The greatest casualties of 2020 at SACS were the international tours and outdoor education camps scheduled in Terms 2 and 3. Our Outdoor Education staff had an interesting start to the year with Year 7 being redesigned each week for three very different locations, due to bushfires and floods! The Year 7 programs turned out to be the only programs that went ahead until late in Term 3 due to COVID-19 restrictions on overnight activities. Staff did actually redesign Year 9 snow camp to enable it to go ahead in a COVID-19 safe way but four days prior to the departure of the first camp, the NSW Government stated no overnight activities could be run. Fortunately, in the last week of Term 3, these restrictions were eased and planning moved into top gear to deliver a full complement of programs for Years 9 and 10 in Term 4. One of the highlights of Term 3 was the ability of staff to run day programs in and around Sydney national parks and recreational areas for the Junior School, which proved to be very popular with students.



Students enjoyed a fun day of competition at the Athletics Carnival in Term 3.





Events snapshot 2020

Events are an exciting and vital part of life at SACS. In 2020, the various COVID-19 restrictions hit the school in Term 2 and led to the cancellation of many school activities and events but many more were reimagined and presented online, with students and staff showing incredible creativity and resilience to ensure our school celebrated the incredible and diverse talents of students, and our community remained connected. These pages provide just some of the highlights from the year.



Choristers' tour of the UK and Europe

To celebrate the 200th birthday of the St Andrew's Cathedral Choir, a very special tour of the UK, France and Italy took place in the Christmas holiday break. Their reputation as a world-class cathedral choir opened the door for them to sing at services in some of the world's most iconic cathedrals and chapels, including St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, St Paul's Cathedral, London, Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, the American Cathedral, The Madeleine and Saint-Eustache in Paris and San Marco Basilica in Venice. A total of 16 choristers were accompanied by 16 choir men, Choir Master Ross Cobb, several teachers and parents. Singing a number of services in St Paul's Cathedral, London, was a highlight for many of the boys.



P&F Welcome in the Square

The P&F once again hosted Welcome in the Square across two mornings at the start of Term 1. With abundant coffee and pastries, new and returning parents gathered to either celebrate or commiserate about the end of holidays and the start of the school year. This is always a wonderful opportunity for parents to mix and mingle, chat to staff and the P&F Executive, meet new parents and renew old friendships. The P&F look forward to hosting this event again in 2021 and also reinstating the mid-year Winter Welcome in the Square.



Gawura Cocktail Party

The last school event able to be held before the COVID-19 lockdown was the annual Gawura Cocktail Party. Around 150 people attended the event, which was hosted in the beautiful Macquarie Bank event space above Martin Place. The evening's MC was SACS family member and Senior Policy Officer for Reconciliation Australia, Marnie Round, and the decorations and theme featured artwork by Indigenous artist Sammy, from Bana Homeland in Kuku Yalanji Country, who graciously gave permission for his artwork to be used. A total of \$69,000 was raised to support a planned On Country tour to Wujal Wujal, Kuku Yalanji Country, in Cape York which our Indigenous students expect to attend in 2021.



Easter Hat Parade

In the last weeks of Term 1, the Junior School and Gawura set out on an ambitious plan to conduct an online version of the Easter Hat parade. With some stellar efforts from our marketing and IT staff, along with the Junior School and Gawura staff and students, we managed to produce a fabulous video treat that showcased every student who had created a hat for the event. This was in addition to the streamed videos of the Easter Service and Assembly on the last day of term. It was an extraordinary team effort from all involved. The video can be viewed on our Facebook page here: bit.ly/SACSEasterHat



Kirrikee Picnic Day

The Kirrikee Family Picnic Day this year was so popular that, for the first time ever, we had to limit numbers. It was an enormously successful day despite cool temperatures and inclement weather, with resilient families enjoying the overnight stay at our fabulous outdoor campus. The challenging activities were popular, the dam was full and the lunch was delicious. The picnic, combined with other SACS fundraising initiatives, raised \$10,000 for the local Penrose Rural Fire Brigade, who were in desperate need of additional firefighting equipment.



Perform with Pride music competition

A new event was created for our musically-minded students to showcase what they had learnt or practised during remote learning. The Perform with Pride music competition invited students to submit a video of themselves performing their selected piece, with the music staff having to pick winners from more than 80 entries across the various age categories. All the winning performances were then shared with students and families, ensuring they could also witness and celebrate the talents of our students, both young and old. The winners were Annabelle Douglas (K-3), David Kim (Years 4-6), Jamie Spittle (Year 7), Dash Drury (age 13-14), Justin Chen (age 15-16) and Ben Wong (age 17-18).



P&F Presents evenings

P&F Presents is a new initiative from the P&F that began in 2019 and continued online in 2020. This year saw three very informative presentations throughout the year: the first on wellbeing and character, the second on leadership at SACS and the third on the branches of the SACS family tree. The format included a panel of staff presenting and then a Q&A session where parents and carers were encouraged to ask questions and join the conversation. These interactive live presentations were delivered online and also recorded, with many parents taking up both options to discover more about the programs delivered to students at SACS.



Leadership Commissioning Service

The 2020 Leadership Commissioning Service was celebrated in the Cathedral with the new student leadership team for 2020-21 receiving a rousing welcome to their roles. In the SACS tradition, our new School Captains chose a food analogy to describe the SACS community but went one step further than previous leaders by actually creating a delicious trifle in front of the audience. The ceremony was followed by a celebratory lunch hosted by Dr Collier, where former School Captain Anthony Segart (OA2017) gave his insights and reflections on the role of the Leadership Team at SACS.



Gala and Giving Day

The last day of Term 2 is always a day of celebration and community spirit at SACS when we hold both the Annual Giving Day and the school's birthday celebration in the form of Gala Day. Perhaps because of the many weeks of remote learning, the students seized the day with more enthusiasm than ever before. It was wonderful to hear the school alive with students from all years competing in their house events, with York House winning the day. The giving component of the day took a special form this year as we asked for donations of volunteer hours, the gift of words of encouragement to each other and, if people felt able, monetary donations for the Heath Bursary Fund, supporting current SACS families. We were overwhelmed with people's generosity in all areas, raising over \$107,000, receiving pledges for 655 volunteer hours and numerous beautiful messages.



Return from remote learning

On 11 May, 2020, and after six weeks of learning remotely, students were overjoyed to return to the classroom. To celebrate their return, which was staggered by year groups attending on different days for the first three weeks, the Community team spent many volunteer hours creating a beautiful display of origami butterflies, which were displayed at the various school entrances. There was one butterfly carefully made and erected for every student at the school. There were a lot of genuine smiles in every classroom as students appreciated being back with their school mates and teachers on campus.



Celebrating parents and grandparents

Many favourite events in the SACS community calendar took a very different form during remote learning and COVID-19 restrictions. Unable to invite grandparents to join us this year, we produced a magnetic photo frame celebrating grandparents in many languages of the world to distribute to all our SACS families. Mother's Day celebrations were replaced with a heart-warming video combining photos of students with their mothers and other important and inspirational women in their lives. Father's Day was also a virtual celebration, this time combining the best (or is it worst) of dads' jokes provided by our students and their families.



Not So Isolated Trivia night

Our online trivia event during COVID-19 restrictions focused on bringing parents together to have some fun – even including some enthusiastic participants dressing up and dancing to the song trivia questions. Parents formed teams with names such as Parents in Pyjamas, Lockdown Loonies and the Loo Paper Hoarders. Some teams gathered together within the COVID-19 restrictions and others met virtually in their assigned chat rooms to grapple with the answers. It came down to a thrilling tie between the Pandemic Parents and the Coronavirus Crazies, with the Year 8 parents, the Coronavirus Crazies, winning the night by one point!



Jane Eyre major drama performance

Our biennial major drama production was scheduled for early in Term 2 but had to be postponed at the last minute due to the COVID-19 shutdown. So, the students and staff reimagined the show and managed to stage their performances to a small number of staff and students at school, and employed an external video production company to shoot the performance so it could be streamed to family and friends late in Term 3. The staging of this event was a credit to the director and producers and all the students who took the many challenges in their stride.



Showcase 2020

It would be unthinkable to have a year at SACS without our performing arts Showcase concert. This year, the Performing Arts department undertook the massive task of organising each of our student performances to be videoed in the new and improved Chapter House to ensure current families would not be denied a 2020 performance. Filmed over two days and two nights, the stunning *Into the Light* Showcase event acknowledged the chaotic and difficult times we all experienced this year to inspire hope and meaning. The stunning final video featured 25 musical items and was streamed online for our community over two nights in September.



Parents' final year celebrations turn to heartache

Skye Molyneax reflects on her journey as a passionate SACS parent and her sense of loss in 2020 as the Year 12 cohort and their parents missed iconic experiences in their pinnacle school year.

As the parent of a Year 12 student, we (students and parents alike) are the class of 2020 – the auspicious, poetic and down-right cool year to graduate ... now completely compromised by chaos of Biblical proportions.

Who would've thought that those born in the ashes of 9/11 would have to completely redefine their final year at school? In a normal year, the HSC/IB would be enough of a challenge to navigate. Now, they have to pivot, sanitise, mask up, keep social distance and Zoom to school. (At the beginning of the year, that last sentence wouldn't have made sense to anyone!)

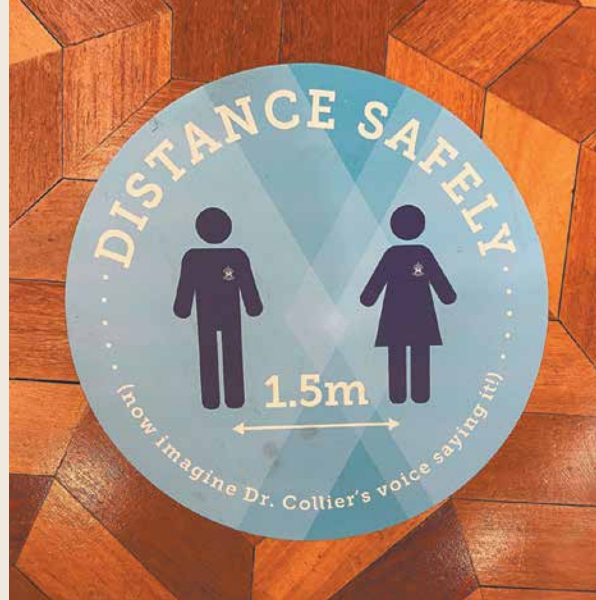
But here we stand (at 1.5m apart), and our kids are getting ready to begin their next chapter at the "end of the beginning" of the New Normal. Confused? Kinda. Uncertain? Definitely. Prepared? Yes, because they have been galvanised by resilience whilst feeling supported by their SACS community.

I've really loved being involved at SACS, not only as a parent but as a professional, and some of the highlights have come from the events where I have been asked to contribute professionally. From designing distancing stickers this year to advising on tertiary courses, I feel lucky to be recognised for what I can contribute. At the Learning the Ropes and Sydney Learning Festival events run by SACS, I have been able to work with young enquiring minds. And although I have never baked a cake, I seem to get invited back every year to judge the Big City Bake Off. It's an absolute pleasure! I love

youthful enthusiasm and that the perspective this generation brings to the learning process is so different to what we experienced at the same age. I reflect on these exchanges and it gives me confidence that our kids are well equipped to face the challenges that the future will throw at them. Yes, it's going to be tough but there will be opportunities in the "new normal".

COVID-19 has stolen so much from our last year of school life. If your house has ever been robbed, you know that awful feeling of loss. The immediately recognisable, big ticket items are gone – tours, carnivals, massed choirs and grand finals, along with camps, graduation and valedictory dinner! But as time goes on, you realise other smaller things are missing and it's these inconsequential items that you can't replace – dropping into school assemblies, getting into a lift with chatty students, a crowded parent social, the friends coming over after school, cheering on the sidelines and laughing with volunteers at a barbecue. Most of all, I miss the "bump-intos" at school. I've always been amazed by the serendipities afforded by Town Hall Square, where there is always a friendly face calling out "Hi Skye!" Everyone needs to feel a sense of belonging and SACS has brought this to my life.

Looking to the future, we still hope to be able to visit the school and amble across the Square. It's where our heart is, it provides us with a sense of home and nothing will ever take that away ... particularly for the class of 2020.



Top: Skye designed these unique stickers for SACS in time for the students' return to school in May.

Above: Skye judging the 2019 Big City Bake Off competition.

Skye's highlights of her SACS journey

- Watching a rugby team, led by an outstanding cellist, come from a massive deficit to snatch a win in the dying minutes of a game
- Dr Collier's stewardship, enduring dry wit and walk-on performance in *The Wizard of Oz*
- Watching a SACS boy double back over George St to help an elderly homeless woman get her trolley across the Tram construction
- Listening to the Senior Boys vocalists' 'I Feel Fire', Massed Choir's 'Ode to Joy', Junior School Choir's 'Recognise' and an impromptu Music Tour performance of 'Earth Song' in Blenheim Castle – all made me cry!
- Being given the titles of 'Cool Mum' and 'Embarrassing Mum' ... simultaneously
- "We went to a really great school...", overheard at a party where Old Andreans were describing their school experiences to their new university friends
- The excitement and incredible generosity of the online fundraiser for Chapter House
- Three emails and two hand-written cards from teachers, filed under "Keepers". They are precious mementos of gratitude and reminders that there is a lifetime of reward if you do the hard work.

Student poets beautify city hoarding

Year 10 and 11 English students can count themselves as published poets, after their poetry work about the city was displayed on a city building hoarding in Chinatown this year, reports Anthony Segaeert.

Students in Years 9 and 10 English Elective last year were invited to participate in Red Room Poetry's 'Poetry on the Block' program, which saw well-established Australian poets Nikki Gemmell and Richard Allen present two workshops to students. The project's aim was to help students express their lived experiences of the city through poetry. Nikki and Richard directed the students' creative ideas by sharing their brainstorming and poetry writing processes.

Supported by the City of Sydney, Poetry on the Block's final poems were visually interpreted by students from the Billy Blue College of Design, who adapted the words into a building hoarding, bringing a dull Sydney city street to life through June, July and August.

In the workshops, students were given different stimuli relating to the city and asked to create their own ideas and poems, and then share them with classmates, who were able to provide them with feedback.

That collaborative aspect of the workshops, which was coupled with expert poet input at every stage, is what Year 10 student Noah Economidis found most beneficial.

"When you think of writing, you don't think a huge amount about working together," he said. "But we did a lot of that. Everyone would write a paragraph and we'd mix it together to see how it worked."

"It was embarrassing reading your work out loud at the beginning," adds Year 10 student Anisha Lahiri. "But it ended up being super useful

because we'd read our poems to help find our own mistakes and other people helped us to come up with solutions."

Collaboration not only allowed the students to more effectively express their thoughts but also led to a better final product.

Anisha wrote about the city's complexity that is at the same time so magical and overbearing:

*I plug myself in, drifting away
from the now, and lose myself
in the what if.*

*Surging away while floating
on sound, pulsing around us.*

*The lights leak together, as if
streams of a luminous river.*

The city hoarding was established on Dixon St in Haymarket and thousands of passers-by have seen the students' poems.

The final artwork displayed in the city was not just an added bonus to the poetry program, but foundational: sharing young people's voices in new ways not only builds a more cohesive society in which citizens can express themselves well, but also provided real-life learning beyond the classroom.

"Poetry on the Block was really beneficial for me," surmises Year 10 student Zara Lum.

"It's exposed us to amazing writers and caused us to think about things from a different perspective. That's so important."

The poems were also published on the Red Room Poetry website: <https://redroomcompany.org/projects/poetry-on-the-block/>

Red Room Poetry's *Poetry on the Block* city hoarding, with poems by SACS students, appeared in Dixon St, Haymarket, between June and October 2020.



**The City – collaborative poem
by Year 9 students (2019) and
Richard Allen**

*Heavy feet and heavier dreams
A city left unclean
Pale people with unmatching clothes
Into the rabbit hole*

*Blinding lights and the roar of machines
There are those who beg for support
Never slow nor calm
No sound belongs there*

*The silent shouting business marches on
It draws you in then throws you out
You work until you rot
Today we live the same as all others*

*Breathe the smog of the tattered ashes
The curtain drops on blinding city waves
Conversations seen and not
A sudden storm of people blocks the sunlight's touch*

*Perching from the highest
Figures shimmer under the stage
Lovely girls with gentle hearts
And evil boys with pretty schemes*

*How full it always is
They don't know
Their own place with their own timing
Each tree holds its value dead*

*Quiet waters as the ferry flicks away
Every person with a different heritage
New people in the familiar blue bus
Without this it would be a sleeping city, never to wake*

*Bewitching sounds whisper next to my ear
The cold bite of a concrete garden
I plug myself in, drifting away from the now
Who are the ones who live?*



Year 9 students enjoyed developing barista skills.

Problem solved with coffee

Coffee often provides the answer to a problem, but few people expected it to be the solution that would encourage more students to congregate in the Level 8 open area of St Andrew's House at lunchtimes.

Faced with a need to better balance the numbers of students across spaces at lunchtime, and with several students also wanting to develop hospitality skills, the Middle School staff leadership team came up with a novel solution: creating a coffee-cart, staffed and managed entirely by Year 9 students, producing hot chocolate, coffees (for older students), no-caffeine lattes and other warm goodies.

Then Middle School Girls Coordinator Jess Gardiner contacted Year 12 parent and coffee extraordinaire George Sabados, who owns Mongrel Joe's Coffee and is the founder of the Australian Specialty Coffee Association. He generously supplied coffee equipment and his time to train students who signed up to participate.

Students then worked with teachers Rev Sam Hwang and Mr Andrew Patrick to perfect their barista skills.

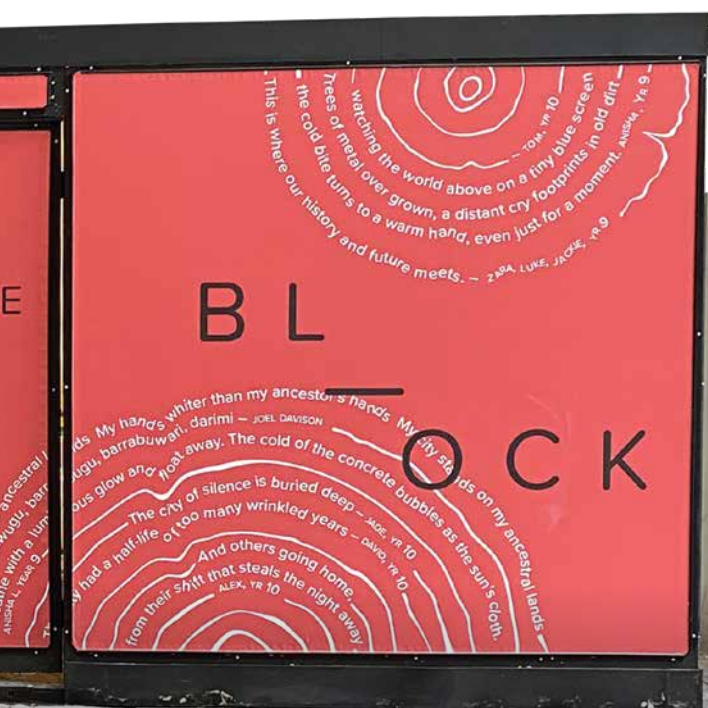
Before COVID-19 social restrictions increased, the Level 8 Coffee Cart ran every Friday lunchtime and was a great success.

The team organising the cart even made a deal with the school canteen to secure cost-price brownies to accompany their coffees on the cart.

The new Middle School Girls Coordinator Naomi Tubman now works with four rotating teams of Year 9 students, with one team each week scheduled to organise stock, serve customers, make the coffee/drinks and solve any problems that arise on the day.

"The most enjoyable part of the process is seeing the kids problem solve during shifts when they are inundated with orders, or when different aspects of the cart need tweaking on the run," she said. "You see their confidence and enthusiasm grow in those moments."

Year 9 student Dash Drury has loved being involved. "The best part of the coffee cart is the laughter, community and, of course, the chai lattes," he said. "I loved working in a team serving coffees and hot chocolates, but I still haven't quite mastered latte art."



Shields provide finishing touches to Chapter House

A last-minute discovery in the roof pattern of Chapter House led to an incredibly complex project – to design, create and erect 14 shields that represented every member of the community. The Director of Community Engagement, Lyn Jarvis, explains the obstacles faced and how it came together in less than a month.

The amazing restoration of Chapter House was drawing towards its conclusion in early May 2020, when the heritage architect pointed out to the Executive Director of School Services, Nicola Warwick-Mayo, that the intricate wooden roof pattern included large wooden shields, located around the atrium that would be ideal to showcase school shields.

A quick search of the school's archives found that there were none of suitable size and quality for the purpose, but all agreed that showcasing the school shields in this way needed further investigation as it would highlight beautifully both the culture of our school

and the exquisite patterned ceiling. It would be a meaningful addition to the transformation of Chapter House that would reflect our school's history and founding, evoke wonderful memories for Old Andreans, and inspire current and future students. The challenge, and it was substantial, was how this could be achieved before the end of May – as that was when the builder's scaffolding was being removed, and there was no other way to mount the shields. The challenge was how to research, design, create, make, and install a meaningful shield for each one of the 14 decorative wooden shield panels in the roof?



The new Durham House shield nears completion.

We approached Julian Bickersteth of International Conservation Services (ICS) for advice on how best to create shields suited to the location. Julian's company had worked with SACS previously and was already involved in the Chapter House project as they had restored the chairs on the gallery level. Julian confirmed that his staff had the required skills to ensure a successful outcome in the timeframe provided, and so the Chapter House shield

project commenced within 48 hours of first recognising the opportunity.

A small dedicated staff team started working on the project, including school archivist Kelton Jarvis (OA2012), along with Will Bickersteth and myself from the Community Engagement Team. We had to quickly decide what the 14 shields would display. Choosing the SACS and Gawura shields and the eight house shields was an easy decision. We also thought it essential to honour

Grand opening in March 2021 ...

Since its completion in 1886, Chapter House has played a major role in the life of St Andrew's Cathedral School, hosting many events such as prizegiving, Chapels, performances, reunions, scouts, even fencing and boxing events in the 1950s.

Its recent major restoration (a joint project with the Cathedral) commenced in October 2019. This included cleaning and repairing the building, realigning and

restoring the gallery level seating, and installing a lift, air conditioning, new bathrooms and a kitchen. It now has the largest seating capacity of any school space. Performance quality audio visual equipment, including speakers, lighting, blackout blinds and control panels, have also been installed, providing a fabulous new performance space. The building works were completed in September 2020 and school commenced using

it in Term 4. A new entrance ramp and the roof of the stunning new atrium entrance will be completed over the summer holidays, with the official opening scheduled for March 2021.

The school now has a 40-year lease for the use of Upper Chapter House. The lower level of Chapter House, which was also an essential part of the renovation process, will be used by the choristers and the Cathedral.

This year, as Covid-19 severely impacted the school's ability to host live events with an audience, it was wonderful to have Chapter House available as the venue to film all the ensembles for Showcase. The final event on the school calendar is the end-of-year Evening of Celebration and Prizegiving, which will be held in Chapter House for the first time in many, many years.



The new Gawura shield.



The new Westminster House shield.



The refurbished Chapter House is now a stunning performance space, featuring 14 decorative roof shields that represent each group in the SACS community.
Photo credit: Anthony Potter Photography.



our connection with the Cathedral and our Old Andreans. Our final two shields needed to represent the choristers and the Old Boys Union (OBU), the predecessor to the OAA.

Crest research delivers stumbling blocks

The first surprise was the discovery that the Durham house banner, carried into the Cathedral and Town Hall for all major school occasions, was not the same as the Durham Cathedral Shield. In fact, the shield hanging in the Level 7 gym and on the first OAA tie is completely different to the banner that is currently used. After extensive consultations with Old Andreans, former Durham House captains, archivists and ICS, it was decided to use the "knight and floral" depiction from the banner, (even though it is more strongly associated with Durham University than Durham Cathedral) as it is now firmly established as the visual emblem of Durham House at SACS. All the other house banners were reflective of their English Cathedral shields.

Finding a suitable shield to represent the Old Boys Union was also problematic and, in the end, ICS created a

shield design based on OBU newsletter emblems discovered in the school archives.

The choristers were to be represented by the pocket each chorister receives and wears on their school blazer. When examining one (which was the only artwork available), Julian noticed it referenced the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) crest, though there were several inconsistencies. Late night consultations with Ross Cobb, who is not only the Director of St Andrew's Cathedral Music but also the National President of RSCM in Australia, confirmed the blazer pocket should be the RSCM crest. Larissa Taylor, our uniform shop manager, discovered that the embroidered blazer pocket currently used had been copied repeatedly from one original embroidered pocket, which was around 30 years old. Her view was that it is likely an embroiderer in the past changed the crest because it was easier to sew. So, the question then was whether to match the shield to the blazer pocket (as that is what had represented our choristers for the past 30 years plus) or match the shield to the RSCM crest? Both decisions had archival precedent but, in this case, with Ross's approval,

we chose to use the RSCM crest for the shield, which will now also be corrected for the Choristers' blazer pocket.

Once the 14 shields had been decided, ICS created the shield-shaped pieces in marine plywood and used the available artwork to vectorise and reformat our shields to fit the shape required. The designs were then transferred onto the shields. The next part of the process was to outline the designs and then the finer details were hand-painted in acrylic, with gold leaf used for highlights.

This involved weekend and late-night consultation and approvals with Community Engagement Team members (and family members), various Old Andreans and ICS. Even screws were located, tested, painted, filled and discussed late on the evening prior to the 7.30am installation – all due to the extremely tight timeframe.

Stunning result

The installation was the next hurdle to conquer due to the height, angle and complexity in attaching the shields. The first shield was completed and hung on Friday 29 May and all were fully installed by 4 June – a mammoth effort by all involved.

Now, as you enter upper Chapter House, in pride of place behind the stage are the School and Gawura shields. The house shields are placed in order of their founding, with York, Canterbury and Salisbury flanking the school crests and the younger houses, Westminster and Durham, being farthest away. The OAA and OBU shields create a matched set directly opposite the school shields; and above the entry/exit, facing each other, sit the St Andrew's Cathedral and Chorister (RSCM) shields, honouring and recognising that SACS was founded in 1885 to educate the choristers of the Cathedral.

This project was immensely exciting, challenging and rewarding. In a short month, under the strange conditions of remote learning and the gradual reopening of the school, with challenges including non-uniformity in the size of the shields, lack of accessibility to their location and to the building site, surprising research results that needed resolution, unavailability of usual staff and stakeholder engagement and extreme urgency – a beautiful and timeless legacy for the school was created.

Illustrations bring Character Strengths to life

A diverse staff team came together to develop the stories and eventual illustrations for each of the school's 15 Character Strengths. The marketing team's Senior Designer, Rachel Heriot, explains the lengthy process to deliver engaging images that will stand the test of time.

If "persistent" was illustrated as a character, what would it look like? What story would it tell? What journey would it follow and what colour would it be? How would it show you that failing is part of everyone's journey and getting up and trying again is what refines and builds us? If "knowledgeable" had to find form as a character, how would it rise to the occasion and captivate a

young audience to inspire deep learning? And if "principled" needed to challenge an audience to think deeply about trust, honesty, fairness and justice and implore that we take responsibility for our actions, how would we anchor that thought and challenge young people to think about where their values come from?

Persistent, knowledgeable and principled are just three of our 15 unique Character Strengths that have now found expression in exquisite and engaging illustrations. I would love to introduce the personalities of all of them to you, however, you will need to "hold onto your hats" until the official launch in early 2021. In the meantime, let me take you on the magic and creative journey that involves an illustrator, a writer, counsellors, a designer, a strategist, deputies, academic leaders, wellbeing leaders, student leaders, teachers and chaplaincy staff.

Throw all of these minds into a room (or virtual room during the peak of COVID-19) and what do you get? Passion, energy, vibrance and a deep hunger to ensure these illustrations work as hard as their namesakes. Robust discussions were had as we all accepted the responsibility of the task at hand, knowing that the purpose of each illustration needed to connect with students and teachers and provide a platform for

meaningful, honest and open discussions around faith and personal values.

As the creative team worked with illustrator Matthew Johnstone, there were many preliminary drawings (and consequently expired pencils) over the course of many months, and as the process to find the perfect illustration for each Character Strength gained pace, so too did the task of developing supporting words. After many drafts and the fine art of crafting illustrations and wrangling of words, the introduction of colour brought the illustrations and project to life.

Each illustration required layers of simplicity and complexity in order to engage students from all stages – Junior School, Middle School and Senior College. Life is full of learning, experiences, lessons, triumphs and failed attempts and it is this journey that shapes us. Having a deep understanding of character can help us to think more deeply and more broadly about our behaviour and how we may respond individually and collectively.



Knowledgeable –
Knowledge is the wondrous art of expanding your mind.



Persistent –
If you fail, learn from your mistake and try again.

It has been a privilege to work as part of a team on a project that gives illustrative expression to our Character Strengths and creates a visual narrative for teaching and learning. We hope these visual tools will help to impact student learning beyond the classroom as our students walk in this world as people with purpose, passion and conviction.

In the words of our Head of School, Dr John Collier, "St Andrew's Cathedral School must challenge the narrative of hopelessness ... and equip young people to be agents of transformation."

Our ongoing prayer for every student is for them to successfully navigate life's challenges, develop a love of learning and find their own anchor. *'We love because He first loved us.'* (1 John 4:19)

Character Strengths creative team

- Matthew Johnstone, Illustrator from "Drawn from Experience"
- Bronwyn Wake, School Counsellor, Wellbeing Coordinator Junior School and Gawura
- Derek Champion, Leader of Wellbeing & Character, Head of Hereford House
- Brad Swibel, Deputy Head of School (Secondary)
- Rhonda Robson, Deputy Head of School (Primary)/ Director of Primary Education
- Craig Tubman, School Chaplain
- Jackie Isenegger, Director of Strategy and Marketing
- Rachel Heriot, Senior Designer.



*Principled –
Be anchored in something bigger than yourself.*

St Andrew's Cathedral School

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

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