

Issue 1 2025

THE Bridge

Brigidine College St Ives



Be you. Be Brigidine.



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WHAT WE LIKED

Our Academic Enrichment program now has a dedicated space – The Thinking Hub! Open daily before school and at lunchtime, MM11 is a dynamic hub for learning, creativity and collaboration. Our students are loving the new space and can access English tutorials, Ethics Olympiad and Mock Trial training, plus robotics, chess, coding, Philosophy discussions and more.



CARE TO SHARE?

We are always grateful to receive photos and stories that we can share on our social media pages. Please send content to:

communications@brigidine.nsw.edu.au

College Board and Leadership Update

This year there have been some important changes in both the leadership of Brigidine College and the governance of our school. These transitions reflect our ongoing commitment to excellence in education and ensure the continued success of our College community.

FAREWELL: MRS MICHELLE DIXON

Mrs Michelle Dixon completed her tenure on the College Board in February. We extend our thanks for her outstanding service and significant commitment to Brigidine and the College Board since joining in 2017.

Michelle's expertise in law, governance and risk management have been invaluable to the College. Her leadership, particularly as Deputy Chair, Chair of the Risk Committee, and more recently as Board Chair since November 2023, has been marked by professionalism, strategic insight and a steadfast dedication to Brigidine's mission and values.

Michelle's three daughters are part of the Brigidine community and despite her demanding role as Managing Director at BGIS, Michelle has consistently demonstrated generosity and care in her work for the College. Her contributions to the Board have left a lasting impact, and the College community is grateful for her leadership and service.

WELCOME: DR MICHAEL McDONALD OAM, NEW BOARD CHAIR

We are delighted to welcome Dr Michael McDonald, the newly appointed Chair of the Brigidine College Board. Michael brings a wealth of leadership and governance experience that will be instrumental in guiding the College in 2025 and beyond.

With a distinguished career in the Catholic education and service sectors, Michael has extensive expertise in education, law, economics and human relations. He is an experienced Board leader, having chaired numerous Boards. Currently serving as the Executive Officer of Catholic Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons NSW and ACT School Authorities (CRMNA), Michael's deep connections across Catholic organisations will serve our College well.

Michael's commitment to mission and education was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2021 for his significant contributions to the Catholic Church and broader community.

COLLEGE PRINCIPAL FOR 2025: MR SHANE HOGAN

The Brigidine College Board was pleased to announce that Mr Shane Hogan accepted the Board's invitation to serve as Principal for the 2025 school year.

Mr Hogan is an esteemed educator with a wealth of experience in leadership across multiple prestigious schools. He has served as Principal at Saint Ignatius' College Riverview, Kambala, St Vincent's College, The Scots College and St Aloysius College. The Board is confident that Mr Hogan will bring strong educational leadership and deep pastoral expertise to Brigidine College, providing a supportive and enriching environment for both students and staff.

His appointment ensures a smooth continuation of the College's vision for the year. The Board continues to progress the Principal recruitment process and will provide an update on the next steps in the second half of 2025.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we continue to build on the rich traditions of Brigidine, we are excited about these leadership transitions. These changes, together with our continued commitment to academic, spiritual and emotional growth, will ensure that the College remains vibrant and forward-thinking into the future.

Thank you for your continued support of Brigidine College. We look forward to keeping you updated on our journey ahead.

MANDY LOOMES DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



A man of faith, justice and compassion,

WELCOME

From the Principal



One of the great privileges of working in schools with a rich tradition, and more importantly a charism, is the sense of history and the opportunity to enthuse in students and staff the sense of mission and duty that we must carry that charism and tradition forward to the next generation.

The story of so many Catholic religious orders who have had such an impact on education in Australia started in the 1800s in Ireland. Young men and women joined religious orders, some to avoid poverty, some through an Irish family tradition of offering one child to the church, and many through a desire to make a difference.

In 1881, the Bishop of Maitland in New South Wales asked the Brigidine Sisters in Mountrath, Ireland, to send nuns to help with the spiritual wellbeing of the remote Australian Catholics. Six young women volunteered and travelled by ship to Australia. Mother Synan wrote in her diary as they left Ireland that upon the ships departure she had never felt so lonely and added, "When we had said our goodbyes, we went to our cabins and had a nice cry. We dined at 6pm and indeed we mingled tears with our dinner."

Upon arriving in Sydney they then travelled by boat to Newcastle, by horse drawn cart to Gunnedah and then on to Coonamble where they reached their new home on 21 June 1883. Here the Brigidine Sisters started their first school in Australia.

Since then, they have had involvement in 26 primary schools and 12 high schools in New South Wales with many more in Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

St Brigid, founder of the Brigidine Sisters and the patroness of Ireland, is in recent years emerging as one whose life has relevance and inspiration, especially as we try to face the issues that confront our world at this time. When we look at the life of Brigid and some of these issues, we can see more clearly why she continues to be relevant today. Brigid of Kildare is a patroness of those who care for the earth, for justice and equality, and for peace and reconciliation. She is a model for a contemplative life in these hectic times and a good role model for our young women in their formation and journey.

I spent a year at St Vincent's College in Potts Point. Their school founders were four young Irish Sisters of Charity who arrived in 1860. They worked in the women's jail at Parramatta, started a school and then a hospital. Six months after they arrived in the colony the then Governor wrote to the English Parliament and said these four sisters had transformed the colony and had raised the standard of living for the poorest of women. I could feel the charism in the bricks of the school at St Vincent's and in the spirit of the students. Likewise, I am now feeling it in the buildings and grounds at St Ives and in the spirit of the students. I recently visited the students at their Retreats and felt the prevailing spirit of St Brigid.

I have been blessed to have been in some amazing schools and know that Brigidine is up there with the best of them. I know our students will be given every opportunity to learn to make the world a better place by their presence and grace.

SHANE HOGAN
PRINCIPAL

FEATURE

Be You. Be Brigidine.

You may have noticed Brigidine College's new tagline, **Be You. Be Brigidine.** At Brigidine, students are encouraged to pursue their passions and develop their natural abilities, allowing them to grow, excel and reach their full potential – all while discovering who they truly are.

Whether their interests lie in academics, sports, performing arts, STEM, social justice, or student leadership, Brigidine offers opportunities for every student to thrive.

We asked some of our Year 12 Senior Leaders to reflect on their school journeys and what Brigidine means to them.

"Through Brigidine's vast academic opportunities I have developed my knowledge whilst also discovering my interests, providing me with the confidence to pursue something I love after school."

EMILEA WALLIS
COLLEGE CAPTAIN

Brigidine has not only nurtured my existing passions but has also given me so many opportunities to find new ones. My days are filled with joy, laughter and endless opportunities. Brigo truly is a place for everyone!

Sport has always been a large part of my life and Brigidine has the most supportive sport programs that allow for both competitive and non-competitive environments. With the chance to participate in a new sport each term, I've really taken the opportunity to 'give everything a try' over the years. This has led me to be involved in Tennis, AFL, Basketball, Hockey, Netball, Touch Football and Sports Aerobics, along with weekly Strength and Conditioning classes in the newly refurbished basement gym.

Beyond the regular sports programs, Brigidine also has numerous selective sport opportunities. I have been lucky enough to participate in the annual Tildesley Tennis Tournament since Year 7, including a trip to Bathurst to compete against schools across NSW. Additionally, through the Sports Aerobics program, I have competed at regional, state and national levels travelling to both Queensland and Adelaide. These experiences have allowed me to pursue my passions whilst also forming new friendships and skills.

Brigidine fosters a supportive learning environment with strong teacher guidance and academic enrichment. For me, a key part of my learning begins with the relationship I have with my teacher, and at Brigidine all the staff and students really make an effort to build a connection with each other.



I am currently studying Advanced Maths and English, Modern History, Geography and Legal Studies, and I have already completed the accelerated HSC Studies of Religion course. My studies reflect my passion for humanities and I hope to pursue a career in this field. Through Brigidine's vast academic opportunities I have developed my knowledge whilst also discovering my interests, providing me with the confidence to pursue something I love after school.

Brigidine truly has so much to offer, and as a student, I feel excited to come to school every day! I have had the most amazing experience surrounded by supportive girls both in my year group and beyond. No matter the highs and lows, there is always someone to reach out to – for help, support or simply to listen. I have absolutely loved my Brigidine journey.

EMILEA WALLIS
COLLEGE CAPTAIN



In my experience, what is truly at the core of Brigo is the encouragement to do a bit of everything and give things a go, knowing that your peers, teachers and the school are behind you, cheering you on.

Having a go at everything is probably the defining marker of my Brigidine life, with all the cocurricular, sports, leadership and academic opportunities on offer. For me, that has meant being a footy player, an Ethics Olympian, a Duke of Ed hiker, a bit of a Thespian in the Year 11 play last year, a grand finalist solicitor in Mock Trial, and every Friday night you can catch me eviscerating the other team's model as a third speaker in debating. I didn't go into high school knowing this is where Brigo would take me, finding my niche in the public speaking, argumentative, social justice world, but it worked out that way and I love it.

I think for any girl, no matter who she turns out to be, Brigidine will encourage her

to try things out, and work out what she likes and who she is. At least, that has been my experience.

I've always been into academics and at Brigo I've had the opportunity to really lean into my love of learning. In my senior years I've been studying English Extension 1, Drama, Modern History, Economics and accelerated courses in Mathematics (Extension 1) and Studies of Religion. In every single one of my classes I am supported by my peers and teachers. They're all incredible, but a standout would be my Economics teacher, Ms Suominen, who encourages us to think critically about the economy – the winners, the losers and assessing everything from both sides. She has helped me discover my passion for economics and I feel lucky I get to go to class every day.

I also harnessed my love of English by founding *The Lamp* in 2023, a student-led literary journal that accepts writing

and artwork submissions from across the school. We edit, collate, and publish it for the school community at the end of every term. It was something I was passionate about, so I gave it a go, and this project has helped me so much in growing my confidence as a leader and a visionary, and I hope that it becomes part of my personal legacy at Brigidine.

Reflecting on my time at Brigo, I've realised how fortunate I have been to go to this school and how much it has shaped my self-image and values. Every Monday at lunchtime I go to Make a Difference Monday where we help make menstrual products for underprivileged girls around the world. Brigidine's focus on social justice has given me an invaluable perspective on life and I feel so equipped to take on the big wide world.

JOSIE CROCKER
COLLEGE SENIOR CAPTAIN



“I think for any girl, no matter who she turns out to be, Brigidine will encourage her to try things out, and work out what she likes and who she is.”

JOSIE CROCKER
COLLEGE SENIOR CAPTAIN

I am so proud to call myself a Brigo girl. My journey at Brigidine has been incredible so far. I'll admit that my first impression of Brigidine, as a Year 6 student who'd come here for her first orientation day, was that the muffins at the canteen were *really* good – and that was about the extent of my knowledge.

Now, six years later, I can safely say I was right about the muffins – but Brigidine is so much more.

I think that's the most special part about Brigidine: the fact that I can't quite describe it. We're not necessarily a 'sports school', an 'arts school' or a 'maths school' – we're a combination of everything. And this is truly reflected in our extracurricular culture.

We have a saying here at Brigo, “Girls can do anything, but Brigo girls can do everything”, and I wholeheartedly agree. As a community, our school really encourages and values involvement across all areas of the school. From volleyball to public speaking to Duke of Ed, I've tried to get involved as much as I can, and I've found that Brigidine's real 'get-involved' culture has helped me build close relationships with girls from all year levels. Our passion for school activities extends beyond sports and academics; school spirit is a big part of what makes Brigidine so special.

Whether it's the end of year sing-off or the house dance battles, Brigidine is a place that values and fosters a strong sense of community. It is a place where students feel happy, included and safe. It has truly given me the opportunity and space to grow, feel supported and find a community that I'm proud to be a part of.

SUMMER WOODS
COLLEGE SENIOR CAPTAIN

“Brigidine is a place that values and fosters a strong sense of community. It is a place where students feel happy, included and safe.”

SUMMER WOODS
COLLEGE SENIOR CAPTAIN

Brigidine College Learning and Wellbeing Framework

We have introduced the Learning and Wellbeing Framework at Brigidine College this year, an initiative designed to create a shared language and cohesive approach across all aspects of College life. This framework ensures that students experience a consistent and structured process of development, guiding them through the phases of Ready, Grow, Measure and Reflect. While learning and personal growth are continuous, focusing on a different phase each term allows us to highlight its importance and deepen students' understanding.

This year, we are trialling and refining the model, gathering insights from staff and students to ensure its effectiveness. A full launch, complete with detailed documentation for community stakeholders, is planned for 2026. By embedding this structured approach across Faith and Mission, Academic, Pastoral, Cocurricular and Leadership domains, we aim to develop and nurture graduates who are curious, capable, confident, courageous and compassionate.

TERM 1: READY – ESTABLISHING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

The beginning of the academic year is a time of preparation and intention-setting. The Ready phase ensures that students are equipped – physically, mentally, and emotionally – to engage in learning effectively. Readiness is more than just having the right materials; it is about fostering a positive mindset, being open to new experiences, and understanding the routines that lead to success – in the classroom, in the band, on the sports field, in Chapel – wherever students are learning.

Throughout Term 1, students engaged in goal-setting activities, organisational workshops and discussions about learning habits that will sustain them throughout the year. Pastoral care sessions focused on emotional and social readiness, helping students to regulate emotions, build strong relationships and contribute positively to their learning communities. By embedding readiness in all domains, we create an environment where students feel supported and prepared to embrace new challenges.

TERM 2: GROW – EMBRACING CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

With strong foundations in place, Term 2 shifts the focus to growth. Growth is at the heart of learning – it requires curiosity, resilience and a willingness to step outside comfort zones. This phase encourages students to take on challenges with confidence and perseverance, fostering both academic and personal development.

In classrooms, teachers design learning experiences that promote critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. Whether tackling complex projects, engaging in spirited discussions, or developing leadership skills through cocurricular programs, students are encouraged to push their boundaries. Our faith, mission

By embedding this structured approach across Faith and Mission, Academic, Pastoral, Cocurricular and Leadership domains, we aim to develop and nurture graduates who are curious, capable, confident, courageous and compassionate.



and pastoral programs emphasise courage and compassion, encouraging students to advocate for justice and engage in meaningful service-learning opportunities. Growth is not just about academic success: it is about becoming a well-rounded individual who embraces new opportunities with enthusiasm and a sense of purpose.

TERM 3: MEASURE – EVALUATING PROGRESS AND REFINING STRATEGIES

Term 3 will shift emphasis to the Measure phase – an opportunity to reflect on progress, identify strengths and refine learning strategies. This phase is crucial in developing self-awareness and accountability, ensuring that students take ownership of their learning and wellbeing.

Staff and students collaborate to assess learning through feedback, self-reflection and goal reviews. Academic progress is monitored not just through assessments, but through ongoing discussions about learning strategies and personal growth. In pastoral care, students engage in reflective practices that help them evaluate their relationships, emotional wellbeing and contributions to the school community. Leadership initiatives encourage students to assess their impact and set new goals for their roles within the College. The Measure phase reinforces the idea that learning is not a fixed process but an evolving journey that benefits from continuous self-evaluation and adaptation.

TERM 4: REFLECT – CELEBRATING GROWTH AND LOOKING FORWARD

As the year draws to a close, Term 4 is a time for reflection. The Reflect phase provides students with the space to celebrate achievements, acknowledge challenges and consider the lessons learned throughout the year. Reflection is not simply about looking back – it is about preparing for the future with a renewed sense of purpose and confidence.

Through final projects and assessments, cocurricular and leadership reflections, students can synthesise their learning experiences and articulate how they have grown. Special assemblies and graduation ceremonies honour the personal and academic journeys of students, reinforcing their readiness for future challenges. Reflection is also embedded in our pastoral and mission programs, where students consider how their actions have shaped their school community and how they can continue to develop and strengthen their curiosity, capability, confidence, courage and compassion.



Growth is not just about academic success: it is about becoming a well-rounded individual who embraces new opportunities with enthusiasm and a sense of purpose.

A FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND WELLBEING

The Learning and Wellbeing Framework is more than a structure; it is a mindset that prepares students to navigate the complexities of life beyond school. By embedding this cycle of Ready, Grow, Measure and Reflect across all aspects of College life, we empower students to become proactive, thoughtful learners who are equipped for future success.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring that every student at Brigidine College experiences a holistic education that nurtures both their learning potential and personal wellbeing. Through this intentional approach, we continue to shape graduates who are not only prepared for the challenges ahead but who will also contribute meaningfully to their communities and the wider world.

LEONE SMYTH
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
TEACHING AND LEARNING



Brigidine Alumni inspire and empower

The College hosted a special Forum on Friday 7 March to celebrate the journey and growth of three inspiring Brigidine Alumni. Through their personal insights and reflections, the panel aimed to inspire and empower our students to follow their own dreams.

The three amazing Alumni featured in the forum were:

- **Francesca Rowlinson (Class of 2016)** a graduate of the Australian Public Service Graduate Program who works with a focus on emerging technology and online safety
- **Lana Sturmer (Class of 2003)**, a marketing expert who has built a dynamic career specialising in community engagement within the property and non-profit sectors
- **Siobhan Campbell (Class of 1994)**, an Inspector at the Marine Area Command for the Water Police.

Facilitated by College Captain Emi Wallis and Vice Captain Carolyn Cuda, the discussion centred around the significance of International Women's Day and how each panellist's journey has shaped their views on empowerment. Each Alumni shared what the day personally meant to them, reflecting on how it resonated with their

own individual experiences of resilience and inspiration.

Despite coming from different backgrounds and career paths, the panellists agreed that their time at Brigidine was integral in shaping who they are today. They shared key moments in their personal and professional lives, recounting how pivotal decisions empowered them on their journeys. The women also spoke candidly about the challenges they have faced as leaders in their respective fields, offering valuable lessons on the importance of perseverance.

A common theme throughout the forum was the idea that true strength often arises from adversity. The Alumni shared inspiring stories about some of the challenges they overcame, emphasising the importance of standing up for one's rights and never giving up on dreams. They encouraged students to embrace their resilience, pursue their passions and trust in their

abilities. All three women reflected on how the support they received at Brigidine, the values they learned at school and the College motto, Strength and Gentleness, have guided them throughout their careers and lives.

The forum was a wonderful success – students, parents and staff left feeling inspired, empowered and energised having been reminded of the enduring power and strength of the women in our Brigidine community.

MANDY LOOMES
DIRECTOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Exciting Progress on our New Sports Precinct!

It's been a thrilling time of transformation since the groundbreaking ceremony on 7 February last year, which marked the official commencement of our new Sports Precinct. What was once a vision is now rapidly becoming a reality, with every step bringing us closer to the grand opening later in 2025.

As construction continues to progress, we are delighted to see the Sports Precinct take shape. This cutting-edge facility will soon be an incredible space for our students to engage in sports, fitness and community activities, creating a lasting legacy for generations to come.

With over 12 months of hard work behind us, we are excited to share some of the key milestones that have been achieved so far:

NORTHERN COURT (COURT TWO)

- **Structural Steelwork and Roof Sheeting:** The steel framework has been completed and the roof sheeting is now in place, ensuring a solid structure that will withstand the test of time.
- **Internal Stud Work, Walls and Ceiling Framing:** The internal structure is shaping up, with the framework for the walls and ceiling now completed. The space is beginning to take on its true form!

NORTHERN FACADE BRICKWORK

- **Brickwork along the Northern facade:** Significant progress has been made in laying the brickwork, which will give the precinct its stunning and modern appearance. The exterior is truly coming together!

CHANGING ROOMS

- **Blockwork Walls and Ground Floor Slabs:** The change rooms are steadily progressing with the completion of blockwork walls and the groundwork slabs, laying the foundation for a functional and stylish facility.

These milestones are just the beginning and there's much more to come! Each phase brings us closer to the ultimate goal: a state-of-the-art Sports Precinct that will elevate the student experience and set a new standard in school sports facilities.

We can't wait to share more updates as the construction continues. You can keep track of the progress by visiting the College website for the latest news:

brigidine.nsw.edu.au/news/#master-plan

Stay tuned – exciting times ahead!

MANDY LOOMES
DIRECTOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Academic Opportunities in 2025

At Brigidine, our primary focus is about creating opportunities for students to reach their potential and maximise their natural abilities. At the centre of that is learning and Brigidine offers many opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to help us assist students in reaching their academic potential.

ACCELERATED CURRICULUM STUDIES

Acceleration opportunities provide students with rigorous, enriching educational experiences tailored to their strengths, fostering early academic challenge and success. We recognise the immense benefits of offering students accelerated pathways in Mathematics Advanced, Studies of Religion, Hospitality, and in 2026, Dance, enabling them to pursue their passions, develop deeper understanding and achieve beyond standard grade-level expectations.

All students in Year 10 are now offered the opportunity to accelerate in Studies of Religion (SOR) in either the 1 or 2 unit course. This early exposure to SOR enhances students' capacities for critical thinking, ethical reflection and interfaith understanding. This rigorous academic environment not only helps to prepare students effectively for senior school success but also cultivates a thoughtful, reflective approach to contemporary issues, significantly enriching their educational experience and promoting a vibrant and inclusive school culture.

Additionally, from Year 9, students demonstrating exceptional aptitude and motivation in Mathematics have the opportunity to accelerate in Mathematics Advanced. This early engagement not only deepens their understanding of

mathematical concepts but also sharpens critical thinking and problem-solving skills crucial for academic and professional success. By undertaking this course early, students position themselves favourably for higher-level Mathematics courses in senior years, including Mathematics Extension 1 and 2, fostering both intellectual growth and increased confidence.

In recent years, students in Year 9 have been able to accelerate in Hospitality. This vocational course provides a practical, hands-on experience that extends beyond traditional academic boundaries. This pathway equips students early with industry-recognised skills and qualifications, preparing them for meaningful employment opportunities and tertiary education pathways in hospitality and tourism. Students gain practical competencies in food preparation, service, hygiene and workplace safety, positioning them favourably for part-time employment or apprenticeships. Additionally, accelerated Hospitality students benefit from connections with local businesses, participating in valuable work placements that enhance their real-world experiences, fostering independence, confidence and professional readiness at an early age.

We are excited to also introduce Dance as an accelerated subject to students in Year 9 from 2026. This initiative acknowledges





the artistic talents and physical discipline of students passionate about performing arts. Dance acceleration will offer students intensive technical training, choreography development, performance opportunities, and an understanding of dance theory and history. Accelerated Dance students will develop discipline, creativity and self-expression through dedicated training, rehearsals and public performances. Participation in this program supports pathways to specialised dance schools, tertiary performing arts courses, and careers within creative industries.

The acceleration opportunities provided by the College reflect Brigidine's dedication to meeting diverse learner needs and aspirations, enabling students to harness their strengths, accelerate their academic journey, and gain experiences that foster resilience, adaptability and a lifelong enthusiasm for learning. By thoughtfully designing and supporting these pathways, Brigidine ensures every student thrives academically, personally, and professionally, enhancing both individual growth and the broader academic and cultural fabric of our community, inspiring excellence and aspiration among all learners.

1:1 PEER TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

This effective program pairs younger students with an older student for targeted support with homework, assessment tasks and general organisational skills. The year-long 1:1 Peer Tutoring and Mentoring Program has been very beneficial in fostering an encouraging learning environment for all students, whilst providing opportunities for students to fulfil their volunteer hours for the Community Involvement Program or Duke of Ed.

HOMEWORK CLUB

Brigidine's Homework Club is an initiative launched in March and is offered as two programs: Senior Study Sessions for Years 10-12 and Homework Help for Years 7-9.

Held after school in Kinkead Library, tutors specialising in subjects across the curriculum, including many of the College's high achieving Alumni, are available to assist each student with their individual study questions.

The vast number of students registering for these programs is encouraging to see.

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Brigidine Academic Enrichment (Honours) Program is an enrichment opportunity offered to students in Years 7 to 10. It is designed to engage girls in a range of structured activities that encourage lateral thinking, creativity and depth of analysis.

Students are asked to explore a wide range of philosophical notions, scientific concerns and political debates. They are called upon to evaluate a variety of topics and express their views and ideas in a myriad of forms and representations.

The 2025 Honours Program is a cocurricular offering with two components:

Creative Intelligence (Individual Project)

The Creative Intelligence Project enables students to develop as independent learners and enhance their engagement with ideas. The project involves addressing a specific question devised by students in an area that interests them. Students are encouraged to evaluate, to wonder and to realise. The project also cultivates an awareness of the interconnectedness of academic disciplines. Examples of Creative Intelligence research questions include 'How can I help my family to reduce our carbon footprint?', 'What is the impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Arts?' and 'Is the human body a good design?'

Design Thinking (Group Project)

The Design Thinking Program is a group project that empowers students to think creatively, critically and empathetically while solving real-world problems. Grounded in the core principles of Design Thinking — empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test — the program nurtures independent learners, fosters collaboration and cultivates curiosity, reflection and iteration.

Students begin the program by identifying a meaningful challenge or problem within an area of personal or societal interest. Through fortnightly meetings, students refine and define their central question by exploring the human impact, relevance and complexity of their chosen topic. With the guidance of a mentor, they develop a problem statement that is both specific and actionable. Examples of Design Thinking focus questions include 'What sustainable design innovations could help combat plastic waste in marine environments?', 'How might we redesign traditional classrooms to enhance collaboration and creativity?' and 'How could wearable technology improve mental health monitoring and awareness?'

Students can choose to participate in one component to graduate with Honours or complete both components to graduate with Honours (Distinction). Both projects culminate in students presenting their research to a panel of judges and responding to questions designed to test their depth of understanding and adaptability.

Fundamentally, the Brigidine Honours Program is designed to inspire, energise and motivate interested learners.



Congratulations Class of 2024

Congratulations to the HSC Class of 2024. We are delighted to share their achievements with our community and celebrate their success.

This cohort of graduating students exemplified self-motivation, resilience and engagement in every aspect of their approach to study and involvement in school life. Early entry offers to university and an impressive number of NESA nominations for HSC excellence in Dance, Drama, Music, Textiles and Visual Arts set the scene for success for these students.

As a community we wish them all the best for their future study, endeavours and life beyond Brigidine. We could not be prouder that they have graduated as women of Strength and Gentleness, ready to make their mark in the world.

Some of the highlights from the results for the Class of 2024 are:

DUX

Maya Flattery achieved an ATAR of 99.00

PROXIME

Sophie Hemens achieved an ATAR of 98.95

ALL-ROUNDERS

Maya Flattery, Sophie Hemens, Roseanna Huang, Milda Magyle

TOP ACHIEVERS IN THE STATE

Chelsea Bannister (Year 11) placed 9th in the State for Studies of Religion II
Ines Teixeira-Pinto placed 5th in the State for Portuguese (2023)

DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS

78 students (62%) were mentioned on the Distinguished Achievers list (those who scored 90 marks or above in a subject) with 134 mentions on the list of a broad range of courses.

BRIGIDINE COLLEGE RANKED

- 95th of all NSW Schools
- 11th Independent Catholic Girls schools
- 14th out of Catholic Girls Schools.

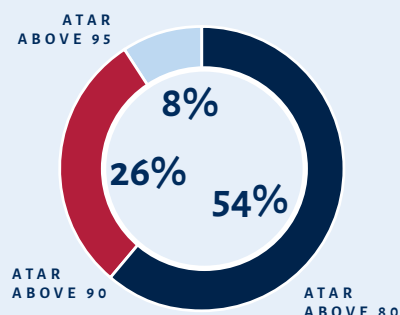
SHANE HOGAN
PRINCIPAL

"...This is the beauty of Brigidine, it gives us all a chance to shine in our own regard, to explore what we can achieve and who we want to be."

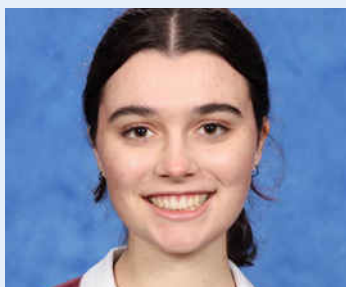
NATASHA TOWNLEY
COLLEGE CAPTAIN 2024

OUT OF 125 YEAR 12 STUDENTS:

- 8% received an ATAR above 95
- 26% received an ATAR above 90
- 54% received an ATAR above 80



MAYA FLATTERY, COLLEGE DUX

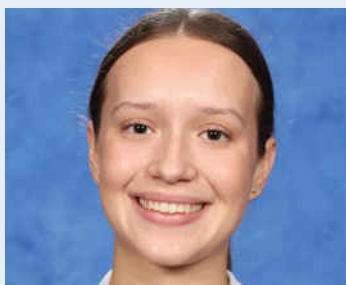


BACHELOR OF LAWS/BACHELOR OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

My passions for political theory, international affairs and the justice system were cultivated during my time at Brigidine and have allowed me to pursue a career where I aim to help individuals within the legal sphere and drive meaningful change within the world.

I know the wisdom and values of strength and gentleness imparted by Brigidine will guide me through university and into the future beyond, generating new perspectives invaluable to future endeavours.

SOPHIE HEMENS, PROXIME



BACHELOR OF COMMERCE, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

My interest in economics and legal studies developed throughout my HSC, giving me a deeper appreciation of the ways in which legal reform and economic policy can be directed to address contemporary issues. While at university, I look forward to broadening my knowledge of finance and economics in a global business environment.

While I am sad to leave the Brigidine community, I feel privileged to have been part of such a lovely and capable cohort and will treasure all my friendships and memories.

2024 HSC RESULTS

78

STUDENTS MENTIONED ON THE DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS LIST

THOSE WHO SCORED 90 MARKS OR HIGHER (BAND 6)

99.00

BRIGIDINE'S HIGHEST ATAR ACHIEVED



134

MENTIONS ON THE DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS LIST ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECTS



2

TOP ACHIEVERS IN THE STATE



4

ALL ROUNDERS



2

SELECTIONS FOR HSC SHOWCASES 30 NOMINATIONS



RANKED 11TH IN NSW OUT OF INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC GIRLS SCHOOLS AND 14TH IN NSW OUT OF CATHOLIC GIRLS SCHOOLS

BRIGIDINE RANKED 75TH SCHOOL IN NSW

8%

ATAR OVER 95

26%

ATAR OVER 90

54%

ATAR OVER 80



CAITLIN WALLEY WAS SELECTED FOR **CALLBACK (MAJOR STUDY PERFORMANCE AND CORE PERFORMANCE)**



MILLEFLEUR UNICORN (APPAREL) BY ADELE CLARSEN WAS SELECTED FOR **TEXTSTYLE**

Renovating Our Classrooms for a Bright Future

As we embark on our educational journey for 2025, we are filled with anticipation and hope for what lies ahead. This year, we are excited to launch an annual giving campaign aimed at enhancing the very heart of our school – our classrooms. These are the spaces where ideas take shape, friendships are formed and futures are built. It is in these rooms that our students take their first steps toward becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

We are focusing on the renovation of 15 classrooms in Synan, which have served our students well but now need a fresh start. Together, we can transform these rooms into modern, vibrant, inspiring spaces that reflect the potential we see in each and every one of our students so they can thrive to reach their full potential.

The classrooms will undergo a full makeover, which will include:

- A fresh coat of paint to brighten the space and create an uplifting environment
- New carpets for comfort and warmth
- Updated blinds and window frames to let in more natural light and create an inviting atmosphere.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

With your generous support, we can make this vision a reality. Here's how you can contribute:

- \$6,000 sponsors the full renovation of one classroom (paint, carpet, blinds and window frames)
- \$2,000 will sponsor the painting of one classroom
- \$2,000 will sponsor the new carpet of one classroom
- \$2,000 will sponsor the blinds and window frames of one classroom.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SUPPORT – CAN YOUR BUSINESS HELP?

Please let us know if your business is able to assist by providing the materials required for the refresh, including the paint, carpet and underlay, and blinds and window frames. Your support, whether financial or in-kind, will have a lasting impact on the learning experience of our students.

WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Every contribution, no matter the size, helps us create an optimal learning environment. The renovated classrooms will not only look better but will also inspire our students with modern, vibrant spaces that will enhance focus, creativity and engagement. By supporting this campaign, you are investing in the future of our students giving them the environment and the inspiration they need to grow, learn and thrive.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

As a token of our gratitude, those who sponsor a full classroom renovation will be acknowledged with a special plaque in the room they've helped transform. Your generosity will leave a lasting legacy for generations of students to come.

Thank you for your continued support of Brigidine. We look forward to working together to create a bright future for our students!



Scan the QR code for more information or to make your valued contribution



INTERHOUSE CARNIVALS

Brigidine Spirit on display

In an action-packed start to 2025, we held all three Interhouse Sports Carnivals – and what a spectacle they were! Not only did they provide a platform for students to showcase their athletic abilities, but more importantly, the Brigidine spirit was on full display.



Gold students shine

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (commonly known as Duke of Ed) is a globally recognised program designed to help young people aged 14-24 to discover their full potential. It focuses on four core areas: skills, physical recreation, voluntary service and adventurous journeys, with an additional residential project for those pursuing the Gold Award. The program encourages self-discovery, personal growth and resilience while fostering a sense of responsibility and community engagement.

Through the Duke of Ed program, students are given the opportunity to step outside their comfort zones and take on new challenges that are meaningful to them. It's not a competition, but rather a chance for individuals to design their own program and work towards their goals.

Completing the Award can boost resumes, aiding in job applications or higher education pathways. Macquarie University and UNSW offer additional ATAR points for those who complete Duke of Ed.

The program equips young people with essential life skills, such as perseverance, leadership and teamwork, that help them become confident and well-rounded individuals ready for the future. By participating, students not only gain recognition for their achievements but also feel a sense of accomplishment.

GOLD QUALIFYING ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

In December 2024, Year 11 Gold students embarked on their Gold Qualifying Adventurous Journey. This is the pinnacle of the Duke of Ed program and was highly anticipated by all. The adventure combined two days of hiking in the Kosciuszko National Park with two days of canoeing on the waters of Lake Jindabyne. Students enjoyed wild camping with magnificent views despite the challenging weather conditions. The highlights of the trip were undoubtedly the sunrises and sunsets spent on Mount Kosciuszko. Throughout the journey, students were pushed out of their comfort zones, developing resilience and honing skills such as navigation and camp cooking. Friendships were forged and memories were made on what was an unforgettable ultimate journey for the Gold students.

"Completing our Gold expedition at the top of Mount Kosciuszko was a really special experience. Not only did I get an opportunity to marvel at the picture-perfect landscape, I also got to cherish my last Duke of Ed journey with the incredible girls I have met along the way."

GRACE OSBORNE
YEAR 12 2025





GOLD RESIDENTIAL PROJECT

Sixteen Gold Duke of Ed students embarked on an unforgettable journey to Victoria's Mornington Peninsula for their Gold Residential Project in December. Accompanied by Ms Carroll and Mr Vale, students stayed at Saltbush Balnarring Beach—one of the Kildare Ministries Community Works—which provides respite holidays for those facing financial, medical and social hardships.

The trip was a meaningful experience that combined community service with recreation, fostering growth, learning and lasting memories. Throughout the week, students engaged in various community service activities, contributing to the upkeep and improvement of the accommodation facilities at Saltbush. They painted houses, organised storage sheds, cleaned housing exteriors, tended vegetable gardens and restored outdoor furniture. Their efforts ensured that Saltbush remains a welcoming and functional place for visitors to relax and enjoy their respite stay.

A highlight of the week was welcoming families from the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP), another of the Kildare Ministries Community Works. The students hosted a wonderful Christmas lunch, sharing typical Australian and Pakistani dishes and participating in fun activities such as soccer, beach volleyball, flag races on the beach and giant Jenga. They quickly built connections with the families, making for a fantastic day and a difficult farewell.

Students balanced their service with a variety of recreational activities that showcased the beauty and uniqueness of the local area. They learned about the Presentation Sisters' land and the native Wildlife Corridor Project, gaining insights into the Sisters' dedication to environmental conservation. A trip to Mornington Beach included swimming, stand-up paddling and kayaking, while evenings were filled with trivia nights and time spent with friends. Additionally, a yoga and breathwork session provided moments of reflection and relaxation, helping students unwind and connect with one another.

A standout moment of the trip was the visit to Phillip Island, where students witnessed the famous Penguin Parade. This experience, coupled with a dinner in Cowes and a visit to the winning house from *The Block* by Brigidine Alumni, Maddy Harry (Class of 2017) and Charlotte Harry (Class of 2019), was a highlight for many.

The trip to Saltbush was more than just an excursion; it was a journey of service, learning and relationship-building. Students returned with new skills in painting, furniture restoration and gardening, as well as a deeper appreciation for community service. Saltbush provided the perfect setting for these young individuals to grow, reflect and create lifelong memories. This experience was not only enriching but also left a positive impact on the community they served.

ELLE CARROLL
DUKE OF EDINBURGH CONVENOR



Mamma Mia!

Here we go again...

Mamma Mia! is a heartwarming and hilarious tale of love, family and the journey to discovering who you really are. It is a vibrant, feel-good celebration of love, independence and the power of choice. Through its unforgettable ABBA soundtrack, the musical explores themes of self-discovery, female empowerment and the importance of embracing life's uncertainties. At its heart, it tells the story of a woman who built a life on her own terms and a daughter searching for her own identity – ultimately showing that family is defined by love, not just by blood. With its uplifting message of resilience, joy and the freedom to shape your own future, *Mamma Mia!* is a testament to living boldly, loving deeply and dancing through every challenge life brings.

I have joyfully supported the College Musical since my arrival at Brigidine in 2022. I had the privilege of witnessing and being part of an incredible team who have such a genuine passion for musical theatre. In Term 2 of 2024, I was approached by former Musical Director, Mr Chris Rutherford, who asked if I would be interested in taking on the role. Without hesitation, I accepted. Musical theatre has always been one of my greatest passions and I frequently remind students that participating in the College Musical will leave them with some of the best memories of their time at school.

Directing *Mamma Mia!* allowed me to work with an extraordinary group of passionate students whose genuine love for singing, dancing and acting was undeniable. Every member of the cast, from those in lead roles to the dance ensemble and chorus, as well as those in the orchestra and behind the scenes, put in an incredible amount of work to bring this spectacular performance to life. It was a privilege to be their director and see them grow.

It is of utmost importance for me to acknowledge that the College Musical is only possible because of the contributions of many talented individuals. I would like to recognise the incredible work of Mr Charlie Lovelock, who brought brilliant passion to the role of Musical Director. He was consistently and wonderfully supported by Mrs Judith Allan, whose expertise were invaluable as Assistant Musical Director and accompanist. Our talented College Alumni, Miss Chloe Jackett (Class of 2020), returned as Choreographer this year, igniting stunning energy in every cast member. Our incredible producer, Mr Chris Rutherford, worked tirelessly to ensure my smooth transition into the role of Director and was a constant source of support and inspiration. Mr Gareth Edey's keen eye for the technical elements of the show was superb. I felt incredibly lucky to be surrounded by such a talented and experienced team.

Additionally, I would like to thank Mr David Yu and Mr Glenn Cameron for building the spectacular set under the direction of Mr Andrew Hodgson. Our amazing Visual Arts department – Ms Alison Finnerty, Ms Monique Bobanovic, Ms Rachel O'Brien and Mrs Joanne O'Connell – brought the set to life with their incredible painting skills. Mrs Carmel McCudden graciously provided support and supervision for the cast during the rehearsal process. Ms Cinzia Marrocco contributed dynamic choreography for *Voulez Vous*. Mrs Michelle Casiglia expertly managed our ticketing process, while Mrs Aleisha Ford, Mrs Mandy Loomes and Mrs Kate Gray did an outstanding job organising the promotion of the show. The ongoing support of dedicated staff members, including Mrs Emma Johns and Ms Libby Goode, was immeasurably appreciated.

Finally, a thank you to all the staff, parents and friends who supported the show by being in the audience.

ELIZABETH TROHA
DIRECTOR





Cocurricular Highlights

AFL

Brigidine made history this season with the most Premiership wins of any school in the AFL Girls Independent Schools Competition:

- BRI01 – Senior 1sts
- BRI02 – Senior 2nds
- BRI09 – Junior 3rds.



BASEBALL

Frankie Powell (Year 9) was selected to be part of the NSW Youth Women's Baseball Team competing in the Australian U16 Championships in Melbourne in April 2025.



BOOK CLUB

Our Book Club students connected via Zoom with St Pius to discuss *Into the Wild* by Hayley Lawrence. This Book Club discussion was part of their preparation for the Sydney Writers' Festival Education Day at The Concourse, Chatswood being held in May.



ICE SKATING

Georgie Baker (Year 9), Bronte Suominen (Class of 2024) and Ella Baker (Class of 2024) recently competed at the ISU World Junior Synchronised Ice Skating Championships in Sweden.

KAYAKING

Tess Lever (Year 11), Hayley Dunbar (Year 11) and Albee McInnes (Class of 2024) competed at the National Sprint Kayaking Championships in March. After strong performances, Hayley was selected for the U16 Australian Team with Tess and Albee selected for the U18 Australian Team. They will travel to Komatsu, Japan in May to represent Australia at the Asia Pacific Sprint Cup.



MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDING

Elleni Turkovic (Year 12) took out first place in the U19 category at the Mountain Bike National Championships at Mount Buller, Victoria. This has secured her a spot at the World Championships in September.





MUSIC

Our Stage Band took to the stage at the Wahroonga Food and Wine Festival in February where they showcased their incredible talent to the community.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

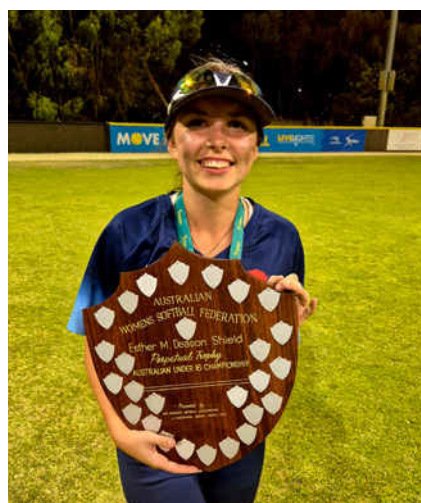
Congratulations to our six students who represented Brigidine at the Rostrum Voice of Youth competition. Well done to Summer Woods (Year 12) for winning the Senior division and advancing to the regional finals and a shout-out to Amelia Hague (Year 11) and Adele Scully (Year 8), who were runners-up in their divisions.



SOFTBALL

This year we had one team in the senior division of the Independent Schools Softball Competition which finished the competition in 3rd position.

Congratulations to Sophia Benson (Year 10) who represented NSW in the U16 National Championships in Perth. NSW had a grand final win against QLD to become U16 National Champions.



SWIMMING

Our Intermediate 4x50m relay team swam at the NSWCCC Swimming Championships. The girls finished in 2nd place and have now been selected to represent NSWCCC at the NSW All Schools Swimming Championships next term.



TENNIS

Brig 3 represented Brigidine in the grand final for IGSA Tennis S18 Division, serving up a strong and convincing win over St Scholastica.

WATER POLO

Our Water Polo grand finalists yielded some fantastic results:

- Senior 1sts pulled off a nail-biting win against Pymble, edging ahead by just 1 goal!
- BRI04 and BRI05 also claimed 1st place in their divisions
- Year 7 1sts gave it their all in a heart-stopper of a match, finishing just one goal behind Abbotsleigh to take out 2nd place.



School Snapshots





Kildare Ministries Social Justice Forum



Year 12 Charity launch



Galentine's Bake Sale



Year 7 Number Day



Shrove Tuesday



Commencement Mass



Year 12 Retreat



Year 11 Retreat

COMMUNITY

Fostering Community Engagement

You will often hear the word 'community' used at Brigidine College; it is important to us. Our school is made up of many different groups – staff, students, Alumni and of course parents. All of them contribute in some way to shape the community that is Brigidine College St Ives.

There are many ways we encourage community engagement and 2025 is no different. In February we hosted our Year 7 Mothers Lunch and Supper Groups and Brigo Dads, with a record number of parents in attendance. Later in the term our Year Group Parents initiative was launched, with the primary goal to bring families and students together through social events and by supporting both the school and the Parent and Friends' Association (P&F) initiatives.

PIP INMAN
ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS



COMMUNITY

Starry Night Welcome Cocktail Party

In February we celebrated the start of the 2025 academic year at our Welcome Cocktail Party. We were joined by over 400 members of our parent community. Inspired by the 'Starry Night' theme, our P&F worked their magic with decorations, and under the sky of a balmy summer evening, the Murray Courtyard was transformed into the perfect venue. As the evening ended, there was a real sense of friendship, positivity and excitement for the year ahead.



Latest News



FROM THE ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR

In the last issue of *The Bridge*, I finished my introduction to our Alumni pages with the words “Our roots are strong, our future is exciting, our story continues...” and that couldn’t be more true as you read this issue. Not only does the school continue to thrive, but our Alumni also continue to fulfil dreams, find new passions and make their mark on the world we live in today.

On the next few pages, we share examples of our Alumni doing just that...Alana Reddy (Class of 2023) tells us how she is pursuing her dream of playing basketball at a US College, Caitlin O’Sullivan (Class of 2023)

reveals how she has discovered a newfound passion whilst taking a gap year and we profile trailblazer Kelly McJannett (Class of 2004) who is changing the future of food security.

As 2025 began we welcomed the next generation of Brigo girls, including four daughters of Alumni, and celebrated the success of the graduating Class of 2024 at our High Achievers Assembly where Mia Flattery, 2024 Dux, talked about ‘the immense opportunity education presents.’ Jackie Rossington, our Archivist, continues the theme of education on our Archives

page when she writes about the history of the College’s commitment to ‘providing high quality academic opportunities for all our students, guiding them to be their best and to pursue their passions.’

We thank all those who have shared their stories and news with us for this issue of *The Bridge*. I encourage all of you reading these pages to consider sharing your story and news too.

PIP INMAN
ALUMNI & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

ALUMNI DAY

Alumni Day 2025 will be held at the College on Saturday 13 September 2025.

We warmly invite the Classes of 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020 to join us for the afternoon. More details will be sent closer to the time but in the meantime please SAVE THE DATE and be sure to share it with your former classmates too.

PIONEERS AND GOLDEN GIRLS DAY

This year we will celebrate our Pioneers and Golden Girls on Saturday 16 August.

This is a special day when all members from the Classes of 1954 to 1975 are invited to join us for lunch. This year we will welcome the Class of 1975 as Golden Girls as they celebrate 50 years since their graduation and celebrate the Class of 1965 who have reached the milestone of 60 years since graduating.

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

We have some gaps in our database meaning invitations to reunions and events don’t always find their way to you. Please reach out to Pip Inman, Alumni and Community Relations Coordinator, at alumni@brigidine.nsw.edu.au with your current contact information so we can stay in touch.

ALUMNI GIVING BACK



Chloe Papandrea (Class of 2011)



Chloe Christie (Class of 2020)



Zoe Gougousidis (Class of 2019)

THE NEXT GENERATION

There was a sense of excitement in the air on the morning of 29 January when Year 7 and new students in Years 8-11 arrived at the College for their first day. It is always a special moment as we welcome the next generation of Brigo girls and this year our Year 7 cohort included four daughters of Alumni who are following in their mums' footsteps on their own journey at the College.



Pictured left to right: Alison Robinson (Class of 1997) and daughter Abigail, Trudi Davie (Class of 1991) and daughter Lily, Kate Steven (Class of 1991) and daughter Molly. Not pictured: Talei Mendel (Class of 1992) and daughter Leila



Back row: Phil Shirvington, Gwen Hill, Yvonne Davis, Carole Martin, Sherryl Bremner, Judy O'Reilly, Judy Gerhardt, Nina Burridge, Virginia Reed, Catherine Rae, Maryanne Brooks, Annemarie Mitchell, Vicki Scott, Judy Black, Michael Palme, Moira Spiteri, Kaye Higgins, Linda Griffiths

Front row: Jo Baker, Enikő Sweeting, Moya Morgan, Kaye Dexter, Keiko Hosogoe

PAST STAFF LUNCH

At their annual lunch in February, 23 past staff members enjoyed catching up.

Enikő Sweeting is the coordinator for the gathering. She explained "We started these lunches in 2001, when six of us retired, and we invited Sr Anita to join us as well. The idea came about after three staff members, who were on long service leave in 1999, decided to meet on the first day of the school year to celebrate the fact that they didn't have to go back to work.

Since then, it is mainly retired staff members who come each year however staff who are on long service leave and staff

who have gone to other schools have also come along at times when it fits in with their timetables.

It's always lovely to catch up with former Brigidine staff irrespective of when they left."

If you are a past staff member of the College and would like to attend one of these lunches please email Pip Inman, Alumni and Community Relations Coordinator, at alumni@brigidine.nsw.edu.au and she will pass on your details. Anyone who has been on the staff at Brigidine College St Ives is welcome to attend.

Flying High at our High Achievers Assembly



At the beginning of each year, we celebrate the high achievers of the previous year's graduating class. In February, members of the Class of 2024 joined us for our High Achievers Assembly where we acknowledged their outstanding achievements.

Maya Flattery, 2024 Dux, reflected on the common perceptions about achieving success and challenged students to rethink their approach to education. Her key message centred around the importance of motivation, specifically finding a personal reason to engage with education and she shared an anecdote about her mum, who regularly reminded her of the privilege of receiving an education, especially in comparison to others who don't have that opportunity. This shift in perspective helped Maya to view school as a privilege rather than a burden.

She encouraged students to seize opportunities not just in academics but in cocurricular activities like music, sport and drama and emphasised two crucial pieces of advice: start your work early to avoid last-minute stress, and don't hesitate to ask for help when needed.

She finished her speech by saying, "ultimately, if there is one thing I would like you to take away from this speech today, it is to understand the immense opportunity education presents and to allow that to motivate any future endeavours. School

really isn't that long, so...make the most of it."

It is with immense pride we wish these young women well as they embark on the next stage of their lives.



Scan the QR code to read Maya's speech in full.

CLASS OF 2022 SURF BOAT TEAM

Congratulations to four members of the Class of 2022 who recently competed in the Trans-Tasman Surf Boat Test Series held at Waihi Beach, New Zealand. It was an intense competition across the Open and U23 division resulting in Australia coming out on top and retaining the title.

Alani Barros, Zoe Ellis, Ella Gale and April McCarney have had a great season. They were selected to represent Australia as the U23 Female Development Crew and to represent NSW in Coffs Harbour at the Interstate Championship, a competition NSW won. Congratulations ladies, great teamwork!



Pursuing a Dream

ALANA REDDY (CLASS OF 2023)

Alana always had dreams of playing basketball at a US college. For the last year she has been working on making that dream a reality. Here she tells us about her experiences at Blair Academy, New Jersey including how she transitioned from her days at Brigidine to living at a coeducational boarding school on the other side of the world and how she has gained some invaluable life skills, all whilst keeping her goal in sight.



My experience at Blair Academy has been nothing short of incredible. Transitioning from Brigidine, an all-girls day school in Sydney, Australia, to a co-ed boarding school on the other side of the world was a big change and I wasn't sure what to expect. Doing a post-graduate year at Blair wasn't something I had initially planned, but it turned out to be the perfect step toward achieving my goals. Arriving at Blair, I was faced with a new high school system, environment and culture. It was challenging at first, but it's something I've come to love. Boarding in a dorm with two roommates, I stepped far out of my comfort zone, but Blair's welcoming and supportive community made the transition smooth and natural. The school emphasises forming meaningful relationships and this culture has shaped my time here in ways I never imagined.

Throughout my time at Blair, I've gained invaluable life skills and the experience has been transformative. Academically, I've studied a variety of subjects and two that I've developed a passion for are Ceramics and Psychology. Blair's ceramics studio, with its exceptional teacher, has allowed me to learn pottery techniques and create some cool pieces. It's become a creative outlet that I never expected to enjoy so much. Additionally, studying Psychology, a subject I hadn't explored before, has deepened my interest in understanding how people think and act. I've learned about brain structures, personality theories, human development and the biological bases of behaviour.

At Blair, I've met amazing people from all over the world, enriching my experience with diverse perspectives. The main reason I came to Blair though, was to pursue my dream of playing basketball

at a US college. Within just a couple of months, I was fortunate to receive offers from some renowned universities. After careful consideration, I recently accepted an offer on a full athletic scholarship to Lehigh University. The scholarship covers tuition, room and board, allowing me to focus on both academics and sports. The scholarship was a result of recruitment by Lehigh's coaching staff, who attended my practices at Blair and were impressed with my playing.

Lehigh University is a Division I school in the Patriot League, an NCAA Division I athletic conference featuring schools in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic. Division I is the highest level of college athletics in the United States, with schools offering full scholarships and competing at a national level. The Patriot League is known for balancing academic excellence with competitive sports, and student-athletes are expected to excel both athletically and academically. Lehigh, located in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, is consistently ranked among the top US universities, known for its engineering and business programs, as well as exceptional research opportunities. I have not decided what I will be majoring in yet, but as of now I am considering doing Psychology or something like Physical Therapy. I am beyond excited to begin this new chapter at Lehigh, where I'll continue my academic journey while playing basketball at the collegiate level.

We are excited to see what the next four years brings for Alana and wish her well in her new adventure at Lehigh University. Good luck, Alana!



My Gap Year and Newfound Passion

CAITLIN O'SULLIVAN (CLASS OF 2023)

Taking a gap year is all about personal growth, meeting new people and gaining experience. Caitlin shares how her gap year led her to experience international travel for the first time, created lifelong memories and even changed her plans after discovering a newfound passion.

I arrived in the UK at the beginning of August 2024 where I embarked on a Contiki Tour visiting eight countries in 11 days on a Taster of Europe Tour. It was my first time travelling internationally and at first navigating foreign countries was very daunting, however I met some incredible people from different parts of the world who all shared their stories of travel with me.

Early in his career my dad worked with an English gap student here in Australia. Now, 30 years later, that person is teaching at Highfield and Brookham School which is how I connected with the school to secure a job there! I worked alongside four other Australian 'Gappies' and one from New Zealand, who have become my second family over there.

With long workdays we looked after the children who boarded at the school, planning activities such as bonfires, spotlight, football tournaments and so much more! During the day I found myself helping a lot in both sport and drama, coaching netball and hockey as well as supporting a Year 7 theatre production of *Macbeth*. We took the performance to Crawley Theatre as part of a Shakespeare Theatre Festival. I was so proud of them all (now I know how Miss Mac and Mr Rutherford felt seeing us accomplish our final Individual and Group performances!).



I had opportunities to run improv activities with the students and drew from my school days at Brigo, teaching the children Space Jump which they all loved. I also found lots of joy teaching the children Aussie Slang.

A highlight of my time at Highfield was in my final week when I was invited to visit London's West End with a Year 6 class. We saw *Back to the Future The Musical* at the Adelphi Theatre. It was incredible seeing such a massive budget production come to life, including an insane staging moment when a car floated above the audience at the end. As I sat and watched, it brought back all the things Miss Mac and Mr Rutherford had taught me about staging and lighting – the Year 9 Drama student in me was ecstatic!

As for the future, I plan on travelling to the US this year continuing my work with children at an American summer camp in Maryland and I am currently securing a volunteer position in Fiji for the end of the year.

Whilst I had applied for an Event Management Course at ICMS during Year 12 at Brigo I found taking a gap year allowed me to find a passion in childcare and travel. I hope to work towards a degree in education and utilise that to travel more overseas and teach in various countries one day.

Good luck with your future studies, Caitlin and safe travels!

ALUMNI

Changing the Future of Food Security

KELLY MCJANNETT (CLASS OF 2004)

Kelly McJannett joined the College as a Year 7 student in 1999 and graduated with the Class of 2004. She took part in College Musicals, competed in Cross Country NSWCCC and Swimming BBSSA, and performed in the Year 11 Play. Her high school years were spent under the guidance of our much-loved Principal John Bowie, who was known for his saying “Girls can do anything, but Brigo girls can do everything.” These words are still heard in our corridors today and it is clear they resonated with Kelly! Today she lives in Manly with her husband and two sons and is a trailblazer in the world of food security, sustainability and technology.

Kelly is the Co-Founder and CEO of Food Ladder – a pioneering organisation that is redefining how we approach sustainable food production and educational opportunities in underprivileged areas. By harnessing the power of technology, she is leading an initiative that not only addresses immediate food insecurity but also empowers the next generation with vital skills for the future.

The idea for Food Ladder was born from Kelly's personal experience working in remote Indigenous communities, where she recognised the urgent need for sustainable, locally-driven solutions to food insecurity. Under her leadership, Food Ladder has evolved from a groundbreaking idea into a dynamic force for holistic, transformational change. Today, Food Ladder operates in 43 remote schools across every Australian state and territory, producing a minimum of four tonnes of fresh produce annually. Internationally, the organisation is making strides in India, Uganda and Bhutan.

Food Ladder stands out as the only global network of connected greenhouses targeting regions most affected by climate change. As global temperatures rise, traditional farming practices face unprecedented challenges, especially in disadvantaged communities. Recognising this dire situation, Kelly and her team have set out to provide a solution: deploying AI-powered, climate-controlled hydroponic greenhouses in schools, allowing for year-round production of fresh vegetables. She explained “this innovative approach not

only ensures a steady supply of nutritious food for students but also alleviates the burden of childhood malnutrition – an issue highlighted by the United Nations as critical to address.”

A key component of Food Ladder's program is its integration with educational institutions, where the impact is most profound. The program supplies schools with STEM-aligned educational resources that provide students with practical, real-world knowledge about sustainable food production. In just a short time, thousands of students and teachers have benefitted from these resources, with projections suggesting that by 2030, Food Ladder will have impacted over one million students globally.

Kelly takes a collaborative approach in all she does. She recognised the unique needs of diverse communities and initiated an extensive co-design process involving teachers and principals. This ensured that the program met the specific educational requirements of disadvantaged schools and the feedback collected from educators led to the development of an innovative, customisable lesson plan generator tailored specifically for food security education.

Sustainability is at the heart of Food Ladder's mission, a subject close to the hearts of our current College students. A unique membership model means well-funded schools can subsidise costs for under-resourced institutions, creating an equitable access environment. Plus, the



AI systems in place continuously learn from environmental and geographical data, enhancing the program's long-term relevance and effectiveness.

Food Ladder's mission is not solely about improving food access; it is about completely transforming childhood nutrition and reshaping how the world approaches food security. The organisation's innovative solutions empower educators and promote sustainable practices while fostering a deeper understanding of food systems among students.

Shane Hogan, College Principal, wrote “Our motto, Strength and Gentleness, is such a powerful statement for our times. Brigidine girls are called to be strong yet considered leaders in their own lives and the lives of others – to be people of influence and compassion in their local and global communities.” It is clear from the extraordinary work Kelly is doing she is the epitome of *Fortiter et Suaviter*, Strength and Gentleness. Her remarkable contributions to food security and education in some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities across Australia has not gone unnoticed. In 2024, she was named among the AFR BOSS Most Innovative Companies, highlighting her commitment to integrating cutting-edge technology with pressing social issues. She is recognised as one of the AFR 100 Women of Influence, serves as a member of the University of Sydney Business School Board of Advice and was a recipient of the Sydney University Anstice Scholarship.

We are incredibly proud of all that Kelly is achieving and the impactful changes she is bringing about to the lives of so many.

An Expansive Vision of Education

A Brigidine education has always focused on providing academic opportunities for students. Indeed, when Daniel Delany formed the Brigidine Sisters in Ireland in 1807 he had an ‘expansive vision of education’ for all. (Kildare Ministries 2021)

Our first Principal, Sister Romuald (then Kathleen) Walz, was a boarding student at Brigidine Randwick and in 1923 passed the Leaving Certificate in her final year. She gained a teachers’ college scholarship and entered the Brigidine Sisters Randwick Novitiate (Garaty, p. 64).

In 1954 when the St Ives school building was opened, Sister Romuald and Sister Adrian Small embarked on providing a wide range of academic subjects and cocurricular activities. Although just two teachers, those first nine students received lessons in English, Mathematics, Latin, French, Art, Chemistry, Domestic Science, History, Religion, Geography, Physiology, Music and they played tennis.

The quality and value of education at St Ives was clearly evident in 1957, when seven students gained their Intermediate Certificate, with six returning to continue into 4th year, at a time when most would have been seeking work rather than staying at school. Of our first students to graduate from the College, post school paths included university arts and physiotherapy degrees, nursing, teaching and secretarial college.

The 1960s saw the compulsory introduction of the Wyndham Scheme which added an extra year of schooling and required a higher and more regulated style of teaching (Hughes 2021). The cost of providing more facilities, higher qualified and lay teaching staff left the Brigidines considering St Ives as a junior campus (Years 7-10), but parents insisted they would help with fundraising and wanted their girls to have an opportunity to continue their education at Brigidine through to the new HSC (Brigidine Sisters 1967).

In 1979 Principal Sister Anita Murray writes of an increase in parents choosing Catholic schools, and the characteristics that make Brigidine a ‘good school’ including the care and effort of our community and the academic standard set from our earliest days. On this characteristic of academic standards she states,

“A school’s main function is to teach. We may argue whether it should teach Ancient History or Modern Greek, but we cannot argue about the fact that it should teach. A school is not primarily a social welfare agency, a sporting club, a careers centre, a counselling clinic, a first-aid station or anything else. A school is not primarily a custodian of society’s values, nor is it primarily an initiator of change. It can indeed be many of these things and society tends to push more and more roles on to a school. But its primary function is to teach and if any of the other roles take precedence over this, the school fails in an important aspect.” (Murray 1979).

Throughout the years the College has persisted, never forgetting our primary function, to educate girls under the motto of Strength and Gentleness. Now offering 43 courses for the HSC ensuring students have the flexibility to excel in areas of individual interest and talent, before going on to further study and to diverse careers around the world.

Whilst curriculums, programs, opportunities, cocurriculars, facilities and social expectations have changed over the last 71 years, the College remains committed to continuing Delany’s ‘expansive vision of education’, providing high quality academic opportunities for all our students, guiding them to be their best and to pursue their passions.

JACKIE ROSSINGTON
ARCHIVIST

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Photo 1: Sister Adrian Small graduating from Sydney University, 1951

Photo 2: Barbara McCarthy, College Captain, 1957

Photo 3: 5th Year in a classroom, 1958

Photo 4: Principal, Sister Anita Murray, 1979

Photo 5: Honours students, Kinkead Library, 2015

Photo 6: Speech Day award recipients, 1984

Photo 7: Year 11 Academic Awards, 2021





Creating a *Bright* Future

The classroom is a space where ideas take shape, friendships are formed and futures are built. It is in these rooms that students take their first steps toward becoming the leaders of tomorrow. As we focus on renovating 15 classrooms in the Synan Wing, your gift will help transform these rooms into modern, vibrant, inspiring spaces that reflect the potential we see in each and every one of our students so they can thrive to reach their full potential.

You can make your contribution by scanning the QR code or through our website:

brigidine.nsw.edu.au/giving

