

# Life in the Wilderness

Term 1 Issue #2 | Friday 13 March, 2026

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

## From the Principal

[Belinda Arnfield](#)

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More than 3,000 people gathered at the Adelaide Convention Centre for the International Women's Day breakfast last Friday. I was pleased to attend with colleagues and a number of our students to hear from keynote speaker and Australian of the Year 2026, Katherine Bennell-Pegg.

Remarkably, Australia is the only country in the world whose first astronaut is a woman. Katherine Bennell-Pegg's story shows what can happen when ambition is matched with persistence. As a high school student, she was once asked to list three possible careers. She wrote down just one: astronaut. It was a bold decision that required years of study and determination to pursue.

Her achievement also reflects the path forged by generations of women before her. Many women scientists made important contributions to discovery and innovation, often without the recognition they deserved. Their persistence helped open doors so that young women today can pursue fields that once felt out of reach.

During her address, Katherine Bennell-Pegg spoke about the importance of encouraging more girls to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As she explained, "Engineering creates order from chaos. It is the how to science's why." Despite progress, women remain under-represented in many STEM fields, particularly engineering. Her message was clear. When girls can imagine themselves in these fields, they are far more likely to pursue them.

This message resonates deeply with us at Wilderness. One of the great privileges of girls' education is the freedom it gives students to explore interests without limitation or stereotype. Whether in our science laboratories, technology workshops, mathematics classrooms or robotics activities, our students are encouraged to ask questions, take risks in their learning and discover what genuinely interests them. These experiences help girls build the confidence to contribute as innovators and problem solvers in fields where their perspectives are urgently needed.

International Women's Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women past and present. It also invites us to reflect on how we continue to support young women to pursue their ambitions with confidence. At Wilderness, this begins in the classroom, where curiosity is encouraged and girls are reminded that their ideas and aspirations matter.

### **Head of the River**

This Saturday, 14 March, our rowing crews will compete in the Head of the River Regatta at West Lakes. The regatta marks the culmination of months of commitment from our students and coaches and is always a highlight of the school sporting calendar.

We warmly encourage our Wilderness families to come along to West Lakes and support our crews as they race for the final time this season. Please note that girls attending as spectators are required to appropriately wear their full summer school uniform. The full program is available [here](#).

### **Mother's Day Classic**

Wilderness will once again take part in the Mother's Day Classic on Sunday 10 May. Families are invited to join the Wilderness team and walk or run together to raise funds for breast and ovarian cancer research. Every step taken and every dollar raised contributes to research that saves lives.

Early Bird registrations are open until Sunday 22 March, and you can [register here](#).

If you are unable to attend on the day, you may wish to support the team by making a donation via our [School's fundraising page](#).

Thank you to Jen Guest and the Parents and Friends Committee for their organisation of this team, bringing our community together on this special day. We would love to see many members of the Wilderness community come together in support of this important cause.



EARLY LEARNING

## Science in the Early Learning Centre

[Rebecca Williamson](#)

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Science has come to life in our Early Learning Centre in the most wonderful way. As caterpillars transformed into Monarch butterflies and two fluffy chicks, Sparkles and Barbie, joined our classroom, the girls have been immersed in observing how living things grow, change and thrive.

In Annie House, the girls carefully observed four very hungry caterpillars as they grew and transformed before emerging as beautiful butterflies. Watching this remarkable process sparked thoughtful conversations about growth, patience and change.

Inspired by Olivia H's visit to the butterfly garden at the Adelaide Zoo, the girls began wondering how gardens attract butterflies. Together we explored the plants and environments that provide butterflies with warmth, colour and nourishment. This curiosity has now led us to begin planning our own butterfly garden as the girls consider which plants might help create a welcoming habitat.

At the same time, Mamie House welcomed two very special new members to the classroom, our ELC chickens. Now lovingly named Sparkles and Barbie, they have already brought great joy and excitement as the girls gently observe and care for them each day. Families have also supported this learning by caring for the chickens on weekends and sharing their experiences.

Through caring for chicks, observing caterpillars transform and planning our butterfly garden, the girls are developing early scientific thinking. They are learning to observe closely, ask questions and notice how living things grow and change.

Experiences like these remind us that young children are natural scientists. When given

the time to slow down and look closely, they notice remarkable details about the world around them. It is our hope that moments like these spark a lifelong curiosity about the natural world and a love of science that begins with wonder.





JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Exploration beyond the classroom

[Liz McCarthy](#)

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The past few weeks in the Junior School have been full of purposeful learning, growing independence and wonderful opportunities for our girls to engage beyond the classroom. It has been a joy to see the energy and enthusiasm with which students are approaching the term, whether through their classroom learning, leadership opportunities or experiences in the outdoors.

A highlight for our youngest students was the recent Year 1 'Magic Beach' day, held at Kingston Park Coastal Reserve as part of our Outdoor Education program. Spending the day at the coast provided a wonderful opportunity for the girls to connect their learning with the natural environment. They explored the beach, observed coastal features and marine life, and immersed themselves in imaginative play inspired by the story Magic Beach. Experiences such as this are a valued part of our program, encouraging curiosity, creativity and a deepening appreciation of the natural world. The girls represented the Junior School beautifully and returned full of excitement and stories from their day by the sea.

Another exciting development this term has been the early work of our Junior School Student Parliament. This new model of leadership is already creating meaningful opportunities for our girls to experience democratic processes, collaboration and service to their community. Over the past weeks, classes have nominated and elected their Members of Parliament, and these students have begun meeting together to learn about the structure of parliament, the responsibilities of leadership and how they can represent the ideas and perspectives of their peers. It has been wonderful to see the seriousness with which the girls are approaching these roles and the pride they feel in contributing to

their school community.

This week our Year 3 and Year 5 students have also undertaken their NAPLAN assessments. While these assessments provide a snapshot of student progress in literacy and numeracy and contribute useful data for schools, we view them as just one small part of a much broader picture of learning. What matters most is the deep understanding we develop of our girls as learners and as young people. Through daily classroom interactions, rich learning experiences and ongoing formative assessment, our teachers gain far more meaningful insight into each child's strengths, growth and next steps. NAPLAN offers one piece of information, but it does not define our girls or capture the full scope of who they are as thinkers, collaborators and learners.

A reminder to families that our Parent-Teacher Interviews will take place on Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 March. These conversations are an important opportunity to connect with your daughter's teacher, reflect on her progress and discuss next steps in her learning. We value these partnerships greatly, as the strongest outcomes for students occur when schools and families work together to support each child's growth.

Thank you, as always, for the warmth and support you show our Junior School community. It is a privilege to work alongside you in guiding and encouraging your daughters as they continue to learn, grow and flourish.





MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Celebrating International Women's Day

[Rhiannon Giles](#)

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On International Women's Day, we recognise the important role educators, particularly women, play in shaping the confidence and aspirations of young girls. The 2026 theme, 'Give to Gain', highlights the idea that sharing knowledge, time and support creates opportunities for others to grow.

This can be seen in everyday moments at school. When a teacher encourages a student to share her ideas, try something new, or persist with a challenge, they are helping her build confidence in her abilities. In turn, students gain the belief that their voices matter and that their goals are within reach.

By giving guidance, encouragement and opportunities to learn, educators help girls develop a strong sense of self and the confidence to pursue their interests. These experiences play an important role in supporting the next generation of young women as they grow, learn and lead.

### **Year 7 Outdoor Education Camp**

The Year 7 Camp provided students with the chance to build new friendships and strengthen existing connections while taking part in a range of exciting and challenging activities.

Throughout the camp, students enjoyed a variety of water-based experiences, including surfing at Robe, kayaking on Tintinara Lake, and sailing with the Meningie Sailing Club. They also participated in a camping experience at Tea Tree Crossing, where they learned about the diverse waterways, ecosystems and culture of Ngarrindjeri land. These activities helped deepen students' understanding of the natural environment while

encouraging teamwork, resilience and problem-solving.

A huge thank you to the staff who supported the students during this memorable experience, the Year 7 Form Teachers, Heads of House, Outdoor Education Staff and the Camp leaders, Kate Woodbridge and Kate Mitchell.

We look forward to seeing the continued growth and friendships that emerge from this experience as our Year 7 students continue their journey through Middle School.

### **Commedia dell'arte Performance**

Middle School students recently enjoyed an engaging performance and workshop on Commedia dell'arte led by theatre practitioner Andrew Crupi. Through a lively demonstration of the traditional Italian performance style, Andrew introduced students to its distinctive characters, exaggerated physicality and improvisational storytelling.

Using masks, movement and humour, he brought classic stock characters to life and invited students to explore how actors communicate through gesture, voice and timing. The session offered a fun and practical insight into theatre history while encouraging students to step outside their comfort zones and experiment with performance.

### **Head of the River**

Good luck to all our rowers as they prepare for this weekend's Head of the River Regatta. I was lucky enough to attend the last regatta at West Lakes a fortnight ago and to see the momentum and team spirit building towards this weekend.

I wish all crews the very best as they compete, and extend a special mention to our LTRs competing in their first Head of the River. It's a significant milestone, and we hope it is an exciting and memorable experience for everyone involved.







SENIOR SCHOOL

## Generosity and connection in the Senior School

[Kate Hanson](#)

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Term 1 has already provided many opportunities for students to gather, celebrate and contribute to the life of our community. From cultural celebrations to student-led initiatives and fundraising efforts, these moments highlight the generosity, leadership and sense of connection that continue to shape our Senior School.

### **Student Achievement**

Amber Trappel (Year 10) has been selected for the 2026 MOD (Museum of Discovery) Youth Board. This program brings together young people from across South Australia to contribute ideas and perspectives to MOD's work with youth audiences.

### **International Women's Day**

Week 6 began with our International Women's Day Assembly, hosted by the SRC Executive and the Girl Up Committee. As part of the assembly, the SRC collaborated with students from other girls' schools to produce a short film responding to this year's theme, 'Balance the Scales'. The film explored how young people can support and uplift one another in ways that contribute to meaningful and lasting change.

Members of the SRC also attended the International Women's Day Breakfast, where they heard from astronaut Katherine Bennell-Pegg and other leaders in our community. Back at school, the SRC ran a donut drive in support of Catherine House, selling more than 550 purple donuts and raising funds for women experiencing homelessness.

### **PAC vs Wilderness Netball Fundraiser**

An annual tradition, the SRC participated in a friendly netball match against Prince Alfred College, in partnership with the Girl Up Committee. The game was played in good spirit

and provided an opportunity to bring students together across schools while raising additional funds for Catherine House. Events like this continue to strengthen the sense of collegiality between our school communities while supporting an important cause.

### Lunar New Year

The International Committee, led by Paris Ung, hosted a special event to mark Lunar New Year. Students were invited to write wishes for the year ahead on cards and hang them on wishing trees, symbolising hope, good fortune and happiness. The activity encouraged reflection and optimism, while also providing an opportunity for students to celebrate cultural diversity and strengthen connections within our community.





BOARDING

## Diving into boarding life

[Carolyn Matthews](#)

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The past few weeks have passed very quickly as everyone has been busy with sporting, academic and life commitments. We all enjoyed an exeat last weekend, which was a great opportunity to spend some time away from our daily routines and enjoy downtime with family and friends. For some members of the house, it was the first time they had been home since the start of the school year.

Our family dinners have continued on Thursday nights, with short, fun competitions held at the conclusion of dinner and points being collected by a number of houses. We have enjoyed a newspaper fashion parade, picking up cotton wool balls with our noses, rolling an Oreo biscuit from our foreheads into our mouths and, this week, we will be sorting M&Ms with no hands. These activities are terrific for bringing the girls together and lifting the mood towards the end of the week.

Our house leaders have been hard at work making plans for National Boarding Week, which will be held early in Term 2. This is an Australia-wide celebration of the unique experience that boarding offers, and our leaders have big plans underway for the week. More to come on that in the near future.

All girls have been busy with their sporting commitments and this week our rowers will face their ultimate challenge of the season with the Head of the River. We wish our rowers all the very best for the regatta and hope their early mornings and busy afternoon schedules will pay dividends.

The Swimming Carnival was a popular event, as always, and our girls were certainly loud and proud when they came onto the pool deck with their chanting, posters and costumes. We were very keen to repeat our winning performance of 2025 in the eagerly anticipated

Boarders vs Day Girls annual race. The event was a closely contested lilo paddling challenge, with the day girls narrowly edging us out. It was wonderful to see friendship, camaraderie and community spirit on full display, and the girls are already determined to return next year with a win.

Activities are also a feature of the boarding calendar and we have had a number of them throughout the term. Trips to the Fringe Festival, flower picking and an outdoor cinema night are all planned in the coming weeks.

The Year 12s are acutely aware that they are in the final part of their last Term 1 and are already marking off a number of final experiences on their calendars. They have all been working with focus and determination and are to be congratulated for this, as well as the excellent example they set for the younger girls.

Boarding parents have not been left out of the fun and recently enjoyed a fantastic trip to the Riverland for the annual Boarder Parents Weekend. We kicked the weekend off with a casual dinner at the Renmark Club and the launch of the River Redgum Challenge, which saw teams competing in a number of activities. On Saturday we enjoyed a leisurely boat trip to our lunch destination at an old wool store on the banks of the mighty Murray River, and in the evening a delicious meal and signature cocktails at 23<sup>rd</sup> St Distillery. The winners of the Redgum Challenge were announced and we are all now looking forward to next year's event on the Yorke Peninsula.



