

SIXTIETH EDITION | 2024

SOMERSET *lifetimes*



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Information

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

Cover Photo: Founders' Day, 2024
Mr Craig Bassingthwaighthe captured the moment all students gathered for presentations after the day's activities.

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Contributing Writers: Thank you to those who contributed articles to the edition including Lael Jeon, Heath Walker, Amy Hyslop, Hermann Vorster and Matt Eddy.

Contributing Photographers:
Move Photography, Paul Broben, Mick Kirby, Grant Peel.

To receive a printed copy of this issue, please email:
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Somerset Alumni Association

All students become life members of the Somerset Alumni Association, after graduating Year 12 at Somerset College. 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 connect 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

Facebook: /ReturnToSomerset | www.facebook.com/ReturnToSomerset

Linkedin: /in/ReturnToSomerset | www.linkedin.com/in/ReturnToSomerset

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FAREWELL TO OUR Headmaster

It is our honour and privilege to acknowledge Mr Bassingthwaighe for his dedication and service over the past 16 years of which we, the students, staff and parents are the beneficiaries.

Where to start? In no specific order:

Buildings, fields and some roads, were named and dedicated with signage created to honour people who have been significant in our history; initially there were ten with The Arnison, Cordner, Rudkin, Rowe and Aitkenhead, to name just a few. Others followed over the years, The Brown, Lamb, Ray and Gallus Buildings. There are so many more ...

A new sporting culture was established, new uniforms and Marty the Spartan joined the team. Premiership ties were introduced.

Our current Year 10s were part of the inaugural Pre-Prep Class of 2013.

The Celebration of Entrepreneurship is now well established, while the Celebration of Literature evolved into Somerset Storyfest.

Our Junior School students can access the Activities Hub, while the Senior School Students have Academic Assistance sessions.

Our Student Leadership model introduced additional leadership positions making 26 in total. At the Commissioning of the Senior Class and Investiture of Student Leaders our Prep students present the Seniors with their Senior Badge. Notably the Seniors of the last three years presented badges when they were in Prep.

The Student Leadership Assembly was created to announce the Student Leadership Team – Elect and transfer leadership responsibilities from the current to the incoming team.

All students from Pre-Prep to Year 12 attend the Founders' Day Ceremony. The Steeplechase and All-Age Track Relay were introduced.



Mr Craig Bassingthwaighe with Health and Lael, College Captains



Investiture Service



FAREWELL TO OUR Headmaster

Cont...

Scholars' Day became Scholars' Evenings; three different ceremonies to celebrate the academic year.

Recipients of an Honour, Full Colour or Half Colour are entitled to wear ties and badges acknowledging this achievement.

We now have the services of a Clinical Psychologist and Psychologist across the College.

Academic success continues with Somerset appearing in National lists of the top schools in Australia. Ten graduates have received Queensland Distinguished Achievement Awards; one of only a handful of schools to regularly be included. Incredibly, after 30 years of Senior outcomes, the most common result for a Year 12 graduate continues to be equivalent to an OP1.

Lael Jeon

College Captain 2024

As Lael said, it's difficult to know where to stop. Under Mr Bassingthwaighe's leadership:

The Return to Somerset function evolved celebrating milestone years and all Alumni.

The Alumni Awards were introduced, recognising the achievements of our Alumni – Early Career, Community Engagement and Annual Alumnus.

Mr Bassingthwaighe continues to work closely with the Parents' and Friends' Association which welcome new families with the annual Somerset Social.

Our Service Learning Programme continues to reach communities and the hearts and minds of those near and far.

Mr Bassingthwaighe, has overseen the construction of many buildings and the refurbishment of many others. All to enhance the Somerset Experience. Building programs exceeding \$90 million have taken place these past 16 years including the Rowing Shed, Early Learning Precinct, the Knowledge and Information Precinct, The Student Services Hub, The Sports'



Mr Craig Bassingthwaighe Commissioning



ELP Construction





Precinct with our magnificent athletics track, The Design Centre, The Aitkenhead Building incorporating the Moses Classrooms and Plaza and the Yarning Circle, the Junior School Expansion – Early Years Centre and reimagining the Common.

Existing classrooms have been refurbished and modernised including The Cordner, Rudkin, Gallus, Roberts Centre, Brohier Learning Centre, Lamb, Smith and Rowe Buildings; and of course, we have air conditioning in all classrooms, The Great Hall and The Suzanne Roberts Centre for Performing Arts. How lucky we are!

Mr Bassingthwaighte has guided the College to seek excellence, academic areas sport, performing arts and cultural areas. Somerset College is now recognised as a powerhouse in APS and APS Sport. Australian representation and national titles have been achieved by students in athletics, cross country, chess, netball, rowing, rugby, swimming, volleyball, and surf lifesaving.



If this sounds like a lot, it is, and there is much more we could add.

We are all incredibly blessed to have Mr Bassingthwaighte as our Headmaster, and we will miss his daily contributions and his Monday morning greetings as we walk through the gates, enquiring about our weekend, making everyone feel welcome and valued.

The cornerstone of Mr Bassingthwaighte's leadership and esteemed service has been providing opportunities for students to shine. His commitment and legacy has been acknowledged in other ways, and this morning we honour him by officially naming and dedicating The Craig Bassingthwaighte Centre.

Thank you, Mr Bassingthwaighte, for everything!

Heath Walker

College Captain 2024



Q&A WITH *Mr B*



Q. XAVIER: *What's your favourite Pokemon?*

A. That is an excellent question, Xavier. I started with Pikachu, but I've learned about small XS and XS and XS and V's. They all sound great.

Q. Now, what's your favourite football team?

A. Well, I would say that my favourite team is Saint George. So the Dragons, I've followed them for most of my life.



Q. ARABELLA: *What's your favourite spot in the school?*

A. Oh, what an interesting question! I do like the terrace, up on The Design Centre, I think that's lovely the way it looks down on the Quad. But I would have to say my favourite spot is the balcony of my office and

off the Boardroom, especially now because I overlook The Common. And so when I walk out there, it's lovely because as soon as somebody sees me, they stop doing what they were doing and they wave.

Q. Why do you want to leave Somerset?

A. I don't think I want to leave Somerset but I think it's the right time. I've been here for 16 years and it's right to leave now because most people who talk to me say, "Why are you leaving?" Not, "Why are you still here?"



Q. FRANKIE: *What are you looking forward to doing when you retire?*

A. I get asked that a lot and what I'm mostly looking forward to is not working. I've been working for 45 years, so I think it's time to stop working. But other than that, we

love to travel but even better, we love our grandchildren so much, they're giving us so much pleasure. That's what we want to spend our time doing.



Q. PIPER: *What is your favourite Somerset event?*

A. Oh, there's so many. I love all the ceremonies at the end of the year. So, the Christmas service, the Scholars Evenings, the Avenue of Honour, where the Year 12s go out, that's pretty amazing but

my favourite event has always been my favourite event at every school I've been at and that's the Athletics Carnival. I absolutely love the Athletics Carnival, I love the colour of it, I love the fact I get to watch you guys, compete and I get to watch you be involved. The number of times we see people, helping somebody down the track, completing a race. We had somebody on a scooter this year, because they had a sore leg. Isn't that just amazing? I'm getting goosebumps thinking about that!



Q. ISAAK: *What was your funniest memory here at Somerset?*

A. In 2012, the College Captain, Matt Rowe, was in the Senior Musical, and he came down on stage and he walked along the front row of the aisle where I sit right and he sat on my lap and he kissed me on the top of the head! But you know what was even better, in an assembly at the end of the year, I got him back. That is the funniest thing I've seen.



Q. DARCY: *What's your favourite subject?*

A. Well, I'm an English teacher, so I'm going to have to say, English. This term, I'm talking to the literature students about Hamlet. That's without a doubt my favourite subject and always will be. I think I love language and I'm always amazed with how well the students use language. Also, for those involved with Wordsmiths, that's awesome.

Q. DARCY: *Favourite baseball team?*

A. I do love the Dodgers. The Red Sox and the Mets.



Q. RYAN: *What are you going to miss the most about Somerset?*

A. All of the students, that's what I'm going to miss that's a no brainer. I love being out the front on a Monday morning and greeting everyone. I love walking around and getting random hugs and handshakes. I think it's the Year 5 boys at the moment, they play a little game that every time they see me, about a dozen of them run over and shake my hand. So, yeah, those sorts of things are amazing. Watching you guys sing, dance, run, jump, compete. That's fantastic.

Q. RYAN: *You said that you like film, were you in school productions?*

A. I fell in love with film and TV at university. Almost the second week I was there they plonked me behind the desk, a mixing desk of the TV studio and I just loved it. I had some talent with it and then all of the stuff I did, acting, producing and directing was at university and then after that, I taught and had a lot of fun in that space.

The very first film I was involved with was a 1.5 hour documentary and no one had ever seen anything like it at the university. So it was, it was pretty special to be with that group of people.

Q&A WITH *Mr B* Cont...



Q. JAD: *What was your most joyful year as being, principal of Somerset? Oh, my joyful come.*

A. Oh my goodness, every year has been a joyful!

Every year has been better than the previous one. You know, what

I would say is 2020, that horrible Covid year, you cast your mind back to that. To see all of the College come together and support people, support the students, support the staff, that made me very, very proud. It seems funny to say it when, there was so much suffering and so much dislocation but, what gave me joy was seeing how good our community was.

Q. JAD: *If you had infinite votes for a captaincy in Year 12, what captain would you be and why?*

A. I don't think I'd like to be the College Captain. I don't think I'm cut out to be that, but probably the work that our House Captains do, is extra.



Q. NADIA: *What book or movie inspires you most?*

A. Well, my favourite novel is The Great Gatsby. So that was written by F. Scott Fitzgerald a long time ago or nearly 100 years ago, next year. Movies, I love the Terminator movies. I like saying, "I'll be back."

Maybe that's what I'll threaten you guys with.

Q. NADIA: *What has been your greatest achievement?*

A. Making it to the end. My greatest achievement, not related to Somerset is raising a family and, being part of a what appears to be a successful family. At Somerset, my greatest achievement is opening up Somerset and making Somerset a more diverse place. I love our academic success, but I'm pleased there are people here who value other things as well and achieve in other areas. We cleaned up at the debating recently and that is just fantastic. So it's wonderful to celebrate all those things.



Q. ARCHIE: *How long? How many years have you been principal for?*

A. Well, I've been principal for 25 years, and I've been at Somerset for 16.

Q. What House are you in?

A. You know, at the end of every carnival, there's three people who always have their hands on the trophy, the two House Captains and me, so I'm always in the winning house!



Q. NOAH: *What's your favourite building at Somerset?*

A. Probably the Great Hall. Other than the Arnison Building, where I have my office, it is where I have spent the most time and have the fondest memories.



Q. ESTHER: *What brought you into the education sector?*

A. That's a really good question. I had a guidance counsellor, somebody who would talk careers, and I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had left it to the last minute to decide and I went

to see this gentleman and he said to me, "You should go into teaching. You're a people person." And that was the best bit of advice I ever had. As soon as I went into teaching, I absolutely loved it. And I've loved every day of the last 45 years.

Q. ESTHER: *What advice would you give to everyone as you leave.*

A. Definitely find out who you are, find yourself and have fun along the way. That's what you guys have taught me. I was, at various stages of my career, far too serious and I wish I'd focused more on fun. I've had more fun at Somerset than I've had anywhere else.



Q. NORAH: *What's your favourite part of being a principal?*

A. There are so many favourite parts. Sharing in your success is, without a doubt, my most favourite part, being there, cheering you on and or, saying, "Well done".

Every, every part of student life, I love. That's the most important part. When I'm sitting in my office, I'm doing all that other stuff, none of that compares to seeing you. When I want to lift my spirits, I'll go for a walk. And that means I'll just go and stand in the Quad and wait for someone to come and talk to me. So you see me, come and talk to me.

Q. NORAH: *What's your favourite sport?*

A. My favourite sport is baseball. That was the sport my family played. My father and my third brother played for Australia and the rest of us all played for Queensland. So that's my favourite sport. That's what I love to do. If I had a choice to do something, it's that.



Q. MELODY: *What was your favourite Somerset memory? The one that you treasure the most?*

A. My favourite Somerset memory, as recently as last Founders' Day, turning around and taking a selfie of all you guys. And I've got that selfie!

That is just such a, lovely sort of memory for me.



Q. NOA: *Where do you most want to travel to when you retire?*

A. We've been very lucky, we've travelled a lot so there are very few bucket list places for us to go to. Where I most want to travel to is somewhere where

I'm with family or friends. We're going to a beach house in a couple of weeks' time with, our grandkids. That's where I most want to be. Then we're going away with some friends next year, that's where I most want to be.

CELEBRATION OF *Entrepreneurship*



The 2024 Celebration of Entrepreneurship at Somerset College was a resounding success, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of students, parents, and our esteemed guest speakers.

Over two dynamic days, students from Year 4 to Year 12 engaged in innovative activities, including the YearSIXpreneur and Year 9 business stalls, the Year 4 Adventurerpreneur challenge, and the inspiring Pitch Competition. Our guest speakers, such as Bonnie Hancock and Maddie Kennedy, shared their incredible journeys, leaving students motivated and inspired.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the entrepreneurs who took the time to share their knowledge and experiences, enriching the minds of our students.

A special mention to our key sponsor, McGrath and to our Somerset Alumni Association, whose generous support made this event possible. Their contributions continue to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the Somerset community.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating the power of entrepreneurship and for helping us ignite the future of our young entrepreneurs.





P&F FAMILY *Fun Day*

The Somerset Parents' and Friends' Association went above and beyond organising this year's Family Fun Day for our community.

The event, Celebrating our Superheroes, supported by Village Roadshow, Hutchinson Builders and One PM Group welcomed Batman and Batgirl and included activities, face paint, open air cinema, a petting zoo and inflatable fun.

Thanks to our volunteers for their dedication to bringing our community together.

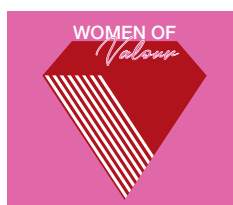




WOMEN OF *Valour*

Women of Valour was an incredible experience the college implemented this year, between Year 7 and Year 11 students. The program consisted of five rotations of valuable lessons. Friendship, where the girls made friendship bracelets, mentors, where they discussed who their mentors are (to which many said Taylor Swift), social media and the harm of unhealthy comparison, movement, an opportunity to get out of the classroom, and finally the importance of resilience. I believe the year 7 girls left this experience knowing how, in the words of Michelle Obama, "There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish".

Ayla Chirathivat Geraldts
Year 11, Andrews



Over the last few weeks, a group of Year 11s took the initiative to mentor the Year 7s Women of Valour workshops. We led workshops on the topics of friendship, the role of mentors, social media, movement, as well as failure and perseverance during PC. We demonstrated leadership, with full control over how we wanted to direct these workshops. Furthermore, we all made sure to reflect after each workshop to improve and further enhance the workshop experience to ensure the Year 7 students were able to make the most out of each session. It was great to chat and build relationships with the Year 7s. I'm sure it was also fun for those who got to speak to us as we had been in their shoes just a few years ago. I know the Year 11s definitely enjoyed working with the younger year. Thank you to all the teachers and staff that were able to make this opportunity happen for both the Year 7 and Year 11.

Jolina Zhang
Year 11, Starkey



MEN OF Honour

The Men of Honour workshops that took place in Term 3 provided Year 7 boys with significant learning opportunities that they can hopefully take with them into later life. Workshops were rotated across a five-week period, giving all boys a chance to experience each uniquely designed workshop. The five workshops included exercise/boxing, boy vs man, relationships, online presence, and nutrition/smoothies. These workshops all focused on different notions of what it means to be an honourable human being. I believe that Year 7 students were able to reflect upon themselves and think about what they can do to become more honourable individuals through the open conversations and advice from mentors and Year 11 leaders.

Jamison Webber
Year 11, Veivers

During the Men of Honour program, I felt like I was truly able to connect to the Year 7s, even while giving them life advice. It was interesting to see what younger kids do nowadays compared to when I was in Year 7, and I believe it's important for us as a year to keep in close contact with them. Not just to act as a role model, but to gain a more wholesome perspective on youth today. I'd recommend this program to any of my peers.

John Oluteye
Year 11, Veivers



NATIONAL *Reconciliation* WEEK – SEA OF HANDS

SOMERSET COLLEGE'S SEA OF HANDS FEATURED IN LANN LEVINGE'S AWARD-WINNING ARTWORK AT SWELL FESTIVAL 2024

As part of National Reconciliation Week 2024, Somerset College created a striking Sea of Hands installation on the Quad, symbolizing the community's support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Inspired by the first Sea of Hands at Parliament House in 1997, this display was a powerful reminder of the petitions advocating for native title rights, with each hand representing a signature calling for action.

Following this meaningful event at the College, the hands from the Somerset display were selected to contribute to a larger artistic project—an original piece by Kombumerri artist Lann Levinge, showcased at the 2024 SWELL Festival. The hands, painted with messages of solidarity and support by

the Somerset community, became an integral part of Lann's award-winning work, Kinyingarra Goorie (Oyster Aboriginal People). The artwork, which earned Lann the Indigenous Artist Award for 2024, beautifully embodied a collaboration between art, culture, and reconciliation.

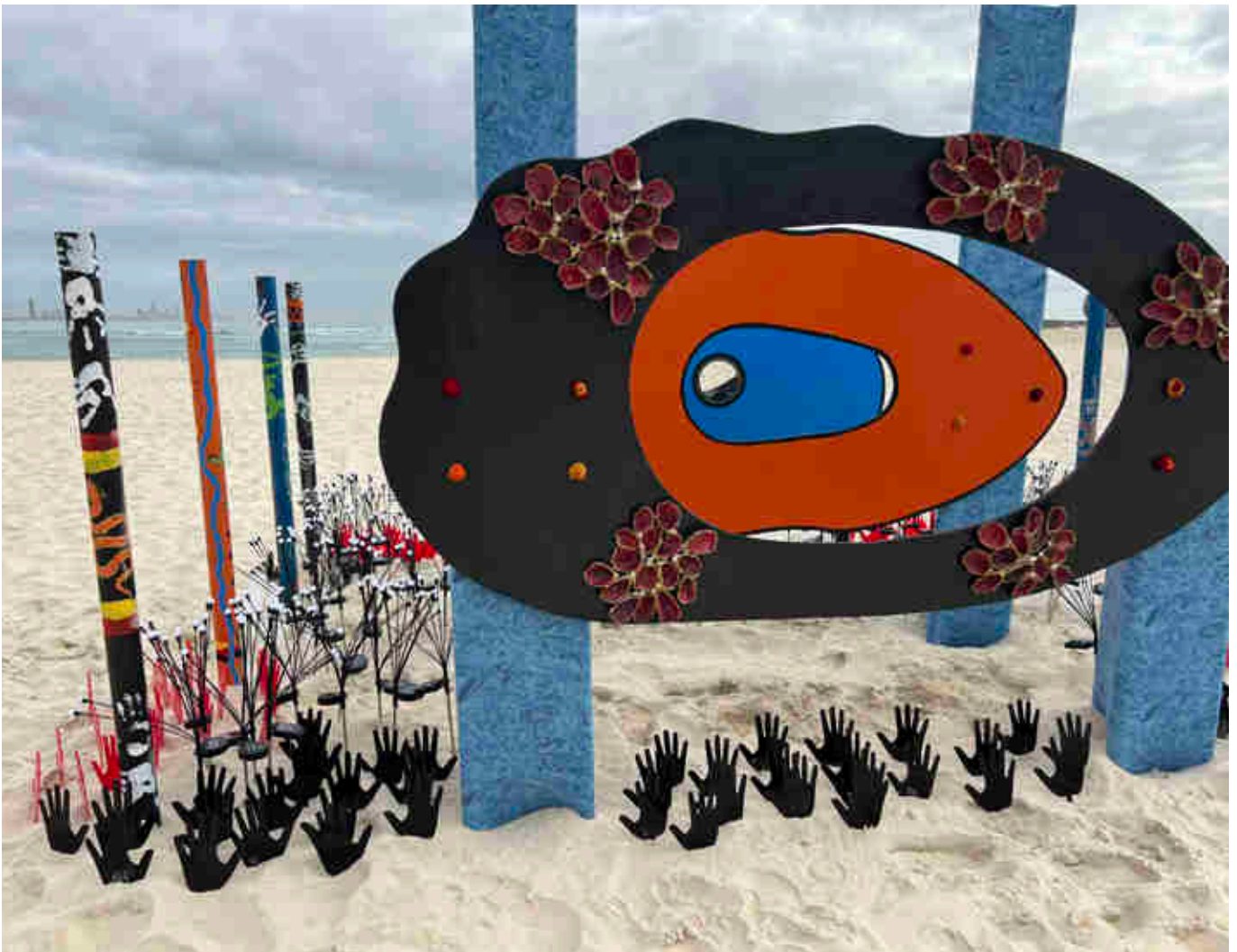
Lann's sculpture, centered around the symbolic oyster, was a deeply personal and layered piece. His description of the artwork highlights the connection to his heritage:

SWELL 2024 ARTWORK

Kinyingarra Goorie (Oyster Aboriginal People)

Kombumerri artist Lann Levinge interprets the oyster as diminishing offset oval rings within oval rings, a simple yet profound expression of the depth the oyster plays within his family. Kinyingarra Goorie is an anamorphic creation and collaboration, a layered piece with the centre of the design being the oyster, adorned by various artworks and hand painted oyster shells by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Their dreams and positive affirmations visible within each shell. The old oyster men used plywood to line the bottom of their boats and hessian to cart the oysters. Both these materials

will be part of the sculpture. The totem poles holding up the piece are painted by students and brings together their connection to this place and to their ancestral homes through images and words. Lann feels it is important to acknowledge that many nations now call this place home. Students from Coombabah State High and Pimpama State College helped create artwork for the structure while the Somerset College students offer their support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with a sea of hands embracing the sculpture and depicting words of encouragement.



PERSONAL *Success*

Two Senior students are now Gold Level Holders after achieving their Duke of Edinburgh International Award.

Congratulations Alysha Gahankari and Leo Kelly Correa on your achievements.

What is the Duke of Ed?

“We aim to provide ALL young Australians with the opportunity to uncover their purpose, passion and place in the world to become #WORLDREADY.”

The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award (the Duke of Ed) is the global leader in the organising and accrediting of non-formal education through its flagship ‘Duke of Ed Framework’. For over 60 years, this Framework has been used by education providers and community organisations to accredit the non-formal learning outcomes and achievements of young people.”

In 2024 ...

The Honourable Paul de Jersey AC (Former Governor of Queensland) presented College Captain, Heath Walker a Secondary Schools Citizenship Award from The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch in a ceremony held at Parliament House, Brisbane. Heath was one of 12 Senior students from around Queensland to be acknowledged for working and walking alongside others whom he serves.

Service Captain, Leo Kelly-Correa and Alysha Gahankari joined Heath to collect their Certificate of Community Service. Congratulations Heath, Leo and Alysha!



Heath Walker



Leo Kelly-Correa



Alysha Gahankari



The Junior Pan Pacific Games were held in Canberra August 21 to 24, featuring the best teenage athletes from Australia, America, Japan, New Zealand and Canada.

Somerset College students Milla Jansen and Olympia Pope were selected onto the Australian Team to compete based on their outstanding performances at the National Age Championships earlier this season. Milla, a leader within the team, was chosen as one of the flag bearers for Australia at the opening ceremony of the event.

Both Milla and Olympia swam well amongst tough competition. Milla had a magnificent meet with the following results:

Girls 13-18 years – Gold 50m Freestyle, Silver 100m Freestyle, Bronze 200m Freestyle, Silver 4 x 100m Freestyle relay, Silver 4 x 100m Medley relay, Bronze 4 x 200m Freestyle relay.

Olympia contested the girls 13-18 years 100m Breaststroke and 200m Breaststroke events finishing 11th in both events.

Well done to Milla and Olympia in representing Australia at this recent international swimming Championships.



Olympia Pope



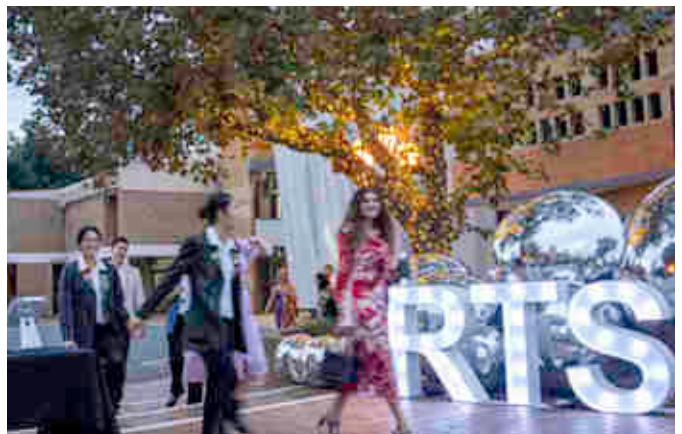
Milla Jansen



THE *Alumni* CHAPTER



RETURN TO *Somerset*



RETURN TO *Corneset*



Alumni AWARDS



This year's Alumni Awards, held at HOTA, hosted by the Somerset Alumni Association President, Nick Richards with guest speaker and fellow alumnus, Councillor Hermann Vorster, (Class of 2002).

Our alumni association is driven by two main goals: fostering a vibrant, connected community of alumni, and giving back to the college by providing mentorship, opportunities, and support to our students.

Evenings like the Awards night, are a powerful reminder of the incredible things we've accomplished together, and they inspire us to continue supporting the next generation in achieving their dreams.



Alumni

AWARDS

Cont...

EARLY CAREER

This award highlights the achievements of our alumni who are just starting out in their careers but are already making a significant impact. Their accomplishments inspire us and embody the spirit of determination.

We acknowledge the tremendous achievements of each nominee in the Early Career category.

The dedication and accomplishments of our alumni have made a significant impact on the Somerset community, inspiring us all to reach for our ambitions and goals.

We deeply appreciate everything they have contributed since graduating from the College, their efforts continue to shine brightly and encourage others to follow their passions.

NOMINEES



Peter Osbourne

Class of 2022

- Peter began his second year at UNSW with an internship at Optus through the UNSW Co-Op Scholarship, where he worked full-time for five months as a software and machine learning engineer. Following this, he was offered a part-time role as a software engineer.
- He was one of only 50 undergraduate students selected across the Asia-Pacific to attend the Jane Street SEE program in Hong Kong, an all-expenses-paid, 6-day program focusing on software engineering in trading and market-making.
- Peter was also chosen from hundreds of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral applicants for an internship as a quantitative researcher at Optiver, with only five being selected.



Lily Peters

Class of 2023

- Lily's single, "The Summer That Got Away," spent three weeks at #1 on the Hottest Australian Country Hits Chart.
- She performed as a feature artist with Human Nature at the Lord Mayor's Carols, which aired nationally on Christmas Day on Channel 7.
- Lily was a showcased artist at the world's largest songwriting festival, the Key West International Songwriters Festival in Key West, Florida, in May 2024.



Amelia Braithwaite

Class of 2016

- Amelia presented her research on motor skills and coordination in young children at an international conference in Belgium. Her work is now under review for publication.
- Amelias proposal on improving patient education by comparing novice and experienced physiotherapists was chosen for the Tasmanian Health Service's Festival of Ideas and has received ethics approval.
- As Chair of Allied Health at TROHPIQ in 2021, Amelia promoted rural health careers, organised key events, and participated in charity initiatives.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This award honours individuals who have actively participated in and made outstanding contributions to their community. Their exceptional service in their field of employment or endeavour truly embodies the spirit of community.

Congratulations to all the Community Engagement nominees for 2024. These individuals have worked tirelessly to make a significant impact in their communities.

NOMINEES



Harris Franzman

Class of 2017

- Harris has kept close friendships from his days at Somerset, sharing countless adventures. The Somerset community instilled in him the value of being a supportive friend and mentor, and the importance of making every moment count.
- Harris's career in rescue services began at 16 as a GCCC Lifeguard, and he now works in the Rescue Helicopter Crewman Service. This year, he proudly represented Australia as an International Lifeguard in Florida, where his team won the US Lifesaving Championships.

Living in the Destin Firehouse has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

- Supported by his family, Harris has explored diverse career paths, from university studies to accounting and education. He launched a running group called "Slow Run" to promote mental health and founded "Do It Again Performancewear," a brand focused on persistence and dedication. These initiatives highlight his passion for empowering others and embracing new challenges.



WINNER

Amy Hyslop

Class of 1994

- As CEO of the Brisbane Writers Festival, Amy transformed the event, boosting engagement and solidifying its place as one of the world's top literary festivals. She brought in major international and local talent, launched a First Nations programming stream, secured significant funding, and smoothly transitioned the festival to a digital format during the pandemic.
- Amy also secured funding to create Australia's first professional contemporary youth dance ensemble under the Australasian Dance Collective. This groundbreaking program, now in its fifth year, focuses on individual dancer

development, creative workshops, and strong ensemble communication.

- With over 20 years of volunteering experience, Amy has made a lasting impact on her community, particularly through her work with local arts organizations like Community, Walk with Us, and the Brisbane International Film Festival. Her commitment to creating positive change is deeply rooted in her personal experiences and values.

Amy has shown an exceptional commitment to helping the arts community. Her dedication and willingness to invest time in others' growth and success truly set her apart.



Julian Lee

Class of 2006

- Julian's most significant achievement has been opening Precinct Skate Shop, which has provided a platform for community engagement and opportunities within the Gold Coast skateboarding community.
- Julian has organized competitions, events, giveaways, video premieres, and educational initiatives, collaborating with other local businesses on projects like Precinct x Alfred's, Precinct x Burleigh Brewing, the Annual Easter Treasure Hunt, and the Precinct Plaza Days Contest here at HOTA.

- Julian is dedicated to helping young skaters achieve their goals by providing sponsorships, which offer financial assistance, confidence, guidance, and recognition. He acts as a middleman between skaters and large corporations, helping them gain exposure and opportunities. Julian's efforts also inspire the younger generation to strive for sponsorships and join the team.



Alumni

AWARDS

Cont...



The Annual Alumnus Award is the highest honour bestowed by the Alumni Association, recognising exceptional achievements in the realms of sports, culture, vocation, voluntary service, philanthropy, or professional excellence.

We acknowledge and celebrate the tremendous efforts of all our nominees. Their dedication and contributions to the community have not gone unnoticed, and we extend our best wishes to each of you.

NOMINEES



WINNER

Meggie Palmer

Class of 2001

Meggie Palmer founded PepTalkHer to address gender pay and leadership gaps, growing it into a global community of 60,000 professional womxn. Featured in Vogue, Forbes, and NBC, PepTalkHer partners with Fortune 500 companies to recruit, retain, and promote top talent, aiming for 50/50 women in leadership.

Meggie developed and launched the free PepTalkHer App, which simplifies performance reviews and boosts confidence. The app has led to significant results, including raises from \$4 per hour to

\$84,000 annually. PepTalkHer's curriculum on negotiation and overcoming imposter syndrome increases skill confidence by 35% after just one session.

Meggie has been awarded a Tory Burch Fellowship and a grant from Sara Blakley's Spanx Foundation. She lectures at Columbia University and Barnard College on negotiation and confidence and regularly speaks at global events like Dreamforce, Vogue Codes, and Greentech in Berlin. Meggie also writes for prominent publications on equality and negotiation.



Dr Gabrielle Bou Samra

Class of 2012

Gabrielle Bou-Samra has demonstrated exceptional service in periodontology and dentistry by becoming a qualified periodontist at the age of 28. She also serves as the treasurer of the Australian Society of Periodontology, managing financial oversight and contributing to the organisation's strategic direction.

As an adjunct professor at the University of Queensland, Gabrielle educates and mentors the next generation of dental professionals, reflecting her commitment to excellence

and her ability to inspire. She also provides valuable advice to future dentists and periodontists.

Gabrielle's advocacy extends beyond her professional achievements. Her involvement in the Australian Society of Periodontology highlights her dedication to advancing the field and supporting her peers. She continues to inspire her colleagues to reach their highest potential.



Dr Alex Roberts

Class of 2008

Dr Alex Roberts is an internationally recognised leader in talent identification and coach development. As the Talent Identification and Development Lead at the Queensland Academy of Sport, Alex leads the team responsible for identifying future Olympic and Paralympic athletes for Brisbane 2032. She is an accredited sport scientist and a certified trainer of coach developers, and is passionate about finding and developing the next generation of elite athletes, coaches and sport scientists.

Alex is an adjunct lecturer in Sport Science at La Trobe University, and has published over 30 peer-reviewed papers. She is also a frequent athlete/coach development consultant for the

Australian Institute of Sport and other high-performance sporting bodies. Alex is regularly asked to present at national and international conferences.

Alex received scholarships to complete her Bachelor of Health and Human Performance and Master of Exercise Physiology at the University of Louisville (Kentucky, USA), before returning to Australia to complete her PhD in Sport Science (Skill Acquisition) (Edith Cowan University). During her PhD, Alex was embedded at the Australian Institute of Sport where she worked with many Olympic/Paralympic teams; including as the Skill Analyst for the Australian Boxing and Judo teams during the 2018 Commonwealth Games.



ALUMNI – A FEW YEARS DOWN THE

Track

Amy Hyslop

Class of 1994

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

My time at Somerset was filled with special moments, but some of the fondest memories are the connections I made with both friends and teachers. The sense of community at Somerset was always strong, whether it was during school events, sports days, or simply hanging out during lunch breaks. I also loved the opportunities to be involved in extracurricular activities, which helped shape me as a person outside of academics.

How did Somerset shape your career path?

Somerset gave me a solid foundation of values like integrity, hard work, and empathy, which are crucial in my current role. It also encouraged a strong sense of service and community involvement, which led me to pursue a career in fundraising and development. The diverse opportunities Somerset offered helped me discover my passion for helping others and contributing to causes that make a difference in people's lives.

How do you spend a working day?

No two days at Cherish Women's Cancer Foundation are the same! My role involves everything from strategic planning for fundraising campaigns to meeting with potential donors and supporters.



I spend a lot of time managing relationships, and collaborating with my team to ensure we're always moving forward with our goals. I also spend time analysing data to understand how we can improve our fundraising efforts and increase our impact. It's busy, but incredibly rewarding.

Who are the people who inspire you?

I'm inspired by people who are driven by a sense of purpose and are committed to making a positive impact, whether on a small or large scale. My colleagues, especially those who work directly with women facing gynecological cancers, are a constant source of inspiration. Their resilience, compassion, and dedication remind me daily why our work is so important. I also find inspiration in the many stories of women who overcome adversity with strength and grace.





Brisbane Writers Festival



Cherish Research

What advice would you offer current students?

Take advantage of the opportunities Somerset offers and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. Whether it's joining a club, volunteering, or trying something new, you never know where it might lead. Also, remember that the relationships you build now—whether with peers or teachers—are incredibly valuable. They can open doors in ways you might not expect. Lastly, never lose sight of your personal values. Stay true to who you are and what matters most to you.



Cherish Challengers



SECOND *Generation*

FIRST GENERATION



Hermann Vorster
Class of 2002

What did you most enjoy about your time at Somerset?

My Somerset journey started in Year 11 after my family made the decision to move from New Zealand where I was studying at another International Baccalaureate school. It was a difficult age to 'start again' but those worries were instantly allayed on day one. Somerset's teachers were genuinely invested in bringing me up to speed while the pastoral care at all levels made me feel welcome and included. On reflection, I packed an incredible amount of schooling, social life, and personal growth into those two years. That doesn't happen by accident. I am forever grateful to Somerset for giving me the encouragement to try new things and seize opportunities as they emerged. The school gifted me lifelong friendships that are as important today as they were on day one.



How did you decide on Somerset for your children's education?

Sending our children to Somerset felt like an inevitability, although we wondered whether their journeys should begin in the junior school or in high school. The decision to enrol in the prep and pre-prep program came soon after Melissa and I attended Founders' Day celebrations during my time as a City councillor. We were both incredibly impressed with the students we met and the sense of deep tradition which had emerged. The day – including an incredible performance by the senior choir – stirred something in us both and we wanted our children to be part of the Somerset community in their most formative years. As an immigrant, I was also drawn to the idea of having a 'second generation' experience where I could share something with my children. It has been wonderful to see them get to know the very teachers that impacted the direction of my life – and knowing they will have that same opportunity.





SECOND GENERATION



Lucia
Class of 2031

What are the biggest changes you have noticed at Somerset?

The built environment continues to change – with incredible sporting facilities and teaching spaces under constant development. That said, I do not feel any of these changes have been for the sake of change. Instead, it feels each new building is working towards the fulfilment of the original Somerset vision. That gives me a deep sense of comfort that the leadership team is working intentionally to create the best possible environment for our children to learn, grow and compete in the Somerset tradition. To offer an example, while the pool complex has been transformed with new facilities and spectator areas, it is still Forrest Butcher on the side of the pool pushing the next generation of Somerset swimmers to achieve their best. And the same can be said of Suzanne Roberts in the performing arts. At Somerset, change means progress toward a vision (not changing the vision).



Hermann
Class of 2033

How does your children's education journey compare with yours?

While I started my Somerset journey at age 15, my children started in the pre-prep and prep program. This means they have had the opportunity to develop friendships across their cohorts and to try more of what Somerset has to offer. They have joined the choir, participated in musicals, and taken up club sports including rugby and netball. I arrived too late to do that – and I'm grateful they will not miss out. The school seems to have really embraced inquiry-based and student-led learning which seems very different to my experience. I think it has been a great move and given my children an opportunity to explore their interests while developing skills that will hold them in good stead in their senior years.



Maxwell
Class of 2036



ALUMNI *Staff*

Matt Eddy

Class of 2006



After spending a few years in Somerset's Junior School before moving away, I returned in 2001 to start Year 7, eventually graduating in 2006.

My time at Somerset was filled with opportunities to try different activities, and some of my fondest memories are of participating in sports carnivals, APS teams, rowing, and performing in Concert Band and Chamber Orchestra. In the classroom, Design Technology with Mr O'Brien and Mr Cooper and PE with Mr Healy were always memorable—although I'm not sure they would remember my enthusiasm quite the same way! All my teachers contributed to making my school experience a positive one in different ways.

Several teachers had a lasting impact on me, especially Mr O'Brien, who was my Pastoral Care tutor, Signor Ham whose ability to build rapport with all students was valued and Mr Goodwin, whose passion for English was contagious. Mrs Rowe also fostered a lasting interest in music.

Initially, I didn't foresee a career in teaching, much less returning to Somerset in that capacity. After school, I spent time at ADFA and later moved abroad to work in sports education.

Founding a business in China, focused on delivering sports, activities and camps to children, helped me realise my growing interest in student development and education. It was a natural transition into teaching from there.

When I returned to Australia, I was fortunate that Somerset offered me an opportunity to continue my professional development. Coming back to the school where I was once a student, despite many changes in the intervening 15 years, has been both rewarding and enlightening. Seeing things from a teacher's perspective has certainly given me a deeper understanding of my time as a student.

Now, as a teacher, parent, and alum, Somerset is again an integral part of my life. I feel privileged to be part of the school's community once again, contributing with our great team to the education and development of the next generation of Somerset students.



Swimming Carnival in his final year, 2006



Soccer - 1st XI Boys Soccer (Undefeated)



Touch Football - Open A Boys



Matt in Junior School with his House, Franklin



Staff UDPATES

CONGRATULATIONS

Sue Roberts

In the King's Birthday Honours, 2024 our very own Sue Roberts (Head of Performing Arts) was recognised for her service to music and secondary education with a Medal of the Order of Australia.

Our heartfelt congratulations to Mrs Roberts. How lucky we are to have her!



WEDDINGS

Shane Cowling and Kate Webb

Shane Cowling marries the love of his life, Kate Webb on 21 June 2024 at the stunning Balancing Heart Vineyard Winery in Ballandean.

Sara Rosentreter

Sara Rosentreter married Justin Nicols 27 June 2024 at the Bower Estate in the Gold Coast Hinterland.



BABIES

Isabella Marnie Paton

Nicole and Jaye Paton were surprised by the early arrival of their little girl, Isabella Marnie Paton. Isabella couldn't wait a moment longer and arrived on Saturday 20 January, 2024 at 10.50am, 3.5kg and 51cm.



Asher Adeline Goodall

Congratulations to Ben and Kate on the arrival of Harlie's little sister, Asher Adeline Goodall, born 26 October 2023, weighing 2.84kg and 52cm long.



Mackenzie Sherson Lewis

Courtney and Matthew Lewis welcomed their beautiful baby girl on Thursday 28 September, 2023. Mackenzie Sherson Lewis arrived at 3.39pm and her parents are completely smitten with little Mackenzie who weighed 3.330kg (7lb 5oz) and was 55cm.





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