

Life in the Wilderness

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Our New Living Classroom

Belinda Arnfield

The generosity of our Wilderness community has a lasting impact, bringing to life meaningful initiatives like the Kitchen Garden, where learning truly flourishes.

On behalf of the Wilderness School community, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Parents and Friends Association for their generous donations to the Early Years Kitchen Garden. Their support has had a tremendous impact, through creating a valuable learning space in the school.

The Kitchen Garden is not just a garden; it is a living classroom. In planning the garden itself, some of our youngest girls researched which plants would thrive together, when to plant them, and how to care for them.

Our OSHC students are hands-on in our Garden to Plate program, experiencing the full journey from seed to plate as they grow, prepare, cook and share meals together. It is a great way to build skills, confidence and a strong sense of community.

The experiential nature of the program supports the development of food literacy and promotes healthy eating habits. Each week, the girls help select the afternoon tea menu, which gives them a sense of ownership and belonging.

The garden is representative of the value we place on hands on unique learning, and the importance of a respect for nature and place, and it wouldn't be possible without the generosity and ongoing support from our community. The Parents and Friends

Association donation has made it possible to enrich our students' learning experience and promote sustainable practices.

As we look to the future, we invite our community to continue supporting initiatives like this through the 2025 Annual Appeal. Your generosity helps create inspiring learning environments and supports students to thrive in the classroom, in the garden, and beyond.



Celebrating our Staff

This week, the 2025 Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL) SA Award Winners have been announced, recognising exceptional leadership and commitment to education. With much excitement, Heather De Blasio (Director of Leadership and Human Potential) has been honoured with the ACCEL SA Fellowship, while Mathew D'Aloisio (Head of English) has received the Pip Field Emerging Leaders Award.

A huge congratulations to Heather and Mathew for their well-deserved accolades.

World Education Support Services Day

Today we also celebrate all our incredible Professional Support Staff at Wilderness School as part of World Education Support Services Day.

From supporting daily operations, to maintaining our beautiful grounds, learning spaces, and IT systems, to fuelling our students with delicious meals, our Professional Support Staff are integral to making Wilderness such a special place.

Thank you for everything you do.

Belinda Arnfield

Principal





EARLY LEARNING

ELC Mother's Day Breakfast

[Rebecca Williamson](#)

Our ELC Mother's Day Breakfast, held on Tuesday 13 May, was a truly memorable occasion. While the setting is naturally beautiful, it was the presence of our families and the genuine warmth they brought that made the morning so meaningful. There is something deeply special about witnessing our community come together to celebrate, and it was a privilege to share this time with you and your daughters.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Vicky Zani, one of our Reception mums, for her generous support in preparing, hosting, and packing up the event. We are also so grateful to our catering team for the delicious breakfast, the Maintenance Team for their efforts, and of course, our dedicated staff who thoughtfully prepared the children's gifts and arrived early to ensure the celebration ran smoothly.

It was a special moment for all, and we look forward to many more shared celebrations ahead.

Rebecca Williamson

Director of Early Years





JUNIOR SCHOOL

An Exciting Start to Term 2

[Liz McCarthy](#)

The beginning of Term 2 is always a positive time in schools, with this year's commencement no exception. The strong relationships that have been built between teachers and students as well as the knowledge teachers have of each girl as a learner ensure that focused learning is underway from day one.

Staff Professional Development

Our staff engaged in a professional learning day on Monday 28 April, with a broad focus across the Junior School on Literacy Development. Our Reception to Year 2 staff undertook training on the use of a digital platform which provides strong assessment data in literacy for girls in these year levels. This data will be used to discern next steps for each girl and to inform future planning. Our Years 3 to 6 staff engaged in deeper learning on the planning and implementation of texts-units of learning. These units support the development of the higher order language and literature components of literacy, explicitly decoding texts and supporting students to become more proficient writers and readers. The staff worked together to build a scope and sequential learning across Years 3 to 6, choosing texts to challenge and build a love of reading in our girls. As a whole Junior School cohort, we then spent the afternoon continuing to build learning plans in Verus and preparing for our Semester 1 reporting cycle.

Mother's Day

To each of our mothers, grandmothers and those who are nurturers, I hope Mother's Day was a day of love, appreciation and time with those dearest to you. The leadership you provide in your families and the example you set for your little girls is so deeply valued and important. As a School, we see and acknowledge this and send gratitude for not only who you are within your family units but also as partners to us on your daughters learning journey. Thank you for all you are and all you do.

Year 6 Canberra Educational Tour

Our Year 6 cohort attended their Educational Tour to Canberra in Week 11 of last term. Arriving bright and early to Adelaide Airport on the Monday morning, there was palpable excitement as bags were checked and boarding passes received. The girls spent a week exploring the many important sites in Canberra, extending and deepening their learning about governance and democracy. Some highlights from the girls themselves are below:

'The place that taught me the most was Old Parliament House because it taught me about previous politicians and more about the history of women's rights.' **Evie C**

'When we visited the War Memorial, I felt so sad to think about how those remembered had left their homes to fight for Australia. There were so many names on the walls, and every person that had a name there made a difference in the war. Without them, there might not have been the Australia we live in today.' **Karla F**

'Visiting the museum of Australian Democracy and seeing where Australia's first politicians worked was an amazing experience. The House of Representatives had a green colour with a beautiful pattern and to make sure we didn't ruin anything we had to wear gloves. On the wooden table there was a gift from the Queen and important books. Next, we went to visit the Senate where everything was the colour red, symbolizing power. One exhibit that I found interesting was the place with lots of pictures and screens around the room. It interested me because of the interactive activities about democracy the screens set for us.' **Kyra S**

'The whole visit to the War Memorial was very special to me because I learn lots about the important people that helped the those in the war and the people who fought for the war. But the main part that made a big impact on myself was the nurse who helped many injured soldiers and made sure they had someone by their side and made sure their family knew they were in good hands.' **Bella M**

'Something that surprised me is that sometimes in an election, people's 2nd preference must be taken because sometimes the votes are even.' **Jessica R**

'I was pretty surprised by the structure of Old Parliament House because it wasn't what I expected on the outside or on the inside. It was quite old but I thought it was going to look older than what it was. It was really surprising to see the voting rooms and the different representatives' rooms.' **Alexandrina C**

'At the War Memorial, I found the stories and the things they went through just to give us what we have today really inspiring because they risked their lives for their country and people. But I also loved the artwork people made so we can understand and honor them.'

Elizabeth J

'I learned that Canberra was designed to be a triangle. Walter Burley Griffin designed it to look and resemble the heart of Canberra. The triangle starts from the Capital hill and goes down to Kings Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue. The triangle stops at Lake Burley Griffin.'

Samadhi N

'I was surprised to learn that you only have a weekend to place in your election votes. But if you go on holiday or can't make the election day you can put in your votes before the election day.'

Lottie D

'I think that the most interesting part of the tour was the part where we went to the House of Representatives and learnt about the roles of the different people in the Lower House, such as Minister, Shadow ministers and ministers.'

Amelia D

'I found the exhibit which displayed all the Prime Ministers in the Old Parliament House interesting because the interactive side of the exhibit was very informative, giving me a new perspective on the lives of the Prime Ministers in Parliament. It stood out to me much more than the Senate and House of Representatives because it didn't lack detail by giving more informative resources rather than the major meeting points of Parliament.'

Olivia E

'Visiting the Exhibition helped me understand more clearly where everything was laid out and I got to understand more about why and how Walter Burley-Griffin chose to align the National Parliamentary Triangle and how he decided to dig out a man-made river.'

Vasiliki N

'I found the process of the court interesting because there are a lot of different steps to go to the federal court. It was cool that we got to visit the highest court in Australia, and it really surprised me that the Australian constitution was a lot thinner than expected.'

Sophia R

'This year the year 6s went on a trip to Canberra. They had an amazing time visiting places like Questacon, Parliament house and so much more. The girls enjoyed everything, but the standout highlights were Questacon and The Institute of Sport. The girls learnt a lot on their camp and had a fun time exploring the capital city. While the trip eventually came to an end the girls took a lot of information back home to share with their families and put toward their learning. The Year 6s were true Wildy girls, wearing their uniform with pride and having a truly wonderful adventure in Australia's capital.'

Millie C

The Australian Government recognises the importance of all young Australians being able to visit the national capital as part of their Civics and Citizenship education. To assist in meeting the cost of the excursion, the Australian Government contributes funding to

Wilderness in the amount of \$90.00 per student under the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate program towards those costs. The rebate is paid directly to the school upon completion of the excursion and we are most grateful for this support in ensuring a high quality learning program for our girls.

The new and consolidated understanding and knowledge the Tour provided for the girls was exceptional however, another highlight that I was most proud of was the consistent feedback from tour guides, our bus driver and members of the public we received on the way the girls conducted themselves, their manners and consideration for others and their engagement in the educational programs. While I was not surprised at this, it is always so affirming to know that our girls represent themselves, their School and families in a way they and we are so proud of. Thank you to the staff team who attended and cared for the girls on the tour, Kate Brennan, Kieran Jackson, Isabella Kasdalis, Katie Silva, Rebecca Keller and Amali Baldwin.

Student Achievements

As always, we are so very proud of all of the amazing things our Junior School girls achieve within their school class and co-curricular learning. It is also always wonderful to hear about the incredible things so many of them undertake outside of school and we enjoy celebrating and acknowledging these also.

Year 2 student, Sam Cooper, has been invited to play in the US Kids Golf World Championship in Pinehurst, North Carolina. Testament to Sam's ongoing training, dedication and talent, this is a wonderful achievement and one which we congratulate her for. We look forward to hearing about Sam's experience in the USA upon her return in July. Congratulations, Sam!

Also in Year 2, Hannah Say has been selected to perform at two of the most prestigious music venues in the world—Royal Albert Hall and the Royal College of Music in England. This remarkable achievement is a testament to Hannah's commitment, countless hours of practice, and musical talent. Hannah is currently in the UK preparing for her performances and we are looking forward to her return.

The Coach House is getting closer

I was delighted to be able to join Belinda Arnfield and Paula Jolly on a walk-through of our Coach House, the beautiful new home for our Reception to Year 2 girls. While the finishing touches both inside and outside the space are still occurring, it was entirely possible to imagine our youngest Junior School girls inhabiting, learning and playing there. With light filled classrooms, a dedicated Maker's Space, break out areas for collaboration to the mud-laboratory, cubby-house and play equipment, each element and piece has been thoughtfully discerned to enhance learning opportunities, inspire curiosity and imaginative play and develop a deep sense of belonging. I look forward to being able to share further details with you about our expected 'move-in' date and the

celebrations that will accompany this very special and long-awaited milestone at Wilderness.

Responsible Citizens

A focus within our Junior School this term is exploring how we live out our School value, 'Responsible Citizenship'. Caring for our shared school environment, both in terms of keeping it clean and tidy while also considering the impact we can have on others through these seemingly small yet considered acts of service are an ongoing focus. Raising girls together who use their agency to do good in their community and to think about how actions affect others is an important aspect of the broader education at Wilderness.

Wishing you each a wonderful few weeks ahead as we move into cooler weather and the winter months.

Warm regards,

Liz McCarthy

Head of Junior School

Year 3 and Reception Buddies - Friendology

On 21 March 2025, our Year 3 and Reception Buddy classes came together to make friendship bracelets in celebration of Junior School Friendship Day. This special activity is part of our whole-school Friendology Program, a key element of the URSTRONG curriculum designed to help students develop the skills to build and maintain healthy friendships, manage conflict, and grow in resilience.

Lauren Whittle

Year 3 Teacher







MIDDLE SCHOOL

Culture and Wellbeing

Rhiannon Giles

Year 7 Languages

On 8 April 2025, Year 7 Chinese language students gathered in Hender Hall for a cultural immersion incursion led by Zhao Liang from the School of Chinese Music and Arts (Adelaide). The enriching session explored the beauty and significance of traditional Chinese instruments, offering students a deeper appreciation of Chinese music and cultural traditions. Through a captivating live performance, interactive workshop and hands-on instrument learning, students discovered the unity between Eastern and Western music, making it a memorable and inspiring experience.

Angela Sciberras-Xiong

Acting Head of AIF/EIF

Year 7 Wellbeing Day

On Friday 9 May, Year 7 students participated in the inspiring Enlighten Education Program, a full-day event designed to develop critical developmental social, emotional, and organisational skills required to foster interpersonal relationships, resilience, time-management, and community among our girls.

The program opened with an engaging introductory session filled with laughter and personal storytelling, with presenter Joy sharing a story about her cultural Pilipino upbringing, immediately setting the tone for the day and interweaving the key ideas about identity, values, and difference.

Students then immersed themselves in interactive workshops including “Keep Calm and

Journal On,” where they creatively expressed themselves through art and reflection; “Forever Friends,” focusing on building healthy, respectful, and supportive relationships; and “Chill Out,” teaching relaxation and mindfulness strategies to use to navigate complex emotions. They also developed essential organisational skills during “Get it Together.”

The day concluded with the powerful “More Than a Body—A Somebody” session, empowering students to critically evaluate damaging societal messages and nurture positive self-image and self-worth. Prior to leaving, students collectively acknowledged and pledged to one another how they will actively promote the key messages of the day among their cohort through a promise of respect, encouragement, and honour.

I thought we were just going to sit down and listen to someone talk to us and that this would be super boring but I was wrong! Joy was able to improve my well-being in such an incredible way. The best part of today was having the chance to say positive things about our friends and being able to learn about all the things that make are strong and powerful. Thank you for reminding me that I have the power to shape my story and the way that I speak to myself matters. Sometimes girls don’t even realise that the biggest enemy can actually be ourselves, but you’ve made me realise that I can change that.

Anonymous

Andrew Mittiga

Acting Head of Cedar House

Year 9 French Market Day

In the final week of Term 1, Year 9 French students brought Hender Hall to life with a mini-market inspired by French-speaking cultures.

From Moroccan mint tea to Belgian waffles and Brittany mussels, students used their language skills to shop, sell and negotiate—entirely in French. The activity blended culture and creativity, building confidence and connection.

Areebah Ahmad

French Teacher

Year 9 REALISE Adventure

Our first REALISE group for 2025 wrapped up an incredible adventure at the end of Term 1! The girls faced new challenges, built strong connections, and explored some new landscapes. From golden sunsets at Dyurrite (Mount Arapiles), to wild weather kayaking in the Coorong, and braving the surf at Robe, the experience was unforgettable for all. New friendships blossomed, life skills were gained, and everyone returned with fresh perspectives and lifelong memories.

Rosie Smith

Outdoor Education Teacher

Wilderness China Tour 2025

In Week 11 of Term 1, 20 students from Years 9 and 10, accompanied by three staff members, embarked on an unforgettable 17-day language and cultural tour of China. Their journey took them through the vibrant cities of Beijing, Xi'an, and Chengdu, offering rich opportunities for learning and exploration.

In Beijing, students attended Mandarin language classes and stayed at Keystone Academy, a Round Square school. There, they joined local students in classroom activities and shopping excursions, practising their Chinese in real-life settings. Highlights of the Beijing leg included visiting the Great Wall of China and learning to cook Gong Bao Ji Ding at a traditional cooking school.

In Xi'an, students explored the world-famous Terracotta Warriors and tested their cycling skills by riding tandem bikes along the ancient city wall. The tour concluded in Chengdu, where students had the unique experience of visiting a panda research centre, preparing food for the pandas, and learning about vital conservation efforts.

The trip was a remarkable blend of cultural immersion, language development, and hands-on experiences. Our students returned with enhanced language skills, a deeper appreciation of Chinese culture, and lasting memories shared with peers and new friends.

Sport Update

Our Years 3 to 12 students hit the track recently for the annual Interhouse Cross Country. Whether racing to the finish or pacing themselves, every girl contributed valuable points to her House—and the encouragement from the sidelines made it all the more special. Thank you to the parents (and dogs!) who came along to support them.

Congratulations to Sparaxis House who were the overall winners on the day!

Jonathon Koutsikas

Director of Sport and Recreation







SENIOR SCHOOL

Celebrating Student Excellence

Kate Hanson

At Wilderness, we take great pride in recognising student achievements both individually and collectively. Recent highlights include the inspiring Round Square trip to Oxford, where students engaged in global collaboration and leadership, and the spirited 'Do It for Dolly Day' Prefect Showdown, which united our community in support of kindness and inclusion, while raising funds for this cause.

Alongside these shared moments, we also celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of individual students.

Sarah Mah was recognised at the recent University of Adelaide's Awards and Prize Ceremony. She received her Certificate of Piano (2023), AMusA Diploma (2024), and the Prize for Grade 4 Musicianship (2024). This is a testament to her dedication and musical talent.

In a remarkable accomplishment, Athena-Malar Retnaraja has been awarded her first official chess title, Woman Candidate Master, by the world chess governing body, FIDE. She is the first female junior player (under 21) in South Australia to qualify for this title. Alongside her national girls' championship titles in both classical and blitz chess, Athena is a passionate advocate for supporting and encouraging fellow girls in the chess community.

Kate Hanson

Head of Senior School

Prefect Showdown

The topic of mental health has been prominent in social media in the past month with the

initiation of the USC Mind Ice Bucket Challenge, which has made conversations about mental wellbeing a priority. As an SRC team, we value these discussions and recognise its importance with young people, and so decided to support 'Do It for Dolly Day' which occurs every year on the May 9. The day raises awareness and supports Dolly's Dream, a charity which focusses on a 'kinder world, free from bullying'. On May 9, we hosted Prefect Showdown with St Peter's College, where the two SRC teams competed in a series of minigames including cake decorating, charades and a lip sync battle. As the two schools came together and demonstrated vulnerability and confidence in front of their peers, we hoped to inspire and encourage the students in our schools to be brave in approaching difficult conversations. We are very proud to announce \$550.00 dollars for Dolly's Dream, which is enough funds to support three school visits to rural communities by Dolly's Dream.

Niya Singhal

SRC President

Round Square

During the Term 1 holidays, five students took part in the Round Square Inspiring Voices: Big Baraza held at Oxford University. This extraordinary event not only deepened our students' global perspectives but also fostered invaluable connections with educators from around the world.

Through Baraza-style debating, students exchanged views on key global issues that matter in an increasingly unpredictable world. Set in iconic venues like the Oxford Union, Oxford Town Hall and Sheldonian Theatre, the conference was more than just an intellectual exercise – it was a chance for young leaders to sharpen their communication and leadership skills, fostering the importance of skills and dispositions surrounding democracy and collaboration.

Throughout the conference, staff also had the privilege of collaborating with inspiring teachers who shared their insights on nurturing global citizenship in students, the importance of cultural exchange, and how we can collectively shape the future of education. These opportunities highlight the importance for our educators and young people to engage with diverse perspectives as a means of fostering empathy, critical thinking, and problem-solving – skills essential to navigate and lead in a globalised world. These connections with both students and educators reinforced my belief that collaboration is key to creating environments that empower our students to be active, informed citizens.

On top of the academic experiences, I lead a cultural sightseeing experience in London, where our students connected with history firsthand. Alongside our Head of Senior School Kate Hanson, students engaged with historical landmarks and cultural icons, providing a pertinent reminder of the incredible potential of such experiential learning

moments. We also thank the Head of Global Learning, Stephanie Andrews for her commitment in creating these opportunities for staff and students.

The insights and experiences gained during this trip will continue to shape global learning at Wilderness School, ensuring students are inspired and equipped to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Mathew D'Aloisio
Head of English





BOARDING

National Boarding Week

[Carolyn Matthews](#)

Term 2 has got off to a busy start for the boarders with lots of activities to keep them busy.

Last week was Cross-Country which took place on a glorious Autumn morning. All the boarders were in good spirits, showing their house colours and it was great to see them competing, whether they ran, walked or skipped the course! Lots of our girls are very busy with their various sporting and extra-curricular activities and it is fantastic to see them embracing all that the school and wider Adelaide community has to offer them.

To show their appreciation to their mothers and special people in their lives, the boarders made a gorgeous Mother's Day video. They highlighted the things which they love doing with their mums, what makes their mum special and why they are so thankful for their mothers. It was a wonderful celebration of girls and their mothers.

We have continued with our weekly Family Dinner nights which are a great opportunity for the girls to get to know their other family members and to take part in small competitions to earn their family points towards our Mary Home House Cup. This is another way we continue to foster a strong sense of community and connectedness in the house.

This week we have had a jam-packed week celebrating National Boarding Week, an Australia-wide event run by the Australian Boarding Schools Association, which is the peak body representing boarding schools in Australia. The week kicked off on Monday

with School Assembly, with our Boarding Captains, Annabel and Ella showcasing where our boarders come from and what life in the boarding house is like. On Tuesday and Thursday morning we were excited to open our doors, with girls inviting a friend and form teacher to an in-house breakfast and then tour of the house. We welcomed over fifty visitors who all enjoyed the morning and got to know a little more about boarding!

Wednesday was Boarders House Day with a Supper Station at recess and then a traditional BBQ for lunch. It was lovely seeing lots of girls enjoying their lunch and then a range of games on Memorial lawns, with the Nutbush even making an appearance. The money raised from the Supper Station and Sausage Sizzle will support the Bhadure School in Nepal. The week will finish for us, with our outdoor Moonlight cinema, with lots of girls from other boarding houses. There will be fairy floss, popcorn and lollies as we all enjoy Legally Blonde together. Hopefully the weather gods will be kind and it won't be too chilly outside! All boarders have been magnificent in volunteering to help with our activities to showcase their home away from home.

National Boarding Week is also a time to not only celebrate our amazing boarders but all staff who play a role in the village which helps to raise the amazing young women entrusted to us. This includes, our catering staff, maintenance, health centre, boarding house staff and all the school staff. Boarding week also celebrates parents who make enormous sacrifices to give their girls this unique and special experience as part of their education. We will all be ready for a rest next week, with all that we have been doing over the first three weeks of term!

Carolyn Matthews

Head of Boarding





