

Life in the Wilderness

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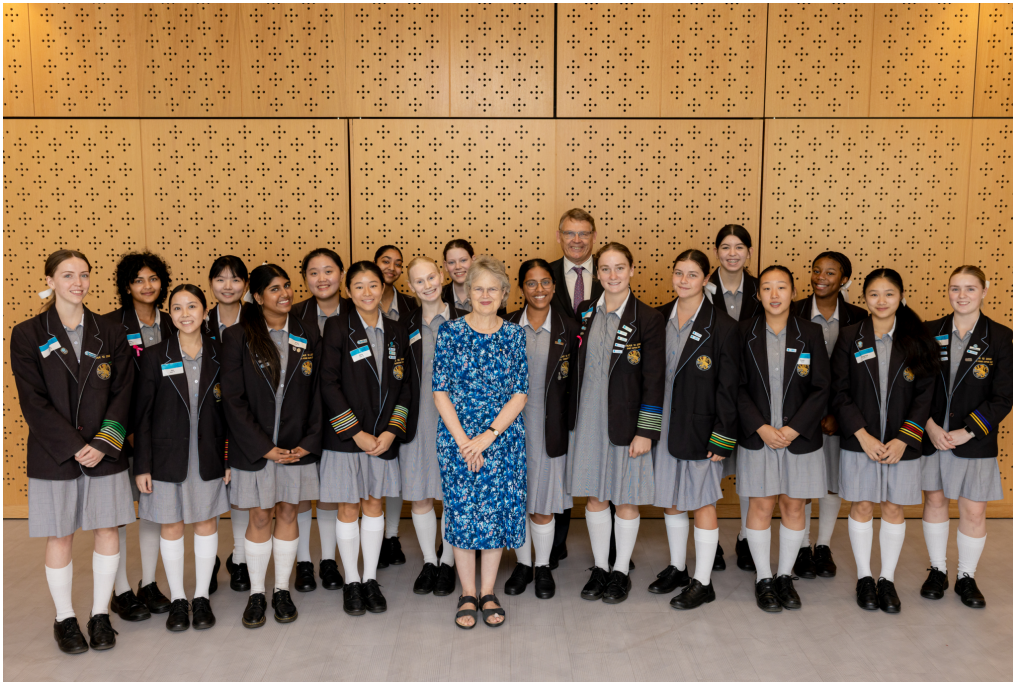
FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Accelerating Progress Together

Belinda Arnfield

This week we have joined the globe in recognising and celebrating International Women's Day. The broader implications of this year's theme, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" have been important for us to consider. In particular, how supporting women's advancement not only broadens opportunities for individuals but also enhances our collective future.

During school events to support IWD, the presence of South Australia's Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, provided a unique opportunity for some of our Middle and Senior School students to engage with themes of hope and civic responsibility. Her dialogue with the students brought forward a series of questions and reflections on what the future holds for young women in leadership and community engagement.



Similarly, the assembly led by the SRC reminded us that our girls are not just preparing to contribute to societal change, they are already active participants. Their current proactive involvement in their community is a tangible demonstration of how our girls apply essential leadership qualities already.

These events underscore the significant ripple effects of empowering women, both locally and globally. Extensive research from organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank supports this by highlighting economic gains tied to women's increased workforce participation. For instance, it is estimated that enhancing women's participation in the labour market could boost the global economy by up to \$12 trillion by 2030. Moreover, women are known to reinvest a significant portion of their earnings back into their families and communities, amplifying the positive impact on education, healthcare, and overall economic stability. This compelling data illustrates the far-reaching benefits of investing in women, not only promoting economic growth but also fostering community resilience and development.

In this light, every question our girls ask in class, every new sport they try, and every leadership role they take on, is not just about personal achievement. Each action is part of a larger narrative of progress and empowerment. This realisation encourages a reflection on how we, as a community, can continue to support our girls in realising their potential.

As we look ahead, the challenge remains to maintain an environment that not only encourages but expects meaningful contributions from all its members, fostering a world where gender equality is not an aspiration but a reality. Citizenship has always played an important role at Wilderness.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to nurturing an environment where our girls can thrive and contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world.

Belinda Arnfield

Principal





EARLY LEARNING

A Journey of Identity, Connection and Respect

Rebecca Williamson

In the ELC, we are delighted to have launched our Wonder of Me project, beginning with the All About Me Bags. Thoughtfully designed and deeply intentional, this initiative is inspired by the *progettazione* approach of Reggio Emilia, where meaningful learning unfolds through inquiry, reflection, and shared experience.

At its heart, this project nurtures each child's sense of identity and belonging. By selecting and sharing three special items—a treasured object, a family photograph, or a keepsake—children reflect on who they are and what is important to them. In doing so, they develop confidence in self-expression while strengthening their connections with others.

Equally important, this experience is about listening as much as speaking. As children share their stories, their peers are invited to listen with intention and respect. These early experiences lay the foundation for meaningful collaboration, where every voice is valued. This directly supports the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and our school's value of Respectful Relationships, fostering empathy, social awareness, and an appreciation of diversity.

Through this project, the children are taking their first steps in understanding that a community is built through shared stories and reciprocal respect. We encourage you to support your daughter as she selects her items and discusses their meaning. Your involvement deepens her learning, reinforcing that her story matters.

We look forward to witnessing the joy, connections, and insights that will emerge as this project unfolds.

Rebecca Williamson
Director of Early Years





JUNIOR SCHOOL

Caring for our Junior School Environment

[Liz McCarthy](#)

Caring for our Junior School environment has been a focus for us in Term 1 of this year and I am delighted to share that, already, there has been a noticeable change in this area. With the introduction of some new processes around lunchboxes and eating time, some lovely new seating as well as a renewed focus on how we are using our spaces, the girls and staff are enjoying a much cleaner, tidier and more useable Junior School play area. After a great deal of discussion with both staff and our girls, it was quickly apparent that so much of effecting change is to do with our habits and our 'way of being'. This is true for anything we do, whether it be classroom or home learning routines, how we engage in our co-curricular and even such things as seemingly simple as how we move around the school between lessons. The way we conduct ourselves, how we treat one another and take care of our own and collective belongings has such impact and, with consistency, forms our culture and shifts from not just how we are, but to who we are.

As a result of this, reinforcing culture in our Junior School, ensuring there is clear understanding about the way we do things and why, our 'Wildy way', ensures that the expectations and boundaries are clear but also that a sense of truly belonging is possible. When our girls feel they belong, we then see our values, about learning, citizenship and kindness, lived out authentically in our daily interactions. This starts with us holding true to the little things; the way we wear our uniforms, our manners, how we present our learning and how we show up and participate in lessons and moves to girls feeling confident to try new things, to take responsible learning risks, to be clear in their

values and to have a voice and share their thinking and ideas.

If your daughter's come home speaking about this renewed focus, about new rules and expectations, please understand that this is purposeful and forms part of a far greater picture of reflection and intentionality for our Junior School. It is something we believe in and are proud of.

The Junior School Oscars Award

Our Environment Committee have introduced 'The Oscars Award' this term. With careful checking each day, the committee leaders, Grace and Millie, make a weekly decision about which year level has the tidiest classroom area. The best year level is then awarded 'The Oscar' and gets to have a highly coveted Oscar the Grouch plush toy visit and stay in their classroom for the week. So far, the Receptions, Year 6 and Year 2 cohorts have been the Oscar recipients and the excitement each week at assembly is palpable. Well done Environment Committee for making such a positive impact!

Liz McCarthy

Head of Junior School





MIDDLE SCHOOL

Celebrating Connection

[Rhiannon Giles](#)

Earlier in the week, we welcomed back recent graduate Allegra Kleinig [2023] to unveil her portrait in the Nucleus, recognising her Bronze Bragg Medal. She spoke of her respect and deep gratitude for David Pyman, her Physics teacher for three years, and how he had played such an important role in her scientific journey.

The relationships between girls and their teachers are fundamental in fostering a supportive and empowering learning environment. Teachers serve not only as educators but also as mentors, guiding their students through academic challenges and personal growth. A strong, positive relationship between a girl and her teacher can boost confidence, encourage curiosity, and inspire a lifelong love of learning. These connections are especially significant when they empower girls to envision themselves as capable leaders and changemakers.

On International Women's Day, we celebrate the vital role that educators—especially women—play in shaping the futures of young girls. Teachers can be a source of inspiration, helping to break down gender stereotypes and encouraging girls to pursue their dreams without limitations. The bonds formed in these educational spaces help girls develop a sense of self-worth, belonging, and strength, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive world for future generations.

Below you will read about the Year 7 Camp, a wonderful opportunity for girls to form not only relationships with their Heads of House and Form Teachers, but with each other.

Our Outdoor Education program provides our students and staff with multiple opportunities to do this outside of the classroom.

Rhiannon Giles

Head of Middle School

Year 7 Outdoor Education Camp

This term, our Year 7 students had an incredible opportunity to embark on their Outdoor Education camp at Crawford Campus, set along the Coorong. The camp is a key part of their transition into Middle School, offering a chance to form new friendships and strengthen existing relationships while navigating a range of exciting and challenging activities.

The students participated in a variety of water-based adventures, including surfing at Robe, kayaking on Tintinara Lake, sailing with the Meningie Sailing Club and a camping experience at Tea Tree Crossing where they learn about the diverse waterways, ecosystems and culture on Ngarrindjeri land. These experiences deepened students' understanding of the environment while encouraging collaboration and problem-solving.

A huge thank you to all the staff who supported the students during this memorable experience: form teachers Francesca Dieu, Ruth Shrimpton, Brad Waller, Mia Ellis, and Angela Sciberras-Xiong, along with the Heads of House Andrew Mittiga, Julie Grant, Marnie Eddington, Kara Bigg, and Maria Criaris for supporting the girls throughout the camp. Special thanks to the Outdoor Education staff Jed De Ruyter, Sean Meredith, Ellie Stroeher, Holli Rawson and Imogen Batt-Doyle for facilitating such a fantastic program. Their dedication made the camp a valuable and enriching experience for all involved.

We look forward to seeing the growth and friendships that come out of this experience as the Year 7 students continue their Middle School journey.

Cassandra Marousopoulos

Outdoor Education Teacher







SENIOR SCHOOL

Collaboration and Connection

[Kate Hanson](#)

Collaboration and connection have been a strong emphasis this term; we are enriched when we connect with others in our community. The Senior Girls have been forming connections with students at other schools, learning about and from each other. Two recent events that have fostered communication and collaboration have been the Healthy Relationships BBQ with Saint Peter's Boys College and the International Women's Day film with Seymour College, Walford Anglican School for Girls and St Peter's Girls' School. These two points of connection are part of developing our girls in leadership, community and partnership.

The opportunities to connect with others – both within and beyond our school – continue to enrich our students' experiences. We look forward to strengthening these partnerships and creating more opportunities for meaningful dialogue and collaboration in the months ahead.

Healthy Relationships BBQ

Each year, our Year 11 students have been invited to Saint Peter's Boys College for Healthy Relationships Day. This year, we have started a new initiative, where we hosted 60 Saint Peter's boys for an afternoon of lawn games, BBQ and some small group sessions.

The Year 11s started the conversation about values, different perspectives and how we can engage meaningfully with each other. Later this year we connect again at Saint

Peter's Boys College with Walford Anglican School for Girls and Saint Peter's Girls School. The conversations and small groups that have formed will continue, enabling connection and dialogue between our schools.

International Women's Day

We started this week with the International Women's Day assembly, hosted by the SRC Executive and the Girl Up Committee. For the assembly, the SRC connected with other girls' schools to produce a film about how we can 'Accelerate Action', the theme for this year's International Women's Day. Their focus for this film was to explore how we can uplift each other to accelerate change. The SRC attended the International Women's Day Breakfast to hear from leaders in our community, following up with a donut drive at school.

Kate Hanson

Head of Senior School





BOARDING

Boarding

[Carolyn Matthews](#)

The last few weeks have rushed by in a sea of activities both for parents and girls.

We have had celebrations, spreading the love with Valentines Day on February 14th, through the joy of food, enjoying each other's successes and hoisting the Boarders vs Day Girls trophy at the swimming carnival. We are excited that, the trophy has gone straight to the Boyfriend room and sits alongside our new Mary Home House Cup on the mantle, the first time since 2022 that Boarders have won this event.

Girls have been busy with their various academic and sporting pursuits and are to be congratulated on how well they have balanced the competing demands on their time. Each Wednesday night we have Family dinner night, which is a great way for the girls to continue to feel connected across the house and to engage in some inter family rivalry through competitions such as donut eating and three legged race contests.

There have been activities in house, with eyes down on Saturday night for three closely contested rounds of Bingo. Despite being compulsory, for everyone but Year 12, almost all girls who were in house met in the green room for some good fun and some great prizes. Sunday morning saw a group of around fifteen girls wander down to Melbourne St in glorious sunshine for brunch. All these events and activities are vital in fostering friendship, camaraderie and a sense of belonging, everything one looks for in a boarding experience.

The end of Week 3 saw boarding parents, Belinda, Ben and myself head over to Port

Lincoln for the Boarders Parents Weekend. This was a wonderful event and showcased the local region, through visits to Coffin Bay, Yarnbala and Peter Teakle winery.

Saturday was jam packed with a morning visit to the famed Coffin Bay region where we enjoyed a short talk about the history of the area before donning our waders and venturing out to a pontoon to learn about the farming of oysters and then the shucking and eating began in earnest!! Whilst not an oyster eater myself, I have it on very good authority, that the oysters did not disappoint!

For lunch we visited Yarnbala, an appointment only property located close to Coffin Bay. Yarnbala is one of South Australia's last remaining vegetation communities of the 'grassy low she-oak woodland', supporting a diverse and dense understory of endemic species. This bushland is now regarded as 'critically endangered'. We enjoyed amazing food and beautiful wines with lots of yarning around the open-fire pit.

Dinner was also a special event held at Peter Teakle's, Line and Label. Once again we enjoyed fantastic food with wines from both the local region but also interstate. The entire weekend was one of camaraderie and great fun and would not have been possible without the efforts of Mandy Drummond, and her team of Leah Wiseman, Mandy Scholz and Therese Claughton planning a fantastic event for all.

The upcoming boarding exeat is well timed, with everyone looking forward to some time away from the house and a chance to rest and recharge the batteries, ready to tackle the remainder of the term.

Carolyn Matthews

Head of Boarding

