

Life in the Wilderness

Term 4 Issue #7 | Thursday 30 October, 2025



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

From the Principal

Belinda Arnfield

The start of Term 4 is always both eventful and deeply meaningful. In just the first three weeks, our community has gathered for occasions across the School, from Grandfriends' Day in the Junior School to Year 12 celebrations and Old Scholar reunions.

Each of these events reflect the sense of belonging and connection that defines Wilderness.

Year 12 Celebrations

On Friday last week, our Year 12 students marked the final day of their Wilderness journey. Following a week of celebratory events, including their final festivities and House Breakfasts, the day began with the Walk of Honour, a treasured rite of passage.

Along the route from the ELC Annexe through the School, the Year 12 girls were met with handmade gifts, messages of love and appreciation and countless hugs. This annual tradition beautifully captures their journey through school and the lasting impact they have made on our community.

Later that evening, families, staff and students gathered at the National Wine Centre for the Valedictory Dinner. Inspired by the theme Monet's Garden, the evening was a celebration of our girls' achievements, memories and friendships, and a reflection of the strong partnership between home and school that has supported them throughout their years at Wilderness.

As they prepare for final exams, we wish our Year 12s every success in the weeks ahead and in all that follows. They leave as confident, capable and compassionate young women ready to make their mark on the world.

Grandfriends' Day

At the other end of School, the Junior School recently welcomed more than 400 Grandfriends for a heartwarming (if rather wet) morning of music, conversation and shared learning.

The day began with a Welcome Assembly featuring Junior School performances, followed by classroom visits and the ever-popular Book Fair, where girls and their Grandfriends generously selected books to donate to the Junior School Library. Grandfriends' Day remains a beautiful reminder of the power of connection across generations and the joy of learning together.

World Teachers' Day

Today we also recognise World Teachers' Day and the dedication of our teaching staff. At Wilderness, our teachers inspire curiosity, foster courage and nurture each girl's unique potential. Their professionalism and care underpin every student's journey and make this such a special place to learn and grow.

As we move into the final weeks of term, I am grateful to all who contribute to the life of our School. It is through these shared experiences and relationships that Wilderness continues to excel.

Belinda Arnfield

Principal



EARLY LEARNING

ELC

[Rebecca Williamson](#)

We have enjoyed a wonderful start to Term 4. The first few weeks have been filled with joyful play, reconnection, and the gentle rhythm of ELC life after the holidays. This time acts as a calm pause before the exciting weeks ahead, including transition visits and our much-anticipated ELC Christmas Concert and Graduation.

This term, we were delighted to welcome two new friends into our ELC community. Both girls have settled in beautifully, and it has been heart-warming to see how naturally the children have embraced and included them in their play.

A recent highlight has been the girls' involvement in creating colourful pasta necklaces for our Year 12 students as they begin their final journey through Wilderness at the Walk of Honour. It is always a deeply moving morning, and a moment that reminds us that, although some days may feel long and the little bumps along the way can seem big, the years truly pass in the blink of an eye.

Our much-loved family cooking experiences have continued this term. Last term, Natasha and her mum Kristy delighted us with delicious Bánh Mì, and this term Ava and her mum Vanessa introduced the girls to Traditional Chinese Rice Balls. These shared cooking sessions provide rich, authentic learning experiences, deepening the girls' cultural understanding, language development, and sense of belonging. We are sincerely grateful to every parent and grandparent who contributes their time, ingredients, and enthusiasm. The teachers, too, have very much enjoyed sampling the delicious creations!

Preparations for the ELC Christmas Concert are well underway, with Miss Ruth visiting more often than usual to rehearse with the girls. There is a wonderful buzz in the air as they sing, dance, and practise for this special celebration of the year that has been.

Our focus has also turned to supporting the girls through their upcoming transitions. For our Mamie girls, the move into the Annie House is a small and exciting step; for our Annie girls, the transition to Reception is a bigger leap. To make these changes feel familiar and positive, the girls have been enjoying visits to the “big girls’ playground” and spending short sessions in the Coach House, where they have loved sitting at desks and engaging in little “Reception-style” lessons. Each of these experiences helps build their confidence and sense of readiness for what lies ahead.

It is a pleasure to see every girl thriving, growing, and embracing this final term with such enthusiasm and delight. We look forward to celebrating all they have achieved as the year draws to a close.

Rebecca Williamson
Director of Early Years







JUNIOR SCHOOL

Junior School

[Liz McCarthy](#)

Grandfriends' Day Returns: A Celebration of Connection Across Generations

After several years apart, our Junior School was once again filled with the warmth, laughter, and love that make Grandfriends' Day such a treasured occasion. Held for the first time since 2019, this special day returned to our calendar after the interruptions of COVID and the excitement of recent building works. Its return was met with great anticipation, and it did not disappoint.

The morning began with a whole-school assembly, where our Reception to Year 6 girls proudly welcomed their grandfriends. The School Gym came alive with musical performances as well as a special reflection on "what makes our grandfriends special". These celebrations showcased the girls' talent and confidence and set a joyful tone for the day ahead.

Following the assembly, grandfriends were invited into classrooms to share in the girls' learning. From storytelling and art displays to hands-on projects, the classrooms were alive with curiosity and connection. For many girls, showing their grandfriends where they learn each day was a highlight and a chance to share their pride in being part of the Wilderness community.

The joy continued at our Book Fair, where girls and their grandfriends could select a book together to donate to the School Library. Each book chosen will carry a special nameplate to acknowledge the donation, creating a lasting legacy of this shared moment and a beautiful reminder of the importance of reading together across generations.

Despite a morning of torrential rain, spirits were not dampened. Laughter, conversation,

and the hum of connection filled every corner of the Upper and Lower Junior School. The morning concluded with a morning tea graciously served by our student volunteers, whose warmth and hospitality embodied the spirit of service at the heart of our school.

Grandfriends' Day holds a special place in the life of Wilderness. It reminds us that education is not only about what happens within the classroom walls but also about the relationships, values, and wisdom that surround our girls as they grow. This year's celebration was a joyful expression of belonging and a reminder that the love and encouragement of our grandfriends continues to inspire each girl to be her most true and courageous self.

Liz McCarthy

Head of Junior School





MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School

[Rhianon Giles](#)

It has been a busy start to the term for Middle School girls. The Year 7 girls enjoyed making personalised bags for the Year 12s to collect gifts during the Walk of Honour last week and presenting them with roses. The Year 8 and 9 forms also prepared gifts to give to the Year 12s as they walked past.

Year 8 Physical Education

Late last term, the Year 8 girls took part in wheelchair basketball as part of their PE program. They had been playing different sports and games with simulated disabilities to help increase empathy and awareness for people living with a disability.

VEX Robotics Competition

Congratulations to our three VEX Robotics teams who recently competed at Pedare Christian College. The Wilderness Brown Team, consisting of Reese Liu, Chenuthi Navaratne, Miaomiao Zhu, Avalene Tran, Skyler Luong, Chanulya Senaratne, and Sirui Tang, qualified for the VEX State Finals in November and won the Think Award for their coding and autonomous programming.

2025 Chinese Language Teachers Association of SA Video Competition

Congratulations to Kate Ma and Laura Xiao, who placed second in this competition. We thank the Languages Faculty for supporting the students and attending the ceremony.

Tournament of Minds

For Middle School students who participated, Tournament of Minds has truly been a highlight this year. It offered opportunities beyond the classroom and allowed students

to showcase strengths and talents that are not always visible in daily life. In ToM, skills such as public speaking, improvisation, and group organisation are encouraged, and every student has a meaningful role to play.

The Arts team's challenge focused on global unity. As a group, they reflected on communities around the globe and explored how working together can achieve more. They researched techniques from multicultural artists and choreographers. Their presentation featured five countries as characters and followed how each vision for a better future evolved during the performance.

The Language and Literature team's presentation centred on the struggles of immigrating and separating from family. Their performance conveyed themes of finding friends, making use of available resources, and passing kindness to others. They adapted a Shaun Tan book into a play, using colour to show emotion. Team members worked hard across six weeks on script writing, costumes, props, and soundtrack. Their dedication was evident in the final presentation and provided a fun and valuable learning experience.

The Language and Literature Team scored highly, and the Arts Team received Honours and the same second place. Congratulations also to our Year 10 students Ava Cabot, Hannah Elsbury Sun, Bella Nguyen, and Seraphina Sun, who completed training this year to be judges for the competition and continue their commitment to Tournament of Minds.

Oliphant Science Awards

Presentations for these awards were held at Brighton Secondary School at the end of Week 1. Congratulations to Nidhi Sinhal (Year 9) for her winning Multimedia entry.

Australian Mathematics Competition

This year the AMC Awards Presentation Ceremony was held in the Wilderness Gym. Congratulations to Chenuthi Navaratne (Year 9) who received a High Distinction and was awarded Best in School.

Extended Curriculum Cluster Group

The Extended Curriculum Cluster group ran an interschool Book Week "Book An Adventure" fantasy map and writing competition this term. It was open to schools in the hub group, with nine entries from Wilderness ECP students. Some girls spent considerable time creating intricate maps and crafting descriptions of their settings.

Outstanding entries included:

- Year 7 – Noor Jilaihawi (Overall Year 7 Winner, First Place Best Map, Highly Commended Writing), Kaitlyn Tran (Second Place Best Map, Highly Commended Writing), Emma Burns (Second Place Best Writing, Highly Commended Best Map)

- Year 8 – Issie Morgan (First Place Best Writing, Second Place Best Map), Jessica Mah and Zoe Crowther (Overall Year 8 Winners, First Place Best Map)

Music Achievements

Following the announcement that Jacey Anand (Year 9) was awarded the Gwen Robinson Prize for Music, it was wonderful to hear from her teacher, Urszula Gruszewski, that Jacey has been selected as a First Prize Winner and Grand Prize Winner of the Intercontinental Music Competition in piano. The level of performance was exceptional, making this a remarkable achievement. Jacey will perform at the Winners Concert at Carnegie Weill Hall, New York, USA, with the New York Orchestra on Sunday, November 23, 2025. Congratulations and best wishes to Jacey for her upcoming travels and performance.

We are also thrilled to share the outstanding achievements of Jessica Mah (Year 8), who has recently been awarded two First Prizes in Music. Jessica was a finalist in the MTASA Riemann-Robinson Scholarship, following a round of pre-selection. She competed against five other finalists, all highly advanced pianists, from a total entry of over sixteen students. She also participated in the Flute Society's David Cubbin Competition in the '30 and under' category. Despite recovering from a cold, she played beautifully and competed against three other advanced flautists from the Conservatorium, ultimately prevailing to win First Prize. Congratulations Jessica!

Year 8 Methodist Ladies College Exchange

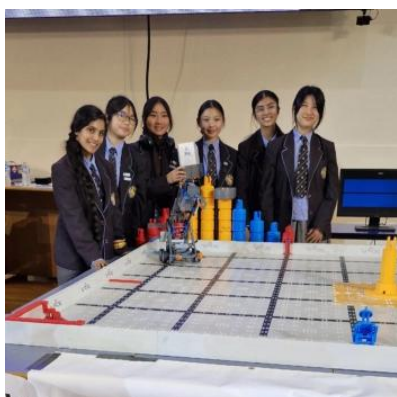
Olivia Oborn reflected on her recent exchange to Methodist Ladies College, Sydney:

"During my exchange in Sydney, I had the opportunity to step outside my comfort zone and experience life in a different environment. One of the most memorable experiences was visiting Bondi Beach. I enjoyed exploring the area, appreciating the atmosphere, and experiencing life away from home. I also valued meeting new people. Attending MLC gave me the chance to build connections with students I had never met before, which helped me feel more confident in unfamiliar settings.

The exchange encouraged independence, as being away from home meant managing my own time and adapting to a different lifestyle. My host family were welcoming and supportive, and I realised I am more capable than I thought. Overall, my time in Sydney was unforgettable. I explored new places, made new friends, and grew in independence. I am very grateful for the opportunity."

We have also welcomed Camille Sheehan from MLC for the past two weeks. We hope she enjoyed her time with the Wilderness community and look forward to future exchanges between our schools.

Rhiannon Giles
Head of Middle School





SENIOR SCHOOL

Senior School

Kate Hanson

Celebrating the Class of 2025

This term has been one of reflection and celebration for our Year 12s as they concluded their time at Wilderness with a series of events honouring their journey, culminating in the Valedictory Dinner.

Throughout the year, this cohort has exemplified their theme of SPARK through their energy, curiosity, and shared commitment to one another. Their strong sense of connectedness has been evident in every aspect of school life, from daily interactions to the way they have supported one another through challenges and achievements.

The Walk of Honour was particularly moving, capturing the warmth and gratitude felt across the school community. It served as a reminder of the special bonds that unite our students and of the lasting impact they leave on those who follow in their footsteps.

This year's Valedictory Dinner, held with the theme Monet's Garden, provided a beautiful setting to celebrate the Class of 2025. The event was brought to life by the creativity of our Marketing Department, whose floral decorations, created with the help of a group of Student Foundation girls, transformed the venue into a stunning garden.

We were joined at the Valedictory by the dedicated Year 12 teachers and staff who have guided and encouraged the girls throughout their final year. Their support, care, and professionalism have been invaluable.

As our Year 12s prepare for their upcoming examinations, we wish them every success. They leave Wilderness ready to contribute their own spark to the world beyond our gates. Though their time as students draws to a close, Wilderness will always remain a place of

belonging, a community that will continue to welcome them home, Always True.

SRC Changeover

At the start of the term, we held our SRC Changeover Assembly. This service is particularly special as we thank the outgoing 2025 SRC and induct our incoming 2026 SRC. The 2026 SRC have already begun planning their theme and the SRC Big Lunch, which will be held later this term. Orders for ribbons and the SRC Big Lunch will be available on Flexischools soon.

Kate Hanson

Head of Senior School





BOARDING

Boarding

[Carolyn Matthews](#)

It was lovely to welcome all our girls back to the boarding house after the holiday break. Everyone returned in good spirits and eager to have the term underway. The focus of the first two weeks was in farewelling our gorgeous Year 12 cohort.

They commenced their boarding house farewell with an outing to Friend of Franki in Hyde Park, where they each made a charm bracelet which is one of their farewell gifts from the house. The girls all chose one charm the same, a lock, to signify that they share a common connection. We enjoyed dinner out together and returned to the house in high spirits.

One of our Year 12 boarders, Annika Hancock, exhibited her year-long folio work in the Year 12 Art Show. Her pieces were quite the talking point of the exhibition and reflected all her hard work and efforts over the year.

The Year 12s enjoyed a sleepover on Wednesday night in the green room with sleepover bags and the Barbie movie for entertainment. I'm not sure how much sleeping was done but a good time was had by all! Thursday night, the girls were farewelled by the boarding house. With a spring theme, invited guests, and a special appearance by Mr Manifold, there were beautiful, thoughtful, and heartfelt speeches from the girls to their special Year 12. At the dinner, the girls received their handmade charm bracelets and in keeping with the spring theme, a celebratory bunch of flowers. The night was planned and led by our new House Captains, Bea and Mimi. Annabel and Ella made thoughtful final speeches as the outgoing Captains. Both our old and new Captains did an amazing job on the night.

Whilst the focus has most definitely been on farewelling our Year 12s, there have been activities which the girls have enjoyed over the first two weekends. They enjoyed a Paint

and Sip with mocktails, where many fine self-portraits were painted. A group of girls enjoyed a Sunday spring outing to the Adelaide Hills, where they each picked a bunch of flowers for their rooms. It was a lovely outing and a stop at Yochi on the way home made the morning complete! Weekend activities are such an important part of the boarding program and experience and really do help to foster that all-important sense of community.

Last week our Boarding House Captains for 2026 attended a day of leadership training run by the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA). Our new leaders worked their way through the program run by Burn Bright alongside 200 other boarding leaders from not only Australia but also overseas. It was a great opportunity for Bea and Mimi to further develop their leadership skills and to meet with student leaders from around Australia.

This week the Year 12s have been working hard preparing themselves for their upcoming exams. They have been working diligently and with focus and are well placed to do their best. We will all wish them the best of luck as their exams start next week.

This week we also announced the winning family in our inaugural Mary Home House Cup, which was the initiative of this year's Captains, Ella and Annabel. We enjoyed a celebratory supper with the most enormous cake, decorated in red for the winning family: Dutton. Congratulations to Dutton and we are so proud of the lasting legacy that Annabel and Ella have left here at Mary Home House.

Carolyn Matthews

Head of Boarding







ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement: We wish to acknowledge the State Government for providing funds to our School towards the provision of a new play area in the Lower Junior School.
