

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

# HARVEST

SEMESTER TWO  
2025



**WE ARE  
KNOWING GOD  
& SERVING HIM**



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SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL

DESIGN BY HARK CREATIVE CO

A large green speech bubble graphic is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page. The bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom left. Inside the bubble, the text 'Want to stay connected with us?' is written in a white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this text, a smaller line of white text reads 'Keep up to date with the latest happenings at SHCS by following us on social media.' At the bottom of the bubble, there are two white circular icons: the Instagram logo on the left and the Facebook logo on the right. To the left of the main bubble, there is a smaller, empty speech bubble shape with three white dots inside, suggesting a continuation of the message.

**Want to stay  
connected with us?**

Keep up to date with the latest happenings at SHCS by following us on social media.





SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



COMMUNITY  
BUSH  
DANCE



*All Welcome*

*Book Now*



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One of my favourite chapters in the Bible is Philippians 4. It's a place in His Word I often return to. This chapter speaks about unity, joy, and that "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

As we step into 2026, I wonder: Where are you drawing your strength from? Where are you turning when life feels overwhelming? Paul reminds us in Philippians that our deep and abiding joy is rooted in knowing and serving Jesus, regardless of our circumstances. Personally, whenever I try to walk in my own strength, that's when things fall apart. That's when I fail and feel like I'm not enough. But when I turn back to Him, through prayer, worship, and reading His Word, His peace sustains me.

Seeking Jesus is not something I can delegate to anyone else. I can't rely on my wife, my kids, my church, or even our school. In the end, it's my choice to pursue the things of God and allow him to work in my life. And here's the truth: He will reveal himself to you if you let him. He will work in your life if you let him. He is always there, waiting, no matter your circumstances or your past.

As this new year begins, maybe you've made a resolution, or maybe you haven't. But as you read this today, would you allow God to work in your life in 2026? The peace and joy that can only be found in Jesus are waiting for you. All you need to do is ask him and he will show up. In James 4:8 James tells us 'come near to Jesus and he will come near to you.'

Thank you for continuing to partner with Southern Highlands Christian School this year. I believe there are great things ahead for our school in 2026. There will be exciting moments, things that challenge us and moments that cause us to stop and pause. Whatever 2026 brings, I know our SHCS community will rally around each other when needed and continue to grow as a community together throughout the year.

I pray that your family will have a blessed and joyful 2026.

*Luke Geradts*

**WELCOME FROM THE  
BOARD CHAIR**

# FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK



## Finding Joy in All Circumstances: A Year of Learning, Serving, and Growing

As we closed another remarkable year at our beloved school, we reflect on the theme that guided us through 2025: JOY. At our opening assembly of 2025, I shared that our goal was that we would be people who pursue joy in serving, joy in learning and joy in Jesus. This message resonated deeply as we navigated the challenges and triumphs of the year. We saw our students embody this pursuit of joy as they tackled hard things, persevered in their learning, and grew in their love and knowledge of Jesus. In 2025, we have learned that joy is not merely a fleeting emotion but a steadfast state of being that comes from knowing and trusting in the Lord..

From the youngest preschoolers to our graduating Year 12 students, we sought joy in every area of school life. We witnessed joy in the friendships that grew in our classrooms and in our playgrounds, in the curiosity of students exploring new subjects, and in the dedication of our teachers who tirelessly nurtured, encouraged and inspired our students to pursue a love of learning.

As we look back on 2025, we are grateful for the countless ways we grew together. We learned that joy is a choice, a deliberate decision to focus on the blessings in our lives and to trust in God's plan. We saw our students grow not only academically but also spiritually, developing a deeper understanding of what it means to live a life of joy. We give thanks for a wonderful year of learning, serving, and growing at our school. We are grateful for the unwavering support of our parents, the dedication of our staff, and the enthusiasm of our students.

As we move forward, let us carry the lessons of 2025 with us, continuing to find joy in all circumstances and rejoicing in the Lord always.

I'm incredibly excited about the year ahead! I am filled with HOPE that 2026 will be a year where God's goodness and strength will continue to be our anchor. As we walk into a new year, I am encouraged that in Isaiah 40:31, God promises us that those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.' Our hope is a deep, steady, confidence in God's promises that persists through good and hard times. It is this hope that will be our anchor as we walk into 2026.

*Meg Story*

'Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus'. -Philippians 4:4-7

*Michelle Whary*



**Tread Boldly**

In 2026 we are excited to launch Tread Boldly, a transformative Outdoor and Christian Formation Framework for the Junior School. While it includes many elements of traditional Outdoor Education, Tread Boldly is far more than learning outdoors; it is a deeply integrated approach to shaping faith, character, and curiosity through meaningful experiences.

Anchored in our Christian formation framework and the Habits of Heart, Tread Boldly weaves together outdoor learning, bush play, and service opportunities to nurture the whole child. It supports students to grow not only in knowledge and skills but also in wisdom, compassion, and a deeper understanding of how God calls them to live.

The framework unfolds across four developmental stages - Discover, Explore, Challenge, and Lead; each offering age-appropriate experiences that build confidence and capability. Students collaborate with peers, reflect on God's design, engage in critical and creative thinking, and develop resilience as they navigate real-world challenges.

A distinctive feature of Tread Boldly is its commitment to bush play. Our natural play spaces encourage sensory exploration, imagination, inquiry, and safe risk-taking. These moments of unstructured outdoor learning help students connect meaningfully with the environment, practice problem-solving, and recognise the beauty and purpose in God's world.

Service is another key thread woven throughout the framework. From caring for the land (in our soon to be SHCS garden) to supporting others

in the school community, students are encouraged to put their faith into action. These experiences help them see leadership as service, responsibility as stewardship, and community as a place where every person is valued.

Alongside this initiative, our Junior School staff will also develop a bespoke Social and Emotional Learning program, Heart and Soul which will launch in 2027. This Christ-centred curriculum will equip students with the skills to understand themselves and others, build healthy relationships, and flourish as part of a caring and connected school community.

Tread Boldly reflects our vision to nurture the whole child; mind, body, and spirit. Through these opportunities, we are preparing students to flourish in faith, learning, and life as they step boldly into the future God has planned for them.

# THROUGH THE JUNIOR LENS

# HIGH SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS



*Michael Neate*

Our education at SHCS is biblically grounded. We are eager and prayerful to see our students develop values in keeping with Jesus' teaching.

Students in the High School at SHCS have a clear sense of their academic progress as they apply knowledge and practise new skills, as their teachers assess their work and provide feedback to guide their progression. In mainstream educational literature there is clear recognition of the value of students being empowered to take ownership of their education, a process which is strengthened when students have clarity about their progress and in particular see themselves as achieving critical milestones. We obviously want this for our students; but we want to show them the "more

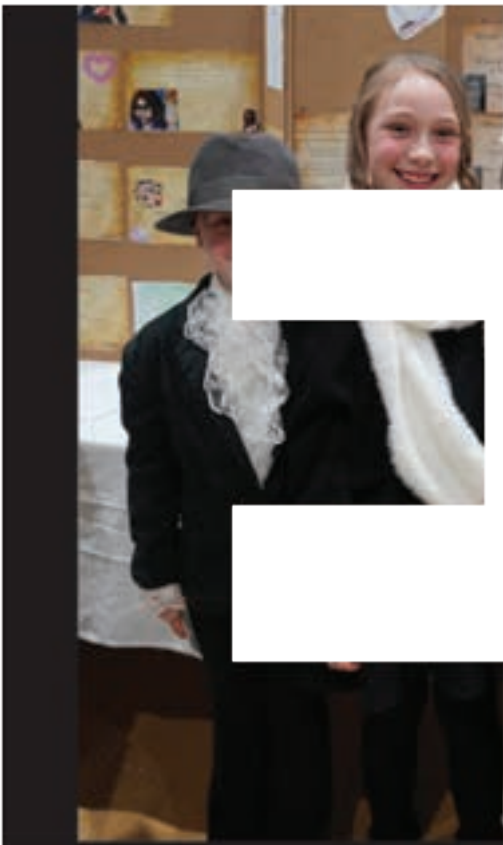
excellent way" of Christian love.

Therefore, we ask our students to apply similar thinking to the development of their character. With God's help, SHCS students take personal responsibility for this development. We have implemented a new encouragement system in 2026 to prompt students to critically consider how they are growing in our school values and to set their own goals in these areas. To support our students in developing those goals, and understanding the sorts of milestones we are guiding them towards, we have articulated a theme for each year and stage in the High School. These will be spoken and prayed over them regularly.

Our Stage 4 students are encouraged to develop identity and resilience. They come to recognise

that they are loved by God and live in a community that values their unique gifts. In Stage 5, we challenge students to be growing in discernment as they look to the Bible as their source of wisdom and understanding of God's world; and as that understanding grows they will be called to action to serve the needs they see in their communities. Accordingly we call on our Stage 6 students to demonstrate conviction, as they recognise that their maturity and their gifts make them leaders in the community, who have a responsibility to mentor and disciple their younger peers.

Please join us in prayer and in encouraging your child, wherever they are up to, to be eager to grow in Christian character, love of learning and a heart for the community.





# BOOK WEEK



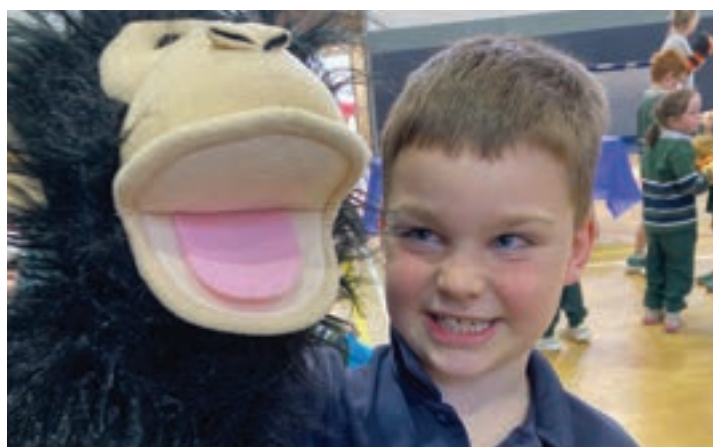


# YR 10-11 SKI TRIP



# INCURSIONS:

# ENVIRONMENTAL MENTORS + PUPPETS



# WOMBAT WALK



# BULLS IN SCHOOLS





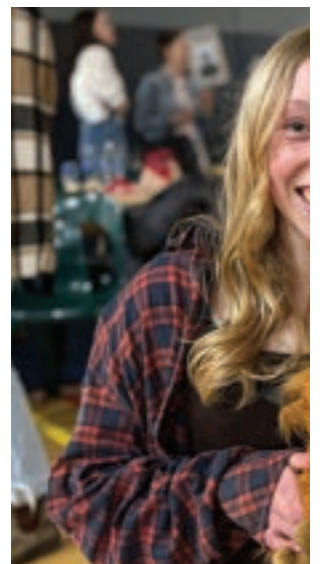
HAPPY  
FATHER'S  
Day



# FATHER'S DAY



# BUSH DANCE





# 3-6 IGNITE



# TULIP TIME

# PERFORMANCE



# LEADERSHIP



# ASSEMBLY

# — SWIMMING

# LESSONS





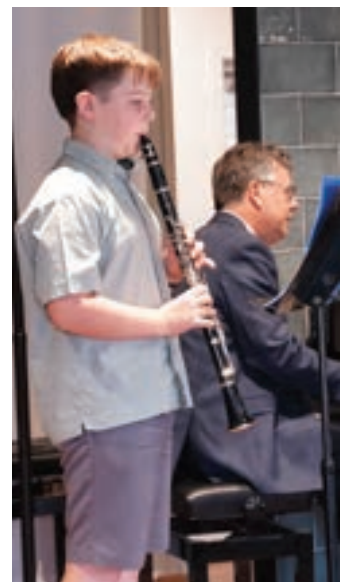
# GRANDPAR





# ARENT'S DAY





# AFTERNOON

# CONCERT



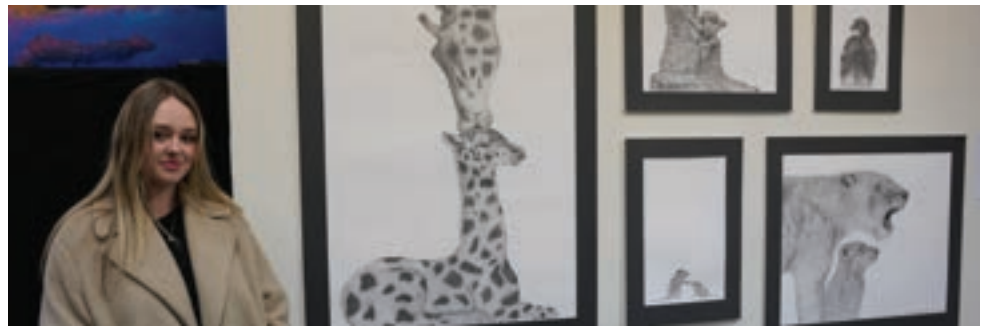
# PRESCHOOL PICNIC

# CHRISTMAS

# KINDY ORIENTATION



# HSC SHOWCASE



# K-2 NATIVITY







# YEAR 12 GRAD

*And Color*





# GRADUATION

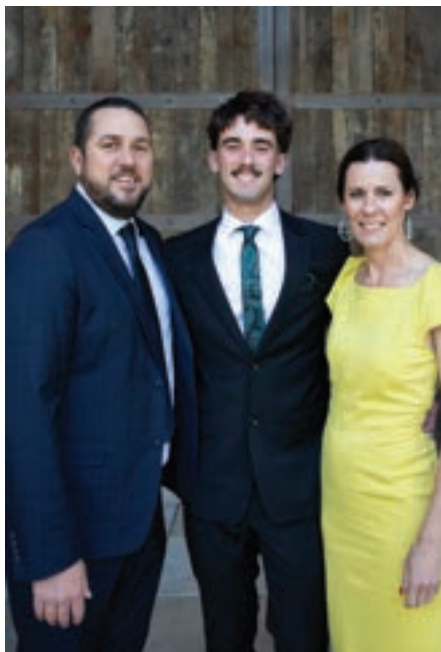
*Four Run*





*Year 12*





*Formal*



# FACULTY

*Being a lifelong learner is about cultivating an ongoing curiosity and passion for discovering new knowledge, skills, and experiences. It's a mindset that transcends traditional education, where learning isn't confined to the classroom or limited to formal schooling. A lifelong learner sees every experience as an opportunity to grow, whether it's through exploring a new subject, learning from others, or tackling challenges that push personal boundaries. This approach to learning encourages adaptability, resilience, and a continuous desire to improve. Lifelong learning involves developing the ability to think critically and creatively, to question assumptions, and to seek out diverse perspectives. It means staying open to new ideas and being willing to unlearn outdated concepts or methods when they no longer serve us. With the rapid pace of change in today's world, being a lifelong learner is more essential than ever. It enables individuals to tackle complex problems, stay current with technological advancements, and meet their personal needs. Lifelong learning is not a destination; it's a journey.*

*Outdoor Education Creative and Performance*

that can span across all stages of life. This commitment to learning can take many forms, from formal education and professional development to personal exploration and self-improvement. It could involve reading, attending workshops, participating in community activities, or simply engaging in thoughtful reflection. Lifelong learners are not only focused on their own growth, but they also inspire those around them by modeling a love of learning and a willingness to embrace new opportunities. Ultimately, being a lifelong learner is about living with purpose and curiosity, continuously evolving, and embracing the adventure of learning throughout life.

Y

# FOCUS

Performing Arts Sport

Science Technology Engineering Mathematics Humanities

# STEM

## STEM Fair

Semester 2 has been an exciting period for the STEM faculties at SHCS. In September, we hosted our inaugural STEM Fair, showcasing the talents and creativity of students from Kindergarten to Year 10, providing a platform for our Stage 3 and 5 students to present their projects, which explored a diverse range of scientific inquiries. From edible slime experiments to investigations into the conductivity of energy drinks, the fair was a testament to the innovative spirit of our students.

Kindergarten students presented a living things exhibit, while Year 1 students demonstrated their work with robots and programmable toys. Year 2 displayed their learning on the science of sound, including objects they designed and made. Year 3 and Year 4 demonstrated how Sphero robots can be used in sports and games.

In High School, Year 7 students showcased an Astro Sprouts activity in collaboration with Swinburne University. This project involved experimenting with seeds that had travelled aboard the International Space Station, to determine if spaceflight affected their germination. Year 8 students set up a Rube Goldberg machine to illustrate different energy transformations. Year 9 students presented their research on non-infectious diseases common in Australia. Design and Technology students constructed a catapult, delighting attendees with demonstrations of launching balls across

the stage. Additionally, our Science and Technology assistant, Mr. Bull, set up a circular pendulum, which proved to be a popular interactive exhibit.

We were honoured to have Dr. Katie Day, a local scientist, attend the fair. Dr. Day engaged with students and presented awards to those whose projects exhibited exceptional scientific thinking.

## University of Sydney, Unearthing Science Program

During Term 4, students from Year 7 once again engaged with scientists from the University of Sydney and the Unearthing Science Program. This group of students had the opportunity to conduct a field study with entomologists, comparing the insect populations in terrestrial and aquatic environments. The students had a lot of fun and enjoyed both the scientific aspects and hearing about the work of real-life scientists.

## HSC Technology

The practical component of the Design and Technology HSC course concluded in September with the completion of major works. Our talented students, under the expert guidance of Mr. Jim Kurrle, created some remarkable pieces. These included a beautifully crafted wooden table with planter boxes, a set of interchangeable handbags, a carry box for a quad box, an exquisite jewellery box, and a promotional F1 desk lamp.

All these activities have allowed our students to display their God-given talents and further explore the amazing world that our great God has created.



# JUNIOR INSTRUMENTAL PROGRAM

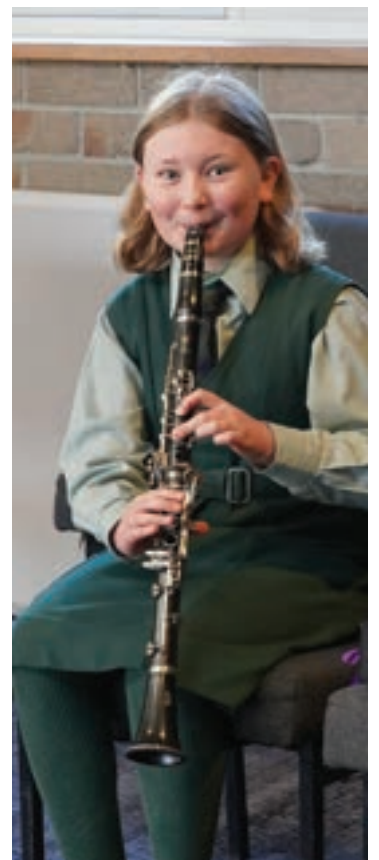
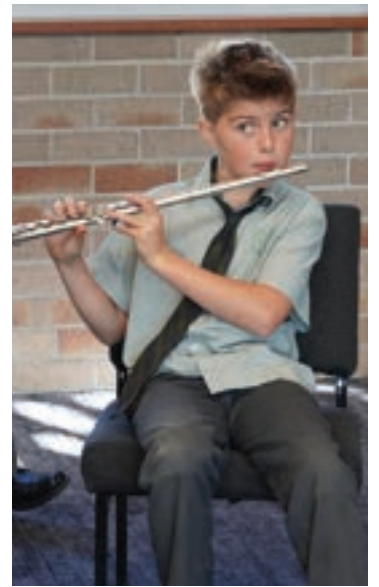
At SHCS, music is more than a subject, it is a meaningful avenue through which students discover creativity, discipline, and the joy of expressing their God-given gifts. One of the highlights of our Creative Arts curriculum is the Junior Instrumental Program, offered each year to all Year 4 students during Terms 3 and 4.

This special initiative gives every student the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (violin, flute, clarinet, or cello) completely free of charge. As they begin their musical journey, students receive hands-on instruction and the experience of playing within a group environment, strengthening not only their technical skills but also their confidence and teamwork.

For many, the experience is transformative. What begins as an introduction to music often grows into a passion, with a significant number of students choosing to continue with private lessons after completing the program.

Throughout the term, our Year 4 classrooms come alive with curiosity, courage, and creativity. We are continually encouraged by the enthusiasm students bring to their instruments and the joy displayed as they explore and develop their musical abilities. It is a privilege to watch them uncover and share their God-given talents.

The Junior Instrumental Program remains a wonderful expression of the SHCS commitment to offering broad learning experiences that nurture the whole child, spiritually, academically, and creatively.



SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S  
PRODUCTION OF

Disney  
**HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL JR.**



In Term 3, our Auditorium transformed into East High School as our talented students brought High School Musical Jr. to life. With sold-out performances, the production was a joyful combination of energetic musical numbers, vibrant choreography, and heartfelt storytelling. It was a highlight of our Creative Arts calendar and a wonderful display of the gifts God has given our students.

From the first rehearsal to the final bow, students drew deeply on their creativity, collaboration, and perseverance. Cast members committed countless hours to mastering lines, vocals, and staging, while backstage crew provided seamless transitions, technical support, props, and costume organisation. Each contribution both on and off the stage played an essential role in the production's success.

A standout feature of High School Musical Jr. was the sense of camaraderie that developed across the cast and crew. Students from a range of year groups worked alongside one another, demonstrating maturity, resilience, and servant-hearted teamwork. Their unity and commitment reflected the core values of our school community.

Throughout the performances, audiences filled the auditorium, cheering, laughing, and celebrating our performers. Many parents commented on the professional quality of the show and the remarkable confidence displayed by students. Beyond the applause, however, the production provided something even more significant, an opportunity for students to step outside their comfort zones, discover new skills, and shine in areas where they may not have previously recognised their potential.

Productions such as this are only possible through the support of dedicated staff and volunteers. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our Creative Arts team, music teachers, technical crew, costume makers, parents, and the many helpers who contributed to rehearsals, logistics, and performance nights. Your generosity blessed our school family in countless ways.

As we look ahead, we are excited for future productions, confident that SHCS will continue to provide a creative space where students can explore their talents and joyfully express themselves to the glory of God.

“



"Congratulations on a wonderful production...my family and I (not associated with SHCS at all) thoroughly enjoyed it! you have a cohort of incredibly talented students... absolutely amazing...well done all!"

- Alice Pike

"It was brilliant, such a joyous show. Everyone was fantastic. Can't wait for next year's show!"



"Was an amazing show! Such great talent by all the students!! 100% must see - absolutely brilliant. Well done to all involved, we all thoroughly enjoyed it."

-Hairtigo Byshell

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# SPORT NEWS

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## A BIG SEMESTER OF PLAY AND PARTICIPATION

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The semester began with an exciting opportunity for selected SHCS students from both Junior School and High School to experience professional sport at its highest level. Nineteen students travelled to Olympic Park to watch the State of Origin deciding match. Although the result wasn't what many hoped for, it was an unforgettable night, marked by electric stadium atmosphere and the thrill of watching elite athletes in action.

### Junior School

This semester has been packed with sporting opportunities, both at school and at representative levels.

Our K-3 students enjoyed swimming lessons, steadily building confidence and essential skills in the water. As part of our ongoing commitment to providing students with exposure to quality coaching, we were thrilled to host the Giants Netball team for a six-week after-school training clinic, a fantastic experience that helped nurture skill development in our budding netball players.

Students proudly represented SHCS at multiple sporting events this term, including Zone Athletics, CSSA State Netball Gala Day, Zone Basketball, and a Zone Interschool Dragon Tag Day hosted by the NRL. Year 5 students particularly enjoyed their opportunity to compete against other schools while participating in skill-building clinics to deepen their understanding of the game.

To round out a wonderful sporting term, we welcomed the Macarthur Bulls for another engaging incursion, offering valuable soccer coaching and further refining students' abilities. It has been an impressive semester of participation, sportsmanship, and achievement. We are proud of the enthusiasm and effort shown by all of our Junior School students.



### High School

Our students showcased their talents at both Zone and State CSSA carnivals, with three athletes progressing to State CIS Athletics, an outstanding reflection of their commitment and determination. Among these students, one earned an Honor Merit, a remarkable accomplishment at this level of competition.

Our school fielded competitive teams in Zone Basketball and Touch Football Gala Days. In Interschool sports, Year

8 students took to the field in Oz Tag, while Year 7 faced off against other schools in cricket, each game a valuable opportunity to learn, compete and demonstrate resilience.

Regular Thursday sport has been full of variety, encouraging students to explore new activities and strengthen their fitness. Sessions included swimming, touch football, slider hockey, field hockey, walking, badminton, Oz Tag, and fitness

games. It has been wonderful to see students develop teamwork, sportsmanship, and skill across such a broad program.

As we conclude the semester, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our High School and Junior School House Captains for their dedication and service throughout the year. Their encouragement, organisation, and school spirit have helped foster a sense of belonging and teamwork across the student body.

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# CELEBRATING SPORT ACHIEVEMENTS: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

We extend a warm congratulations to the outstanding achievements of our students this semester.

- Charlotte McCall - Selected in the 2026 Zone Touch Football Team, marking her third consecutive year of selection (the team will compete in Term 1, 2026).

- Anthony McCall, Hamish Riley, and Robert Baldwin - All represented SHCS at NSW CIS Athletics.

- Robert Baldwin - Awarded an Honor Merit after placing 3rd in 12-year Boys Discus at CIS.

These accomplishments represent not only talent, but perseverance, humility, and the willingness to give one's best. We could not be prouder of the way our students have represented SHCS this semester - on the field, on the track, and in their character.



# HIGH SCHOOL LUNCHTIME SPORT



Across the year, our Lunchtime Sport program has provided students with a fun, inclusive, and highly anticipated opportunity to connect, stay active, and enjoy friendly competition. Designed to change each term, the program offers a variety of sports and activities that cater to different interests, skill levels, and year groups.

## **Term 1: Volleyball**

The year began with a tightly contested Volleyball competition, with nine teams competing for the perpetual trophy in a round-robin format. Matches were energetic and competitive, culminating in an exciting final. The eventual winners were Ball Hog or Die, a Year 11 team made up of Jasper, Isaac, Koby, and Tyron, who staged an impressive comeback to defeat Gooners S and claim the title.

## **Term 2: Soccer**

In Term 2, lunchtime sport shifted to the soccer field, with six teams competing across five rounds. Finals were played at the beginning of Term 3 and did not disappoint. Gooners United defeated DaBoiis in a close 2–1 match to finish third overall. The grand final saw Gonners FC take an early 3–0 lead against The Ram-a-thons. Despite a strong second-half comeback from the Ram-a-thons, Gonners FC held on to win 3–2. The winning team included Giano, Cooper, Loxley, Joel, Keegan, Leylah, and Abbey, who demonstrated excellent teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the competition.

## **Term 3: Basketball**

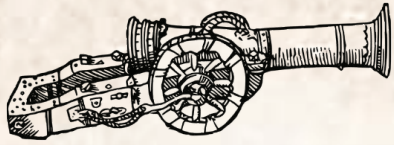
Term 3 saw the launch of our final lunchtime sports competition for the year, a fast-paced and highly competitive Basketball tournament. Five teams competed with great energy, making it one of the standout lunchtime events of the year. In the playoffs, The Flatchalants secured third place after defeating Team 1, while The Spurs emerged victorious over The Buckets to claim the championship title. Congratulations to Max, Sunny, Anthony, Luisa, Claire, and Daniel for their outstanding teamwork and effort as part of the winning team.

## **Term 4: Active Alternatives**

In Term 4, lunchtime sport took on a more varied format, combining swimming, fitness sessions with Chris Coates, and touch football training. This flexible approach allowed students to stay active while preparing for upcoming sporting events.

Our Touch Football Gala Day was a highlight, with teams competing across all divisions, Open and Junior Girls, and Open and Junior Boys. The Open Boys team performed strongly, recording two wins, one draw, and two losses to finish third overall in their division.

Students also enjoyed a special beach day with the PASS class and HMS, taking part in surfing and stand-up paddle boarding while learning valuable water safety skills.



# NIGHT OF THE NOTABLES



## BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

On 23 September, our Year 3-6 students hosted our first annual Night of the Notables, a culminating event that showcased learning from their Term 3 History units on Colonial Australia. Our school Auditorium was transformed into a living museum, filled with characters from the past whose stories helped shape the nation we know today.

In preparation for this much-anticipated evening, each student selected a notable figure from Australia's colonial era and delved into their world, exploring their background, achievements, and contributions to society. The students carefully crafted their presentations, rehearsing their speeches, and learning to articulate historical perspectives in engaging and informative ways.

To help bring these presentations to life, students came dressed in character. Costumes were intentionally simple, affordable, and inspired by everyday items from home, thrift shops, or creative improvisation. This approach ensured the focus remained where it mattered most, the research, understanding, and communication shown by our students.

As guests stepped into the space, they found themselves transported back in time, greeted by explorers, nurses, social reformers, pastoral pioneers, and political figures. Families were able to move between displays, hear stories told from a first-person point of view, and ask questions of our talented "historians." Students demonstrated confidence, creativity, and strong speaking skills as they shared their knowledge with parents, carers, peers, and staff.

The evening was as educational as it was memorable, offering an interactive experience that helped deepen understanding of early Australian history. Our students had the opportunity not just to learn about the past, but to embody it, reflecting on the challenges, successes, and societal changes that shaped our nation.

We are incredibly proud of the dedication and enthusiasm shown by our Year 3-6 students, and we extend our thanks to families for their support and encouragement throughout the preparation process. Events like Night of the Notables highlight the richness of learning at SHCS, where students actively engage with history and develop valuable presentation skills in authentic and meaningful ways.



# FROM THE PAGE, IN THEIR WORDS

## STUDENT CREATIVE WRITING

Cade Robson: A (Completely Boring) Life

This is me. And this is my life.

It is particularly boring and you shouldn't be reading this. You read on anyway, didn't you? I just sighed while typing this, but here we go. As I awoke in the wonderfully drab Bowral hospital, its bleak walls and bleaker white lighting bruised my eyes in a heroic attempt to prevent itself from flickering on and off - it failed quite miserably. I was delivered by a cheerful young doctor, admittedly, their smile was an attempt to stay irrationally joyous despite the lack of pay they would receive for this. For a split second before my eyes glue shut, I see a circle on the wall, with two lines, one long and thin, one short and fat. It is the first thing I see when I enter the world. It is a symbol of mortality. Perhaps a mortal dilemma isn't what you wanted in my story, alas, you shall receive it regardless. I sit in the arms of my father, crying, because I'm a baby.

\*\*\*

During the early years of my childhood, life was slightly more flavourful than what it is now. When I saw fruit and colour in everything a person would say. The bold new world I finally found myself conscious enough to interpret, and bend to my will. The stories told to me about my life up to that point were thick and detailed, yet I didn't find them even mildly amusing, - "What's so special about a baby being born? Weren't the others? Weren't you, father?" - In actuality, I found people talking about me to be quite a drag, serving the sole purpose of allowing a sense of false stability to be experienced, I was too smart for that. The paint stained, Crayola battered and Play-doh abused white table was a place of relief and thoughtfulness for me, sitting at its cushioned chairs, playing with whatever I sought out and found intriguing. I would utterly devour a bowl of spaghetti on it, and afterwards, the shower water would be scented with beef and tomato - I painted my face with bolognese like an empty wall plastered by a giant roller.

\*\*\*

This is an interlude, to make sure you're paying attention, and to tell you to stop. Please, stand up, go to a bookstore, purchase and read "The Role of a Woman" or something like that, Michelle Obama is loads more interesting than me. I'm just a poor boy from a poor family (Scaramouche Scaramouche). I have no marvellous stories, no impactful tales, no gruelling chronicles, no endeavours. Of course, I have had holidays, I play sports and such, but it is merely a sideshow to the grey lit pillar of boredom that is me. And of course, no one wants to hear yet another tedious story about an admittedly mediocre trip to Disneyland.

"Carpe diem. Even if it kills me". Knox, in this scene, reinforces his impulsive persona through dramatic tone and figurative language. Weir uses this moment of direct dialogue to highlight the power of art as a form of expression and romantic rebellion, as well as a dire moment of self-actualisation. Although this moment may be eye-opening for Knox, it is the foreshadowing of Neil's tragic realism. Neil and Knox's characters contrast with each other, yet share the same optimistic aspects. Earlier in the film, Knox says, "I've been calm all my life" However, the calm he is referring to isn't peaceful but instead repression; his being "calm" is a metaphor for his life under social expectations. But when Neil says, similar to Knox: "For the first time in my whole life, I know what I wanna do! And for the first time, I'm gonna do it!" His transformation from passive obedience to passionate action is emphasised through declarative tone and emotive language. Despite his optimism to seize the day like Knox did, his world has sharper edges.

In the end, Dead Poets Society shows us that art is more than expression; it's identity, rebellion, and liberation. Through poetry and performances, the boys begin to see the world not as it is, but as it could be. Yet, Weir reminds us that "Carpe diem" comes with risks; for Knox, it inspires love, but for Neil, it leads to tragedy. Still, the power of art remains - not to guarantee freedom, but to awaken the soul to its voice. And sometimes, that voice is brave enough to stand on a desk and say:

"O Captain! My Captain!"

(Jasper MacNamara Year 11)

### Dog bite

I see him sprinting  
Across the dewy grass and hide.  
Scared of the terror that chases  
Him in a different way than he thought. He peeps  
Between the slats of the crumbling and shattered  
Cubby, in which, as a toddler, he used to cry  
As we forced him to come inside when the sky dimmed  
And the trees shook  
In the nightly wind that howled  
Through the small cracks under the door. And he would beg  
To go back and play games with the huge  
Beast that today leapt  
Towards his quivering  
Neck. But missed and sliced  
His lip that now gushes  
Blood. And in a scared  
And broken  
Voice he whimpers  
"I wish he was still my friend..."  
His voice, dejected, trails away  
At the thought of the sacred playmate.  
Of which now, it seems, he has none.  
Amaya Hope-Nicholson (Year 8)

# AUTHOR VISIT INSPIRES YOUNG WRITERS

## JAQUELINE HARVEY

In Semester 2, students were treated to a memorable visit from acclaimed Australian author Jacqueline Harvey, creator of much-loved series including Alice-Miranda, Kensy and Max, and Willa and Woof. With her warm presence and engaging storytelling, Jacqueline captivated students from the moment she stepped into the classroom.

During the sessions, she shared insights into her writing journey, discussing the inspiration behind her characters, the many drafts involved in crafting a novel, and the discipline required to write for young readers. Students were fascinated to hear how everyday encounters and imaginative ideas form the foundation of her stories.

The highlight for many was the opportunity to ask questions. From “Where do you get your ideas?” to “How long does it take to write a book?”, Jacqueline responded with honesty and encouragement, reminding students that anyone with creativity and perseverance can become an author.

Following her presentation, Jacqueline kindly signed books and spoke with students individually, leaving many with newfound motivation to pick up their pens and begin writing their own stories.

Author visits like this enrich our learning culture at SHCS, inspiring curiosity and nurturing a love of reading across the School. We are grateful to Jacqueline Harvey for investing her time and passion into encouraging the next generation of storytellers.



# SERVING UP

## *Success*

### *Stage 5 Restaurant Evening*



Our Year 9 and 10 Food Technology students recently showcased their skills and creativity by hosting a restaurant evening for their families, a highlight event within the TAS Faculty calendar.

Working collaboratively in small groups, students were challenged to design and operate their own restaurant from start to finish. Each group developed a unique theme, carefully planned their menu, created a detailed shopping list, and managed food preparation and cooking throughout the day. The culmination of their hard work saw families welcomed as guests to enjoy a thoughtfully prepared dining experience.

The evening provided an authentic, hands-on learning opportunity that allowed students to apply their classroom knowledge in a real-world setting. Through menu planning, cooking, time management, teamwork, and food presentation, students demonstrated a strong understanding of both the practical and organisational skills developed in Food Technology.

This event was a wonderful celebration of student learning and growth, and a testament to the dedication and effort of both students and staff within the TAS Faculty. We are incredibly proud of the confidence, professionalism, and creativity displayed by our young chefs as they served their families with excellence.



# YEAR 3 SCHOOL CAMPOUT

Parents and students of Year 3 (and a few teachers) enjoyed the annual camp out at SHCS. Tents of all different shapes and sized rose from the ground outside the auditorium and transformed the placed in a campsite.

Students loved having extra bush play (while some of their parents set up their tent), while others loved getting hands-on and creating their own spaces. Year 3 students had earlier in the day started camp at the Bowral Pool after their swimming lesson and enjoyed some free time and games in the warm temperatures. Icy poles and afternoon tea further delighted students back at school and the first camp activities began with volleyball, soccer and basketball in the auditorium.

Camps always need to have amazing food, and Dominos definitely delivered with stacks of empty pizza boxes and more for breakfast. Thanks goes to Mr Chris Straughan who volunteered some time to give parents and students the opportunity to reflect on the role of technology

in their families, and to interview each other. Conversations flowed through the bush play area. Eventually the sound of a soccer ball hitting the back of the net was enough to entice a big game of students vs parents soccer. The parents were strong in their positioning, but the students had the stamina. Some questionable scorekeeping and a late switch of teams from Mr Kime and Mr de Jong brought the students back into the game, eventually winning 5-4 as the last rays of the sun shone across the oval. Running time was not over, with the back oval alight with glows ticks. After 15 minutes of gathering, the teams were tied, and bedtime was called. It was a great experience for many children undertaking their first night with their friends in a camp setting. It also served as a wonderful transition into the Outdoor Education program that will find its conclusion in the Year 11 mission trip to Fiji in about 8 years time. Thanks to Mr Hannah for the behind the scenes work, Mrs Hickman for the ordering of food and all the parents for a great night of community and partnership in Christ.



## YEAR 4 CAMP ADVENTURE AT WOMBEROO

Our Year 4 students recently set off for an exciting camp adventure at Camp Wombaroo, where they were welcomed by a large group of kangaroos before launching into a day filled with fun, challenge, and discovery. From the outset, students embraced all that camp life had to offer, building shelters, tackling the giant swing, completing team challenges, playing 44 Home, constructing rafts, and testing their navigation skills through orienteering.

The evening was spent settling into cabins with friends, sharing stories, and enjoying the unique experience of being away from home together. Throughout the camp, students were encouraged to push beyond their comfort zones and try new things. It was wonderful to see the way they supported and encouraged one another, especially when someone felt unsure, but with the help of their peers, found the courage to give it a go.

Overall, Year 4 Camp was a meaningful time of growth, friendship, and resilience. Students returned home with new confidence, strengthened relationships, and many special memories, already looking forward to their next camp adventure.





## STAGE 3 CAMP ADVENTURE AT WEDDERBURN

On Monday, 24 November, our Year 5 and Year 6 students, together with our team of teachers, set off for an unforgettable three-day adventure at Wedderburn. While the days ahead were full of unknowns, it didn't take long for excitement and laughter to fill the air. Away from the familiar walls of the classroom, friendships blossomed and new connections were formed as students embraced the challenges and joys of camp life.

The first night was spent camping in tents, where students quickly learned the importance of setting them up properly, particularly when rain arrived in the middle of the night! The second night brought the comfort of cabins, a welcome change after the outdoor experience.

Throughout the camp, students were encouraged to step beyond their comfort zones and discovered strengths they didn't know they had. From soaring on the giant swing and scaling the rock-climbing wall to abseiling down cliffs and navigating the low ropes course, each activity provided opportunities to practise courage, teamwork, and perseverance. Students also tested their problem-solving skills through initiative games, learnt first aid during a mock bush emergency, and enjoyed a refreshing swim.

We are incredibly proud of every student for stepping up, trying new things, and supporting one another throughout the experience. It was a wonderful display of resilience, growth, and community, making the Stage 3 Camp at Wedderburn a truly memorable experience for all.



# YEAR 11 SERVICE & MISSION:

# FIJI



For many of us Fiji was our first time overseas. Looking over the Fijian landscape showed a great contrast of culture and environment. It was an eye-opening experience and we were immediately grateful for the opportunity to be on the trip. On arrival we were greeted with traditional music and the friendly hospitality of Fijian culture.

Our first stop on the ground was Loloma Home, a shelter for victims of domestic violence. We were greeted so beautifully by all the kids and we got to play games and sing songs to them, though they outshone us when they started singing. It was a wonderful privilege to share our school's donations with them.

Our mornings usually started being woken up by the questionable music that our house mum put on her speaker right outside of the boys' rooms. On the second day we began painting the two care-takers' shacks. After many, many coats of paint and many shirts ruined they were an amazing green colour. Once everyone was dressed we set out to the local markets which are a hotspot for school kids, and we started gospel conversations with total strangers (Mr Neate's note: We were so proud of their boldness and willingness to leap out of their comfort zone). We got to pray for lots of them, which was really cool.



God also blessed us with days full of joy, worship, and community. We visited a small village and sang for the kids, lifting our voices in praise with *My Lighthouse* and the all-time favourite *10, 9, 8 God is Great!* As we played with the children, their joy overflowing even though they had so little, it reminded us of Jesus' words in Matthew 19:14 to have childlike faith. That same evening, we were welcomed with big smiles, worship music, and countless "Bulas" at a Nadi youth group, where we really felt God's Spirit move and give us heartfelt connection as we shared meals and testimonies.

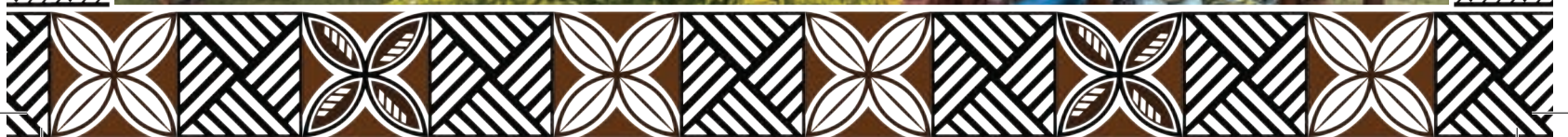
It wasn't all work, and on the Saturday we were



blessed with the opportunity of a rest day and a trip to the beautiful Barefoot Island. We got to swim among the coral and snorkel with reef sharks – it was a good reminder of how big God is and how beautiful His creation is.

We are thankful to God and to our parents for giving us this opportunity, and to Mr Trenfield, Mrs Sloan and Mr Neate for accompanying us and patiently driving us everywhere, and even having some really deep conversations that challenged and encouraged us.

-By Year 11, 2025 Students



# YEAR 10 OUTBACK MISSION

## STEPPING OUT IN FAITH

During Term 4, our Year 10 students spent an unforgettable week serving communities, partnering with local churches, and living out their faith in practical and meaningful ways.

The mission began on Friday night with a youth group gathering at Parkes Christian School, where students connected with other young people through games, fellowship and shared worship. It was a wonderful way to start the week, building relationships and setting the tone for a mission centred on service and community.

Saturday combined fun and connection, with a park run, fruit juice ice blocks, and a visit to the Parkes Observatory, giving students the chance to learn

and explore together outside the classroom.

On Sunday, students joined the Wellington Church congregation for worship, followed by games and a shared home-cooked meal, highlighting the importance of fellowship and hospitality within the Christian community.

Monday focused on serving younger students, as the team returned to Parkes Christian School to assist with activities at the Junior School games day.

On Tuesday, students partnered with Wellington Church in hands-on community outreach, helping with gardening, cleaning, weeding and cooking. A highlight was preparing and packing meals for a community freezer,

providing ongoing support for those in need.

The mission concluded on Thursday with a visit to Dubbo Zoo, followed by a meaningful experience at PCYC, where students helped serve breakfast to underprivileged children alongside a local police-run program.

Throughout the week, students were challenged to step outside their comfort zones, serve selflessly, and live out their faith through action. The Year 10 Mission was a time of service and growth, strengthening relationships, building confidence, and deepening students' understanding of what it means to love and serve others as Christ calls us to do.



# LEARNING THROUGH ADVENTURE: DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Congratulations to Angus H, Philip L, and Michael S on successfully completing their Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme - Silver Expedition. This significant achievement reflects their perseverance, teamwork, and commitment to pushing beyond their comfort zones.

The Silver expedition challenged students to plan, prepare, and complete a multi-day journey, testing their navigation skills, resilience, and ability to work collaboratively under demanding conditions. Throughout the experience, the boys demonstrated maturity, determination, and a positive attitude, qualities that lie at the heart of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

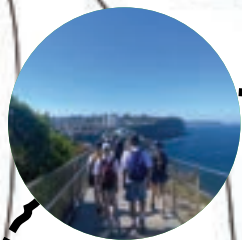
We extend a sincere thank you to Mr Luke Haylen, who accompanied Mr Michael Neate and the students on the

expedition, providing guidance, encouragement, and support throughout the journey. His willingness to give time and expertise plays a vital role in enabling these rich learning experiences for our students.

We also celebrate our Year 9 students, who completed their Bronze Award Adventurous Journey around Sydney Harbour last week. This hike marked an exciting milestone in their Duke of Edinburgh journey and provided a memorable opportunity to build confidence, teamwork, and independence.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award continues to be a valuable program at SHCS, encouraging students to grow in character, leadership, and resilience as they take on challenges beyond the classroom.

Duke of Ed Silver Award Recipients



# COMPASSION IN PRACTICE: YEAR 9 HOMELESS SERVICE & MISSION

In the lead-up to the Year 9 Service and Mission Trip, the SHCS community came together to support the Bowral Mittagong Uniting Church Food Pantry through a whole-school food drive. Over several weeks, families generously donated non-perishable pantry items to help support local individuals and families experiencing hardship within our own community. As part of their mission experience, Year 9 students delivered these donations to Bowral Uniting Church on the first day of their trip, providing a meaningful and practical way to begin a week focused on service, compassion, and community impact.

The Year 9 Service and Mission trip visited three different ministries to the homeless and disadvantaged; Bowral Uniting Church, HopeStreet in Woolloomooloo and Vine Church in Surry Hills. Upon their return, Mr Mark Grieve interviewed two of our Year 9 students, Scarlet Straughan and Joshua Davey, about the experience.

**Mr Grieve: Can you tell us what sort of work these churches are doing to help people?**

Joshua: They're all giving resources to the most needy people. Vine Church is especially focused on building connection with people. It was quite remarkable to see how many people they are actually helping and how many different programs that are running in the city, all compelled by the love of Christ to reach out to those in need. They do a wonderful job. Scarlett,

**What were we able to do to help at those churches?**

Scarlet: At HopeStreet, we cooked the people a barbeque and we also talked to the local people, to be a welcoming face and just ask how they are, which was great. We did a lot of jobs at Bowral Uniting, helping with gardens and putting away all the food we collected with the food drive. That food is going to the homeless in our community, which is cool.

**What challenged you on this trip?**

Joshua: The vast number of people not only in Sydney, but around here, that are homeless or in need, which is why the Uniting Church is doing work right here in Bowral. How helpful it is to just talk to people. We also got to hear from someone who had been really helped by one of the churches. He spoke for 45 minutes about his life and some of the poor choices he made, and we weren't bored for a second. He told us how coming to that church and being helped by Christians brought him to the Lord and got his life back on track.

**What encouraged you?**

Scarlet: The ability for the church to be able to connect to people and help them spiritually, not only with resources but also to just show care. We were told that if you see a homeless person, you don't have to give something over – a smile and a hello will really make their day because you're loving them as a human, speaking to their humanity, not just looking at them as people who've made mistakes or thinking that they should know better.

# KINDY BIKE DAY

## Learning Together Across the Years

One of the most highly anticipated events in our Junior School calendar is Kindy Bike Day, a special day that brings together our youngest learners and our oldest primary students in a meaningful and memorable way.

Planned and led by our Year 6 students, Kindy Bike Day provides a wonderful opportunity for leadership, responsibility, and service. In small groups, Year 6 students carefully plan a range of stations and real-life learning experiences, designing activities that are engaging, age-appropriate, and fun. On the day, they manage each station themselves, guiding, encouraging, and supporting the Kindy students as they move through the activities.

Kindy students bring along their bikes and scooters and ride around to the various stations, eagerly taking part in each activity. Along the way, they learn important road safety concepts, practise listening and following instructions, and build confidence as they navigate the course.

Beyond the skills being developed, Kindy Bike Day is a beautiful example of our buddy program in action. It creates meaningful connections between students across year levels, fostering care, encouragement, and a strong sense of belonging. For our Kindy students, it is often one of their first experiences of being part of the wider school community, supported by older peers who model kindness and leadership.

Kindy Bike Day is fondly remembered by students throughout their school journey, even into high school, as a moment that captures the joy of learning together.



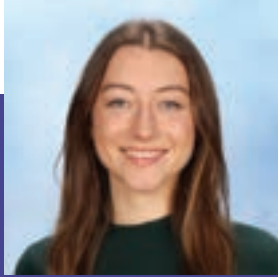
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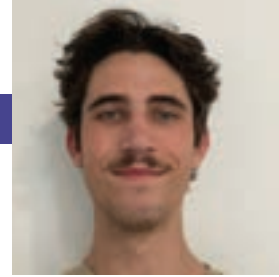
## Amy de Jong

Visual Arts & Modern History Teacher

We are delighted to welcome in 2026 Amy de Jong to our High School team, where she will be teaching Visual Arts (Years 7–12) and Modern History. Amy is an SHCS alumnus, having spent much of her Junior School years here, making her return especially meaningful. Her other claim to fame is being married to our Year 4 teacher, Ethan de Jong.

Amy, Ethan, and their golden retriever, Keith, love spending time outdoors, going on bike rides, and catching up with friends over coffee. Amy is creative at heart and enjoys painting, sewing, knitting, baking, and gardening. She attends Shellharbour Community Church and is passionate about using her gifts to point students toward Christ.

"I am so excited to work at SHCS because it was where I first heard about Jesus! I can't wait to carry on the school's vision by sharing the gospel with students as it was shared with me."



## Kane Upton

Teacher Trainee / Educational Assistant (Music & Multimedia)

This year we welcome Kane Upton, who will be working two days a week at SHCS while completing his Master of Education, majoring in Music. Kane brings a rich musical background, he plays, records, and leads worship at Shellharbour Community Church, where he also serves as a youth leader.

Kane attended Calderwood Christian School and loved being part of a small, close-knit year group that shared a strong passion for music. Many of those friendships formed the core of the band he still performs with today. Kane will be serving in our High School Music Department and supporting students across a range of creative learning experiences.

"I am most excited to work at SHCS for the community, as well as the creative arts department and seeing what the school is currently doing in this area."



## Zach Unwin

Teacher Trainee / Educational Assistant (Business Studies / HSIE)

We are thrilled to welcome Zach Unwin back to SHCS, an alumnus who attended from Kindergarten all the way through to Year 12. This year, Zach will be working two days a week in our HSIE faculty and Learning Support team. Having completed his Business degree, he will commence his Master of Education in 2026, majoring in Business Studies and HSIE.

Zach attends St Michael's Anglican Church in Wollongong and enjoys spending time with friends, running, and being involved in his community. With a heart for service and a deep connection to SHCS, Zach is excited to invest in the same school that helped shape him both academically and spiritually.

"As an alumnus, I'm excited to return to my roots and be a part of the culture that shaped me and my faith."



## Brigitte Handicott

Teacher Trainee / Educational Assistant (Primary Education)

We are pleased to introduce Brigitte Handicott, who is currently completing her Primary Education degree and will be working in our Junior School, supporting student learning alongside our wonderful teaching team. Brigitte attends Figtree Anglican Church, where she serves as a youth leader and is actively involved in their missions program.

Creative and community-minded, Brigitte enjoys soccer, spending quality time with family and friends, and exploring arts and crafts. She brings a warm, joyful presence to the classroom and is passionate about nurturing confident, curious learners grounded in Christ's love.

"I've always valued being part of a warm and encouraging community, and I've heard nothing but that about SHCS. I feel truly blessed to be joining this team and contributing to the Kingdom-building work of our great God."

# ALUMN



**GEORGIA SMITH, CLASS OF 2017**

Sub-Editor & National Partnerships Director

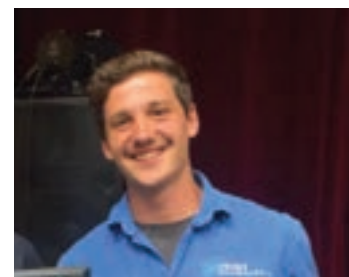
Georgia Smith has built an impressive career at the intersection of international relations, policy, and communication. She completed a double degree in Asian Studies and International Relations at the Australian National University (ANU), followed by a Master of International Relations. Her academic journey has taken her to Yonsei University, Seoul National University, and Sogang University, and includes an internship with the Embassy of Nepal.

Today, Georgia works as a Sub-Editor and Proofer at East Asia Forum, collaborating with students, academics, and global practitioners to publish leading analysis on policy and economics across the Asia-Pacific. She also serves as National Partnerships Director at the Asia–Australia Youth Association.

“What I liked most about SHCS was the size of the school, and the amazing teachers. I always felt like I could ask questions. The teachers cared so much about how we were doing, not just academically, but as people, and supported us as we developed into good individuals who

could be diligent in all of our endeavours.

SHCS taught me invaluable soft skills. One of those things is discipline, as well as how to interact with people in a gentle and caring way. SHCS has prepared me for work by teaching me how to interact respectfully and professionally.”



**AMOS IRVING CLASS OF 2021**

Tradesman and Plumber

Amos Irving pursued his passion early, leaving school at the end of Year 10 to begin his career in the trades. His dedication and strong work ethic have seen him progress quickly - he is now a fully qualified plumber and is currently completing his Certificate IV in Plumbing as he works toward becoming a licensed plumber.

From hands-on learning to building real-world expertise on the job, Amos has embraced the challenge and reward of learning a skilled trade and is committed to continuing his professional growth in the industry.

“I loved going to SHCS. I really enjoyed the sporting opportunities and the support from the teachers.”

# WINNI IN ACTION

## HARRISON GRAHAM CLASS OF 2021

Musician and Mathematics Graduate

Harrison Graham stands at a unique crossroads of creativity and analytical thinking. After graduating from SHCS, he completed a Bachelor of Mathematics with distinction at Western Sydney University (WSU). Alongside his academic pursuits, Harrison has been performing live music since 2020, developing a strong presence as a vocalist and instrumentalist.

He now serves as Head of Music at The Fields Church while continuing to perform and explore opportunities in the mathematical industry - bringing together two passions that reflect both discipline and artistry.

"The thing I loved most about SHCS was the Christian lens that everything was done through, especially in the way relationships were formed with teachers and other students."



## EMMA LEE CLASS OF 2015

Registered Midwife & Nurse

Since graduating from SHCS, Emma has followed a rewarding and impactful path in healthcare, supporting families and caring for mothers and infants through every stage of pregnancy and birth. After completing the Year 13 Youthworks Gap Year in 2016, she went on to pursue nursing at the University of Wollongong (UOW), graduating with a Bachelor of Nursing in 2019. In 2021, she undertook the MidStart program, a rigorous year of full-time study and work, earning a Graduate Certificate in Midwifery from Charles Sturt University. Today, she works as a continuity of care midwife at Goulburn Hospital, balancing her calling in healthcare with the beautiful role of motherhood. Her journey has been marked by perseverance, purpose, and a deep commitment to serving families with compassion.

"I really loved the small community at SHCS, I had a really beautiful year group"

Faith Foundation:  
**FINDING GOD IN  
CREATION, IN A  
WORLD FULL OF  
DISTRACTION**

James Bull  
2026 School Captain

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My year cohort and I recently travelled overseas to Fiji for our year 11 mission trip and had a wonderful time, both getting to grow closer together as a year group, but also in our faith. As part of our trip, our year were not allowed to bring any devices, which quickly became a blessing to the trip. Being away from the noise, stress, and constant distractions of everyday life gave us time to reflect and truly listen to God. Every morning, the teachers sent us out to have personal devotion time. We were encouraged to find a quiet spot to spend time alone with God, which I found to be one of my many highlights from the trip. It felt very easy to slow down, to breathe and focus, and not worry about everything that was happening around me. Being able to sit in stillness, without any distractions, allowed me to fully connect with God and made me realise how easy it is to unintentionally push God aside when life gets busy. In Fiji, those mornings helped me to remember that God never stops being present in our lives. What especially stood out to me was seeing the view from where I sat. I looked out

upon a long mountain range, across fields of green and a lovely blue sky. God's creation looked beautiful, full of life and detail. It felt like God was revealing Himself gently, not through words or signs, but through the world He made. It reminded me of the verse, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands," (Psalm 19:1). The incredible creation that God has made shows how powerful he truly is and is a reminder of his love for us.

I realised that God speaks clearly in the quiet. He speaks when we slow down and create room for Him in our day. That's something I hope to carry on through to next year, not just relying on big moments such as mission, but also finding Him in the everyday. My prayer is that we remember to make space for God, even when life is busy. God is always with us and loves us with an unchanging love. Through creation, we can be reminded that He is near, guiding us, and calling us to rest in Him. I hope that we can continue to pause, notice His presence, and trust that He is faithfully at work around us.

# MEET MEGGIE

In Term 1, 2026, Southern Highlands Christian School will introduce a very special member to our community: Meggie, our six-year-old Golden Retriever, who will become our first wellbeing dog through the Dogs Connect program.

This initiative marks a significant step forward in our commitment to supporting the social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of our students. As a Christian school, we believe deeply in caring for the whole child, helping each student feel seen, known, loved, and supported. Welcoming Meggie into our daily life is one way we continue to build the calm, connected, and compassionate culture our community is known for.

## Why Dogs Connect?

Dogs Connect is an evidence-informed wellbeing program used in schools across Australia. It is designed to help young people develop skills such as emotional regulation and calmness, connection and relational trust, empathy, compassion, and care for others and social awareness and confidence.

Research shows that the presence of a gentle, well-trained dog can lower stress, reduce anxiety, support students during challenging moments, and strengthen the sense of belonging within a school community.

After months of preparation, including training, staff development, family communication, and student education, SHCS is now ready to embark on this meaningful wellbeing journey.

## Meet Meggie

Meggie is a calm, affectionate Golden Retriever who loves people, gentle interactions, walks, tummy rubs, and being near those who need a quiet moment. Her temperament has already captured the hearts of some of our staff who have spent time getting to know her.

As she joins us on campus, Meggie will gradually be introduced to students, beginning with structured classroom visits and student information sessions. She will work alongside trained staff in designated "Dog-Ready" spaces, ensuring that every interaction is safe, positive, and meaningful.

We have been intentional in preparing students ahead of her arrival. Through information sessions in term 4, 2025, students have learned how the program works, how to interact safely and respectfully with a wellbeing dog, and why Meggie is here - to contribute to the calm, connected learning environment SHCS continues to grow.

## Looking Ahead

Over time, Meggie will become a familiar presence in classrooms, the playground, wellbeing spaces, and even during moments when individual students need a little extra comfort or support. Her role is not to be a pet, but a wellbeing partner, integrated into our whole-school approach to care.

We are excited to see how her gentle presence helps our students develop resilience, confidence, self-regulation, and stronger relationships with one another.

Meggie is a beautiful reminder of God's kindness and His care for His people. As we continue to nurture a community grounded in compassion, humility, and connection, her presence will enrich the SHCS experience for students, families, and staff alike.

We are grateful for the partnership of Dogs Connect, for the support of our families, and for the enthusiasm of our students as we take this next step together. We look forward to sharing more stories, photos, and updates as Meggie officially becomes part of daily life at SHCS.

Welcome to the SHCS family, Meggie!



# HABITS OF Heart

In 2026, Southern Highlands Christian School will introduce the Habits of Heart Award System in our Junior School - a renewed and intentional approach to recognising and nurturing Christ-centred character in our students.

Replacing our traditional assembly-based awards, this new framework moves beyond celebrating isolated achievements. Instead, it focuses on the daily choices, attitudes and behaviours that shape a child's character for life. Through the Habits of Heart, students are encouraged to see that growth happens through consistency, reflection and faithful practice.

The Habits of Heart bring our six School Values - Christian Character, Respect, Love of Learning, Excellence, Service and Partnership - to life in practical, age-appropriate ways. Displayed in every classroom and embedded into daily learning, these habits create a shared language that guides how students learn, interact and care for one another.

Teachers will intentionally model and teach these habits, helping students understand how their choices influence their relationships, learning and decision-making. Student leadership will also play an important role in shaping and celebrating a positive Habits of Heart culture across the Junior School.

How it works: when students consistently demonstrate a Habit of Heart, they may receive a Mini Award from any staff member. Collecting Mini Awards leads to Value Certificates, then Value Badges that can be worn on the school uniform. Students who earn all six Value Badges are recognised with the prestigious Habits of Heart Special Award, presented at the annual Thanksgiving Service.

At its core, the Habits of Heart initiative reflects our deep hope that every SHCS student will grow in character, compassion and resilience, living out their faith with integrity and purpose. As we launch this initiative in 2026, we look forward to partnering with families to nurture students who embody Christ-like character in every area of their lives.



A rectangular award form with a blue border. At the top center is a circular logo featuring a lightbulb with a heart inside, surrounded by the text "Love of Learning". Below the logo are four horizontal lines for text, each preceded by a label: "Name:", "Habit:", "Date:", and "Signed:". At the bottom of the form is a green gradient bar with the text "Southern Highlands Christian School" in white.



# A Note to Year 6



To our wonderful Year 6 students, It has been a privilege to walk alongside you during these formative years, to watch you grow in confidence, character, kindness, and faith. You have learned not only academic skills, but how to care for one another, persevere when things are challenging, and approach each day with courage and curiosity.



As you step into the next chapter of your learning in High School, we want you to know that you remain an important and valued part of our community. This is not an ending, but a new beginning, a season filled with opportunity, responsibility, and discovery.



God has gifted each of you uniquely, and High School will be a place where those gifts can be explored, strengthened, and put into practice. As you encounter new challenges, changes, and moments of discomfort, we encourage you to seek God in those spaces, to trust Him, lean into growth, and remain open to all that He is shaping within you. We are excited to see how you will continue to develop your gifts, deepen your faith, and step confidently into all that lies ahead.



“BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS, THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL CARRY IT ON TO COMPLETION.” - PHILIPPIANS 1:6

# A Note to Year 12

Parents, Family, Friends and Graduates,

Together, we have reached a milestone in the lives of those who are such a valued part of our school community. While Graduation marks an end to their classroom lessons here at Southern Highland Christian School, we know that it is a season of change for all of you.

These students are familiar with change – but vitally, we also know that God’s word in the Bible guides us through all circumstances and all seasons of life. Romans 15:13 is a verse we began these senior years with and is one such point of guidance, sitting amidst a chapter of the Bible focused on following Jesus example of living for God by showing genuine love for others.

As a staff we pray that the most important lesson taken away from your time at our school is the gospel: that we love others because God first loved us, sending Jesus Christ as the sacrificial payment for the wrongs committed by every person. God then gives us the choice of how to respond to such radical, self-sacrificing love – he has paid the price, and now he offers us forgiveness that we do not need to earn ourselves.

At the end of this journey, we celebrate the achievements of these young people who have led and shaped the school.

We recognise and praise God for the growth in each and every one of them.

And we pray that they continue to grow in faithfulness, embracing the plans that God has for their lives.

“MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL  
JOY AND PEACE AS YOU TRUST IN HIM, SO  
THAT YOU MAY OVERFLOW WITH HOPE BY THE  
POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”  
- ROMANS 15:13

# PARENT STORIES



It was really important for my husband and I to send our kids to a Christian school, and it became very obvious very quickly that this is where we were meant to be. It felt like a really beautiful community, with Jesus as the undercurrent everywhere.

My daughter can be slow to warm sometimes, and she's found such a beautiful teacher - really patient and really loving. The way she has learned to read has blown me away. The school has loved her and encouraged her, and we've partnered really well with her teachers to support her at home.

Kindy has far exceeded my expectations. As kids are growing up, there are always things you need to work through, and I feel the school has been really open to having conversations with parents and following a biblical model, sitting down, talking things through, and working together. You feel empowered as a parent to say, "I'm struggling," or "my child is struggling" can we talk and work this through?" It's welcomed, not discouraged

As a community, we get to encourage one another and pray for one another.

- Angela P, Junior School Parent

SHCS has been one of the best things to ever come into our lives. Our daughter has taken on my passion for History and now enjoys it thoroughly, even choosing to watch documentaries at home of her own accord. We are so thankful for the school's approach to teaching, as it is clearly having a positive impact on both her and her class.

We feel truly blessed to have the school as part of our children's lives. The positive influence it has had on every aspect of their growth cannot fully be put into words, but it is clearly demonstrated through its actions each day. We are deeply grateful for every single staff member and all that they do.

- Terry R, High School Parent



# PRAYER & PRAISE

Praise God for the approval of our Preschool in 2025, achieving ACECQA accreditation

Pray that new students joining SHCS in 2026 would settle confidently into their classes, form strong friendships, and quickly feel seen, known and loved.

Pray for God's continued provision through enrolments in 2026

Praise God for the fantastic 2025 HSC Results

Pray for Meggie, our student wellbeing dog, as she settles into school life in 2026. That God would use her presence to bring calm, connection, and comfort, supporting the social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of our students.

Praise God for our new student leadership team for 2026, and pray that they would lead with servant hearts, wisdom, and faith as they represent and support our school community.

Praise God for the opportunity for our students to take part in mission trips, sharing the gospel, serving communities, growing in their faith, and impacting the lives of others.

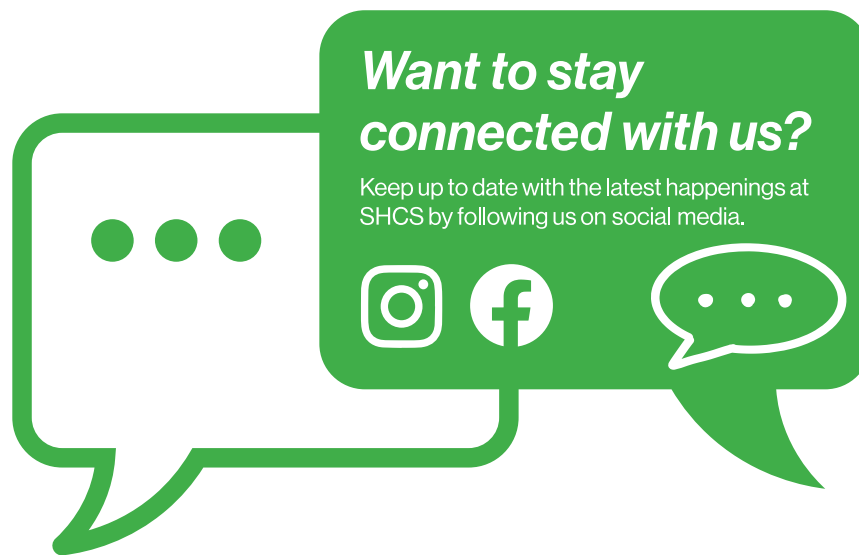
Praise God for our dedicated teachers, who faithfully serve our students with care, commitment, and a deep love for learning each day.





# SHCS VALUES





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