

Life in the Wilderness

Term 2 Issue #3 | Thursday 7 May, 2026



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

A community connected by purpose

Belinda Arnfield

There is a strong sense of connection across the School at this time of year, with many opportunities for our community to come together in support of one another and the generations of girls who will follow.

Our 2026 Taxation Appeal, Give to the Future, launches this week. This year, the appeal focuses on both our Building Fund and Scholarship Fund. The Building Fund supports the continued development of our learning environments, ensuring our girls benefit from thoughtfully designed, well-equipped spaces. The Scholarship Fund helps ensure a Wilderness education remains accessible to girls of ability and potential, regardless of financial circumstance. Together, these funds shape the experience of learning at Wilderness and open the door for more girls to be part of it. Much of what defines the School today has been made possible through the generosity of our community, and this appeal invites all families to contribute to what comes next. For more information, [please visit our website](#).

This Sunday, many in our community will take part in the [Mother's Day Classic](#), raising funds for breast and ovarian cancer research. It reflects something we value deeply as a School, the importance of service and contributing to causes beyond ourselves. There is still time to register, or you may simply join at Pinky Flat in the morning. A 7km or a 4km run or walk along the Linear Route is a lovely way to start the day. It would be wonderful to see other Wilderness families taking part.

Looking ahead to next week, I encourage you to join us for the Wilderness Community Quiz Night on Friday 15 May. Held in collaboration by the Parents and Friends Association and the Wilderness Old Scholars' Association, it is always an enjoyable evening. Gather a table with friends, enjoy a drink from the bar, and take part in some friendly rivalry. Thank you to the organisers for the time and care they have put into bringing this event together. Tickets close this Tuesday, and you can [secure your place here](#).

As the term continues, there is much to look forward to across the School. In classrooms and beyond, our girls continue to engage with curiosity and purpose, supported by a strong and connected community.

Lastly, a reminder to please use the pedestrian crossings and traffic lights near the School and along the Parklands to help keep our community safe during busy arrival and departure times.

Thank you, as always, for the many ways you contribute to the life of the School.



EARLY LEARNING

The quiet work of belonging

[Rebecca Williamson](#)

As we move through the term, I find myself reflecting on what has quietly, yet powerfully, unfolded in our ELC. While we may not have launched new projects in these early weeks, we have been doing some of the most important work of all. We have been welcoming new friends into Mamies and Annies and nurturing the connections that make our environment feel like home.

Our focus has been on ensuring every little girl feels connected to her peers, comfortable with her educators, and at ease in her surroundings. These are the foundations upon which everything else is built. Without warmth, belonging, and trust, learning cannot truly flourish.

Each girl has also spent special time with an educator reflecting on all that their mothers do for them and creating something heartfelt to present at our Mother's Day Breakfast. This will be held on Tuesday 12 May from 8:15am to 8:45am, and we are very much looking forward to sharing this special moment with our girls and their mums or special guests.

Recently, one of our new mums shared with me that she had never experienced such a warm welcome from a group of children before. Moments like this remind me of what truly matters. It is the warmth, the relationships, and the genuine care and connection between the girls, between the adults, and across our whole community that make our ELC such a safe, secure, and caring place to be.

Thank you for entrusting us with your daughters. We feel the privilege of it every day.





JUNIOR SCHOOL

A journey to the heart of Australian Democracy

[Liz McCarthy](#)

Last term, our Year 6 girls embarked on one of the most enriching and memorable experiences of their Junior School journey, a five-day educational tour to Canberra, Australia's national capital. From the hallowed halls of Parliament House to the awe-inspiring Australian War Memorial, from the cutting-edge science of Questacon to the solemn grandeur of the High Court, our girls returned to Adelaide not simply as students who had visited famous buildings, but as young citizens who had encountered the living institutions that shape Australian life.

At Wilderness, we believe deeply in educating girls who are not only academically capable, but civically engaged; young women who understand how our democracy works, why it matters, and how they themselves have a voice within it. This Canberra tour is a cornerstone of that vision, and the experiences our Year 6 cohort brought home have already begun to enrich their participation in our own Student Parliament here at school.

Walking the Corridors of Power

There are moments in education that no textbook can replicate, and stepping inside Parliament House was one of them. Our girls had already studied Australia's system of government, its constitutional history, and the role of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. However, nothing prepared them for the experience of standing in the marble foyers where history is made every sitting week.

"Going to Parliament House was an unforgettable experience, from entering the marble foyers to looking into the House of Representatives. Having learnt about democracy and past leaders of Australia, the portraits of each Prime Minister particularly sparked our interest and showed us how each had chosen to be remembered.

Our last stop was Government House, which was an amazing way to finish such an intriguing trip. As the guide took us through the rooms and spoke about the Governor-General's duties and ceremonial role, we were all stunned by the beauty of the property. We were sad to leave but took away a new understanding of how Australia is governed."

Niamh, Year 6

Justice in Action

One of the most extraordinary aspects of an educational tour is when the real world delivers something no itinerary could have planned. Our Year 6 cohort was exceptionally fortunate to visit the High Court while a live case was being heard before all seven justices, an experience that brought the Australian legal system vividly to life.

"The High Court was such an amazing experience. Our Year 6 cohort was especially lucky to be in Canberra while a case involving all seven official judges of the High Court was taking place, along with barristers, solicitors, and a court officer.

We saw two courtrooms: the regular courtroom used for taxation cases and a much larger courtroom where the live case was unfolding. It was an educational, engaging, and mind-blowing experience, and definitely a highlight." **Tara, Year 6**

Honouring Those Who Served

The Australian War Memorial is not simply a museum; it is a place of national reflection. Our visit was one of the most emotionally significant experiences of the tour, reminding our girls that the democratic freedoms they had been learning about throughout the week came at an extraordinary human cost.

"The Australian War Memorial was an amazing, interesting, and heartwarming place to visit and was definitely a highlight of my time in Canberra. From the wreath-laying ceremony to seeing all the names written on the walls with poppies everywhere, the honourable soldiers left a memorable mark on all of us." **Bou, Year 6**

Science, Wonder, and Joyful Learning

Every great educational tour also recognises the value of joy, and Questacon delivered it in abundance. After days of rich and often deeply moving experiences, our girls discovered that curiosity and delight are themselves powerful forms of learning.

"After all our thrilling stops throughout the trip, we ended at Questacon, the science 'fun and try new things' place that was the perfect way to finish such busy days. There were six amazing rooms, each filled with a new adventure, including a drop slide that gave a heart-stopping thrill and left you smiling all night.

A giant 3D planet orbited the centre staircase, making the whole place feel exciting and full of energy. From earthquake simulators to eye-catching experiments, Questacon was ten out of ten." **Lola, Year 6**

Bringing Canberra Home to Wilderness

The Canberra tour does not begin and end at the airport. Its most important work begins long before departure and continues well after the girls return, as they bring what they have seen and experienced back into their learning at Wilderness and, most powerfully, into their participation in Student Parliament.

Our Student Parliament gives girls a genuine voice in the life of the school. They debate issues, propose motions, and practise respectful, evidence-based discussion. They learn that democracy is not a spectator activity; it requires preparation, listening, and the courage to speak up. Having now stood in the chambers where Australia's elected representatives undertake this very work, our Year 6 students return with a richer understanding of why these skills matter and a deeper appreciation of what they are practising in our own parliament.

We have already noticed the difference. Conversations in class are more assured. The questions our girls ask about how decisions are made, at school, in government, and in the courts, have become more thoughtful and confident. Seeing democracy in action has encouraged them to become more active participants in the democracy they experience every day.

Supporting Our Girls Through the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate

The Australian Government recognises the importance of young Australians visiting the national capital as part of their Civics and Citizenship education. To assist with the cost of the excursion, the Australian Government contributes funding to Wilderness through the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate program, providing \$90 per student towards the excursion costs.

The rebate is paid directly to the school upon completion of the tour, and we are grateful for this support in helping provide such a high-quality learning experience for our girls.

Our Gratitude

A tour of this quality and depth does not happen without support, and we thank the dedicated staff who accompanied our girls and helped make every moment of the experience meaningful.

Most of all, we are proud of our Year 6 girls for their curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, and willingness to be moved by what they saw. They are exactly the kind of engaged and thoughtful young citizens Wilderness seeks to nurture, and this tour reminded us all why that work matters so deeply.





MIDDLE SCHOOL

Supporting Your Teen to Make Safe and Informed Choices

[Rhiannon Giles](#)

We are pleased to invite parents and caregivers to an upcoming Encounter Youth Program Parent Information Webinar, taking place on Thursday 14 May.

The Encounter Youth Program is a drug and alcohol awareness initiative designed to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to make safe and informed decisions. As parents, you play a vital role in shaping your child's attitudes and choices, and this webinar provides an opportunity to strengthen the partnership between home and school.

The webinar will cover a range of relevant and timely topics, including:

- Current trends in alcohol and other drug use among young people
- Legal considerations when hosting parties
- Brain development and teenage risk-taking behaviours, including vaping
- Strategies for talking with your child about alcohol and other drugs
- Ways to positively influence your child's decision-making

This program has a strong history of engaging young people in meaningful ways, and we believe it will be a valuable addition to our wellbeing initiatives. Your involvement is key to its success, and attending the webinar will help you feel informed, confident, and supported in guiding your child.

Encounter Youth Parent Information Webinar

Date: Thursday 14 May 2026

Time: 6.00pm to 7.15pm

Please register before 3.25pm on 14 May by clicking [here](#):

We encourage all parents to be part of this important conversation. By working together, we can support our young people to make healthy and positive choices now and into the future.

Chinese Music Incursion

Our Year 7 students recently participated in an interactive cultural immersion workshop with Zhao Liang, one of Adelaide's most respected Chinese instrumentalists. The girls were introduced to the history and sounds of traditional Chinese musical instruments and enjoyed learning about Chinese musical traditions through this engaging experience. Thank you to Angela Sciberras-Xiong for organising this opportunity for our students.

Australian Computational and Linguistic Olympiad (OzCLO)

OzCLO challenges students to solve problems involving real-world languages by using clues, logical reasoning, and pattern recognition to uncover meaning. Our teams worked collaboratively and demonstrated impressive critical thinking and problem-solving skills throughout the competition.

We are proud to share our Round 1 results:

Gold Band

Ashlee Basnayake, Jessica Mah, Minnie Prowse

These students went on to represent Wilderness at the OzCLO National Round held at Pembroke late in Term 1.

Silver Band

Meng-Meng Deng, Nidhi Sinhal, Sirui Tang, Amber Trappel

Bronze Band

Noor Jilaihawi, Rosie Morgan, Lila Nassery, Addy Wilson

Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge

The Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge is an international online competition designed to promote informatics, logical thinking, and problem-solving. Students complete timed, puzzle-style tasks focused on algorithm design, abstraction, and pattern recognition.

Congratulations to the following students:

High Distinctions

Emma Burns (Yr 8)

Rosie Morgan (Yr 8)

Kaitlyn Tran (Yr 8)

Distinctions

Skyler Luong (Yr 8)
Kathryn Vaezi (Yr 8)
Adeline Wilson (Yr 8)

Credits

Amelia Davis (Yr 7)
Mia Zhou (Yr 7)
Zoe Crowther (Yr 9)
Jessica Mah (Yr 9)
Issie Morgan (Yr 9)
Hazel Newman (Yr 9)
Ariana Ng (Yr 9)

Merits

Skye Aung (Yr 7)
Maya Dan (Yr 7)
Connie Davies (Yr 7)
Olivia Zhong (Yr 7)
Mitakshi Gupta (Yr 7)
Olivia Ertugrul (Yr 7)
Grace Fan (Yr 7)
Shamaim Jibrán (Yr 8)
Isha Wechalekar (Yr 8)
Noor Jilaihawi (Yr 8)
Yazhini Dhachina (Yr 8)
Cedra Sawad (Yr 8)
Menuki Fernando (Yr 9)
Ella Wu (Yr 9)
Amelia Yip (Yr 9)
Dora Chen (Yr 9)
Saanwi Kumar (Yr 9)

Participation

Ashlee Basnayake (Yr 9)
Minnie Prowse (Yr 9)
Dora Li (Yr 9)
Genevieve Lim (Yr 9)

AMEB

Congratulations to Sharanya Reddy, who recently received an award for her outstanding performance in the AMEB Level 6 Speech and Drama examination. Sharanya was presented with the award at a ceremony held in Bonython Hall at the University of

Adelaide.

National Youth Archery Championships

Over the holidays, Jessica Ryder competed in the National Youth Archery Championships in Launceston, Tasmania across several divisions. She achieved a gold medal in the Under 14 Female Longbow 900 Round, breaking both the Under 14 and Under 16 National Records in challenging windy and rainy conditions.

Jessica has also been progressively claiming South Australian State and Adelaide Archery Club records over recent months, including State Records at Under 18 level. Congratulations, Jessica, on these outstanding achievements.





SENIOR SCHOOL

Leadership, stewardship and service

[Kate Hanson](#)

This year has already offered many moments for students to gather, celebrate and contribute meaningfully to the life of our community. Across the term, students have embraced opportunities to lead, connect and give back in ways that reflect the values of our Senior School.

One of the most powerful examples of this is the SRC's Cut for Cancer initiative. Led with compassion, the event will see seven Year 12 girls donate their hair to support the creation of wigs for those undergoing cancer treatment. It is a generous act of service, supported by a wider fundraising effort that has already drawn strong support from across the school community. The initiative reflects student leadership through visible and meaningful action.

Our students have also continued to excel beyond the classroom. At Generations in Jazz, Wilderness was exceptionally well represented, with students performing to an outstanding standard and many selected for Super Bands. This recognition is a significant achievement and one of which we are all incredibly proud.

Last term's Careers Breakfast provided another valuable opportunity for students to look ahead and engage with possibilities beyond school. Through conversations with professionals and Old Scholars from a wide range of fields, the girls were encouraged to think broadly about future pathways, ask thoughtful questions and consider the many ways a meaningful career can take shape.

Alongside these moments of connection and celebration, the Senior School continues to provide opportunities for students to grow in independence. As the term progresses, students are increasingly asked to manage competing demands, organise their time with

intention and take greater responsibility for their learning. These habits are not incidental to school life, but central to it. Learning to manage workload, prepare steadily and respond to challenge with maturity is part of the deeper work of becoming capable and self-directed. With examinations approaching at the end of the semester, students will be encouraged to draw on these skills with confidence, recognising that independence is built through the steady practice of responsibility, reflection and perseverance.

This term, we have also been speaking with students about stewardship, what it means to inherit a community and what it asks of us in return. To belong to a school such as Wilderness is not simply to benefit from its traditions, but to care for them thoughtfully and carry them forward with integrity for those who will come after us. This idea of stewardship invites students to see themselves not only as participants in school life, but as custodians of its culture, values and spirit. We see this reflected in the approach to the upcoming Founders' Day, where we will pause to celebrate the enduring legacy of the Brown sisters and the vision upon which Wilderness was founded.

Student Achievements

This term we have already celebrated some wonderful student achievements. Sara Dobrijevic recently travelled to Brisbane to compete in the 2026 Australian Youth Water Polo Championships. Layla Balestrin was part of the successful South Australian team at the National Under 18 Lacrosse Tournament in Perth. Miaomiao Zhu achieved second place in the Mixed Doubles at Under 19 level at the South Australia Under 15 and Under 19 Badminton Tournament. Rila Li competed in the 2026 South Australian State Jumping Championships and placed fifth in the 70cm class among many experienced riders. Along with many others in our community, these girls have achieved outstanding success in their chosen pursuits.

Year 12 Hoodies

Year 12 students received their hoodies this week. Girls are permitted to wear the hoodies at school and to weekend sport.

Please note the following expectations:

- Hoodies cannot be worn to or from school, even if a student has sports training.
- Hoodies cannot be worn with the blazer.
- Hoodies are not to be worn to assemblies, on excursions or at formal events.
- Thank you for your support with these special commemorative jumpers.





BOARDING

Term 2 begins in boarding

[Carolyn Matthews](#)

It was wonderful to welcome the girls back into the house after the holiday break. Everyone has returned refreshed and ready for the challenges of Term 2, and we have certainly hit the ground running. Sport training has recommenced, assessments are underway and, within the house, we have enjoyed our first family dinner nights while the leadership team has been busy planning for National Boarding Week.

National Boarding Week is an Australia-wide celebration of the unique experience boarding education provides. This year's theme, Echoes of Home, celebrates the culture, traditions, memories and sense of community that shape our boarders each day. The celebration will run from Sunday 10 May to Saturday 16 May, and our House Leaders have been working enthusiastically to bring the week's activities together. There is much to look forward to, including Wellbeing Wednesday, when the girls will take part in a Puppy Yoga session.

We have also welcomed four new Supervisors to the Boarding House this term, several of whom are Old Scholars and former boarders. I am sure many of the names will be familiar to families. It is wonderful to see Old Scholars returning to boarding, speaking so positively about their own experiences and wanting to give back to our current girls.

Week 2 also brought the annual Cross Country Carnival, where the girls proudly displayed their House spirit and colours. Held in beautiful autumn weather, the event was full of energy and enthusiasm, with a sea of colourful bodysuits, tutus, ribbons and creative running attire. For our Year 12 students, the day also marked another of their final school events, bringing with it the mixed emotions that come as they begin to realise these experiences are drawing to a close.



OSHC

Learning beyond the classroom

[Bec Vandermoer](#)

The April school holidays were vibrant, busy, and filled with meaningful learning experiences. Children engaged in a wide range of excursions and incursions that supported their interests, wellbeing, and sense of belonging within the community.

Highlights included visits to the new recreation centre, participation in community events such as Kidschella and the Gather Round footy festival, and creative experiences including the K-pop Silent Disco, Star Academy dance sessions, and Lego Masters challenges. Children also explored science and health concepts through Operation Ouch, developed independence and life skills at Homefresh Cooking School, and connected with nature during the Farm Barn excursion.

These experiences strongly aligned with the principles of the My Time, Our Place (MTO) and Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), supporting outcomes such as developing a strong sense of identity through collaboration and participation, building connections with community, fostering confidence as involved learners through hands-on experiences, promoting wellbeing through physical activity and social engagement, and encouraging effective communication across creative and social contexts.

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, children's voices, interests, and choices

remained central to the program. The diverse range of activities created opportunities for exploration, creativity, and inquiry, supporting each child's unique learning journey.

Overall, the holidays provided a dynamic balance of fun, connection, and learning, creating lasting memories and strengthening relationships across our learning community.

If you have ideas or suggestions for future holiday programs, we would love to hear from you. Please send them through to OSHC@wilderness.com.au

For feedback regarding our April Vacation Care, please complete our survey by clicking [here](#) - we'd love to continue to improve our service.



