

# Inspired

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ST ANDREW'S  
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

# From our *Head of School*

Dr Julie McGonigle.



Every great story begins with the breath of new life.

When Bishop Alfred Barry opened the doors of St Andrew's Cathedral School 140 years ago, he did more than establish a school—he breathed life into a vision.

A vision of education  
grounded in faith,  
lifted by knowledge  
and propelled by hope.  
That breath of life still  
moves through our  
community today.

The word *Inspired* carries a weight far beyond its common use. Rooted in the Latin *inspirare*—to breathe into—it speaks of being filled with life, vision and the courage to see beyond the horizon. Across 140 years, countless lives have been shaped by this divine inspiration. And with each new generation, that breath grows stronger.

This edition of *Inspired* is a testament to that truth.

In these pages, you'll see it in students who braved the 'Kosi to Coast' expedition, learning that resilience is forged in the struggle. You'll feel it in the creative energy of *Treasure Island*, where imagination became a vessel for truth. And you'll witness it in our First Nations Strategic Plan and Restoration Action Plan, as we breathe new life into relationships and walk toward justice and healing.

May this edition breathe life into where we are going, with faith unshaken and our greatest chapters yet to be written.

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# Celebrating 140 Years: a Legacy of Light

**2025 SEES ST ANDREW'S  
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL MARK  
HISTORIC MILESTONE.**

From humble beginnings in a borrowed Pitt Street schoolroom with just 27 boys, St Andrew's Cathedral School has grown into an exciting, vibrant, coeducational learning community. Proudly situated in the heart of the city, the School now educates over 1,400 students across Kindergarten to Year 12.

Across every era – with changing buildings, uniforms, curriculum and culture – what has endured is a commitment to deeply valuing each student and helping them grow into hope-filled young people who embrace their gifts.

By Ivy Swibel (OA2021)

*Caption: Students arriving at our 140 Year  
Celebration Commencement Assembly.*

St Andrew's Cathedral School

Founded in 1885 by Bishop Alfred Barry, a scholar and visionary with a passion for education, St Andrew's Cathedral School was established to support the Cathedral's rich choral tradition.

Following its founding, the School's location moved around for decades, making homes in church buildings and offices across the city. Despite these challenges, the community endured, and in 1976, the School moved into its permanent home in St Andrew's House, directly beside the Cathedral – a symbolic and physical reminder that St Andrew's Cathedral School has always been, and still is, a city school with soul.

With students drawn from over 230 suburbs, St Andrew's Cathedral School has become one of the most diverse independent schools in the country. The School became fully coeducational in 2008, reflecting a belief that a coeducational school helps students develop empathy, mutual respect and real-world readiness.

That same conviction underpinned the founding of Gawura School in 2007, our First Nations 'school within a school', providing culturally enriching, academically rigorous education for First Nations students in Kindergarten to Year 6. Now recognised nationally for excellence, Gawura School continues to shape the wider school community through truth-telling, recognition, reconciliation and shared learning.

The theme for this milestone year, *140 Years: A Legacy of Light*, captures the dual nature of St Andrew's Cathedral School: a place grounded in history yet driven by vision. Legacy honours the resilience, creativity and character of generations of students and staff who have shaped the School. Light speaks to the School's motto, *Via Crucis Via Lucis* (the way of the cross is the way of light), and the hope-filled education it seeks to offer every student.

Today, St Andrew's Cathedral School is known for its dynamic blend of tradition and innovation. Students can still hear the choir rehearse beside the Cathedral, but they also explore design thinking in their Personal Projects, inquire into global issues through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), serve in local homeless shelters and hike as part of the School's signature Outdoor Education programme.

Under the leadership of Head of School, Dr Julie McGonigle, St Andrew's Cathedral School continues to embrace change without losing sight of its purpose. It remains a school where faith and learning are interwoven, where academic excellence is pursued, alongside character formation, and where every student is known, valued and equipped to flourish.

**“For 140 years, this has been a school that requires faith. It’s not perfect – that’s reserved for Christ alone – but it has been called by God, to shepherd young people – with skilful hands and integrity of heart,” said Dr McGonigle.**

Across the School's long and rich history, we have seen graduates go on to serve in government, medicine, law, music and the arts, science, education and more.

We are proud of our place in the city, our story and our students. We are proud to be a school where music and maths, prayer and philosophy, friendship and fitness all find their place. We are proud to be a school that says: you matter, because you are made in God's image — and you are here for a purpose.

As we give thanks for 140 years, we step forward with courage, hope and a renewed commitment to carrying light into the next generation.



**Read more about our  
Legacy of Light**



# It was *all hands on deck*, for this year's Major Drama Production

By Ivy Swibel (OA2021) and Marcia Svendsen.

**Landlubbers and buccaneers were treated to an unforgettable performance of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.**

Our incredibly talented drama students once again wowed packed out audiences with a lively and moving dramatic performance — this time bringing Stevenson's classic tale of *Treasure Island* to life.

From 20 to 22 February, students took to the stage at the NIDA Playhouse, for the School's biennial Major Drama Production. The story wove a rich tapestry of complex, beautifully flawed characters ranging from the naïve to the villainous, the young to the old, the rich to the poor all united by a single, all-consuming goal: the promise that treasure will solve their deepest troubles.

St Andrew's Cathedral School has long been a leader within the independent school sector in performing arts. Giving students the opportunity to engage in practical theatre making in a professional setting is an important part of the life of the School and the development of our students.

*"These formative experiences build a training ground for our graduating Year 12 Drama cohorts. They support them in pursuing acting careers in a tertiary context, at Australia's leading acting schools," said Mrs Dominique Haynes, Acting Director of Performing Arts.*

*Treasure Island* offered a vivid snapshot of the underbelly of working-class Georgian England. The harsh physical demands of manual labour and the desperation to survive provided endless creative possibilities for building this world on the stage.

"As we embarked on bringing this story to life, we found that greed was the driving force behind every character's actions. What begins as a quest for treasure quickly transformed into a haunting reflection of the lengths people will go to in their desperate desire for wealth," said Mrs Ashleigh Chakarovski, Head of Drama and Director/Producer.

Students at the School can find themselves transformed by participation in our Performing Arts programmes. Success in drama, music and dance requires courage and persistence. Set design, props, make up and lighting also provide an additional opportunity for students to support the production and learn new skills. The energy and dedication of the backstage teams, although not as visible, are equally important to the success of the production.

**"I started doing drama in Year 5 and have never looked back. It brings me so much joy and is such a true and beautiful form of artistic expression," said Year 12 Drama Captain, Isaac Donlevy, .**

With four performances, over 500 tickets sold, 36 brilliant actors, five dedicated crew members and a production team full of brilliant minds, this show was a real treasure.

"Well done to everyone involved, especially Mrs Chakarovski and her team of staff and alumni who helped train, support, organise and coach our students right up to curtain fall on the final show. Bravo one and all," said Head of School, Dr Julie McGonigle.

Congratulations to the wonderful student cast, crew and everyone who supported this



**Read more about our Major Drama Production**

tremendous production. Courage, open-mindedness and a willingness to work together towards a common goal resulted in an amazing theatrical experience for audiences. We hope they remember the magic of being part of a St Andrew's Cathedral School Drama Production for years to come.



Photos: Students immersed themselves in the drama and danger of the 18th-century seas.



# Founders' wisdom sparks vision for First Nations restoration

*St Andrew's Cathedral School launches Restoration Action Plan and First Nations Strategic Plan.*

By Marcia Svendsen.



St Andrew's Cathedral School proudly celebrates 140 years this year, with our First Nations school, Gawura School, being founded much more recently – in 2007. Gawura School sits within St Andrew's Cathedral School and is a dedicated First Nations coeducational Kindergarten to Year 6 day school.

Following fifteen years of Gawura School operating, and with much learning, the School Council and Foundation Board wanted to cast a future vision, encapsulated in a Strategic Plan.

Following this request, the founders of Gawura School, Pastor Ray Minniecon and Mrs Sharon Minniecon, highlighted to the School's leadership that before the development of the Strategic Plan, the most appropriate path would be to first deliver a Reconciliation Action Plan.

In response to this leading, it was agreed that the School would first develop a Reconciliation Action Plan. This process was led by Director of Strategy and Marketing, Ms Jackie Isenegger. Ms Isenegger formed an internal working group which was able to leverage the wisdom and experience of a number of First Nations staff including Aunty Leanna Carr-Smith, Pastor Ray Minniecon, Mrs Sharon Minniecon and Head of Gawura School, John Ralph.

*"Starting out on this journey, I don't think any of us realised how individually impactful it would be. Our First Nations community have endured generations of trauma and it's hard to fully comprehend the lasting impact that has on their community," said Ms Isenegger.*

During a series of workshops, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group came to understand that First Nations stakeholders didn't feel the word 'reconciliation' was correct. The definition of reconciliation means to repair a relationship that has been broken. Since there was no relationship to start with, 'restoration' was collectively viewed as a word that was much better at capturing the essence of what the group wanted to communicate.



Top: Gawura School students performing at the 2024 NAIDOC Assembly

**"Restoration offers hope for the next generation—for a future where First Nations cultures, languages and lands are celebrated and protected," said Pastor Ray Minniecon.**

The Restoration Action Plan Working Group used the Uluru Statement from the Heart as their starting point. They co-designed the vision for restoration, named *A New Story*. This plots a path from 'truth telling' to 'recognition', 'authentic healing' to 'sacred space', 'a beacon of hope' and ultimately to our motivation, in 'our faith'.

Through the development of the Restoration Action Plan, three themes were adopted from the Narragunnawali Reconciliation Action Plan framework: 'Relationships', 'Respect' and 'Opportunities'.

The Working Group then turned their attention to developing the First Nations Strategic Plan. Following extensive stakeholder engagement, training, discussions and research, the First Nations Strategic Plan came to hold two central themes: *Bridging Worlds and Building Futures*.

Both documents were launched to parents and students at the Evening of Celebration and Prize Giving on 5 December 2024. Community and donors received the documents at the Gawura Gathering on 28 March 2025. Following these events, the documents have been featured at multiple staff training days.

"Our First Nations community have been extremely generous with their engagement. I'm proud of what both these documents say and the future we are building towards," said Head of School, Dr Julie McGonigle.

Subsequently, the School has identified a list of short, medium and long-term initiatives, some of which have already started. The First Nations Strategic Plan is available on the School website, and will shortly be joined by more material explaining the process and articulating measures, targets and initiatives.

The School's hope is that the Restoration Action Plan will ignite a spark of change that builds momentum. We want to be a School and workplace known as a beacon of hope – showing it's possible to create a better present, and future for everyone – regardless of their cultural background.



**Learn more about our First Nations Strategic Plan and Restoration Action Plan**



# Students undertake formative twenty-day 'Kosi to Coast' expedition

*When it comes to Outdoor Education, St Andrew's Cathedral School experiences are unparalleled in their field.*

By Ivy Swibel (OA2021) and Marcia Svendsen.

Complementing our prime city centre location, St Andrew's Cathedral School boasts an inspiring Outdoor Education programme. This comprehensive curriculum has become a hallmark of a St Andrew's Cathedral School education and a life changing experience for many of our students.

The programme is designed to help our students develop character, resilience, confidence and leadership skills, for use both in the great outdoors and in their everyday lives, well beyond school.

*"Our Outdoor Education programme allows students to fully explore who they are, and grow their values and character – something we believe is immeasurably important on their journey to adulthood," said Head of Outdoor Education, Mr John Chapman.*

To round off the Outdoor Education programme, Year 10 students are offered a number of challenging camp options. A popular choice is the annual 'Kosi to Coast' expedition, where students undertake a challenging journey, that can be as demanding as it is rewarding.

Last year's 'Kosi to Coast' saw 57 students embark on this remarkable twenty day adventure. It took them from the summit of Mount Kosciuszko, through the rugged Pilot Wilderness and down the Snowy River to the Victorian coastline at Corringlie.

The first of the 2024 groups set off on a sunny Sydney morning in November, beginning their expedition with the two-hour drive to Kirrikee, the School's Outdoor Education Centre in the Southern Highlands. Here they spent their first day preparing for the hike by carefully checking their equipment and packing their food.

They left early on the second day for the five-hour drive to Kosciuszko National Park.

The twenty day trip is split into two sections, with the first eight days of the trip being hiking, and the remaining days white water rafting and travelling back to Kirrikee.

As the National Parks and Wildlife Service had closed many sections of the park, the 2024 group had to deviate from the normal itinerary and instead started their hike at Charlotte Pass. Over the following days they walked the beautiful but challenging Main Range Track to the top of Mount Kosciuszko and traversed the Pilot Wilderness, taking in the iconic Cascade Hut and Tin Mine Hut.

At the half way point, the group arrived at the Pinch River Campground, in the Lower Snowy River area of Kosciuszko National Park. The following ten days saw the group white water

raft down the Snowy River, all the way to the coast, stopping each night to camp and setting off early again each morning.

On arrival each night at their respective campsites, students pitch their tents and prepare their food. They relax from the day's endeavours and have a time of group reflection together.

On the paddling section of the expedition, students were given the choice of sleeping under tarps or keeping their tents. All the groups opted for tarps as they provided greater airflow, are more efficient to pack down and allowed for a different group dynamic.

As there were no mobile phones, the groups kept themselves entertained. They sang songs and got to know each other more, as they hiked, splashed each other with water when it was hot, played games when they arrived at camp, told jokes and stories, made up nicknames and more.

**"This expedition is a memory I will always hold on to. From the lessons, people, challenges and connection to God – I genuinely loved the experience," said Year 11 student, Bella Isenegger, who took part in the expedition last year.**

Students returned to Sydney on day twenty, following a final night of celebration at Kirrikee. Parents were met with a tired but happy bunch — a group of students only beginning to make sense of, and reflect on, all they had seen, experienced and felt.



**Read more about the expedition**



Photos: The 2024 Year 10 group set off on the twenty-day 'Kosi to Coast' expedition – hiking, rafting and camping through wild terrain.



# NSW state cricketer ups stumps to take on new role

By Marcia Svendsen.

Below

Mr David Moore, Head of High Performance Athlete Development and Coaching



Read more about David Moore's role

## Mr David Moore joined the St Andrew's Cathedral School Sports Department in 2025.

As a Christian school, we believe education is transformative — we're always looking for ways to enrich and enhance the lives of our students. With that in mind, we're very excited to have former NSW state cricketer, Mr David Moore, join our staff team this year.

David played as a wicketkeeper for NSW and was then appointed the Head Coach of the Cricket NSW women's side. He was appointed as Head of Programmes at Bangladesh Cricket Board in 2022. It's from this rich background of professional sports and coaching that he joins our staff team.

### Tell us about your role. What does it involve?

My title is Head of High Performance Athlete Development and Coaching.

I'll oversee the development of programmes for our high performing athletes. I'll also work with our sports staff to advance development programmes for our coaches. In addition, I'll support Gawura School and support strategic planning.

### What are you passionate about?

What I really love is being able to help people unlock their true potential — whether in sport, education or employment.

### Why did you want to work at St Andrew's Cathedral School?

My daughter attended the School for Year 11 and 12 from 2020 to 2021. I saw the positive impact the School community had on her growth and performance, so when the opportunity arose to work at St Andrew's Cathedral School I was very excited to take it!

### What are your hopes for your time here?

My goal is that, in partnership with my colleagues, we can provide the best sporting experience for all students at the School.

### What advice would you have for any students wanting to pursue a career in sport?

Find a good mentor that you can trust who will provide you with direction and tell you honestly about the positives and negatives of the sporting industry.

# From Ukraine, via Australia, and on to the world stage

By Marcia Svendsen.

Below

Mr Alexander Gavrylyuk (OA2002) with Head of School, Dr Julie McGonigle



Find out more about Mr Alexander Gavrylyuk and the Old Andreans

## Internationally acclaimed pianist Mr Alexander Gavrylyuk inducted into the School's Hall of Honour.

At our annual Evening of Celebrating and Prizegiving in December 2024, the School was incredibly proud to induct Old Andean (OA), Mr Alexander Gavrylyuk (OA2002) into the St Andrew's Cathedral School Hall of Honour. This is in recognition of his remarkable achievements and enduring legacy as one of the world's foremost pianists.

Born in Ukraine in 1984 and holding Australian citizenship, Alexander (Sasha) began his piano studies at the age of seven and gave his first concert performance when he was just nine years old. At the age of 13, Alexander moved to Sydney and joined St Andrew's Cathedral School in Year 9 on a music scholarship.

Alexander lived in Sydney until 2006. During that time, he won First Prize and the Gold Medal at the Horowitz International Piano Competition in 1999, First Prize at the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition in 2000 and the Gold Medal at the Arthur Rubinstein International Masters Competition in 2005.

As a recitalist, Alexander has performed at venues all over the globe, including Musikverein in Vienna, Wigmore Hall in London and the Tokyo Opera City Hall. He is currently Artist in Residence at Chautauqua Institution in the USA.

*"Not many things in this world can unite people — I think that music comes the furthest in revealing that we are all quite similar," said Mr Alexander Gavrylyuk.*

Following his induction into the St Andrew's Cathedral School Hall of Honour, Alexander enthralled the School community with his spellbinding performance of Rachmaninov's Piano Sonata No.2 in B Flat Minor, Op.36.

All graduates of St Andrew's Cathedral School are lifetime members of the Old Andreans Association. The OAA Council is made up of Old Andreans who are enthusiastic about keeping school connections active. They meet regularly to facilitate events, reunions and to support the Old Andean and School community.





## RICHARD ANDERSON

**From St Andrew's Cathedral to Opera Australia, Richard Anderson (OA1989) has come back to his roots**

Richard Anderson (formerly Craig) has long been associated with St Andrew's Cathedral School, where his musical journey began. Joining our School as a chorister in 1984, Richard quickly established himself as a talented young singer, becoming a vital member of the Cathedral Choir.

Richard's journey into professional music continued after his time at school, with his vocal training taking him to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the Canberra School of Music, where he honed his craft. His big break came in 2003 when he joined the Moffatt Oxenbould Young Artists' Development Program at Opera Australia.

By 2009, he was a principal bass with the company, performing an impressive range of roles on the opera stage. His repertoire includes significant roles in *Carmen*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Bohème* and *Rigoletto*. In 2025 he has been in high demand – performing no less than five roles for Opera Australia this year already.

Recently, Richard has rekindled his connection with St Andrew's Cathedral School by rejoining the Cathedral Choir as a permanent bass. This reconnection was further highlighted when he took part in the Old Andean performance of *One Day More* at the 140 Year Celebration Commencement Assembly in March 2025. His return to the School, after many years of musical success, serves as a reminder of the importance of the foundations laid during his time there—foundations that continue to shape his career.

By Richard Hansen.



Read more about Richard Anderson and watch his performance of *One Day More*



## DANICA BELLCHAMBERS

**Shaping the future of AI and women in tech**

Danica Bellchambers (OA2005) is a proud Old Andean and a shining example of the remarkable careers which can grow from a St Andrew's Cathedral School education.

Arriving in 2003, Danica was among the first cohorts of girls at the School. She not only embraced the academic opportunities but also helped shape the emerging culture for female students.

Danica has remained closely connected to the School community, volunteering for several years at the Old Andeans Association's flagship careers event, Learning the Ropes, where she mentors and inspires current students preparing to navigate life beyond school.

Today, Danica is the Head of AI Product at Nine Entertainment, where she leads the development and strategy for cutting-edge artificial intelligence solutions across one of Australia's largest and most dynamic media networks.

Danica's professional journey began with a love of mathematics, which sharpened her logical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This led her into data science, where she uncovered insights from complex datasets, and ultimately into the fast-evolving world of AI.

Beyond her corporate role, Danica volunteers with Statistics Without Borders, a nonprofit that applies data science expertise to serve communities and ensure the benefits of technology are used for the common good.

By Richard Hansen.



Read more about Danica Bellchambers

# Stay connected with our Schools

STAY IN TOUCH  
WITH WHAT'S BEEN  
HAPPENING AND  
WHAT'S COMING  
UP AT ST ANDREW'S  
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL  
AND GAWURA SCHOOL.

## News

Discover the breadth of activities occurring across St Andrew's Cathedral School.



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## Upcoming Events

Find out what school activities and events you can get involved in.



Visit our  
website

## Old Andeans Association

The OAA connects former students with the School and each other by organising reunions and social gatherings.



Follow us on Instagram

## Gawura School News and Events

Discover all the events and activities happening in our Kindergarten to Year 6 First Nations school.



Follow us on Facebook



# Servant-hearted

Helping others creates  
connection, community  
and humility.

FRONT COVER | STUDENTS UNDERTAKING 'KOSI TO COAST' EXPEDITION (2024)  
BACK COVER | ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL CHORISTERS (1897)



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