

# Life in the Wilderness

Term 2 Issue #4 | Thursday 4 June, 2026

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

## From the Principal

[Belinda Arnfield](#)

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This term has provided many opportunities for our girls to engage with ideas that reach beyond their day-to-day learning and explore the role they can play in shaping the future.

Recently, our Year 6 and Year 12 students attended an address by former New Zealand Prime Minister Dame Jacinda Ardern at St Peter's College. Her reflections on resilience and staying true to your values resonated strongly.

For our Year 6 girls in particular, the experience connected closely with their learning in civics. Through their studies, participation in Junior School Student Parliament and trip to Canberra earlier this term, they have been exploring democratic systems and active citizenship. Hearing those ideas reflected in the experiences of a female political leader brought these concepts to life and helped them see how their own leadership can make a positive difference within their communities today.

Each year, we celebrate National Boarding Week and the many ways our boarders enrich life at Wilderness. From the hotly contested Day Girls versus Boarders netball match to shared breakfasts and the Teddy Bears' Picnic, students enjoyed opportunities to strengthen friendships and spend time together. Boarding has long been an important part of Wilderness, and I am pleased to share that applications for our [2028 Boarding Scholarships](#) are now open. If you know a family who may be interested in boarding at Wilderness, I encourage you to share this opportunity with them.

Founders Day and National Reconciliation Week invited us to reflect on both our history and the responsibilities we carry forward.

On Founders Day, we acknowledged the vision and legacy of the Misses Brown, whose commitment to the education of girls continues to shape Wilderness more than 140 years later. During National Reconciliation Week, we were privileged to hear from guest speaker Courtney Summers, who challenged us to consider how we can be 'All In' for Reconciliation through the choices and actions we take each day. Reconciliation is an ongoing journey, and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue learning together.

As always, preparing girls for the future remains central to our mission. Recent events including Careers Week, our Medicine and Pathways Information Evenings, and the Activating Identities and Futures Expo, allow our girls to explore study and career possibilities while identifying their own strengths and aspirations.

As we approach the end of the financial year, I would like to thank our community for its ongoing generosity and support. Through our 2026 Taxation Appeal, we seek to strengthen the learning environments and scholarship opportunities that help more girls access a Wilderness education. We warmly invite contributions to this year's [Taxation Appeal](#) before 30 June.

As this will be my final newsletter for the term, I would also like to thank our students, staff and families for a wonderful semester. I will be taking study leave next term to undertake further study in governance and futures education and look forward to returning at the start of Term 4. During this time, Mr Brad Snell will serve as Acting Principal, and I know the School will be in very capable hands.



EARLY LEARNING

## All In: National Reconciliation Week in the ELC

[Rebecca Williamson](#)

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Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives sits at the very heart of the Early Years Learning Framework, and National Reconciliation Week gave us a natural moment to make that work visible. This year's theme, 'All In', reminds us that reconciliation is not something to watch from the sidelines. It asks everyone to step in and take part. That is how we approached the week, not as experts, but as learners ourselves, researching alongside the girls and beginning, as we always do, with what they already knew and wondered.

What made the week so special was that our learning was guided from within our own community. Miss Siobhan, a relief co-educator who belongs to the Kamilaroi mob, generously shared her culture with the girls. To see a young woman from our own ELC family share who she is, where she comes from and what she carries was a gift. The girls listened, and so did we.

Across the week, the Mamie House girls gathered around Somebody's Land, written by Adam Goodes. In the Annie House, Miss Danielle and Miss Siobhan shared their favourite Dreaming stories, while Miss Siobhan introduced the girls to clapping sticks and to Inanay, a traditional lullaby in the version recorded by Torres Strait Islander singer Christine Añu. There was art too, with handprints bright with the colours of the Aboriginal flag, and a collaborative painting inspired by the bold colours and free-flowing lines of Anmatyerre artist Minnie Pwerle. The girls' work always found its way back to the land. Even our group times made room for Kurna words, in our Acknowledgement of Country and in the singing of Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.

This was a beginning, not an ending. Reconciliation is not a single week or a single story;

it is something we keep learning and choosing every day. This week, our girls did just what 'All In' asks of all of us. They stepped in with curious minds, and we were right there beside them, learning too.







JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Stories, citizenship and learning beyond the classroom

[Liz McCarthy](#)

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Last Thursday evening saw one of the most beloved events in our Lower Junior School year, Bedtime Stories. Girls in Reception to Year 2 were invited back to school in the evening, dressed in their pyjamas and accompanied by their cuddliest friend, to enjoy bedtime stories read by staff from across the School.

Enormous thanks to our Year 6 Library and Literature Portfolio, led by Mrs Lauren Whittle, our wonderful Learning Commons team and, of course, the many readers who came along to share in the joy.

Here are some highlights from the evening, as shared by our girls.

### **Reception:**

**Olivia:** Miss Danielle reading Do Not Open This Book because I have it at home.

**Lyca:** I liked dressing in my pyjamas and coming to school. I liked seeing all the teachers in their pyjamas.

**Ellery:** Seeing Ms Arnfield in her pyjamas.

**Kiara:** I was happy I got to wear matching pyjamas with Mum. Miss Danielle read me a book.

**Matilda:** I liked the decorations in the library. My mum wore her PJs to school.

**Emily:** Taking a snuggly toy to school made me happy.

### **Year 1**

**Eva:** I loved having the teachers, especially Miss Sophie, read to us.

**Harriet H:** Being able to wear our PJs to school and bringing a cuddly friend.

**Alana:** I loved wearing my PJs to school. I felt very cosy.

**Grace:** Mum got to come to school with me and come to the library for the first time.

## **Year 2**

**Eloise:** I love that Ms Arnfield read us stories and we got to see our old teachers. I also love that we got to be upstairs in the library, where we have never ever been.

**Alyssa:** I love that we get to bring our cuddly teddies and listen to stories. Instead of borrowing books, we got to listen to lots of different stories and go on many adventures.

**Elizabeth:** I loved that all the books were funny and I got to be with all my friends listening to stories. The night made me feel really excited and happy.

**Lena:** I loved that I got to go to school with blankets and cuddly toys. The teachers got to wear colourful pyjamas, which made it cosy. I felt really snuggly, cosy and warm.

## **Year 6 Parliament House Visit**

To support the girls' understanding of the events and ideas that led to Australian Federation, democracy and citizenship, the Year 6 students were fortunate to tour Parliament House with the Premier of South Australia, the Honourable Peter Malinauskas MP. This rounded off an outstanding unit of Civics learning, which has included the introduction of our Student Parliament leadership model and our Year 6 Canberra Educational Tour.

**Elodie:** I really enjoyed learning about the suffragettes because they were very inspirational.

**Maddie:** Mr Malinauskas challenged us to a scavenger hunt to look for items in Parliament House; we found them all.

**Lily:** People used to carry swords, and they had to stand far enough away in Parliament sessions so the swords couldn't touch each other.

**Bou:** It was fun to see how everything had a meaning, even down to the plant patterns on the carpet.

**Tara:** I loved hearing that South Australia was the first place in the world to let women vote.

**Emma:** I enjoyed seeing how old Parliament House was and the history that went before us.

**Maggie:** I liked that we got to sit in the seats in the House of Assembly.

**Harriet:** It's hard to believe that we stood in a room where the biggest law in history was made.

**Edwina:** I liked seeing the history of previous Premiers in South Australia.

**Sara:** I found it interesting to learn about the process for how important decisions are made in Parliament.

**Agnes:** I enjoyed sitting in the seats where lots of important people sit in Parliament House.

**Afton:** Seeing the swords that they used to determine how far apart people sit was very interesting.







MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Extending horizons in the Middle School

[Rhiannon Giles](#)

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### Parent Information Sessions

Tom Nehmy's parent session was well attended last week, and the feedback from our parent community has been wonderful. The Year 8 students have started the Healthy Minds Program this week, and information will be posted regularly on Verus that you can use to support open discussions at home. While the plan is to reinforce the content delivered at school, I hope you will find the resources useful for building relationships with all the young people in your family.

The Year 8 students have homework to complete at home this week before their next session. They have been asked to discuss the following questions with someone at home:

- How do other people view perfectionism?
- Can they identify any unhelpful aspects of perfectionism?
- Can they identify any healthy aspects?
- Do they consider themselves a perfectionist? Why?

Year 9 students and parents recently participated in informative sessions led by Encounter Youth, exploring the realities of vaping, alcohol, drugs and adolescent risk-taking. The presentations provided practical insights into teenage brain development, current trends in substance use, strategies for having effective conversations with young

people and ways parents can positively influence decision-making.

Families are also encouraged to explore Encounter Youth's Uncharted Parenting podcast, which offers expert advice and real-world perspectives to support parents navigating the challenges and opportunities of raising teenagers.

### **da Vinci Decathlon**

The da Vinci Decathlon was established in 2002 as an extension of the highly successful da Vinci Program for gifted and talented students at Knox Grammar School. Named in honour of one of history's greatest thinkers and scholars, the competition challenges students across a range of disciplines while fostering higher-order thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and creativity.

Congratulations to our Year 7 and Year 9 da Vinci Decathlon teams, who competed at St Peter's Girls' School last week.

#### **Year 7 Achievements**

- 1<sup>st</sup> place in Art & Poetry

#### **Year 9 Achievements**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall
- 1<sup>st</sup> place in Code Breaking
- 1<sup>st</sup> place in Art & Poetry
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place in English

The competition brought together 25 schools, with students participating in 10 academic challenges: Engineering, Art & Poetry, Code Breaking, English, Mathematics, Creative Producers, Science, Cartography, Ideation and Legacy. This year's theme, Machines and Mechanics, inspired students to apply their knowledge, creativity and collaborative skills across a diverse range of disciplines.

### **Lean In Girls**

The 15 Middle School SRC students recently participated in the Lean In Girls curriculum, a program designed to build confidence, resilience and leadership skills in young women. Through engaging discussions and practical activities, the girls explored topics such as

self-belief, effective communication, teamwork and overcoming challenges. The program empowered students to develop their leadership potential, strengthen their voices and make a positive impact within the school community.

### Recent Achievements – Jessica Mah, Year 9

Jessica Mah has achieved outstanding success recently across a number of her interest areas. In 2025, she received the Governor’s Civics Award for Schools at Government House and was awarded the Flute Society of South Australia Scholarship. She also earned the AMEB Certificate of Performance in Voice and Communication, recognising years of dedication to speech and communication studies.

Her musical accomplishments include a High Distinction in AMEB Grade 8 Flute and winning the prestigious David Cubbin Memorial Competition for Flautists Under 25.

At the weekend, Jessica achieved first place in her Rostrum Voice of Youth heat and progressed through the semi-finals to qualify for the Zone Final at Parliament House. Her impromptu speech, Chasing the Rainbow, encouraged audiences to look beyond the pursuit of external rewards and instead discover the unique strengths, values and potential within themselves.

Congratulations, Jessica.





SENIOR SCHOOL

## Halfway and looking ahead

[Kate Hanson](#)

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### Halfway Day

The Year 12s recently celebrated Halfway Day, an exciting milestone in their final year. While there are still many events, assignments and tests to come, Halfway Day marks a pivotal point in their Year 12 journey. The girls celebrated with pigtails, cupcakes made by Layla Lau and nostalgic videos together. We look forward to the second half of their Year 12 journey.

### Semester 2 Courses

If your daughter would like to change courses for Semester 2, she will need to make a time to see me this term, before the end of Week 9. Changes are subject to SACE patterns, class availability and prerequisites.

### Upcoming Examinations

Years 10 to 12 will have examinations either at the end of Term 2 or the start of Term 3. Communication for each of these year levels has been posted on Verus. If you have any questions about exams, please contact our SACE Coordinator, David Pyman.

Exams are always conducted in full school uniform. Year 10s will attend all classes during their exams, while Years 11 and 12 will only be required to attend school for their examinations.

Year 10s will complete formative examinations in English, Mathematics and Science

during Week 9. The exams will be held in classrooms and offer an opportunity for the Year 10s to experience exams before their end-of-year examinations in November. Grades for these examinations will not be published on reports; they will be distributed via Verus in the same way that test and assignment grades are shared.

Year 11s will also have their examinations in Week 9. Examination results for Year 11s will be distributed via Verus and listed on their end-of-semester report. These examinations provide a valuable opportunity for the girls to practise their skills in this area and offer some insight to help them select their courses for Year 12. Year 11s are not required to attend school when they do not have an exam, although they are permitted to study in the Learning Commons.

Year 12 examinations are held from Monday to Thursday in Week 1, Term 3. The Year 12s will need to spend time in the July break preparing for these examinations.

### **Ethics Olympiad**

Well done to the Year 10 students who participated in the recent SA & NT Senior Ethics Olympiad. Both Wilderness teams received Honourable Mentions from the judges in this collaborative event that builds civil discourse and critical thinking skills. The 2026 cases explored scenarios related to gene manipulation, artificial intelligence, deception, loyalty, punishment and personal responsibility. Our teams were commended for their careful reasoning, respectful dialogue and deep consideration of multiple perspectives.

**Wildy Red:** Sirui Tang, Nidhi Sinhal, Sharon Zhai, Zara Ng, Nina Stradwick

**Wildy Purple:** Lucy Davis, Meng-Meng Deng, Evangeline Lee, Amber Trappel, Anika Sangha







BOARDING

## Connection, service and boarding spirit

[Carolyn Matthews](#)

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Term Two is moving along very quickly, and a feature of the term has been connection and service.

National Boarding Week is celebrated every year, usually commencing on Mother's Day and running through to the following Saturday. The theme of this year's celebration was Echoes of Home, and each day had a particular focus, all of which we covered in our celebration of the week.

On Mother's Day, seven girls and I headed to Scotch College to take part in a service initiative called Boarders Birthday Cakes. The initiative is a collaborative, student-led movement, partnering with It's The Little Things Foundation and supporting families connected to Ronald McDonald House Charities Australia. It brings boarding house communities together to bake and decorate birthday cakes, write heartfelt cards and prepare them for delivery to families staying at Ronald McDonald Houses. For many families, birthdays can pass quietly while a child is in hospital, and this small gesture helps restore celebration, dignity and normality during an incredibly challenging time.

There were boarders from a number of schools, and in total on the night we iced, decorated and wrote cards for more than fifty cakes, which was a great achievement. We enjoyed a meal together with other boarders and their staff, and heard an interesting presentation from the Red Frogs group, who support the Boarders Birthday Cakes initiative.

Monday commenced with Boarders Assembly and then a Day Girls vs Boarders netball game. Assembly showcased the homes of our girls and the varied landscapes they come from. The netball game was a great contest, with lots of enthusiasm from the crowd,

including the boarders' and day girls' mascots, but ultimately the day girls were narrow winners.

Tuesday was another busy day, with our open house breakfasts and tours for day school friends. Our supper station at recess was also a hit. Selling the traditional hot chocolate and Tim Tams, the stall supported the Bhaudure School in Nepal.

The theme for Wednesday was Wellbeing Wednesday, and we embraced this by having the girls take part in Puppy Yoga, which is exactly as the name suggests: yoga with puppies. This was a great hit, with lots of yoga as well as time to play with the puppies. On the girls' return to the house, they entered the Wilderness Wellness Room, where they were able to choose a sample bag from a range of goodies designed to support their wellbeing. Our regular Wednesday special supper was a wide-ranging spread of all the usual Wednesday night favourites.

We ran a competition to guess the total distance that our boarders travel to Wilderness, as well as the distances of the furthest and closest students to the School. The answers to these questions were:

- Total distance: 40,516 km
- Shortest distance: 64 km
- Furthest distance: 7,508 km

Thursday was Boarders Day, and the girls did an amazing job cooking the barbecue. We served well over three hundred sausages, again raising valuable funds for the Bhaudure School. Friday was our final community event, and we hosted a number of teachers for breakfast and a tour of the house. We came together as a house on Friday night for an in-house movie night, which was a wonderful way to round out Boarders Week.

The following Friday night, we hosted Year 10 to 12 students from PAC, Saints and Seymour in our inaugural Senior Netball Social. The event was the brainchild of Lucy Allen and Indy Holman, and they worked tirelessly to put the night together. The invited schools were asked to put together teams of ten for a round-robin netball competition, which was held in the School Gym. There were a number of closely contested matches, but the eventual winners on the night were the team from PAC. Mitchell Quinton from PAC was awarded Best Player on the Night. We all enjoyed supper afterwards and are hoping that the event will become an annual one.

Last Friday, we held our annual Teddy Bears' Picnic. Each boarder is buddied up with one of the Reception girls. They eat lunch together with special toy friends, of course, before enjoying a tour of the house and finishing with a teddy cookie. The house was filled with

lots of loud noise, some girls not sure that they would like to be a boarder and others wanting to move in right away! The activity is a great connection point between the day school and boarding house, and one that the girls, both big and small, look forward to each year.

Thursday night is our family dinner night, when our families enjoy dinner together. Each fortnight, the house leaders plan and run a short inter-family competition, earning valuable points towards the Mary Home House Cup. Last Thursday's competition was a little different, as we supported Daisy Duncan in her AT1B Health Initiative by making sandwiches through the KickStart for Kids program, which supports students experiencing food insecurity.

In total, in fifteen minutes, 600 sandwiches were made, with the Dutton family winning with an incredible 151. Well done to Daisy for her work in the program, and to all our family groups for their mighty sandwich-making efforts. It is wonderful to see our girls involved in service activities and supporting one another's initiatives.







OSHC

## June-July Vacation Care

[Bec Vandermoer](#)

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The July Vacation Care program promises another exciting and varied holiday experience for our OSHC children, with a rich mix of excursions, incursions and in-day activities planned across the break. From Tru Ninja, TreeClimb Kuitpo Forest, ice skating, Cirkidz and Zone Bowling to Carnivale, Detective Mystery, Christmas in July, World Cup activities and an 'Is it Cake?' baking challenge, the program has been designed to support children's interests while encouraging creativity, connection and active participation.

Children will also have opportunities to explore STEM, nature play, imaginative challenges, creative arts, physical activity and collaborative group experiences, with several activities suggested by the children themselves. The program continues to align with the principles of My Time, Our Place and the Early Years Learning Framework, supporting wellbeing, identity, communication, inquiry and a strong sense of belonging throughout the holiday period.

To view the program and book, please click [here](#).

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](mailto:OSHC@wilderness.com.au)

