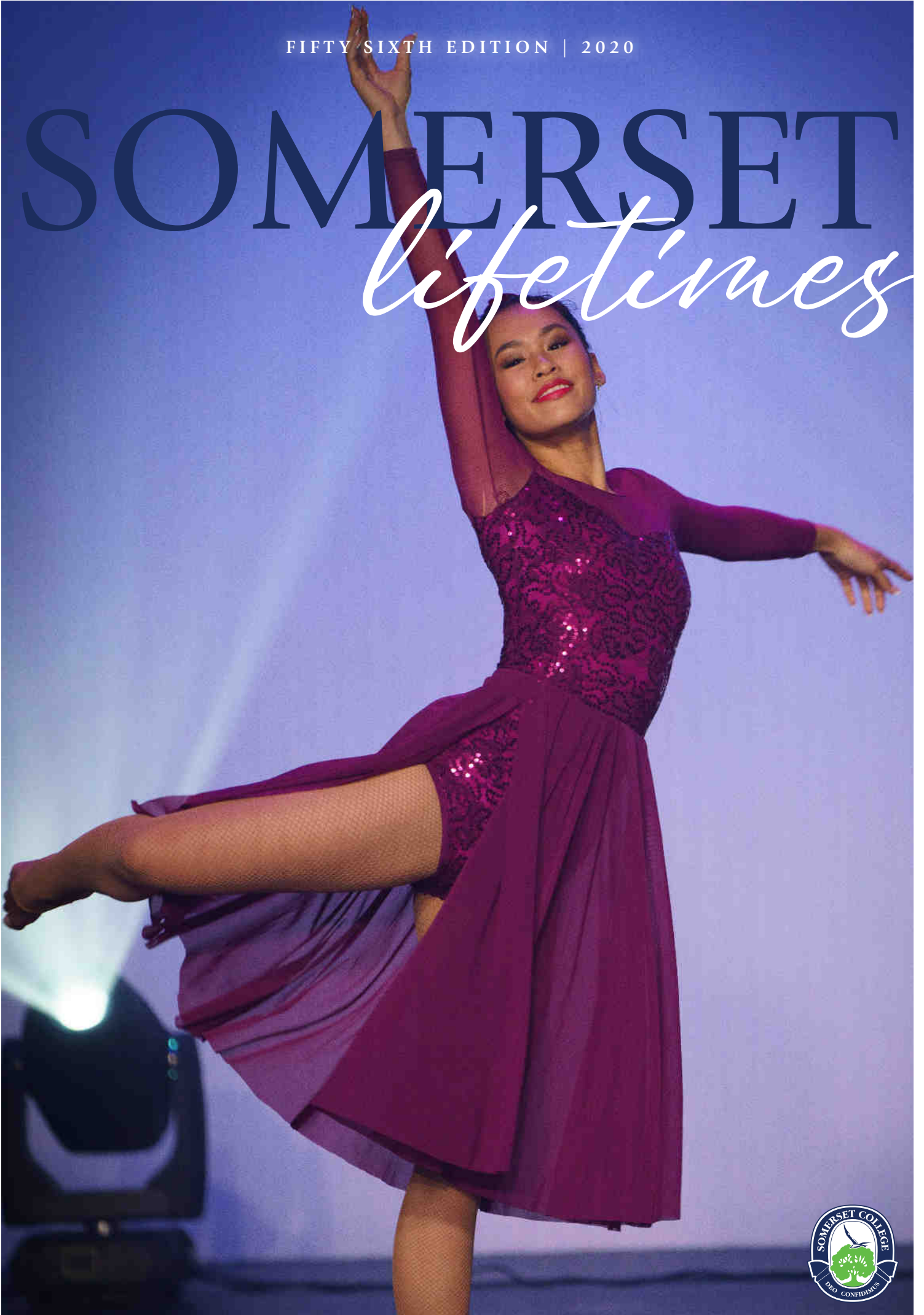


FIFTY SIXTH EDITION | 2020

# SOMERSET

*lifetimes*



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## Information

**Somerset Lifetimes** is published twice a year by Somerset College to share items of topical interest relating to overall activities of College life and the greater Somerset community.

Challenges we faced in 2020 meant the edition has been published at a later date than we anticipated.

**Cover Photo:** Senior student, Jacinta Mai (Year 12 Laver) features on the cover in her performance from Day of Dance 2020. The event involves all students from Pre-Prep to Year 12 who participate

in our dance co-curricular programmes.

**Editor:** Narelle Higgs

**Assistant Editor:** Linda Keefer

**Layout:** Narelle Higgs

**Contributing Writers:** Thank you to all those who contributed articles to the edition, including Craig Bassingthwaighe, Andrea Lewis, Katherine Zernike, Sue Roberts, Lilliana Swainson, Andrew Wrigley, Eileen Wheeler, Noelle Panlilio, Lachie Yarwood and Kate Grigg.

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To receive a printed copy of this issue, please email:  
[publications@somerset.qld.edu.au](mailto:publications@somerset.qld.edu.au)

## Somerset Alumni Association

All students become life members of the Somerset Alumni Association, founded in shared experience and comradery. The Association seeks to create, nurture, and grow positive and mutually beneficial associations within the College community.

The Association also provides all members with a copy of the College's annual *Somerset Lifetimes* publication, and works to contact our many Association members with information about upcoming events and engagement opportunities.

All College alumni can access the Association, simply visit us on any of our networks.

### ***This network is your network, so come and join us!***

For further information regarding the Association, please contact our Community Relations Office:

**Instagram:** @ReturnToSomerset | [www.instagram.com/ReturnToSomerset](https://www.instagram.com/ReturnToSomerset)

**Facebook:** /ReturnToSomerset | [www.facebook.com/ReturnToSomerset](https://www.facebook.com/ReturnToSomerset)

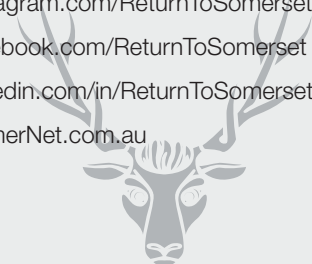
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Somerset Alumni  
Association

# FROM THE *Headmaster*

*Craig Bassingthwaite*

Headmaster

Congratulations to the Class of 2020, the ATAR edition!

After such a tumultuous year, we are delighted to have received the results of the inaugural ATAR cohort.

There were many highlights but what is very obvious is the endeavour of the students, the skill and expertise of their teachers, the leadership and gentle guidance of the Dean of Studies, Mrs Karen Crowley, the responsiveness and creativity of the College Leadership Team, and the patience and support of their families, have combined to produce a stellar set of results.

We congratulate all our students who completed their Queensland Certificate of Education including the Business Diploma. It is no mean effort to run the race and finish; perseverance and discipline that will set our students for life.

One of our students, Jacinta Mai, the Academic Captain, received the highest possible score, 99.95, one of only 30 students across the state. Jacinta is featured on the front cover in one of many activities she was involved in at the College.

Another 11 students received a score of more than 98.85 which is the rough equivalent of the old OP 1. At 12 per cent of the cohort, it is probably our best ever result.

We had 55 students, 56 per cent of the cohort, receive a score of more than 90. Our median score of 91.2, roughly an equivalent OP 5, is equal to our best ever result. In the middle of a pandemic, as the first group to go through this unknown system! Truly we dip our lids to this achievement.

Georgina Powell, College Captain, topped the state in English and Music with perfect scores of 100 as did Chester Whiting, Starkey House Captain, in Philosophy and Reason.





# FROM THE *Headmaster*

To show the breadth of our students and their interests, Sports Captain, James Guy, received an ATAR score of 99.65 and then proceeded to score his first ton, 105 not out, in senior grade cricket on the Gold Coast. Knowing James, it will be obvious what brought the greatest joy last Saturday.

At Somerset, we continue to have the vast majority of our students ATAR eligible or enrolled in the IB Diploma, 98 per cent. You will see results from other schools in the media but until we know the rates of eligibility within cohorts, it is impossible to compare these results. Some schools last year reported eligibility of less than 10 per cent, making them statistically anomalous.

## CAPITAL

The Aitkenhead Building, one of our originals, was replaced with a new 12 classroom block that transformed the central area of the Junior School. As well as eight general classrooms, it features innovative outside spaces and four specialist areas devoted to Art, Design, Science and Technology. Expansive outside recreation spaces including the Yarning Circle and the Dr Dianne Moses Plaza have made students' lives more comfortable.

The air conditioning plant for The Arnison Building has been a wonderful success. I'm very glad to say that we completed our end of year events in the nicely air-conditioned Great Hall – a very welcome addition!

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING

What a joy it has been to work with the Class of 2020.



*Farewell to Mrs Eileen Wheeler, after 38 years of service.*

I'm very proud of what they have achieved this year and to see them finish so strongly is testament to their character and commitment. The College Captains, Desmond Chuah and Georgina Powell, have been wonderful ambassadors for Somerset and superb advocates for our students. It has been a privilege to walk a little way with you. You will be fondly remembered.

The Human Resources of the College are our greatest asset and we could never achieve the success and reputation we enjoy without their commitment, skill and service.

We farewell Mr Wally Brodar, Mrs Kate Cornell, Mr Neil Smith, Mrs Jane Stewart and Mrs Jodie Watson, this year and thanked them for their service at Somerset.



Mr Wally Brodar



Mrs Kate Cornell



Mr Neil Smith



Mrs Jane Stewart



Mrs Jodie Watson

Dr Michael Brohier retired from his position as Deputy Headmaster in July this year. He has served the College wonderfully well in so many ways, establishing programmes that enhance the student experience. Michael was Chair of the Somerset Celebration of Literature, building that signature Somerset event into the city-wide festival we call Storyfest. He was integral in the establishment of the IB DP here at Somerset, a first for Queensland and one of the leaders in Australia. The introduction of the Diploma further solidified Somerset's reputation as an academic leader and innovator.

In recognition of his service, I am delighted that the Board agreed to my suggestion that the Senior Learning Centre be renamed The Dr Michael Brohier Learning Centre.

When one talks of service the benchmark is our Foundation Staff of whom there will be none next year as Mrs Eileen Wheeler retires after today.

The entire Somerset community benefit from those who have gone before us and no-one has a greater legacy than Mrs Wheeler.

Our words cannot adequately express our gratitude. Look around this Great Hall and feel our traditions, there is something of Mrs Wheeler in all we do.

After 38 years of outstanding service, including 30 years as a teacher in the Junior School and seven years teaching in the Senior School, Mrs Wheeler will retire at the end of 2020. Mrs Wheeler taught Year 1 in her first year and after more than 30 years transitioned from

teaching in the Junior School to teaching in the Senior School in 2014 when Year 7 became part of the Senior School. We were delighted that Mrs Wheeler moved into the Senior School without any sign of it being different, something for which many students and colleagues are grateful.

Mrs Wheeler has served the College wonderfully well, in many ways establishing the Somerset experience.

The College is served by a skilled and visionary Board and Leadership Team. Both are relentless for improvement and that is why we are where we are.

I thank the Chair of the College Board, Mr Tony Hickey OAM, and other members of the Board, Deputy Chair Mr Peter Trimble, Chair of Finance Mrs Belinda Simmons, Chair of Governance Mrs Penny Thurnwald, Chair of the Foundation Mr Bede Young, Mrs Amanda Appel (Class of 2003), Mr Simon Chan, Mr Jason Cordner (Class of 1990), and Mr Mark Sowerby for their wisdom, encouragement and energy.

Mrs Louise Davidson has been a wonderful member of the College Board, making exceptional contributions as a whole, but specifically in her role as Chair of the Somerset Storyfest Board. Mrs Davidson steps down from the Board today and we thank her for her considerable service to the College.

The past years at Somerset have been so rewarding because of my daily interaction with the College Leadership Team. We are indeed blessed to have them.

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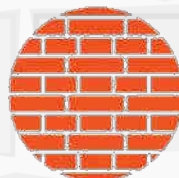
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# FROM THE *Headmaster*



*Mr Bassingthwaite with 2020 College Captains,  
Georgina Powell and Desmond Chuah*

My only skill is to surround myself with good people and I've done particularly well here. Thank you, Mr John Bacon, Dr Michael Brohier, Ms Rebecca Collie, Mrs Karen Crowley, Mrs Allison Foster, Mrs Michele Sauer, Mr Craig Sayer, Ms Lisa Thomson and Mr David Thornton. I have no doubt that this team is stronger every year.

There is a consistency of output and a genuine passion and loyalty to each other that is enabling and inspiring.

Of course, there were many, many downsides to what happened this year, but it is easy also to find many good things.

Perhaps it was a slower pace, more time for family and friends, more time for yourself, looking at the way you live through slightly different eyes.

For me, the year has been bittersweet. My oldest friend lost a dear wife, but Kathy and I spent more time together, a bonus for me, jury's out for her! And we certainly spent more time with our adult kids, and they have turned out pretty well, again, no prizes for attributing that praise to the right parent.

2020 brought new music from two of my heroes, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. What a joy. The Boss's *Letter to You* is a bittersweet reflection of what we gather and what we share.

*Trying to summon all our hearts find time  
Things we find out through hard times and good  
Dug deep in my soul and signed my name true  
Sent it in my letter to you  
Took all the sunshine and the rain  
All our happiness and all our pain  
The dark evening stars  
And the morning sky of blue  
Sent it in my letter to you*

What we found out this year has made us strong yet more vulnerable, wiser yet more innocent, resolved yet more flexible, determined yet more forgiving.

I hope your Somerset experience has taught you these things

*All your fears and doubts  
All the hard things you found out*

My letter to you is to affirm the energy and genius of our youth, that our reputation stand on deeply held values that you can be trusted and that your enthusiasm and ambition are undiminished.

The dark evening stars and the morning sky of blue hold no fears for the Class of 2020.

We Will See You On the Other Side – Reflections on the Pandemic.



# Storyfest @HOME

## STORYFEST@HOME

**Following the devastating cancellation of our three-day writers' festival in March, we were thrilled to be able to provide Storyfest@Home for Somerset College students in September.**

Over two days, our students were able to participate in author sessions with some of our favourite local authors as well as secure their favoured book from the bookshop. It would not be Storyfest without Dippin' Dots and through the generous support of Headmaster, Mr Craig Bassingthwaighte, all the children from the Early Learning Precinct, were treated to an ice-cream.

The senior students were kept engaged with performances by local multidisciplinary group – Shock Therapy Productions. “Shock Therapy Productions aims to tell stories that are meaningful thought provoking, dynamic and entertaining, celebrating both the confronting and cathartic nature of performance.”

Storyfest On the road authors Lucas Proudfoot, Tristan Bancks and Lucia Masciullo were also in the line-up for Storyfest@Home, thus allowing further support of our local authors, in what of course, had been an extremely trying time for artists in general.

The Somerset students revelled in the opportunity to have the festival exclusively for them and especially our senior students, who for some, had visited the festival every year since they joined us in Prep.

Our 2021 Festival is being planned and we hope the Somerset community will join us in celebrating the return of the festival and embrace the opportunity to interact with the authors with your children.

We look forward to seeing you at the Parents' and Friends' Prologue Party on Wednesday 17 March commencing at 5.30pm.

*Andrea Lewis*

CEO - Somerset Storyfest



Photos: Megan Cattell





Photo: Megan Cattell

# BOOK CHARACTER Day

## CURIOUS CREATURES, WILD MINDS

**This year, Somerset College hosted its first ever live streamed Book Character Day parade. We were very excited to be able to deliver this special event to our Somerset community at home, work and even to our extended family from across the globe.**

In fact, the live stream reached over 1400 viewers living in 40 different countries!

To kick the day off, our students in Years 3 - 6 visited our friends in the ELP to share their favourite books with one another. It was delightful to see our older students interacting with the youngest members of our school community by sharing their love and appreciation of literature.

Thank you once again to our parents and friends for your involvement in co-ordinating your child's costumes and continuing to support their literacy journey by reading with them regularly.

*Katherine Zernike*

Teacher - Junior School, Information Literacy









# Day of DANCE - 2020



**Dance at Somerset was turned on its head in 2020 with all classes forced to Zoom during COVID.**

Thankfully, as we approached the end of Term Three, classes returned to campus and hopeful preparation was underway for our annual Day of Dance. Despite some modifications, add some glitter, sequins and perhaps the odd crossed fingers, the concert was safely permitted.

On our stage, throughout the eight concerts, we were able to showcase how adaptable our students and staff were, taking all the changes throughout the year in their stride to produce a wonderful experience for all.

With approximately 300 dancers, from our Pre-Prep students through to our graduating Year 12 students, the performance had all the talent, glitz and glamour that we have always seen in our shows.

Thanks must go to Ms Melissa Parkinson and the dance team for their hard work and continued confidence in the programme. We cannot wait to see what next year brings and look forward to this enthusiasm!

*Gue Roberts*

Head of Department - Performing Arts



# B5 Trip

## B5 RETURNS TO BARAMBAH

The B5 trip to Murgon was an insightful, fun and connecting experience for everyone, from the children at Murgon State School to the students and teachers from Somerset. In the lead up to the trip, we had all been told about the amazing connections that had been made over the years, and how impacted the kids had been by previous trips, however, we did not realise quite how true that was until we experienced it for ourselves.

In the days that we spent attending school with the Prep to Year 6 students, we made connections that are going to last a long time. We did not think about improving reading levels in three days or increasing math grades overnight; our short presence created bonds, closed gaps and opened doors. We were welcomed with open arms and farewelled with hugs and tears, such is the nature of the relationship between our schools.

After every day, we would come together, share and reflect on our experiences from that day, and what we had learnt. Mr Walker encouraged us to act by the motto 'not for, not to, but with', and I did not understand the validity of this statement until I was on the trip. We cannot pretend to fix any perceived problems Indigenous people have; not only is it impossible to achieve alone and on one trip, but that is not the way it should be. Indigenous people have been learning to solve these problems for generations, and it



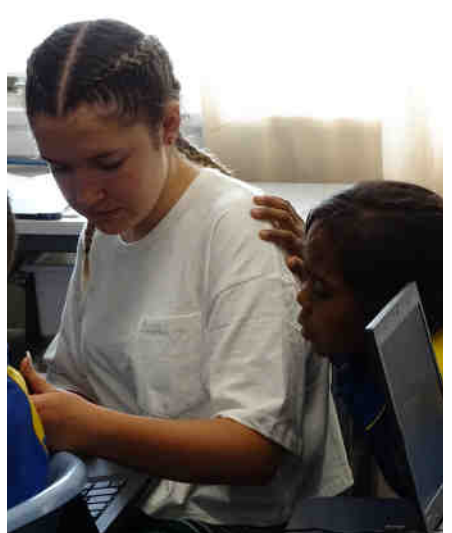
is not up to us to tell them how to do it. The B Trip wasn't a trip about differences or foreignness, it wasn't about 'us' and 'them'. It was about closing gaps, not just crossing bridges. It was about what unites us, not what divides us. Those connections we made, the 'realness' of them, the sense of humanity and empowerment in forming those bonds, that is what I will never forget.

Experiences on the trip included grocery shopping with peers (very interesting), a sombre reflection at Coomba Falls, a history lesson at The Ration Shed in Cherbourg, making whirlpools in the swimming pool after a 40°C day, creating a parody of the song, The Twelve days of Christmas, painting 'thank you' paintings at Bunya Nurseries, a heartfelt reflection in the Bunya Mountains and, of course, attending school with the beautiful kids at Murgon. Although I did not realise it at first, the trip truly did live up to the expectations that previous B trippers had set, and I encourage anyone who can to attend a B Trip. The experience really is life changing.

This trip has opened my eyes to indigenous and rural Australia and has encouraged me to build a future in which our paths will cross. On behalf of everyone who participated on B5, we are very grateful to Mr Walker, Mrs Walker, and Miss Capper for providing this opportunity, as I am sure everyone agrees that it was a wonderful and moving experience.

*Kate Jordan*  
Year 10 Starkey





# LILLIANA'S AWARD OF *Excellence*

Early in December, 2020 I received the Study Gold Coast's Student Excellence Award for excellence in championing diversity, by Mayor Tom Tate. This year there were over 300 nominations and I was honoured to have been selected by the Study Gold Coast panel. I was presented this award by the Mayor of the City of Gold Coast, Tom Tate and CEO of Study Gold Coast Alfred Slogrove. Excellence in championing diversity is awarded to a student who advocates and champions the values of embracing diversity in varied forms within our community.

I am beyond honoured to receive this award and am grateful for the staff and students of Somerset College for their support and encouragement for my work lead by my MYP Personal Project, A Little Bird Told Me. I am especially grateful as stood amongst amazing and talented university students. I am also the only high school student to receive an excellence award.

*Lilliana Swainson*

Year 11 Laver

*"Lilliana Swainson's philosophy is underpinned by the belief that all people are equal regardless of gender, race, religion or age and her focus is to generate dialogue in young children about the acceptance and integration of all people. Over the past year, Lilliana has shown dedication and leadership towards not only Somerset College, where she attends, but other schools in her local area, including Clover Hill State School, as well as internationally in Singapore and Italy."*

*"Whilst still only a teenager, Lilliana has already demonstrated her leadership qualities by working with students from Prep to Year 7 through her book talks and also in class workshops that highlight the need for greater understanding of diversity and gender equality."*



Lilliana's authored and illustrated book

Reading to Pre-Preps at Somerset





*Lilliana with Ms Luisa Navanteri*



*Lilliana with mum, Mrs Danielle Swainson*



*Lilliana accepting her award from Mayor Tom Tate*



# MATHEMATICAL Murals

**A few years ago, I ran out of wall space in my classroom. Therefore, if I was thinking of producing any further mathematical displays, it was necessary to think outside the box ... in fact, outside the classroom itself.**

It all started with a Penrose triangle on the outside wall by the door and progressed through a family of other impossible polygons. They look complex but are fairly simple to construct.

Trig graphs are always a good visual display and I had an interesting conversation with a Year 7 student who thought I had made a mistake on the x axis. He politely informed me that one cycle of the sine graph should be  $360^\circ$  and not  $2\pi$ , as I had shown.

Exact trig ratios were next – and, in drawing the equilateral triangle, I bent the apex angle around the edge of the building to produce the  $30^\circ$ ,  $60^\circ$ ,  $90^\circ$  triangle.

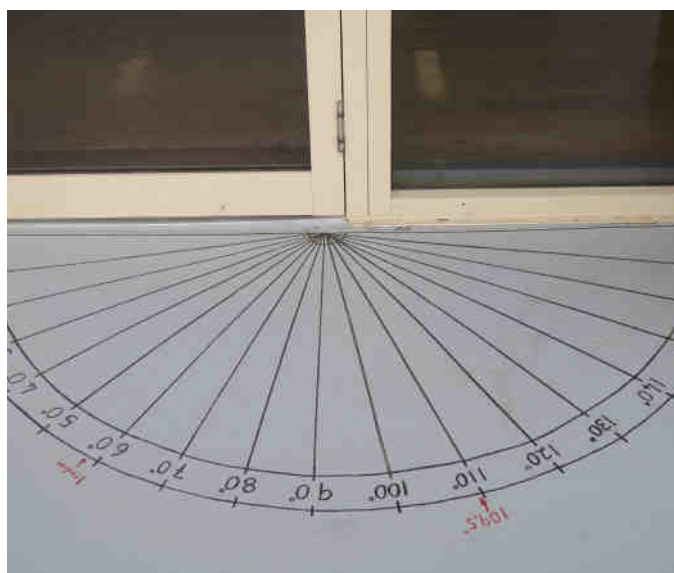
Then came Pythagoras' famous

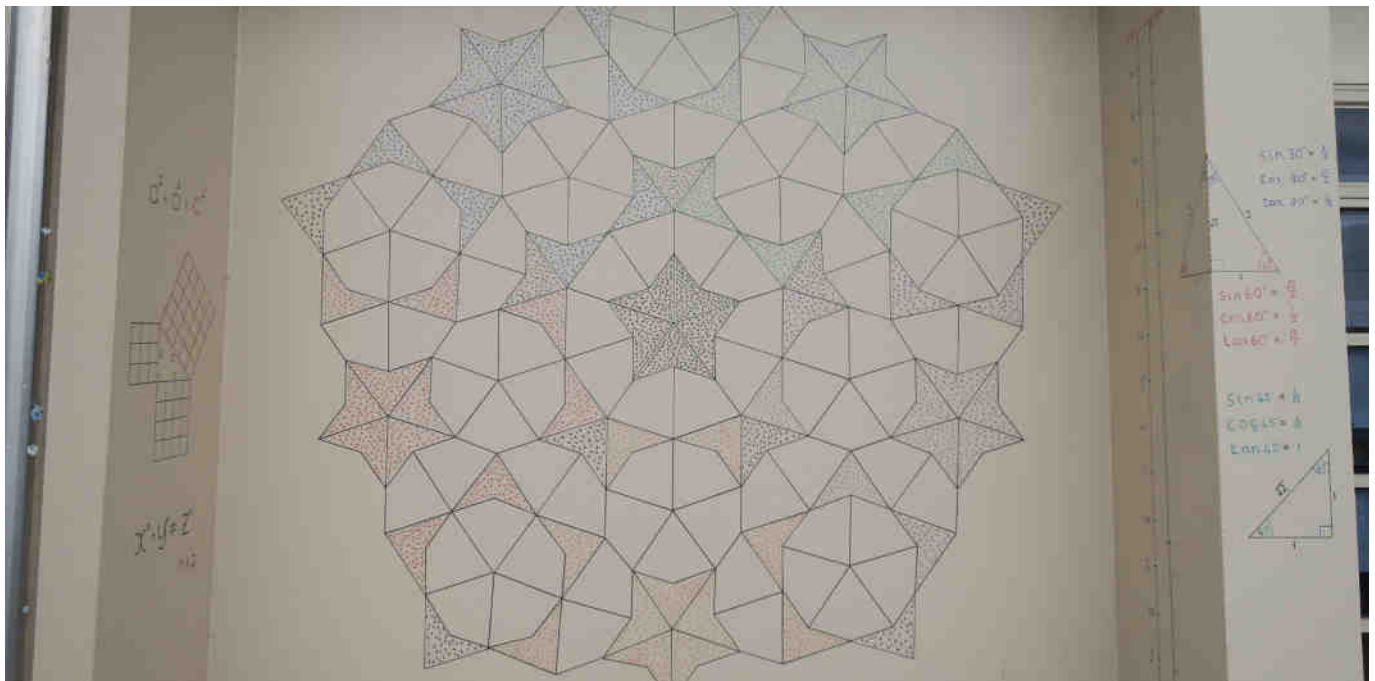
equation followed by Fermat's last theorem - but the proof was too large to fit on the wall. That certainly triggered lively discussion with pupils and parents.

A tape measure was drawn in both metric and imperial units up to the dizzy heights of Robert Wadlow, who at 8 feet 11.1 inches (2.72 m), was the tallest man to ever live. This proved popular with staff and pupils alike – the pupils exclaiming how much they had grown, contrasting with the teachers remarking on how they must have shrunk!

These graphics were all quick to draw. Then, during our Covid shutdown last year, I attempted the 'Infinite Star' which, as the name implies, could have taken me forever. It is a Penrose tessellation with 5-fold symmetry using two shapes - a kite and a dart. This certainly took a while, but with no pupils at school, I was able to work undisturbed. On their return, even our Junior and Prep school students were fascinated with the patterns in the shape.

Once the walls were full, I suspected that the headmaster was hoping I would just stop all this graffiti... - but what about the floor? This was decorated with a protractor to measure the door opening angle, together with the latitude and longitude of the classroom as well as a compass rose. When students asked why I was drawing a compass rose, I couldn't resist replying "I've found my direction in life".



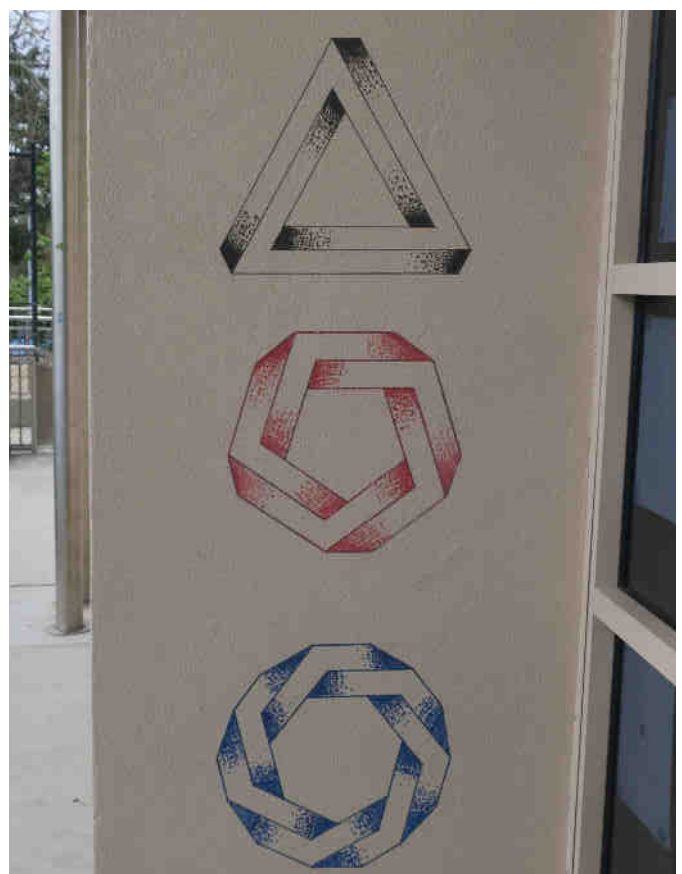


There were not many numbers on display at this point and, as our College was established in 1983, I thought that was worth recording, along with the Roman numeral equivalent. I also included the 'forgotten' numbering system used by the Cistercian monks in the Middle Ages and the ancient Mayan system, which is vigesimal (base 20) and uses just three symbols. I thereby created our very own 'Rosetta Stone'

Mathematical graffiti has certainly prompted the College community into talking about Maths and in the words of Oscar Wilde, "There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about". Therefore, I would encourage all maths teachers to just start drawing. You don't need to be Leonardo Da Vinci or MC Escher to make an impression and there is a wealth of mathematical material that can be illustrated. And, like the Ancient Greeks, you don't need any special equipment - just a straight edge and compass.

*Andrew Wrigley*

Senior School Teacher - Mathematics





# 38 YEARS OF *Service*

## FAREWELL TO EILEEN WHEELER

**It was the vision of Rod Wells, the first Headmaster, that he would open a private co-ed school on the coast.**



I heard about this proposal from a newspaper cutting sent to me while I was living in Sydney. The article included an address so I wrote to say I was interested in applying for a job. The reply informed me that the land for the school hadn't been bought, but that they would communicate when it had. About a month later I was interviewed in a hotel in Sydney and was offered a position; however, there were still so many factors to consider, one of which was when the school would open.

The Christmas holidays 1982 came and each time I went for a drive out into the Hinterland I saw that no construction had started. The sign board was intriguing though because the spelling of Somerset seemed to change. In fact, it took three goes to get it right.

It was decided the school was to open in January 1983 and so it was with great relief that a few weeks after the New Year a brick building was constructed. Our junior classrooms arrived on the back of a truck; they were demountables which were the change rooms at the Commonwealth Games. These were put in position about two weeks before the school was to open and were placed on the hill which is where our Great Hall stands today.

In the last week before the school opened, we all pitched in to lay turf and generally clean up. Someone mowed the



*Eileen (second from right) on Queensland Federation Day, Founders' Day, 1985*

field which is now The Common. We breathed a sigh of relief when the classroom furniture arrived on the Friday afternoon - we were opening on the Monday.

On day one, we waited with bated breath.

Would the children who enrolled actually arrive? Would the dirt track up to the demountable school office convince them that this was in fact a school and not a work site? Would they last the week?

We breathed a sigh of relief when we saw the new students of Somerset College begin to dribble in looking so smart - the girls in their white French straw panama hats and the boys in their vintage flat navy caps. This very English look was so out of place in such a rough rural Australian setting.

I must say this was the most thrilling feeling to realise we were officially open.

After meeting our classes which ranged from as little as 6 students in a class to 15, everyone, parents and students congregated on the The Common and held hands to make a big circle. After a quick welcome and a prayer, a bugler and a howling farm dog officially opened the school.

The first few months were challenging to say the least.

Firstly, we had the wettest season in years. Difficult when you have a toilet block down the hill. The sound of rain

brought an urgency for my Year 1's to go. So, we trudged up and down many times a day. Teachers' shoes were ruined and believe or not at the end of the first year we all got shoe allowance to pay for our ruined shoes.

The rains brought fabulous pasture for the disgruntled cows who had always used The Common. They say it's always greener on the other side and so the children learned to play games that included dry cow pats and became skillful in skipping over the wet ones. A stockman always chooses a direct route to move his herd so from time to time the demountables shook as the cows thundered past. The dust drifted through the windows and we watched in fascination the drover on his horse cracking his whip.

Our school spirit was born on the first day. Everyone wanted the school to succeed and went out of their way to help. Parents gave us paper, carpets for the cold floors, a television and recorder, books for the classroom library, games and the list goes on. One funny memory is that sometimes on a Friday we would watch a video. The problem was we only had three to watch.

"Haven't we seen this video before?" Our young students would query.

"No, same title but a different story," we would reply convincingly.





# 38 YEARS OF *Service*



Some smiled knowingly.

All was quiet and they were happily glued to the video re-run.

However, we needed more students to remain open. It was everyone's job to go out and spread the word about this amazing new school. You took every opportunity to promote the school from your hairdresser to the butcher and it worked. New students seem to arrive every week and the class of 6 soon became 20. It was quite amazing. We were always so thrilled with each new student who arrived at our door.

The parents and children welcomed every new family into the community. You could see genuine warmth. This was when the spirit of the Somerset Community was born. A bond that I had never seen before and have never seen since. Nothing was unachievable. There was always someone who knew someone who could get things done. Whenever, there was a job to do at the school we would have a working bee on the weekend. Parents and staff all pitched in.

We felt invincible until we realised how small we were when we joined the Gold Coast Inter School Sports competition. We looked perfectly groomed but had very little skill. My netball team danced around the court. We became known as the Somerset Country Club.

Sports Day was organised at Firth Park. Students participated in every event regardless of their skill. We all cheered them on as if we were holding the Olympic Games. I remember the Year 1 and 2 House groups were very uneven. It was too hard to explain that some people would have to run twice in the relay. We just told them to run as soon as they got the baton. They stopped when they eventually got tired. How many laps they I did I have no idea, but we laughed till we cried.

The excursions were great fun in the first year. In Year 1 and 2, we went to Brisbane Airport and sat on a plane that was on the tarmac, we went to the Fire Station in Southport and an ice-cream factory. We also went on an excursion to a small farm up the valley. We decided to walk through the bush which is now the Sands and Wyangan Ovals. However, when we got to the creek we realised we couldn't get across it! Oops! We hadn't checked this out prior to the outing. Risk Management forms had not been invented and nor had mobile phones. Fortunately, a kind farmer happened to be on his farm on the other side and carried each child across. We then walked on up the dirt track to see a couple of cows and some sheep.

Being stuck in the middle of the bush, we had our fair share of snakes. The development disturbed them and so we regularly had to deal with them. One day we were all in the brick building having Chapel when a teacher was signalled by our one and only groundsman to come to the open window. A snake was slithering down the verandah towards the open door. The next minute there was a loud thud with a spade and there was a decapitated snake outside the door. The Chapel continued.

Another time, I had a very concerned high school student at my door who said there was a snake in the boys' toilet. Low and behold it was in the doorway. The groundsman once again came to the rescue.

The Gold Coast in the early 1980s was just about to boom. This brought an interesting clientele.

One family was very generous and gave us our first piano. Then overnight left Australia leaving their house with

everything in it and their restaurant in Southport locked up.

Another family asked a teacher to look after their cat. They left Australia never to be seen again. Interestingly, the cat eventually moved to New York with the teacher.

We had a student whose father on occasions dropped him off by helicopter. They landed on a field opposite.

The Merchant family were madly making their Billabong board shorts in their garage but had the time to make the curtains for some classroom windows so we could show videos and they made our flag.

We had our fair share of quirky teachers too who passed through our doors in the first few years! One always wore black on Fridays, another often came to school with pegs hanging off the end of his shirt. We had a clean freak who would have regular classroom clean ups. This meant everything – desk, chair and book was taken outside then put back again.

There was never a dull moment and a lot of laughing in the first year. We worked hard but we had parents and students who were so very giving and grateful for what we were doing and trying to achieve. It was no wonder that the message got out into the community that there was a school called Somerset College in the Hinterland that had a very special vibe which no other school had. By the end of the first year, we knew without doubt we would survive.

Rod Wells and his council built a school and the staff, parents and students put Somerset College on the map. I could not have envisaged how Somerset would look in 2020.

I have said to many students over the years to follow their dream. Mine has been teaching and I feel blessed that I have been able to share my passion. There has never been a day when I haven't wanted to come to school. Somerset College has given me everything I have ever wanted from a career and more. I thank colleagues, students and parents who have crossed my path for giving me the best 38 years I could have ever wished for.

I shall dearly miss all aspects of Somerset.

However, now it's time for my husband Roy and I to continue to enjoy amazing adventures together out of school holidays!

*Fileen Wheeler*

Founding Teacher of Somerset College





### WEDDINGS

*Maarten de Kruifj  
and  
Hebe de Kruif*

Maarten, Head Coach of Football and Futsal married wife Hebe at Miami Beach, 22 February 2020.



### BABIES

*Rob Hughes*

Rob, Senior School Teacher and his wife Gabrieli along with daughter Olivia (aged two) welcomed daughter Nina on 30 September 2020, weighing 3.1kgs.



VOLUME 3, 2020

THE *Alumni* CHAPTER





# ALUMNI *Awards*

## ANNUAL ALUMNI AWARDS

**Somerset College Alumni are enterprising and diverse, hail from all over the world, and no matter what stage of life or career they find themselves, they remain a valued and vital part of the Somerset College community.**

Each year the Alumni Association in conjunction with Somerset College celebrates the achievements of our alumni through the presentation of a number of awards. In recognition of the achievements of our alumni, the Annual Alumni Awards presents three award categories: Early Career, Community Engagement, and Annual Alumnus.

Alumni Award recipients exemplify the transformation individual people can create through taking action and giving back to their community. Alumni Award recipients are leaders and innovators in their field, and exemplify the way in which we can create change through the application of passion, empathy, and dedication.

The Alumni Association encourages internal and external nominations for each of the Annual Alumni Awards categories. All nominees must have completed Year 12 at Somerset College and must not be a member of the Alumni Association Committee or the Annual Alumni Awards Selection Committee.



## ANNUAL ALUMNUS

*Julia Crilly* OAM  
Class of 1994

Julia Crilly is a Professor of Emergency Care, in a joint appointment between Gold Coast Health and Griffith University. Julia graduated from Somerset College in 1994. She worked as a registered nurse in the emergency department for nearly 10 years before completing her PhD and progressing into full time research.

Julia leads two multi-disciplinary programs of research that focus on evaluating innovative service delivery models of care for vulnerable population groups as well as understanding and improving aspects of the emergency department workforce.





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*Edda Haman*

Class of 2006

Edda advocates for a sustainable, ethical and inclusive fashion industry. For 10 years she has built a movement to educate and inspire people to make sustainable wardrobe choices. Edda co-founded Undress Runways in 2011, a sustainable fashion runway show. Exhibiting in Australian cities, the event engages 50,000+ people every year celebrating designers from around the world. Undress broadens people's awareness to a world that respects garment makers and the environment.

In 2014, Edda launched an annual magazine on the future of fashion, *The Naked Mag*. Featuring contributors from over 10 countries, she brings a global perspective to local Australian markets. Advocating for diversity, respect, equality, sustainability and smart textiles in the fashion industry, *The Naked Mag* empowers its readership to make better choices for future generations.

In September 2016, Edda was named a UN Young Leader for the Sustainable Development Goals for her work leading change in the fashion industry. She also became the QLD Young Achiever of the Year in 2017 and made the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia List in 2018.



## EARLY CAREER

*Ursula Watts and Benjamin Watts*

Class of 2005 and 2002

Ben and Ursula Watts are the visionaries behind renowned Gold Coast cafe-bakery venues Bam Bam Bakehouse in Mermaid, Custard Canteen at Tallebudgera, Chinderah icon Cubby Bakehouse and the soon-to-open Chinderella.

As the original founders of Paddock Bakery in Miami (which they sold in 2017), Ben and Ursula lead talented team of bakers, patissiers, chefs and makers, creating venues that have become widely recognised and cult-followed for their iconic handmade pastries, great coffee and ethos of simple food, done really well. Born and bred on the Gold Coast, Ben and Ursula now call the northern NSW town of Chinderah home with their two sons, Owen and Bob, and their CattleDog, Chook.



# ALUMNI *Updates*

## WEDDINGS

*Harumi Kondo*

Class of 2001

Harumi married husband Masanori  
3 May 2019, in a traditional  
Japanese ceremony.



## BABIES

Harumi and Masanori welcomed  
their baby son, Hidenori on 4  
February 2020.





## SOMERSET TO CAMBRIDGE

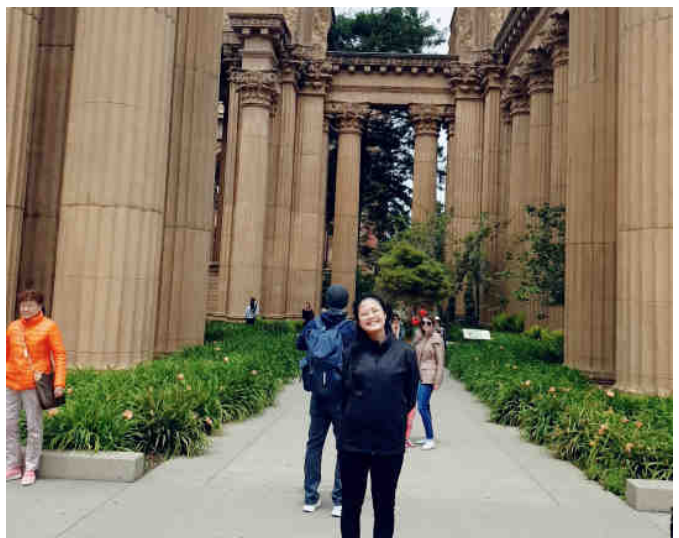
*Noelle Panlilio*

Class of 2013

When I was fifteen, I wrote and performed a poem about everything I had wanted to be since I was three (chef, architect, engineer - it changed often) and how, at such a critical time in Year 12, I no longer had any idea. In it I concluded that I would be okay because I had the support of everyone around me, and because I knew for sure the two things I have always loved the most: “words” and “making things”. What I meant was that ever since I was small I had a passion for reading, writing and language, as well as creativity and innovation. Seven years later, I have followed my love of words through a law degree and into law practise. Along the way, I discovered intellectual property, which incorporated my love for innovation with law. In October, I followed both passions to Cambridge University to complete a Masters of Law specialising in intellectual property.

That poem (and many others) was produced in the Wordsmiths creative writing club at Somerset, one of my greatest joys in Senior School. I had the pleasure of being a member of the club since Year 8 and captain in Year 12. Needless to say, my love of words flourished in the group. Equally formative for me was the IB Diploma course and, particularly, the English curriculum. I studied (and fell in love with) writers like T.S. Eliot, Sylvia Plath, and John Donne - two of which are alumni of the very university I am about to attend.

Now, at 23, I want to be a professor of law - yes, it certainly involves plenty of words. It also involves education and journeying with young people. These were things I came to enjoy through tutoring, youth ministry, and as a member of a local school advisory council. In retrospect, the seeds were likely sown through the vertical PC homeroom system and the many leadership opportunities at Somerset. Having been on scholarship, I remain immensely grateful for the excellent education I received in high school. I would not have achieved the dream of going to Cambridge without it.



# ALUMNI – A FEW YEARS DOWN THE

# Track

*Lachlan Yarwood*

Class of 2017



### ***What are some of your fondest memories of your time at Somerset?***

Somerset offered amazing opportunities through sport and academics to really help narrow down my field of study. Being driven toward sport, I strived in many sporting events, particularly Tennis. I also enjoyed spending time with Junior School students, in my senior years.

### ***How did Somerset shape your career path?***

Tennis has always been a great passion of mine, so Somerset's exceptional facilities and coaches at the time, really helped guide me on the path to pursue a career in the

sport. As a professional player or a coach, any pathway in Tennis was going to be a great achievement for me. Putting two and two together, it was a very easy choice for me to advance my career in this direction.

### ***How do you spend a working day?***

I'll always spend the working day being as productive as possible. Having the middle of the day off is always refreshing. I try and spend most of break either keeping myself healthy by going to the gym or playing tennis, and also catching up with friends.

For me, it's always important to keep a healthy work life balance so I can be as motivated and as fresh as possible when I go back to work in the afternoon. Some days, I will spend the whole day in the office either planning for upcoming events, or even organising community and service opportunities for the Junior and Senior School students.

Coaching Tennis at Somerset involves training students, for both school Tennis, and their own personal endeavours for outside school tournaments and events.

### ***Who are the people who inspire you?***

My dad is definitely one of the people who inspired me most. He always had a positive outlook on life, even when things were tough for him. His adversity for always being his best self really inspired me to be the best I can be.

Jay Deacon, who was the previous Head Coach of Tennis, while I was at Somerset was definitely an inspiration to me. He was more of a mentor to me as he was my coach for 10 years, roughly. He made me the player and coach that I am today.

### ***What life lessons guide you?***

There is always a point in life where you will put yourself down, it's just natural. So one of the most important life lessons I have been taught is that you write your story and always believe in yourself. At the end of the day, it is your life and you can do whatever you want with it and be happy with what you are doing.

### ***What are some of your most defining moments in life, so far?***

Winning my first tournament at 14 years old was a defining moment for me. It made me realise how much I

# ALUMNI – A FEW YEARS DOWN THE

# *Track*

enjoyed tennis and how gratefully led to my job today, for which I am grateful.

Accepting to work here at the College as a full time student was also defining for me. It has set up an amazing career that I hope to continue for many years.

Finishing my Junior Development Coaching Degree through Tennis Australia, where I met amazing coaches and made many connections to help expand my network in order to further better my coaching.

Whether these moments are small or big, to me, they are what has set me on the path that I am on today.

### **What advice would you offer current students?**

My advice to students would be to just strive to be the best you can be. School can get quite stressful, so it is always important to be the best version of yourself.

I would also encourage students to stay in contact with teachers and fellow classmates. I know for myself, I spent 13 years at school with my friends, and those are friendships that will last forever and have made me the person who I am today.





# ALUMNI *Staff*

*Kate Grigg*

Class of 2005



**In my current position at Somerset College, I am a Year 5 classroom teacher. In my additional roles, I head the Andrews House in the Junior School as the House Convenor. I accepted this role, despite being Captain of Franklin House when I was in Year 12 at Somerset. I also co-direct the Junior School Musical each year, (with preparations well underway for the 2021 Junior School Musical, *Rock Bottom*). Previously I have worked in Year 3, Year 1, Music, Physical Education, Information Communication Technology and in the Senior School.**

After graduating from Somerset, I went on to study a Bachelor of Education. While studying I worked at the College assisting with coaching sport.

I made some solid connections during

this time, with the staff and students. When I graduated university, Somerset offered me the opportunity to help out on some Senior School camps, which led to a year contract teaching Music, P.E. and I.C.T. From there, I was fortunate to have been offered permanency, with a position teaching in the Junior School. I have thoroughly enjoyed working at Somerset and being back with this amazing community.

The rare opportunity to work with teachers who taught me as I went through school, has given me a lot of insight to both sides of the schooling world. Being brought up in the Somerset community, it is easy to pass this on to the current students and use my past experiences as a student, to help our current students feel welcome and part of this wonderful community.

In my job I am continually rewarded. I love that every day it is different. No matter how much you plan ahead there will always be something that comes out of left field to shake up your day. Watching the students' growth throughout the year always amazes me, when you reflect back to when they first started in your class and how far they've progressed.

I hope every student that I encounter at school (through class or sport or musicals) feels confident in their interactions with staff and other students. I hope they feel comfortable to ask for help, understanding or just to be able to share things that are happening in their life. I encourage all students to have a go at everything, you never know when a talent or interest might find you!



*Kate (right) with fellow Junior School Musical support for the 2019 performance of Dr Seuss - Junior.*



*Kate at her Senior Formal, in 2005.*



*On the Hockey field in Junior School.*



*Supporting Andrews House at the Inter-House Swimming Carnival.*



# ALUMNI *Updates*

*Vale - Stephen Wilson*

Honouring our Parents' and Friends' Association, Past President



*Our P&F Past President Steve Wilson who presided over the Somerset College P&F from 1998 to 2000.*

*Steve (who sadly passed away in 2014) is pictured above with his daughter, Class of 2000 and former member of staff, Mercedes Porter (nee Wilson).*





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