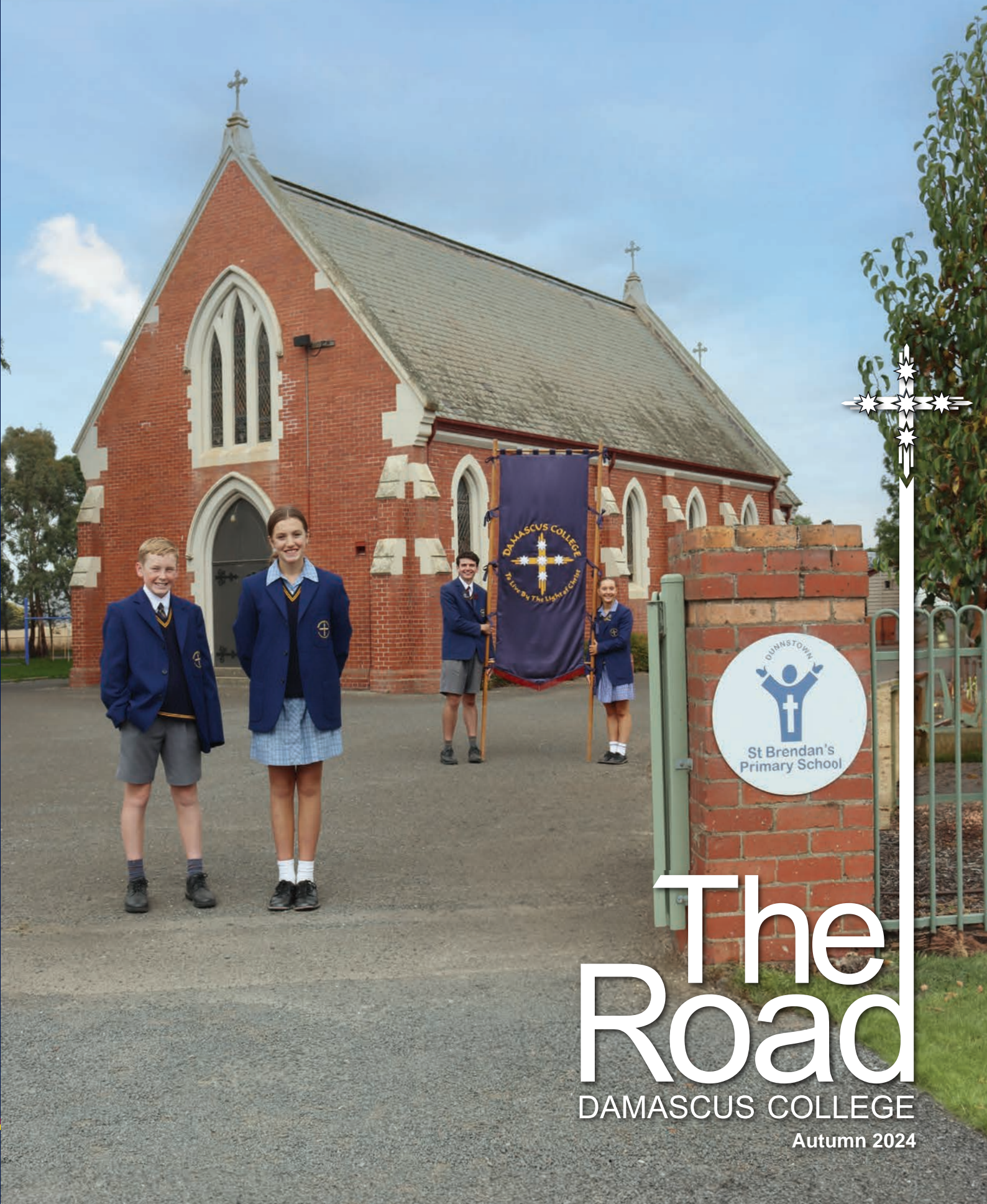


The beginning of a new era at
St Brendan's, Dunnstown



The Road

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

Autumn 2024

FRONT COVER

DUNNSTOWN

Cover: The beginning of a new era at St Brendan's, Dunnstown

Pictured on the front cover are Year 7 students Xavier Staley and Leni Romein, and 2024 College Captains Lucas Wells and Paris Govan, holding the Damascus College banner in celebration and honour of a new era beginning for Damascus at the St Brendan's Primary School site in Dunnstown.

With an exciting Year 8 program commencing in 2025, Xavier and Leni will have the benefit of experiencing educational activities at Dunnstown throughout their full six years at Damascus College. Earlier this year, they visited the site to participate in their Year 7 reflection day, which was the start of many more life-giving and spiritual experiences for Damascus students at Dunnstown.

Read more about the history of the St Brendan's Primary School in Dunnstown, and the exciting future for its use as part of Damascus College. These stories can be found on pages 6-9.

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Steven Mifsud at Head of the Lake

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

STEVEN MIFSUD

As a community, we continue to grow, be challenged and be our best by living by the light of Christ. As a College community, we continue to revisit our Mercy Values and heritage, determined not to lose sight of our blessed charism. A charism that celebrates the fullness of life and provides an anchor for each of us to centre ourselves and to be our moral compass.

I want to take the opportunity to welcome you to the 2024 academic school year. This year, the College began with 1210 students with nine core groups at Year 7 and a staff of over 180. We continue to grow as Ballarat's only Catholic co-educational secondary school.

Each year, on the first day of the school term, we gather as a community to be people of hope and hospitality, welcoming new students, and new staff. Each year, our Year 12 leaders choose a song that values inclusion and inspiration. This year, our students chose Drew Holcombe's song, 'Find your people,' a song that recognises that we can only grow as people if we surround ourselves with people who understand, challenge, and celebrate our individuality. Our young people need to find their tribe, their people. People who will give them energy, embrace their quirkiness, and help them become the best version of themselves each day. At Damascus College, we provide our young people with many opportunities to find their tribe, and their people. The sense of tribe is evident as we explore this edition of The Road.

At our First Assembly, we explored our College theme for 2024,

'Living Mercy.' This year, we will explore these values and embed them in our interactions and behaviours.

Damascus College claims the Mercy Values as crucial aspects of our Mercy tradition. We aspire to see these values in our work, in our school and in our community.

Respect: To see the goodness in everyone we encounter. To be self-aware, reflective, and respectful of uniqueness in embracing or interconnectedness with all God's creation.

Compassion: To recognise the suffering of others with gentleness and kindness. To answer the call to action by not being bystanders in times of challenge. To understand that compassion is a decision, not a feeling.

Justice: To recognise, respond, speak out and act whenever injustice is seen. We are inspired by Jesus Christ to be stewards working together to make our planet more peaceful, sustainable, and just.

Courage: To act with integrity when attitudes and social barriers stand in the way of ethical living and decision-making. To be resilient and have grit to meet the demands of our Christian mission, in encountering injustice and actively working towards a more equal and equitable future for all.

Service: To serve and not be served. To be generous in sharing our talents and resources so that no one might be in need. Being of service to others in an act of gratefulness and, in turn, offers thanksgiving to God.



Steven Mifsud with student medalists at the 2024 Swimming carnival

Hospitality: To open our hearts and homes to welcome the stranger. To move beyond our comfort zone to create an experience of 'home' for others.

As we enter the Easter season, we are people of the Resurrection, people who live the resurrected Christ in and through our relationships in the here and now, on this earth. The Easter story is one of hope, transformation, and new life. We are called to bring the Reign of God into our everyday lives by living and sustaining deep and profound relationships and community.

Damascus College continues to celebrate the gift and talents of each and every student. Our mantra, to 'be my best,' was certainly embraced by our 2023 Year 12 cohort. The College was pleased to receive the results of our VCE and VM (Vocational Major) students of 2023, and they are a testament to the thirteen years of hard work and tenacity of our young people. These students experienced two years of remote learning during their senior years and achieved some excellent results.

I am excited to announce the following results from our students who achieved an ATAR of 90+

- Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley – 97.30
- Josephine Bantick – 94.80
- Sophie Busuttill – 92.60
- Audrey Merlin - 92.10
- Daisy Simpson-Kerr – 92.05

The College VCAL Dux was Joshua Matheson.

At the conclusion of the 2023 school year, we gave thanks to the staff who concluded their time at the college: Joanne Lawrence,

Susannah Berens, Brianah Walsh, Christine Gawne, Sally Murphy, Michelle Jans, Eloise McGifford, Jasmina Kirkham, Misty Duncan, Lauren Stirling and Justin Marson. Each has had extensive careers at Damascus, and I thank them on behalf of the generations of young people that they have educated.

We welcomed a number of new staff: Narelle Dixon, Amy O'Loughlin, Peter Hexter, Mikhaila Picone, Rachael Thompson, Andrea Hadley, Gavin Webb, Stephen East, Jayde McSparron, Jessica Simon, Tegan Heinrich-Morrison, Jasmine Beaumont, Katelyn Clark, Danielle Nyikos, Kiky Amelia, Lois Stiles, Jack Mattinson, Geraldine Ewing, Alan Ng, Katrina McMahon and Toni Schiltz.

I wish to acknowledge the work of our School Advisory Committee. Thank you to the members Lucy O'Beirne, Brett Holloway, Emily Clarke, Fr. Marcello Colasante, Sr. Marie Davey, Christopher Grant, Cassie Lindsey and Lisa Mitchell, who provided counsel and encouragement to the College.

This year ahead provides us the opportunity to be an even better school. A College rich in self-reflection, an aspirational school that promotes the best learning outcomes for each and every student – meeting them at their point of need. To grow, to be my best, to be our best and to be your best.

I am so excited about the College's commitment to explore the St Brendan's site at Dunnstown. We anticipate that the old primary school, with a rich connection to the people of Dunnstown and the Parish of Bungaree, will continue to provide Catholic Co-education as a satellite site for our Year 8 students who will spend a term there developing their Damascus Learner Attributes.

Our work with MacKillop Education and the embedding of Reframing Learning and Teaching Environments (Relate) will ensure that our classroom pedagogies meet the needs of young people.

We will continue to focus on building authentic relationships through our Teacher Advisor Program, and classroom experiences will ensure each learner is named and known, promoting personal excellence and challenge.

In partnership with the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited, the College has embarked on the School Improvement Framework. Our purpose is to reflect on our Strategic Plan and our performance for the past four years. The community is engaged in both reflective and forward-thinking practices, ensuring Damascus continues to grow as a Catholic School of First Choice. Employing the Characteristics of Highly Effective Catholic Schools staff, students, and parents will create a shared vision and goals to steer the College into the later part of this decade.

Our Master Planning keeps moving at a phenomenal rate. Our new building is meeting the key timelines and we can already begin to visualise the magnitude and adult learning environment we are creating for our young people.

2024 is both a year of consolidation and growth and I am grateful for the support of all members of our College community. May we continue to excel as leaders of Catholic co-education blessed by the Charism of the Sisters of Mercy and nurtured by the Diocese of Ballarat.

With every blessing,

Steven Mifsud, Principal, Damascus College



Steven and Fraser at horticulture market on campus



International Womens Day 2024



Easter Lentern Liturgy 2024



Students at St Brendan's Dunnstown

THE END OF AN ERA, BUT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ONE

DUNNSTOWN

St Brendan's Primary School in Dunnstown had its origins in 1858 in a wooden building known as the Catholic School Shed, situated not far from its present Dunnstown site, to cater to the educational needs of local Catholic children.

Throughout its history, the school has been staffed by a combination of religious orders and lay teachers. The Sisters of St Joseph taught there for ten years, the Presentation Sisters for forty-four years and the Sisters of Mercy for thirteen years, as well as the dedicated lay teachers who have taught in the school. Above all, as history shows, it has been the continuing support from the community that has enabled the school to endure and prosper for so many years.

Most notably, in 1900, St Mary MacKillop visited the Sisters of St Joseph in Dunnstown to provide guidance. Consequently, the Sisters were broken up and became two separate orders, the Black Josephites and the Brown Josephites.

The Josephites named the school St Brendan's around 1900, but when the Church was built on the school site in 1905, and the school was moved to an area behind the Church, it was renamed St. Mary's.

In 1952 the school was placed under the patronage of Our Lady of Fatima, and was known as Our Lady of Fatima School, and was the first school building in the Ballarat Diocese to be dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

In around 2008 the school reverted to the St Brendan's name bringing it back into line with the naming of the church.

Community involvement continued to the day it closed its doors in December 2023 due to low enrolment numbers, where the success of the school and Catholic Education depended mainly on the partnership between the community and the teaching staff.

Upon the closure of the Primary School in December 2023, the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCCEL) announced that Damascus College will continue the provision of Catholic education on the Dunnstown site, and Damascus now looks forward to working with the Parish of Bungaree and the Dunnstown community.

In 2024, Damascus College has formed a working party to design and develop an exciting new learning experience for Year 8 students. Assistant Principal of Learning & Teaching, Mr Ashwin Pillai, is the chair of the working party and provides an account of the plans for the St Brendan's Dunnstown Programme at Damascus.

While the Dunnstown community bids farewell to the St Brendan's Primary School, Damascus College will carry forward its legacy and cherish the values instilled since its establishment in 1859. It is the end of an era for St Brendan's Primary School, but it also marks the beginning of a new one for Damascus College.

My Dunnstown experience so far

Hi, I am Xavier Staley, a Year 7 student at Damascus College, and I am the Year 7 SRC representative for St Martins House in 2024.

My Damascus College journey has been pretty good so far. To commence the year, we went out to St Brendan's Primary School at Dunnstown for Reflection Day, and to Creswick for Camp. All of these journeys have been memorable.

My favourite experience so far has been playing for the Damascus College cricket team, where we have had a few wins along the way. Reflection Day was also a cool experience being out at Dunnstown for the day, making new friends and playing cricket on the oval with everyone. It is a very small and quiet little place, but sometimes it is a good thing to be away from school and off campus for a bit.

As a Year 8 student next year, we will get the opportunity to be on the Dunnstown site for an extended period which should be heaps of fun. I cannot wait for the opportunity to meet new people and to be off campus, experiencing different things. I am looking forward to a different type of school life when we are at Dunnstown, away from other year levels at school. It should be a great experience for all.

I am looking forward to all of the available sporting events and taking on new opportunities like the SRC. I cannot wait for what the future holds for me as a Damascus College student.

Xavier Staley, Year 7 student



Sharon Lehtonen and Xavier Staley, Year 7 student

Looking forward to making new friends

My name is Leni Romein, and I have recently started my journey at Damascus as a Year 7 student.

The past seven weeks have been challenging and exciting. Finding new friends and classrooms has been a struggle for me, but with the help of the lovely staff and students, they have made it so much easier.

One of my favourite memories so far was the Year 7 camp out at Creswick, as we got to push ourselves out of our comfort zones with activities like the leap of faith and the giant swing. I loved the challenge, and it was a great opportunity to make new friends and share laughs.

When Year 7 students went to Dunnstown, it was an enjoyable experience painting a banner and writing letters to our future selves. I liked the big area to run around in, and the classrooms were a good size, with plenty of room to fit lots of people.

Next year, Year 8 students will spend more time there, which I think will be a great way to spend a term. Learning in the new Dunnstown environment would allow me to get closer to friends and make new ones.

Leni Romein, Year 7 student



Leni Romein, Year 7 student



From left to right:

Ashwin Pillai, Xavier Staley, Paris Govan, Steven Mifsud, Sharon Lehtonen, Leni Romein and Lucas Wells at St Brendan's, Dunnstown

THE ST BRENDAN'S DUNNSTOWN PROGRAMME

A YEAR 8 INITIATIVE

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16, NRSV)

These profound words of Jesus remind us that we each have a light within us meant to shine for the world. At Damascus College, guided by our motto, "To Live By the Light of Christ," we have embarked on an exciting new endeavour to help students shine their lights brighter.

In 2025, we will launch the innovative St Brendan's Dunnstown Programme for Year 8 students on the historic St Brendan's Primary School site in Dunnstown. This transformative programme will build on a rich 141-year legacy of Catholic education in the district, dating back to the pioneering Sisters of Mercy, who first brought holistic learning and faith to the young people of this community.

By reviving the name of St Brendan's for this cutting-edge programme, we pay tribute to those educational pioneers who came before. Their vision and service inspire us still today. At the same time, we are reimagining their mission for the 21st century context. How can we take the values they held dear – compassion, justice, respect, hospitality, courage, and service – and express them in new ways relevant to today's rapidly changing world?

Our driving question captures the spirit of this endeavour: "How can we shine a light on the Dunnstown community and catalyse transformative action by creating an innovative programme that empowers students to reach their full potential?"

This question speaks to our belief in the potential of all young

people to make their mark on the world when given the right opportunities and support. Adolescence is a critical time when students' lights can either shine brighter or begin to dim. Research shows that engagement and wellbeing often decline in Year 8, a trend exacerbated by the transition to secondary school and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our data from ACER's Social Emotional Wellbeing surveys and internal metrics aligns with these patterns, suggesting decreased wellbeing and connectedness amongst our Year 8 cohorts. We aim to reverse this trend by designing an innovative programme tailored to the unique developmental needs of early adolescents in today's rapidly evolving world. The programme will provide enhanced social-emotional support while equipping students with essential future-focused skills and competencies.

To bring this vision to life, I have assembled a team of passionate, creative educators from diverse backgrounds to serve as a Working Party. We come from across disciplines and year levels, bringing expertise in pedagogy, curriculum design, Catholic culture, wellbeing, behavioural science and more. Together, we will collaborate this year to ideate and develop the curriculum and learning experiences for the programme's 2025 launch.

We have been charged with thinking outside the box, drawing on emerging best practices from around the globe. The Working Party will have the autonomy to create a truly innovative programme – one that integrates academic, social-emotional, and faith-based learning in new ways. Key decisions will be made collaboratively, from the daily timetable to the flagship projects students will complete.

Learning will come alive through immersive, multidisciplinary projects focused on real-world problems connected to three themes: leadership, stewardship, and social justice. By taking action on issues they care about, students will develop critical 21st-century skills while also making a positive impact on the school, local and global communities.

Four key spheres of learning will nurture the growth of not just the intellect but the whole person – head, heart, body, and spirit:

- Focused Learning through Critical and Creative Thinking
- Cultural Awareness and Global Citizenship
- Mercy Tradition and Transformative Action
- Spiritual Formation

By interweaving these four elements with experiential learning as the vehicle, we aim to catalyse holistic transformation within students. They will grow in knowledge, compassion, purpose, and wisdom.

Living out the Mercy values of respect, compassion, justice, courage, service, and hospitality will be central to the programme. Students will gain a global outlook and intercultural understanding while also being empowered to act within their local context as forces for positive change. They will carry forward the spirit of Catherine McAuley, who served the marginalised and vulnerable with such care.

Ultimately, we hope that students will emerge from this programme knowing they have a light within and feel empowered to shine that light in the world with empathy, integrity, and moral courage. They will be leaders guided by their faith and equipped with the knowledge, skills and heart to tackle injustice and serve their communities.

As philosopher Simone Weil wrote, “All true education grows out of the roots of the past, but sow’s seeds for a richer future harvest.” This programme represents that spirit - honouring the legacy we have inherited while innovating with the future in mind to help our students grow.

At Damascus College, we have a saying: “Be My Best, Be Your Best, Be Our Best.” This programme embodies that spirit of striving for excellence as individuals and as a community. It represents the next chapter of Catholic education in Dunstons, one that honours the district’s proud learning heritage while also innovating with the future in mind.

We believe this immersive approach will reignite the passion within students to be engaged, motivated learners. By shining a light on the legacy of St Brendan’s and the longstanding spirit of Catholic education in the Dunstons community, we aim to reveal the potential waiting to be ignited within every child. Our students’ lights are meant to shine, and this programme will help them glow more brightly.

Mr Ashwin Pillai, Assistant Principal, Learning & Teaching





STAFF PROFILE

STEPHEN EAST

In 2024, Damascus College welcomes Mr Stephen East to the newly created role of Leader of Mission, within the Catholic School Culture Team. We were lucky to spend a moment with Stephen, where he shared his aspirations for his contribution to Damascus in this important role at the College.

Thanks, Stephen...

It is always a daunting experience to start somewhere new. It does not matter if you are someone with years of experience, or just fresh out of school, there is always at least a hint of anxiety when you step out to a new beginning. As daunting as it is, I am very excited to be taking on the new role of Leader of Mission at Damascus College. I am energised by the possibilities that the role may entail, and I am very much looking forward to working with the staff, students, and families to make Damascus College a dynamic and faith-filled community. I want to thank the staff and students for their warm welcome, which has allowed me to settle in nicely over these past couple of weeks. As well as my leadership position, I am currently teaching Yr 8 English, Yr 9 and 10 RE, Yr 12 Youth Ministry and one VCE Music period a fortnight.

For the previous nine years, I held several leadership positions at Marian College Ararat, including Head of Music, Head of RE and

Assistant Principal: Student Pathways, Organisation and Catholic School Identity. Before this I taught at St Patrick's Primary School in St Arnaud, mainly in the middle years, but also holding leadership positions in RE as well as other areas.

Providing quality Religious Education has always been central to my work as a teacher and is the core business of any Catholic school.

Religious Education is not limited to the periods of RE lessons that we have throughout the week. The Catholic School Culture team oversees the planning of the RE Curriculum, Liturgies, Retreats, Youth Ministry, JAG, and Sustainability. However, RE is not simply limited to these areas. It is in all interactions that we share with one another so that our God given human dignity is always preserved. Through my role as Leader of Mission, it is my responsibility to support the Catholic School Culture team, as well as the wider school community, to ensure that we are all providing quality faith-based experiences that invite others to share in our faith journeys and grow in a deeper understanding of the world we live in.

It is important to note that while Damascus College is a Catholic school, we are inviting people of all faiths and traditions to take up the opportunity to work, learn and grow together so that we can all be our best.

Though teaching Religion is something that I whole heartedly enjoy, it was music that first got me into teaching in the first place. I have been playing brass since I was 8 ½ years old, starting on the Baritone before moving on to the Tuba in Year 7. Since year 7, I began attending an annual music school that is held in different towns around the Wimmera and Mallee districts during the June/July school holidays. After completing all the theory grades provided by the school (Grade 6 followed by an extra harmony grade), I was asked to come back as a member of the staff.

First, as an assistant, to support a 'main' teacher, then as a teacher in my own right, where I have taught Grade 3 theory for over 20 years! The music school also gave me an introduction to conducting, which allowed me to develop my skills in conducting various ensembles of different ages and abilities. This experience led me to conducting opportunities with the Haddon Community Concert Band and then the Beaufort Municipal Band, where we won the State Championships in 2010. In 2019, I was the musical director for Ararat Musical Comedy Society's production of Les Misérables, which was an incredible experience.

I am looking forward to sharing all that I have to offer with the Damascus College community. One of the first goals placed before me is to ensure that our School Environment Management Plan is revised and actioned so that it correlates strongly with the key goals of the Laudato Si Action Platform. This will be done through the lens of our Mercy Values and will ensure that ecological education is a core business for the faith life of Damascus College, bringing to life what Catholics proclaim in our Eucharistic Prayer that "All creation rightly gives You praise."

Mr Stephen East, Leader of Mission, Damascus College





CATHERINE MCAULEY

OUR MERCY HERITAGE

In 2024, Damascus College embraces the theme of “Living Mercy” as we explore the life and legacy of Catherine McAuley, the remarkable founder of the Sisters of Mercy.

Catherine was an Irish woman known for her profound faith and compassion towards those in need. Born into a privileged family in Dublin, Ireland, on 29 December 1778, she grew up in a time when laws imposed significant challenges on the poor, especially Catholics. Catherine’s father, a devout individual, instilled in her a deep awareness of the struggles faced by the homeless, sick, and uneducated, especially among young women. From him, Catherine inherited not only practical wisdom but also strength of character.

At the age of five, Catherine experienced the loss of her father. For the ensuing two decades, she relied on the charity of Protestant relatives for her livelihood. Eventually, she found companionship with Mr and Mrs Callaghan, whose lives were profoundly impacted by her acts of charity and Christian example. Moved by her influence, both Mr and Mrs Callaghan chose to be baptised before their passing. Following their deaths, Catherine inherited Coolock House along with the Callaghan fortune, becoming its sole heiress. With a burning desire to provide care and refuge for Dublin’s homeless, she embarked on realising her dream.

On 24 September 1827, coinciding with the feast day of Our Lady of Mercy, Catherine established the “House of Mercy.” Her dedication to serving people experiencing poverty knew no bounds.

Catherine’s House of Mercy quickly became a beacon of hope, attracting numerous volunteers eager to join her cause. Together, they provided education, practical skills training, and employment opportunities for young women. Catherine’s mission extended beyond mere material support; she also emphasised instruction in the Catholic faith and the importance of visiting the sick and impoverished in their homes, endeavours that held a special place in her heart.

Over time, despite Catherine’s original intentions, her group of women evolved into a new religious congregation within the Church. On 12 December 1831, the first Sisters of Mercy pronounced their religious vows with Sister Catherine as their leader. Their compassionate works expanded as they extended aid to all in need, caring for the sick, managing hospitals during epidemics, providing shelter to orphans, and aiding those in distress.

Catherine, a deeply Christ-centered woman, endeavoured to address both the spiritual and material needs of those seeking help, striving for love, justice, and knowledge.



The Sisters of Mercy quickly spread their mission to England, the United States, Australia, and beyond. Inspired by Catherine's example, they fearlessly embraced hardships in their commitment to "implant Jesus Christ in the hearts of the poor."

Sister Catherine McAuley died in Dublin on 11 November 1841. Her life had been one of incredible generosity, spent in serving others. She had given her wealth to provide for their welfare, to lessen their sufferings, all the while herself enduring much misunderstanding and many trials and hardships.

On 9 April 1990, after much research into Catherine's life and works and lengthy discussions on all aspects of them, a Commission of Cardinals and Bishops in Rome agreed that she had led a life of heroic Christian virtue; this being so, they bestowed on her the title of Venerable Catherine McAuley - an indication that one day she may be declared a saint of the Church - Catherine was thus acknowledged a woman of God - one who simply followed the voice of Christ in relieving the suffering and injustices around her.

While Damascus College opened its doors in 1995, that was by no means the beginning of our story.

In 1881, Mother Agnes Graham, Sister Philomene Graham, Sister Xavier Flood, Sister Joseph Howard, and Sister Bridget Cousens left Warrnambool to establish the Ballarat East Convent of Mercy in Victoria Street, marking the beginning of Sacred Heart College (SHC).

Though the exact opening date of Sacred Heart College is uncertain, by March 1881, the Sisters were already providing music lessons to local girls. Official approval for the school arrived in 1887, with 18 boarders and 90-day pupils accommodated by 1888. By the 1960s, Sacred Heart College's reputation had grown so much that enrolments exceeded capacity. Consequently, the Sisters of Mercy established St Martin's in the Pines, a senior College, at our Mount Clear site for Year 11 and 12 students. The amalgamation of Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College, and St Martin's in the Pines in 1995 led to the formation of Damascus College. This new institution, Damascus College, built upon the strengths of each founding school while continuing the Mercy traditions and charism initiated by Catherine McAuley in Ireland in the 19th century.

Images used courtesy of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Archives.





Sharon Lehtonen, Sr Veronica Lawson and Steven Mifsud

LIVING MERCY

2024 COLLEGE THEME

The beginning of the school year is both an exciting and daunting time. As I look to the year ahead, I see many opportunities for our families to partner with us in the holistic growth and development of the students. It is also an opportunity for us to grow as a community.

Damascus College is a community that has a faith identity, grounded in a story, the story of Jesus Christ. We are unique in the way we express our faith as we have the heritage and charism of the Mercy tradition to guide us. Therefore, we have a particular way of acting and seeing the world.

This year, we have chosen the theme 'Living Mercy,' and we will spend the year exploring each of the values. This theme will create opportunities to help us grow a deeper understanding of how the values underpin our lives and our community. Living the values is an opportunity to reflect on our words, thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

We aspire to see these values in our work, in our school and in our community.

Respect: to see the goodness in everyone we encounter. To be self-aware, reflective, and respectful of uniqueness in embracing our interconnectedness with all of God's creation.

Compassion: to recognise the suffering of others with gentleness and kindness. To answer the call to action by not being bystanders in times of challenge. To understand that compassion is a decision, not a feeling.

Justice: to recognise, respond, speak out and act whenever injustice is seen. We are inspired by Jesus Christ to be stewards working together to make our planet more peaceful, sustainable, and just.

Courage: to act with integrity when attitudes and social barriers stand in the way of ethical living and decision-making. To be resilient and have grit to meet the demands of our Christian mission, in encountering injustice and actively working toward a more equal and equitable future for all.

Service: to serve and not be served. To be generous in sharing our talents and resources so that no one might be in need. Being of service to others is an act of gratefulness and, in turn, offers thanksgiving to God.

Hospitality: to open our hearts and homes to welcome the stranger. To move beyond our comfort zone to create an experience of 'home' for others.

In a special presentation at the Opening College Mass, Sr Veronica Lawson presented Mercy Values posters to our House Leaders for distribution across all year levels.

'Living Mercy' calls us to be compassionate people who not only see a need but do something about it. It calls us to seek justice, not only for ourselves, but for all of God's people, to 'love our neighbour', and care for all creation as God calls us to do.

The call to live the Mercy values is a challenge, which requires us to show courage, as being the people we need to be is not always easy. As people of hope, we can reflect and ask ourselves: Where did we find Mercy today? What did it look like? On days when things do not go as we planned, we might ponder, what might Mercy look like tomorrow?

Sharon Lehtonen, Assistant Principal, Catholic Culture

SHINING LIGHT AWARD

for inspiring alumni

The Damascus College Shining Light award celebrates the outstanding achievements of extraordinary alumni in a diverse range of fields and areas of endeavour. It recognises alumni whose service has made a significant contribution from local to the global community.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2024 AWARD INDUCTEES



Anne Tudor OAM

Service to the
Community Award
Class of 1967



Dr Jason Kelly

STEAM Achievement
and Academia/Career
Excellence Award
Class of 1991



Pete Gervasoni

Academia/Career
Excellence Award
Class of 1994



Samuel Rizzo

Young Achiever Award
Sporting Achievement
Class of 2018

2025 NOMINATIONS OPEN JUNE 1 2024

Categories for nomination include:

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY • STEAM ACHIEVEMENT
SPORTING ACHIEVEMENT • ACADEMIA or CAREER EXCELLENCE
FAITH DEVELOPMENT • YOUNG ACHIEVER

Simply complete a short nomination form:

damascus.vic.edu.au/community/alumni/shining-light-award



Ebony O'Doherty-Bowman, Class of 2019

BREAKING BIAS

ALUMNI STORY

Being a hands-on learner, Ebony always knew that she wanted to work in the trade industry. For someone who enjoys critical thinking and problem-solving, Ebony found herself drawn to the electrical industry.

Ebony O'Doherty-Bowman graduated from Damascus College in 2019 and is currently in her third-year apprenticeship at Powercor as a Meter Technician.

Initially not knowing exactly what career path she wanted to take after graduating, Ebony completed her Year 12 exams, got an ATAR and kept her options open. After graduating she worked at Bunnings full-time whilst figuring out what career path she wanted to take. Ebony had an interest in working in a trade, so she applied to study a pre-apprenticeship course (Certificate II in Electrotechnology) at Federation University.

Following the pre-apprenticeship course, Ebony went on work experience for three months in both the commercial and industrial electrical sectors, when she found the opportunity arise for apprenticeships at Powercor. After a lengthy hiring process, Ebony was a successful applicant for the apprenticeship and eagerly embarked on her career as an electrician.

Ebony has worked at Powercor for just over two years now and describes it as the best decision she has ever made.

"Going into a trade is one of the smartest decisions I have ever made. You learn real-life skills that will help you in every aspect of your life. I ended up choosing electrical as it was one of the more interesting trades and is a relatively clean trade," said Ebony.

Working in a non-traditional female role, Ebony says that she has felt nothing but support and encouragement.

"I get asked if I have come across any challenges as a female in a male-dominated industry a lot and personally, I can happily say no."

"On any job site that I have ever stepped into, I have always been supported and encouraged. I have never felt like I did not belong where I was. Especially at my work currently, my work colleagues and boss are nothing but amazing," said Ebony.

Ebony approaches her career as a tradesperson with determination and a can-do attitude and encourages others to follow their desired career path and not to let any gender-based bias discourage people from having a go.

"For anyone feeling like they might face gender-based bias, from what I have found, if you are willing to give something a red-hot crack and put your best foot forward 99% of the time, you are going to be supported and encouraged."

"Employers want to see that you are genuinely interested in what you do, show initiative and ask questions if you do not know," said Ebony.

During her time at Damascus, Ebony is grateful for her leadership roles as an SRC representative in Year 7 and McAuley House Captain in Year 12 and shares how they helped shape her in her role today.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the leadership roles, as they helped me to become the person I am now. I pushed myself outside of my comfort zone and had to learn how to communicate effectively with my peers and teachers at the time."

"To this day, I have found those skills essential, especially in my day-to-day work as we deal with customers and the general public on a daily basis," said Ebony.

Outside of work, Ebony enjoys going to the gym and working on her car. She is incredibly proud of her pride and joy - her XR6 ute, "I have worked hard to get it where it is and how it looks, and I love it," says Ebony.

Since graduating Ebony is proud of her work ethic and determination to get to where she is today, continuing to work hard in her apprenticeship, and learning and developing in her career as an electrician.





2024 COLLEGE CAPTAIN

PARIS GOVAN

I am Paris Govan, and I am proud to be one of the 2024 College Captains alongside Lucas Wells.

I come from a family of five, including my mum, dad and two brothers: Kalle, my older brother, who graduated from Damascus in 2022, and Kieran, my younger brother, who is currently in Year 9 here at Damascus. We also have a dog named 'Salty' and a cat called 'Chocy'. Outside of school, I work at Racers Bar and Café on the lake, so if you are ever in the area, pop in and say hi because I would love to see you. I also dance outside of school at Versatility Dance College, where I have been for the past 15 years.

Whilst I have always loved being part of leadership opportunities throughout my time at Damascus, I was truly honoured and shocked that I managed to achieve this wonderful position. It means so much to me that my cohort trusts and believes in my abilities, and that is why I was chosen as one of the College Captains. During my time as captain, I hope to give back to the community that has done so much for me during my time here. I also hope to inspire great Damascus pride throughout the College.

During my time at Damascus College, I have made so many wonderful memories through the extracurricular activities we have to offer. One of my favourites that I have continued through my six years here at Damascus has been rowing. I have made so many amazing friends and learnt some essential life skills, such as persistence and responsibility. Although I have not been in the rower's seat for a long time, I was able to find my place as a coxswain. It is truly rewarding being able to sit in the boat and see the sheer determination that comes with being a Damascus rower.

I love the community presence at the College, where no matter what

it is you are trying out for, there is so much encouragement that comes from all the teachers and fellow students.

For my first year out of high school I do not have a set plan just yet, but I hope to spend some time travelling and doing some mission work in South Africa. After taking some time off I am hoping to do a psychology course as I plan on becoming a school councillor in the long run.

Some advice I would give to parents looking at choosing a secondary school, is to choose one that aligns with your top priorities. Whether that be the number of extracurricular activities the school offers, the values that the school holds, or even how accessible the school is for your child. In this way, I believe that Damascus has a place for everyone. The college offers so many opportunities that are available to everyone, and the staff and student culture makes all people feel welcome and included.

Some advice I would give to students who are starting Year 7 is to get involved in any and every opportunity out there. Although it might seem like you are doing too much, I can assure you that you will find a path that suits you and that you can continue through your six-year journey at the college. For example, during my time here, I have tried my hand at being part of the Student Representative Council (SRC), debating team, BAS swimming and athletics, rowing, Final Hours/ school productions and the Justice Action Group (JAG). Although I did not continue all these things, I have made so many friendships with lots of wonderful people and found what I love most which is being an advocate for all students to create change within the community.

Thank you.

Paris Govan, Year 12 student and College Captain



2024 COLLEGE CAPTAIN

LUCAS WELLS

My name is Lucas Wells, and I am one of the 2024 Damascus College Captains alongside Paris.

I am immensely excited to be granted this wonderful leadership opportunity and look forward to what I can achieve over the coming year. To me, being College Captain means promoting every student to “Be Their Best” while striving to be my personal best at every available opportunity and in all regards. I am looking forward to getting to represent the school at a range of events, having already done so as a part of the Spit Crew for Head of the Lake and at the Project Compassion Commissioning Mass, and acting as a voice for the student body of the college, advocating for positive change.

My family has been a vital element of my life and greatly influenced the morals and values I possess. Both of my parents have been my main role models, alongside my older sister Amy, who graduated from Damascus in 2022.

At school, I must admit that I enjoy all my subjects, so picking a favourite would be tremendously difficult. The sciences of physics and chemistry allows the exploration of how and why things work, English promotes critical analysis, mathematical methods provides valuable abilities, and specialist mathematics is a fun challenge. Last year, I accelerated the completion of what has been my favourite subject over my time at Damascus, systems engineering, where students get to design and build various electronic and mechanical projects.

What I enjoy most about being at Damascus is the various extracurricular activities I am involved in. These include the Student Representative Council, Justice Action Group, Sustainability Committee, Debating and Public Speaking, and most notably, the Sustainable Racing Team (SRT). Through SRT, I have had many favourite memories so far at Damascus. The three Maryborough

Energy Breakthrough events I have attended rated high, with the two class-winning years of 2022 and 2023 certainly standing out.

Outside of school, I am an active firefighter with the CFA, having been a junior member from 2017 to 2022. The CFA has been and continues to be a vital aspect of my life, as it is the soul of the town that I am from, and is a way to gain new and varied skills. Currently, the predominant sport I am involved in is competitive firefighting, which fills up my Sundays for the first term.

Following the conclusion of my time studying at Damascus College, I hope to move to Melbourne and commence a Bachelor of Agriculture at the University of Melbourne. Coming from a family farm on the outskirts of Ballarat, in the town of Elaine, I have been surrounded by farming all my life and would love to pursue a career in that field. My time at Damascus has certainly influenced this desire, with my enjoyment of science subjects such as physics and chemistry prompting me to aspire to a career as an agricultural scientist.

Beyond telling them to go to Damascus College, a piece of advice I would give a parent when choosing a secondary college is to go somewhere that offers a broad range of opportunities so that their children can be exposed to as many things as possible, something that I have found incredibly enriching to my secondary education.

The advice I would and have given to new Year 7’s starting at Damascus is to get involved. At swimming sports or in class, the Justice Action Group or Sustainable Racing Team, get immersed in as many of the great opportunities that are available at Damascus, as they are invaluable towards your secondary schooling experience.

Thank you.

Lucas Wells, Year 12 student and College Captain



Guest speaker, Cara Waters

2023 AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENT EVENING

DAMASCUS EVENT

The 2023 Awards & Achievement Evening was held on Tuesday, 5 December at the Federation University Founders Theatre. This event recognised students throughout 2023 who have achieved academic excellence, general endeavour, and sporting endeavour, as well as age group champions.

The special guest speaker was Cara Waters, Class of 1996, and she shared insights into her personal journey after high school, emphasizing the value of taking risks. She encouraged individuals not to fear changing their path if their current direction doesn't align with their aspirations.

After earning her law degree from the University of Melbourne in 2002, she practiced as a corporate litigation solicitor for six years at Mallesons Stephen Jaques in Melbourne (now King & Wood Mallesons) and Linklaters in London. Later, she pivoted her career towards journalism, studying at Lambeth College in London. She served as the start-ups and technology editor, editor of SmartCompany, and worked as a journalist for The Financial Times' website FTAdviser.com and The Sunday Times website in London. Currently, Cara Waters holds the position of city editor for The Age.

Year 12 student Elarin Johnson and Year 11 student Declan Eden entertained the guests with a drama performance from The Addams Family school production, titled 'Happy Sad.' The Damascus Choir delivered a beautiful rendition of 'Another Day of Sun' from La La Land. The third performance was a video compilation celebrating Year 12 Visual Arts & Technology work, and it was inspiring to hear why the students chose to produce their artwork.

The 2023 Senior Art Acquisition Prize was awarded to Year 12 student Brynne Milne for her painting on a wooden panel titled 'Kairosclerosis.' The 2023 Junior Art Acquisition Award was presented to Year 9 student Laura Stone for her clay creation of an owl titled 'Il Allocco.'

There were many notable awards and scholarships presented, including the new Mercy Education Award, which was presented to Year 12 student Felix Moore.

Finally, staff member Mr Alan Strange received the Catherine King Community Shield for his extraordinary commitment to the Damascus community, through his dedicated work in the Damascus Sustainable Racing Team.



Presentation of Awards



Awards Performance of The Addams Family Musical

2023 SPECIAL AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Award	Name	
2023 VCE Dux - Yvonne Aitken scholarship	Sara Abu Asbeh	2023 VCE Dux
2023 VCAL Dux	Jack Mattinson	2023 VCAL Dux
Debating Award	Zoe Newman	11
Bill O'Loughlin English Endeavour Award	Macy Donaldson	11
Bill O'Loughlin English Endeavour Award	Benjamin Watt	11
McNeil Cup - BAS Tennis	Jarrod Joyce	11
BAS and SSV combined 9 hole Golf Champion	Keira O'Beirne	9
Sports Person of the Year	Alice Lepair	12
Damascus College Academic Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Isabeau Turner	7
Damascus College Arts Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Ava McLeod	11
Damascus College Sporting Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Mason Sutton	8
Dorothy Irene-Ellis Thomas Scholarship	Poppy Rowland	12
Dorothy Irene-Ellis Thomas Scholarship	Rohan Saha	12
Diocese of Ballarat Scholarship	Milan Pilmore	10
Sisters of Mercy Dorothy Griffin Scholarship	Haileigh Buttigieg	10
Sisters of Mercy Dorothy Griffin Scholarship	Luke Eddy	10
Damascus College Academic Honours	Sara Abu Asbeh	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Elarin Johnson	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Jessica Hodge	12
Damascus College Academic Honours	Leah Stevens	12
Catherine King Community Shield	Alan Strange	Staff



Giovanni Piazza, Class of 2012

NAVIGATING THE PATH TO SUCCESS

ALUMNI STORY

To mark reaching a professional milestone, Giovanni Piazza, Class of 2012, has generously sponsored the introduction of a new Business Entrepreneur Award for a Year 12 Damascus College student.

During his time at Damascus, Giovanni battled with his studies, not identifying himself as academically inclined. "I struggled with academic pursuits and never considered myself particularly inclined in that area. My interests leaned towards more practical subjects like Physical Education, Food Technology, and Business. I had the privilege of having Sharon Wolfe and Isabelle Miller teachers, whose guidance I truly treasured during those formative years."

However, Giovanni's aspirations took an unexpected turn when an injury derailed his initial career path. A broken bone shattered his dream of enlisting in the Australian Defence Force, forcing him to reconsider his future. Coming from a small, local Ballarat family, Giovanni persevered through setbacks and eventually found himself working in business management with KFC. Subsequently, a recommendation from a family friend led Giovanni to embark on a career in real estate. "Real estate was never on my radar, but I decided to seize the opportunity," Giovanni recounts. "And it turned out to be a pivotal turning point in my professional journey, finding something you are interested and passionate about"

Embracing this newfound career path in 2016, Giovanni found fulfilment and success and recognition at state level within the industry as a licensed real estate agent and auctioneer. "Real estate offers me the autonomy to pursue my interests and the flexibility to maintain a balanced lifestyle," Giovanni explains.

What Giovanni finds most gratifying about his profession is the opportunity to interact with a high number of diverse individuals daily and deliver exceptional results for his clients. With Harcourts Ballarat and Ray White Ballarat merging, Giovanni eagerly anticipates joining one of Ballarat's largest real estate firms. He'll continue supporting his extensive client base in their property transactions and developments across Ballarat and its vicinity. "Building meaningful connections and helping clients achieve their real estate goals brings me immense satisfaction," Giovanni remarks.

Reflecting on his formative years at Damascus College, Giovanni underscores the importance of altruism and making a positive impact. "My experiences at Damascus instilled in me the values of empathy, compassion, and community service," Giovanni reflects. "And those values continue to guide me in my personal and professional endeavours."

Giovanni advises current students to explore passions, stay resilient through challenges, and pursue excellence. "Persevere, experiment, and stay true to yourself," he suggests. "Success follows dedication, but true fulfillment comes from pursuing what you love."

Giovanni's journey from high school struggles to philanthropic endeavours serves as a testament to the power of resilience, determination, and generosity. Through his example, Giovanni inspires others to embrace their unique paths and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Giovanni Piazza, Class of 2012

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

DAMASCUS EVENT

On Friday, 8 March, Damascus College celebrated International Women's Day by holding a Breakfast Q&A event for parents, staff, and students at the Damascus Events Centre.

Guests were treated to a sumptuous continental breakfast and a panel of two inspiring speakers, including Sister of Mercy and Biblical Scholar Veronica Lawson RSM and Julie White, Director of Environmental Evolution & Training Facilitator Extraordinaire. Both ladies are past students of Damascus College and Sacred Heart College.

Sr Veronica and Julie spoke beautifully, as they shared their individual journeys as women and their perspectives on women in leadership in current society. They each shared some learnings experienced throughout life that the audience took away with a feeling of empowerment in today's world. Throughout the event, insightful questions were asked by the audience, that allowed the conversation to be relatable and transferable. The two guest speakers also spoke of the males in our society that support women to shine and the need to support and celebrate these men, as advocates for women's equality.

A lunchtime event was also held in the Auditorium specifically for Damascus students, where Ebony O'Doherty-Bowman, Class of 2019 attended as the special guest speaker. Upon graduating, Ebony became an apprentice electrician at Powercor.

The auditorium was full of students who asked some outstanding questions, enabling Ebony to share how she got into the trade and the subjects she studied at school that allowed her to follow her dream. Ebony's story visibly inspired students, as she showed the grit to follow a non-traditional path and is excelling as an electrician. She gave numerous tips to the students, including the notion to follow their dreams and not be put off if their chosen profession was traditionally male-dominated.

International Women's Day is a great way to celebrate the women in our community for a higher purpose. Let us work together to forge a more inclusive world for women collectively.



Julie White, Class of 1994



Sr Veronica Lawson, Class of 1958



Ebony O'Doherty-Bowman, Class of 2019



SRC PRESIDENT

CALEB SMITH

Hello, my name is Caleb Smith, and I am in Year 12 and have been at Damascus since Year 7 when I started all the way back in 2019.

In my spare time, I love playing basketball and football, which includes coaching my younger brother. I also enjoy going to the gym in the morning before school.

To be elected the SRC president by my peers, especially by those close to me, means a considerable amount. I know that it will push me to excel in my leadership and allow me to become more of a positive role model, especially for my younger siblings.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2024, I am looking forward to utilising everyone's talents in the SRC to plan successful days for the rest of the Damascus community and leaving the school in an excellent place for the next people to come through as students, as a part of the SRC, or even the next SRC president.

As a Year 12 student, it does seem quite daunting that in less than a year, I will be 18 years old and moving on in my life after I finish school. However, throughout the rest of the year I am looking forward to all school events, such as the swimming carnival, athletics day, and anything else that is worth getting involved in.

When I finish Year 12, my mates and I are looking to travel across Europe in a gap year, most specifically in France, after I get into a business or commerce course at university. I plan to attend Deakin when I return and open my career pathways as much as I can so that I can really do whatever I want.

Caleb Smith, 2024 SRC President



2024 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

STUDENT LEADERS

POSITION	Mc AULEY	ST MARTIN	RICE	XAVIER
School Captains			Lucas Wells	Paris Govan
House Captain	Lucy Leviston	Zoe Kierce	Tara Orchard	Emily Crumpler
House Captain	Ella Turpie	Freya Palmer	Chelsea Oellering	Melanie Coffey
House Captain	Zoe Newman	Aila Bergstrand	Harrison Kennett	Caleb Smith
House Captain	Macy Donaldson	Brayden Joyce	Ray Glover	Campbell White
Year 11 SRC	Leila Haddad	Kylan Jans	Angus Kasbach	Charles Snare
Year 10 SRC	Jack Leech	Lucy Gravell	Millie Baker	Samuel Handreck
Year 9 SRC	Billy O'Kelly	Dilana Romeril	Emily Meade	Duke Pilmore
Year 8 SRC	Ella Gordon	Jameson Reus	Heidi Jones	Pippa Berry
Year 7 SRC	Molly Young	Xavier Staley	Charlotte Jurgens	Leni Romein



Br Scott, C1990s

BROTHER BERNARD JOHN SCOTT

CHRISTIAN BROTHER

Brother Bernard John Scott was born in Preston, Melbourne, in 1934 and embodied all the qualities displayed so proudly by the local Preston community – he was solid, hard-working, dependable, and self-effacing. A 14-year-old Bernard entered St Endas's Juniorate in Strathfield before beginning his novitiate in Minto, returning to Strathfield to complete his teacher training.

Brother Scott began his teaching career at St Augustine's, Yarraville, before going on to teach at schools throughout Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania. 22 years were spent in Ballarat, with an early stint teaching at St Paul's in the early 1960s before returning as Principal from 1973 to 1976.

Brother Scott was known to devote himself wholeheartedly to each community he was stationed in and was greatly admired for his integrity and commitment. Over time, he became a highly skilled coach of both gymnastics and swimming and under his guidance, many students experienced great success in these sports.

Brother Scott was deeply committed to his chosen life as a Christian Brother. He had an incredible generosity of spirit and shared his gifts willingly with those who surrounded him. An avid ornithologist, his love of birds took him on travels around the country.

He was President of the Ballarat Bird Observers Association for many years, until he died in 2011, and would spend long hours driving around the country in search of both common and rare birds alike. Brother Scott was able to combine this hobby with another of his passions – photography. The photographs Brother Scott took while on staff at St Paul's reflect his unique ability to perfectly capture the special moments in college history, now saved for posterity.

In Brother Scott's final months, he was honoured to receive a Papal award for his long and distinguished devotion to the church, with his outstanding service to his community and his conspicuous zeal noted.

The Papal Awards, also known as Papal Honours, are distinctions conferred by the Pope to individuals for their exceptional service to the Catholic Church or society. Brother Scott passed away in 2011, aged 76, having lived a life of integrity devoted to his God, his church, and his community.

With thanks to the Kelty Archives, Parkville



Br Scott while on staff



Sacred Heart College Schoolaerobics team 1993

SCHOOLAEROBICS 1993

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Throughout the years, the college has taken on many popular sports with enthusiasm, perhaps none more so than the aerobics craze of the 1980s and 1990s.

Stretch fluorescent lycra arrived at Sacred Heart College (SHC) in 1993 with the decision to enter both a senior and junior team in the 'Schoolaerobics' competition.

After a gruelling audition process, twenty-one eager students were selected to form the two SHC teams. Students committed to training a minimum of three times a week, including weekends, with increases to this in the lead-up to the competition.

The intense training schedule paid off, as both the junior and senior teams progressed through to the State Championships. Training intensified in the lead-up to states, and once again both teams

experienced success - the Junior team winning the title of State Champions and both teams moving through to the Australian Championships.

Anticipation reached a crescendo on a cold day in August when the teams donned their bright orange leotards and danced their hearts out – aerobics style. Both teams performed admirably, but it was the Junior team's day, taking out the title of Junior Australian Champions.

Despite being heard vowing to never again train another group of over-excited schoolgirls, the frazzled coaches bravely retook the plunge the following year in the hope of backing up their previous victory.



French sister school visitors



French visiting students in science class



Steven Mifsud with visiting sister school teacher

FRENCH SISTER SCHOOL VISIT DAMASCUS COLLEGE

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

It was with much anticipation, excitement, and delight that Damascus College hosted visitors from our sister school in Angers, France, Saint-Benoit School, from 4 to 15 March 2024.

The group comprised eleven students with their teacher, who were billeted with host families from our wonderful Damascus community. During the fortnight they immersed themselves in Damascus school life in a typical Australian school. They then journeyed to Sydney for a week to conclude their Australian Tour.

During their visit, they participated in many excursions, activities, and experiences to give them a taste of Australian life. Upon arriving at the Damascus campus, they were greeted by a group of kangaroos that frequent the Damascus beautiful bush setting – perfect timing!

Learning Area Leader of languages, Finian Augustin, said that the city of Angers is a city of comparable size to Ballarat, located about 250 kilometres (or 1 hour 21 minutes by fast train) to the west of Paris.

“Angers is located in the famous provincial Maine-et-Loire region and surrounded by beautiful nature. Our respective cities could well be sisters as well,” they said.

“Saint-Benoit School is part of a larger multicampus Catholic institution in the centre of Angers, with an innovative educational structure offering courses that include a strong scientific, digital and linguistic identity, and optional artistic, sporting, linguistic and technological courses.”

“Australia and France share significant events in history, as well as the core values of freedom and democracy. The relationship between our nations is strong, yet it should not be taken for granted, as relationships take effort to maintain. Our bilateral relationship begins with individuals and with face-to-face interactions,” they said.

“We are proud of the work of our host families in helping to build and keep those relationships strong. The students from both countries will be great ambassadors for both Australia and France.”

The guests were welcomed with a special morning tea with Damascus staff, where they were treated to some Australian delicacies, including tim tam biscuits, lamingtons, vegemite scrolls, caramello koalas, and more.

YEAR 7 CAMP REFLECTION

RUBY JAMES

Hi, my name is Ruby, and I am in Rice House. At the start of Term 1, all the Year 7 students in Rice arrived at the Log Cabin Camp in Creswick for camp. When I first arrived at camp, we all put our bags down and met in the foyer to learn more about camp and what activities we were going to do while staying there.

Once we got into our activity groups, they sent us to our first activity. Mine was the giant swing. I was scared at first but after seeing some other people do it, I was a bit more confident. My favourite activity was the leap of faith because I was not too scared, and I jumped straight off and hit the ball. Some of my other favourite things at the camp were going swimming in the dam, canoeing, and even things as small as free cabin time to hang out with all my friends.

The thing I liked most about camp was probably growing stronger friendships with people and making new friendships with people that I would have never talked to if it was not for camp. All of the activities helped to develop my strengths as well as taught me new ones, and I learned more about how to put on a harness and even got over my fear of heights.

All of the teachers that went to camp were so nice and I was so happy I got to meet them all. I am excited for all future camps throughout high school and am grateful to have had this experience.

Ruby James, Year 7 student



Leap of Faith



Canoeing



Year 7 Rice House
Ruby James, first on left from front of second row



ASPIRING NEUROLOGIST

HAILEIGH BUTTIGIEG

Year 11 student Haileigh Buttigieg dreams of one day becoming a Neurologist or a doctor of the brain, as she puts it.

From an early age, Haileigh said she has been interested in how the brain makes the whole-body function.

"Without the brain, we would not be able to create memories, or be able to learn new things," she said.

"I like to ask questions, and Science provides the answers to them. At age 10, I was inspired by paramedics who saved my sister's life following a freak accident at home. From that point forward, I knew I wanted to study medicine so that I could help people in the same way those paramedics helped my sister."

In Year 10, Haileigh spent work experience at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI) in the immunology laboratory with WEHI Laboratory Head Professor Misty Jenkins AO and Co-Head of Research Strategy, The Brain Cancer Centre.

This work experience opportunity came about due to Haileigh's

involvement in the Girls in Stem Program through Federation University Tech School.

This innovative program addresses the under representation of girls and women in science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM). Ballarat schools select female students to spend two days in each term visiting the Tech School to experience and build confidence around STEM subjects, and to encourage the pursuit of careers in STEM fields.

Throughout 2023, Haileigh became a leader with the Girls in Stem Program, where she mentored other young girls interested in STEM, participated in leadership days, and met community members who visited the Tech School to meet with students and become future mentors.

Haileigh became a leader of this STEM program and was selected to participate in the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, where she was selected to film a special interview with Professor Misty Jenkins AO.

Through this interview Haileigh learnt so much from Misty about the subject of science and was further inspired to follow her dream of becoming a neurologist.

"Misty taught me to learn how to learn and not to be afraid to be myself and to push for the goals I would like to reach. She is a big idol of mine," she said.

"I learnt to surround myself with people that support me and that will help me never to give up. The Girls in Stem program was one of the best decisions I have made and has offered me so many opportunities."

Misty encouraged Haileigh to have mentors in her life, as they are an essential part of the journey, and spoke on the importance of goal setting and teamwork. Misty shared some advice for females aspiring to be scientists, and encouraged young girls to overcome imposter syndrome, to be curious and to be the one asking the questions in class.

"It was so astonishing to see that a teenage girl from a small country town was personally asked to be part of such a big video project that will be seen all over the world. Like Misty said, "Scientists are just normal people", so although it was a bit nerve-racking, it was easy to be part of the environment."

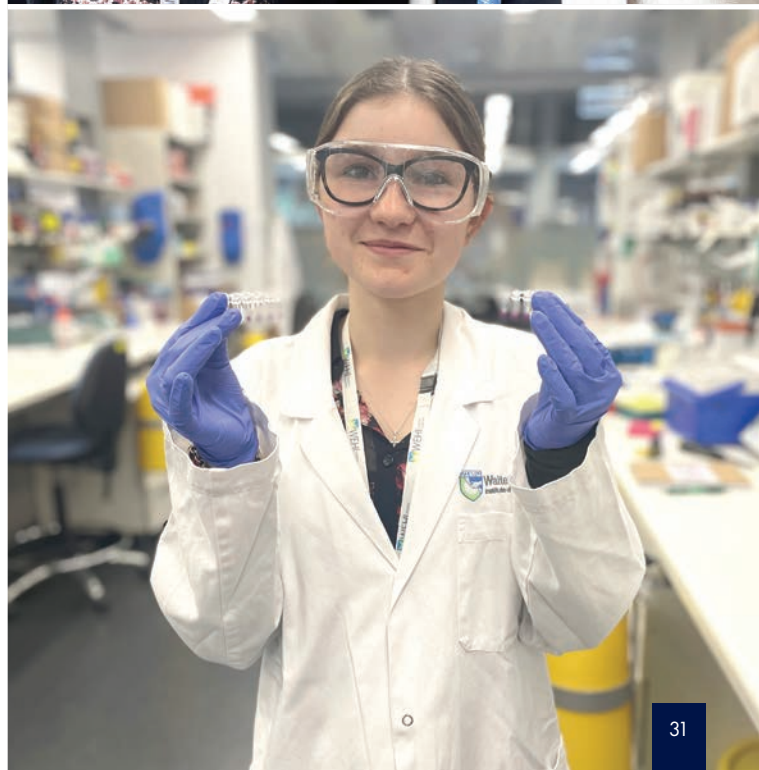
Though understandably awed by the occasion, Haileigh exuded poise and professionalism. Her grasp of the issues demonstrated a wisdom beyond her years. This extraordinary young woman is a role model to all students - especially young women considering careers in STEM. She illuminates a path forward, guiding others to fulfil their potential.



Haileigh at Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research



Haileigh with Professor Misty Jenkins AO





Anton Wilson, Class of 2003, teaching at Damascus College

A PATHWAY TO TEACHING

ALUMNI STORY

Anton Wilson, Class of 2003, has experienced a diverse career path before stepping into the classroom as a teacher, equipping him with many first-hand skills and experiences that he brings to the classroom, a classroom that he once sat in as a student.

Being both a past student and a technology and systems engineering teacher here at Damascus College, Anton has the unique opportunity to teach alongside many of his former teachers and in the department which was the stepping stone for Anton's first career path into cabinet making.

Mr Boadles's Year 10 woodwork class was a favourite of Anton's, and it was during a week of school-based work experience that he was presented with the opportunity to go into full-time work as an apprentice cabinet maker at Brownway Joinery.

Having his family's support, Anton took advantage of the opportunity, unenrolled from Year 10 and commenced his

apprenticeship. Anton worked in cabinet making for nine years, with one of those years working and travelling abroad in the United Kingdom.

Anton then journeyed from cabinet maker to flying instructor. Once returning from his time abroad, Anton studied for his Commercial pilot's licence and instructor rating whilst working at a local cabinet maker. After completing the training, it was then time for Anton to put the tools down and fly into his new career as a flying instructor at the Ballarat Aero Club.

Working as a flying instructor for five years, it was during this time that Anton found his passion for teaching. He particularly enjoyed training the VET aviation program students to fly, every Tuesday and Thursday through the secondary school VET network in Ballarat and surrounds. It was this that sparked Anton's interest in a career in education.

Anton has worked in education for six years now and joined Damascus last year, teaching systems engineering, woodwork and metal across all year levels.

Anton said building positive relationships and watching students develop and learn is one of the areas he enjoys most about teaching.

"I enjoy all of the teaching in general, but if I were to choose one area I really enjoy, it is working with students to develop their ideas and concepts into an end product and helping them learn the new skills needed along the way," said Anton.

Since joining Damascus College, Anton has supported the introduction of a laser cutter and engraver to the Technology Department and shared the advantages it brings for students.

"Students get the opportunity to build skills using Computer-Aided Design (CAD) to prepare their projects for the laser cutter, as well as 3D printing, and these are critical skills needed in the workforce.

It also allows students to get a higher quality finish and take on larger projects with the time saved, in comparison to making by hand," said Anton.

Anton's trade experience is imparted into the classroom and creates opportunities for students to learn different skills and equipment that are used in the workforce.

Anton is proud of his career path since leaving Damascus and is grateful for the different experiences and opportunities that have followed.

"I am happy that I have tried different areas of work from cabinetry to aviation, to now teaching - a role that I really enjoy. I encourage anyone, if they want to give something different a try, then go for it! There is no lost time, and you get the opportunity to develop different skills and experiences along the way."



Anton with students at the laser cutter and engraver





VCE VOCATIONAL MAJOR YEAR 12 CAMP

DAMASCUS CAMP

Autonomy, independence and encouraging student agency are always at the forefront of the VCE Vocational major (VM) learning intentions and success criteria.

The VCE VM (formerly known as VCAL) program at Damascus College is the largest it has ever been, with just under 100 students in Years 11 and 12 in 2024.

The program has a strong emphasis on essential employability skills, including communication, teamwork, ICT, learning, organisation, time management and problem-solving. These skills, along with the five pillars of the program: Motivation to engage in learning, Applied learning practices, Student agency, Student-centred flexible approach and Assessment practice, which promotes success, are the underpinning core beliefs for the program.

For our Year 12 students undertaking the Personal Development Skills class, part of their learning outcomes involved effectively planning and organising a camp for their cohort.

Students first came together as a class to discuss possible locations

in the first week of Term 1. Halls Gap was decided upon, and the planning phase began! Students needed to identify the various roles needed for a successful camp and understand the skill set needed in terms of strengths and areas of growth for everyone. Roles such as Shoppers, Camp Activity Leader, Camp Leader, Communicator, Volunteering Leader, Treasurer and Transportation were outlined with position descriptions.

The Year 12 cohort then had to write an individual application to present to the class and the staff. Students were able to describe why they would be best suited to the role and why they should be selected.

With successful applicants being notified, the students looked at budgets, transportation (gaining quotes and communicating with key stakeholders), appropriate accommodation and activities, and risk assessments for activities that would be engaging, somewhere to show our Mercy values by giving back to the community in Halls Gap; acknowledging allergies and needs; and most importantly ensuring this camp was an opportunity to strengthen relationships.

With planning and organisation completed, the staff and students set out on Monday, 6 March at 9am to Silverband Lodge in Halls Gap in the buses sourced by Mason, Tyler and Brody. The Shoppers did a fantastic job in researching, budgeting (thanks to the treasurers- Aidan, Jock and Cody) and purchasing items for cabin care packages, prizes, snacks and lunch at our first stop in Ararat. Well done to Lilli, Seth, Darcy, Lily, Reagan, and Sophie for being amazing bargain hunters and acknowledging all allergies and needs.

Once we arrived at the camp, we quickly unpacked and headed to our first location, Halls Gap Zoo. Here, we toured the Zoo and then completed our voluntary work of assisting in the maintenance of the wallaby enclosures. The voluntary group consisted of Steph, Issy, Grace, Harry, Matt, and Kiera. Other activities included canoeing, high ropes course (the students supported each other beautifully and showed courage and inclusion), a concert, bobs and statues, musical chairs, trivia, a walk to Silverband Falls/Venus Baths and a trip to the pool. The activity group ensured that everyone was included and had fun. Thanks to Olivia, Dom, Cooper, Max, Noah and Jonte.

Our Communicators are to be commended for ensuring all groups worked independently and collaboratively. Thanks to Nathan, Kenzie, Jasper, and Ella.

We also need to acknowledge our outstanding Camp Leaders, Ryder, Mia, Ashlee, and Sienna. They were the backbone of the operation and showed tremendous leadership and care towards the staff and their peers.

Opportunities such as this camp allow our VM students to shine, understand and demonstrate transferrable skills to grow, develop and realise they are capable of achieving.

Belinda Dwyer, VCE VM Coordinator





MY AUSTRALIAN ARMY CADET JOURNEY

JAMES GUNN

I am James Gunn, a Year 11 student who has been involved with the Australian Army Cadets for almost three years now. I was inspired by my dad's example to join, seeing it as a chance to push my boundaries and try something new. When I signed up, I chose the Army branch, while my younger sister went for the Air-Force Cadets.

Starting out as a cadet recruit meant six months of intense training, but it laid the groundwork for what was to come. Progressing through courses and camps, I have worked my way up the ranks, finding fulfillment in the opportunities for growth and leadership development along the way.

One of the most rewarding parts of my cadet journey has been the impact it has had beyond just the cadet organisation. At Damascus College, I have become a role model and leader thanks to the skills I have developed in the cadets. It has been amazing to see how these experiences have shaped me into a positive influence within our community.

I have even managed to inspire a couple of friends from Damascus to join the cadets themselves. Sharing my passion for the organisation with them has been really rewarding, and I have seen first-hand how it has transformed their lives as well.

One of the standout moments for me was the leadership course at the Puckapunyal Military Base. Spending a week there, surrounded by cadets from across the state, was an experience unlike any other. It taught me so much and allowed me to forge connections that will last a lifetime.

James Gunn, Year 11 student

The Cadets aim to instil key attributes like identity, purpose, and belonging in youth, and I have definitely felt that. As a Cadet Sergeant, I have taken on significant responsibilities, managing a platoon of 40 cadets and helping to guide their development.

Of course, it has not always been smooth sailing. I have faced setbacks, like not getting selected for the Regimental Sergeant Major – Army (RSMA) role despite multiple attempts. However, I am not letting that hold me back. I am determined to keep working towards my goals with resilience and determination.

Despite the challenges, the friendships, and experiences I have gained through the Cadet program have been invaluable. From attending camps to participating in ceremonial events like meeting Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the 20th Anniversary ceremony at the Prisoner of War Memorial in Ballarat, each moment has contributed to my growth and development as a young leader.

Looking ahead, I am considering a future in mechanical engineering. Whether that means studying at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) or serving as an army reservist while pursuing my education, I know that my time as an Army Cadet has prepared me for whatever comes next.

As I continue my cadet journey, I am grateful for the opportunities, friendships, and lessons learned along the way. With my eyes set on the future, I am ready to embrace whatever challenges come my way, confident in the skills and values instilled in me through the Australian Army Cadets.

James Gunn, Year 11 student



James Gunn and Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese



Adele Nairn nee Smith, Class of 2000, Matthew Nairn, Year 7 and Allan Smith, Class of 1971

CONNECTED TO DAMASCUS

ALUMNI STORY

The Smith-Nairn family's connection to Damascus College spans three generations, each with its unique experiences and perspectives. Their journey with our College reflects not only the evolution of education but also the enduring values of respect, responsibility, and faith that have been instilled in its students over the years.

Allan Joseph Smith, Class of 1971, represents the first generation. A country boy with a strict Catholic mother, Allan's path to Damascus College was paved with determination and sacrifice. In the late 1960s, he attended St Paul's Technical College, a foundation school of Damascus College, where he travelled on two buses each day to reach the city campus – Ludbrook House on Lydiard Street.

Though not academically inclined, Allan understood the value of education, especially in subjects like math. With the guidance of one Brother, his math grades over four years increased from the 30's to the high 80's—an achievement he credits to the mentorship and dedication of his teacher. However, beyond academics, St Paul's taught Allan the essence of respect for oneself and others.

In a cohort of all boys, within the confines of a small city campus, violence was non-existent, replaced by a culture of mutual respect and camaraderie.

The second generation is represented by Allan's daughter, Adele. In 1995, Adele became part of history as one of the inaugural students at Damascus College. The school was formed from the merger of three foundation schools: Sacred Heart College, St Martin's in the Pines, and St Paul's Technical College—each bringing its own traditions and values.

Adele embraced the non-traditional aspects of her education at Damascus, particularly within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) structure. As a VET student, she balanced regular classes with work placements, gaining practical skills that would shape her future. Despite the modern approach to education, Adele found echoes of her father's lessons in respect and responsibility at Damascus College.

As she reminisced about her time at the school, Adele spoke fondly of her two school captains and the deep respect she felt for them. At Damascus, students were encouraged to be themselves and to thrive regardless of academic prowess. It was a community where diversity was celebrated, and everyone had the opportunity to excel.

Now, the story comes full circle involving a third generation with Matthew, Adele's son, and Allan's grandson. For Matthew, attending Damascus College was a natural choice, influenced by both family tradition and personal connections. After attending a SEED visit to Damascus during primary school and hearing about the experiences of his friends, Matthew chose Damascus over other schools.

Entering Year 7 with excitement and anticipation, Matthew feels a strong connection to his family's legacy at Damascus. He proudly carries on the tradition of being a member of Rice House, which is named after Blessed Edmund Rice to honour and acknowledge St Paul's legacy being continued at Damascus College. Matthew's faith is an integral part of his identity, and he finds solace and inspiration in the values upheld by Damascus College.

As Matthew embarks on his journey through Damascus, he is met with the promise of new opportunities and experiences. The construction of the Senior Learning Precinct symbolises the school's commitment to evolving with the times, offering students like Matthew innovative learning environments. He eagerly anticipates the challenges and discoveries that lie ahead, confident in the foundation of respect, responsibility, and faith instilled in him by his family and Damascus College.

The Smith-Nairn family's story serves as a testament to the transformative power of education and the enduring values upheld by Damascus College. From Allan's simple beginnings at St Paul's to Matthew's bright future at Damascus, their journey reflects the school's unwavering dedication to nurturing students who respect themselves and others, can adapt to change, and embrace their unique potential across generations.



Adele in Year 7



Matthew, Year 7 student



Sophie Busuttil, Daisy Simpson, Audrey Merlin
Josephine Bantick and Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley



Kiahna McQuie and Kalan Grant



Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley

ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY

DAMASCUS EVENT

The 2024 Academic Assembly was held on Tuesday, 13 February 2024, to recognise and celebrate academic excellence from the 2023 school year.

It was a wonderful occasion to welcome back the Class of 2023, held in the Damascus Events Centre, with a full house of special guests, award recipients, and the Year 12 2024 cohort in attendance to be inspired by the achievements of their recent graduates.

2024 College Captains Paris Govan and Lucas Wells welcomed guests before the 2024 Shining Light Inductees were announced. This award recognises past students' outstanding achievements in an area of field or expertise. The 2024 inductees were Dr Jason Kelly (Class of 1991), Pete Gervansoni (Class of 1994), and Anne Tudor (Class of 1967). The Young Achiever inducted was Samuel Rizzo (Class of 2018). These inductees are further profiled throughout this publication.

Damascus College congratulated award recipients for achieving 40+ study scores in VCE subjects, VCE Baccalaureate, Academic Honours, Westvic Staffing Solutions VET Excellence Awards, 90+ ATARs, and the VCE and VCAL Dux awards.

The 2023 VCE Dux Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley and 2023 VCAL Dux Jack Mattinson presented to guests on their pathway so far and gave some excellent advice to current Year 12 students about achieving their potential throughout Year 12.

Year 11 student Charlie Snare entertained the event on the xylophone, performing 'Tap Tap' by Sam Gevers. It was a wonderful display of talent on an instrument that is not very well known.

Congratulations to all award recipients. Overleaf are the award recipients recognised and celebrated at the 2024 Academic Assembly.

2023 VCE UNIT 3 & 4 STUDY SCORE OF 40+ AWARD			
Name	Year	Subject	Score
Sophie Busuttil	12	Visual Communication & Design	40
Sophie Busuttil	12	Art Making & Exhibiting	44
Alexandra Lockhart	11	Art Making & Exhibiting	42
Asha Dickson	12	Drama	42
Lucas Wells	11	Systems Engineering	43
Jessica Hodge	12	Food Studies	40
Josephine Bantick	12	French	43.76 *
Audrey Merlin	12	French	41.05 *
Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley	12	French	45.4 *
Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley	12	English	50
Brianna White	12	English	42
Poppy Rowland	12	English	42
Jessica Hodge	12	English	41
Josephine Bantick	12	Literature	41.41 *
Daisy Simpson-Kerr	12	Health & Human Development	40
Daisy Simpson-Kerr	12	Physical Education	43
Kiahna McQuie	11	Health Services (VCE VET)	42
Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley	12	Religion & Society	40
Audrey Merlin	12	Religion & Society	40
Emily Crumpler	11	Biology	41.19 *
Laura McDonald	11	Biology	41.19 *
Zoe Newman	11	Biology	41.19 *
Elarin Johnson	12	Biology	40.17 *
Ava Skilbeck	12	Psychology	40
Josephine Bantick	12	Psychology	43
Macy Donaldson	11	General Mathematics	44

SPECIAL AWARDS			
Name	Year	Award	
Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley	12	2023 VCE Baccalaureate Award	
Sienna Caldow	12	2023 VCE Baccalaureate Award	
Drew Davis	12	2023 VCE Baccalaureate Award	
Audrey Merlin	12	2023 VCE Baccalaureate Award	
Ava Skilbeck	12	2023 VCE Baccalaureate Award	
Kiahna McQuie	11	2023 VET Achievement Award	
Kalan Grant	11	2023 VET Achievement Award	
Lachlan Hill	12	2023 VET Achievement Award	
Jack Mattinson	12	2023 VCE-VM Dux	
Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley	12	Academic Honours Award	
Jessica Hodge	12	Academic Honours Award	
Elarin Johnson	12	Academic Honours Award	
Leah Stevens	12	Academic Honours Award	
Name	Year	Award	Score
Daisy Simpson-Kerr	12	2023 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	92.05
Audrey Merlin	12	2023 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	92.1
Sophie Busuttil	12	2023 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	92.6
Josephine Bantick	12	2023 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	94.8
Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley	12	2023 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	97.3
Sara Abu Asbeh Smalley	12	2023 Damascus College Dux	97.3

* Scaled study score



Anne Mibus née Watt, Class of 1965 and Genevieve Martin née Watt, Class of 1972

FEELING RE-CONNECTED

ALUMNI STORY

For many past students and staff of Sacred Heart College (SHC), establishing a connection between the institution they once knew, and present-day Damascus College can pose a challenge. This sentiment was shared by two former students, Anne Mibus née Watt and Genevieve Martin née Watt, until they embarked on a heart-warming Damascus campus tour. Through this experience, they discovered the enduring significance and deep respect given to SHC's foundation and history by the current cohort, fostering a renewed sense of connection and appreciation for them both.

Anne and Genevieve represent the bookends of the four-Watt sisters from Balmoral in the Western District. Their educational journey began at the SHC campus on Victoria Street, where they were followed by their sisters, leading them to the Sacred Heart College Senior Campus - St Martin's in the Pines (St Martin's). In total, the Watt sisters spent 24 years in these institutions, spanning from 1958 to 1972.

Anne commenced her studies in 1958, followed by Bernice in 1964, Marlene in 1965, and Genevieve in 1968. Both Anne and

Bernice successfully completed their matriculation and pursued careers in teaching. On the other hand, Marlene and Genevieve pursued nursing training at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne.

Anne was the only Watt sister not to experience boarding at St Martin's. However, as a student of SHC, she was very much aware of the legacy of Ms Fanning's bequest of 50 acres at Mt Clear to the Sisters of Mercy. Anne recalls being part of the processions of girls walking from Victoria Street to Mt Clear to throw medals in the first turned sods for the construction of a senior school that would later be known as St Martin in the Pines, or affectionately to the students and locals as "St Mick's in the Stick's."

Standing before the building that once served as the boarding house, Anne and Genevieve were surrounded by the beauty and serenity of the lush bushland setting. They could not help but feel a profound sense of pride and connection upon discovering that it is named the Sacred Heart building. It serves as a poignant reminder of the college's foundational roots upon which Damascus College is flourishing.

As the tour continued, memories rushed in for both sisters, prompting reflections not just of their days at SHC but also of the enduring bonds formed with friends and the profound lessons learned along their educational path.

Returning to Damascus for the first time since she left school was an affirmation for Genevieve of the values and appreciation she has carried through her life.

"I am proud that Sacred Heart College and St Martins in the Pines evolved into a modern college, proud of its student diversity and its curriculum offerings. It is wonderful to see Damascus has an ongoing commitment to reflecting the values of the Sisters of Mercy," said Genevieve.

She observed that the bushland setting for Damascus students must be second to none, enhancing students' educational experiences in the humdrum of the modern world.

The whole of the Watt family migrated from Victoria to Queensland starting with Genevieve on her marriage in 1977. She and her late husband, John, developed a wilderness resort, "Ferns Hideaway," from scratch along a creek at Byfield north of Yeppoon. Their resort became a go-to destination for weddings and people seeking a family-style holiday staying in hand-hewed log cabins and experiencing a music-filled dining experience in the restaurant.

As they said their goodbyes to the campus, Anne, and Genevieve could not help but appreciate the impressive facilities of Damascus College and the accomplishments of its current students. This experience left them feeling a sense of pride in their college and a genuine connection to their old high school.



Anne and Genevieve on campus tour



THE NATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE FORUM

ZOE NEWMAN

My name is Zoe Newman, and I am a Year 12 student at Damascus College.

In January 2024, I had the opportunity to attend the National Youth Science Forum (NYSF) Year 12 program for ten days in Brisbane. The NYSF is designed for students with a passion for STEM, particularly science, to expose them to a wide range of opportunities, expand their horizons and allow them to connect with like-minded people.

The 250 participants spent ten days staying at King's College, located next to the University of Queensland St Lucia campus. I first found out about the opportunity to attend NYSF through an email sent out by the science department, but I never seriously considered applying. However, after some encouragement from my parents and connections from my time in the Girls in StemProgram with the Ballarat Tech School, I applied for the program and was lucky enough to be accepted.

I connected with the Ballarat East Rotary Club, and they were kind enough to provide a partial sponsorship to support my attendance. Prior to the program I had the opportunity to attend an evening where participants were able to meet the Governor of Victoria.

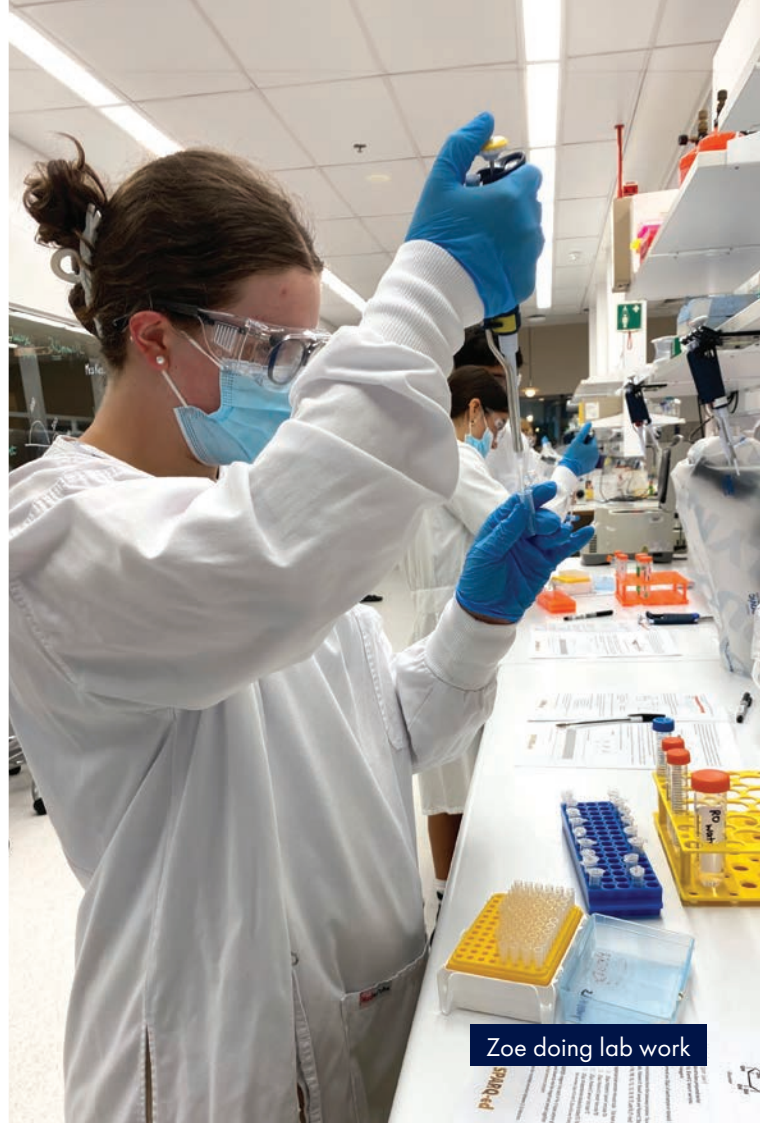
The program itself was an amazing experience. Whilst in Brisbane, I attended several lectures by Australian and International scientists from various fields. I attended STEM visits where my specific group of participants got to visit the Integrated Pathology Learning Centre, Advanced Queensland (a hub for AI company start-ups), the Griffith University Gold Coast campus, where we visited Biospine and completed a lab in the Griffith University Medical Research Labs, as well as visiting the Translational Research Institute.

Along with the STEM visits, we also participated in a careers day where we attended lectures, could talk to different universities/ companies at their stalls and got to speak to STEM professionals from different areas in the 'Speed Meet', which exposed me to the wide variety of STEM-related careers that are so important to our future.

One of my favourite parts of the program was a lecture on science communication. I found it fascinating to learn from the range of science communicators, including Tegan Taylor (ABC Health and Science reporter), who communicates directly to the public, and Steve Liddell (Founder of Street Science), who engages young people in science and assists in furthering their curiosity. I found it highly interesting and am considering this as part of my future.

Although it was primarily a science focused experience, we had plenty of time to hang out with friends we made, as well as going to the disco and concert. Overall, the National Youth Science Forum was an incredible opportunity - I had heaps of fun meeting and spending time with like-minded people from across the country and have made life-long friends while learning so many new things about science and its potential in my future.

Zoe Newman, Year 12 student



Zoe doing lab work



Zoe at University of Queensland campus



SPORT AT DAMASCUS

ROWING PROGRAM

Damascus College's commitment to sporting excellence was on full display as students showcased their talents across a variety of sports. From the tranquil waters of Lake Wendouree to the electrifying atmosphere of the swimming and athletics arenas, the College's athletes demonstrated dedication, skill, and camaraderie throughout the 2023/2024 Rowing Season, the Swimming Carnival, and the Athletics Carnival. With each event, the spirit of competition soared, leaving a lasting impression on both participants and spectators alike.

The 2024 rowing season for Damascus College saw 41 students compete at the 2024 Head of the Lake, with representation in the following events:

- Four Junior Girls Coxed Quad Sculls
- One Junior Boys Coxed Quad Scull
- Two Senior Girls Coxed Fours

- One Senior Boys Coxed Four
- One Intermediate Single Sculler

Every crew representing Damascus College delivered exceptional performances, showcasing their mastery of skills, which stands as a testament to the relentless dedication of the coaching staff. Among the standout achievements, Will Busutill's remarkable feat of clinching a gold medal in his single scull event at Head of the Lake shines brightly, underscoring the fruits of his arduous training regimen over the past 30 weeks.

This season marked an exciting change for the Damascus annual January Rowing Camp, relocating to Falls Creek for a week of intensive training on Rocky Valley Dam. Led by the senior squad, this high-altitude experience proved both exhilarating and fruitful, with each member completing approximately 75 kilometres of rigorous training, an auspicious start to the competitive rowing campaign.



Here are a few highlights from the 2024 rowing regatta season:

- Will Busutill winning a gold medal at Head of the Lake
- Junior Girls 2nd Crew placing second at Head of the Lake
- Senior Boys 1st Crew winning a Bronze Medal at the Head of the Schoolboys Regatta in the Open Division 2 Coxed Four event
- Senior Girls combining to row an eight at the Head of the Schoolgirls Regatta
- Junior Boys 1st Crew winning a gold medal at the Wendouree-Ballarat RC Regatta in the Beginner Quad Sculls event.

The College is deeply grateful to all parents, staff, and coaches for their unwavering support during the rowing season, which is vital for the program's sustainability. Special thanks to the organisers and volunteers at the Wendouree-Ballarat RC Regatta and the Head of the Lake Regatta BBQ stalls. Your successful fundraising efforts have allowed the program to grow and develop, positively impacting athletes' experiences. Thank you for your ongoing dedication.

Damascus College rowing had a small yet competitive team of rowers this season. It was a pleasure for the coaching staff to work alongside all students, parents, teachers, and staff to offer this unique opportunity. They eagerly anticipate the upcoming season with enthusiasm and anticipation.

2024 ROWING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

DIVISION	RUNNER UP	WINNER
Junior Boys:	Oscar Henderson	Billy O'Kelly
Junior Girls:	Miley Singline	Grace Rivitt
Intermediate Boys:	Declan Newman	Will Busutill
Intermediate Girls:	Catherine Coad	Meg Mason
Senior Boys:	Flynn Rivitt	Joah Henderson
Senior Girls	Charley Gartlan	Ruby Byrne
Cox of the Year	Matilda Watt	Paris Govan
Coach of the Year:	Cooper Reid	Sam Hutchinson
Morongo Medallist:	Flynn Rivitt	
Senior Rowing Fellowship:	Flynn Rivitt	



2024 Swimming Carnival



SPORT AT DAMASCUS

SPORTING CARNIVALS

The annual Damascus Swimming Carnival took place on Thursday, 29 February, at the Eureka Pool. Despite the cool morning, the Year 7 students kicked off the events with the 50m freestyle races, showcasing excitement and enthusiasm. The day was filled with vibrant colours and cheering, with students dressed up in wonderful costumes. Notably, the Year 12 students, in their final swimming carnival, exhibited outstanding leadership and support for the younger year levels.

Following the completion of the 50m breaststroke, backstroke, and butterfly events, the highly anticipated relays commenced, drawing enthusiastic participation and encouragement from the crowd. A new addition to the carnival in 2024 was the Champion of Champions event, which featured the fastest eight female and male swimmers from any year level competing over 50m. It was particularly impressive to see three Year 7 students—Estelle Karlake, Ruby Cookson, and Jonty Ward—qualify for this event.

Another cherished tradition at the carnival is the synchronised swimming performance by the Year 12 students, culminating in all four Houses singing Damascus chants and war cries while in the pool, creating a memorable spectacle.

SWIMMING CARNIVAL HOUSE RESULTS

1 st	St Martin	1160
2nd	McAuley	1135
3rd	Xavier	1002
4th	Rice	921

The Llanberris Athletics Reserve came alive with the sound of cheers and the spirit of competition as Damascus College students and staff came together for the annual Athletics Carnival on Tuesday, 19 March.

The colourful display of house pride, with students representing Rice, McAuley, St Martin’s, and Xavier Houses, showcased unity and team spirit. Each event was not just a race or a jump but a chance for students to earn crucial House points towards the coveted Ron Matthews Shield.

However, it was the consistent display of sportsmanship that genuinely stood out. Throughout the day, from the track to the field, students demonstrated determination and camaraderie, supporting each other’s successes. Sincere applause goes out to all the students who dedicated themselves to every event, displaying their talents and commitment, and special recognition is also due to the dedicated staff members whose support and encouragement were invaluable in making the day a massive success for everyone who attended.

ATHLETICS CARNIVAL HOUSE RESULTS		
1st	Rice	2438
2nd	Xavier	2272
3rd	St Martin	1951
4th	McAuley	1905

Damascus College continues to thrive in its sporting endeavours, with the Rowing Program showcasing exceptional teamwork and determination. The Swimming Carnival saw spirited competition and impressive performances, while the Athletics Carnival highlighted the talent and dedication of student-athletes. Damascus College remains committed to fostering a culture of excellence and sportsmanship among its students.



2024 Athletics Carnival





Elizabeth Jones nee Morcom, Class of 1978

AN OVERDUE THANK YOU

ALUMNI STORY

My time with the Sisters of Mercy spanned just two years, but it left a lasting impression. Before I arrived in Ballarat in 1978, I had been educated in Sydney. However, due to challenging family circumstances, it was decided that I would board with the Sacred Heart nuns.

Upon my arrival, I was immediately struck by the welcoming atmosphere. Despite the school's adherence to strict rules, there was a sense of informality that differed from my previous educational experience. Addressing the Sisters by their first names, such as Sister Anne, Sister Pat, or Sister Agnes, may seem trivial, but it fostered a sense of relaxation and familiarity for me. Coming from a turbulent period in my life, I found solace in the Sisters and staff's compassionate approach, which balanced boundaries with a genuine generosity of heart.

Despite the rigidity of the rules, what stands out most in my memory is the kindness demonstrated by the Sisters. Their warmth and compassion left a lasting impact on me, shaping my perception of those formative years.

I want to express my appreciation for the dedication of the staff, who not only had the responsibility of educating us but also the challenging task of keeping us in line. Many weekends seemed endless and mundane, providing ample opportunity for mischief. However, despite the odds, we all emerged relatively unscathed. Looking back, many of us tested boundaries and required frequent redirection. Living as boarders, we formed tight-knit bonds, perhaps due to the constant companionship of sharing our lives 24/7 for months at a time. There was a sense of comfort in the camaraderie that developed within our little clique.

In my own dorm room, midnight feasts were a regular occurrence, showcasing our creativity and resourcefulness. We would toast bread over the electric bar heaters or whip up feasts using an electric wok (definitely contraband). Despite the risks, we revelled in these small acts of rebellion.

The nuns surprised us with their sense of humour; waking up to Carol King tracks blaring over the P.A. system at 7am was a memorable and amusing experience. To this day, I cannot hear "You've Got A Friend" without remembering my time at St Mick's.

Among the many memories, one that stands out is my Year 11 teacher, Shahrukh. She possessed an exceptional talent for connecting with students and making learning engaging and vibrant. Throughout my 12 years of schooling, she truly stood out as an outstanding educator. I do not think I ever said thank you, but in my heart I do.

Education has been a cornerstone of my life journey. After studying science, I transitioned into industrial construction and eventually pursued a career in emerging technology. This path has not only sustained me financially but has also offered me a deeply fulfilling professional life.

As a student, I may not have fully appreciated the value of education. However, I now recognise its vital role in laying the groundwork for navigating the complexities of the world. I am deeply grateful to the wonderful and dedicated staff of Sacred Heart College and St Martin's in the Pines. During times of chaos in my life, you provided stability, and the exceptional education I received empowered me to construct a richly rewarding professional life. Thank you.

Elizabeth Jones nee Morcom, Class of 1978



Elizabeth and her family

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

Open Night

Tuesday 15 October

4.30pm – 7.30pm

Discover Damascus College at Open Night - an ideal opportunity for prospective families to experience the vibrant Damascus community.

Arrive anytime throughout the 3-hour event to explore the campus and engage with enriching presentations, displays, and demonstrations. Enjoy a self-guided or guided tour with dedicated staff and students showcasing the contemporary facilities. Join the festive atmosphere with showbags, give-aways and enjoy refreshments in the courtyard as you learn more about Damascus College.

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

Open Mornings

Thurs 10 Oct • Fri 25 Oct • Wed 5 Feb 2025

9am - 11am

Open Morning Tours are an opportunity for prospective families to hear presentations from the Principal, Registrar, students, participate in a Q&A and take a guided tour of the campus during school hours, led by current students or staff.

The event runs for 2 hours commencing at 9am, with registrations opening at 8.30am and concluding with light refreshments at 11am.

Registration essential

**[damascus.vic.edu.au/
enrolment/visit-us](https://damascus.vic.edu.au/enrolment/visit-us)**
and click 'Book a Visit'

Enrolment Applications for Year 7
2026 close Thursday 6 February
2025





2024 Shining Light Inductees

2024 SHINING LIGHT INDUCTEES

ALUMNI AWARDS

As a college, we deeply value the rich legacy of alumni from Damascus College and our foundation schools: Sacred Heart, St Paul's, and St Martin's in the Pines. Their remarkable accomplishments and diverse paths post-graduation continue to serve as a wellspring of inspiration for our current and future students.

To highlight and honour the accomplishments of our alumni across various fields and endeavours, Damascus College established The Shining Light Award for Inspiring Alumni in 2019. This award allows us to proudly induct chosen alumni as Damascus College Shining Lights, acknowledging their outstanding contributions and achievements in their respective fields. Following a rigorous selection process, we are honoured to induct four deserving recipients into the Shining Light Award for 2024.

Our first inductee is Anne Tudor OAM, Class of 1967, for Service to the Community Award.

Anne graduated from Sacred Heart College in 1967 and completed a two-year teacher training program before moving to Papua New Guinea. Returning to Melbourne in 1973, she taught at St Paul's Secondary College in Altona North, where she held various roles while she pursued further qualifications through night courses and completed her fourth year in psychology, sparking her desire to become a practising psychologist.

In 1991, Anne and her partner, a teacher of deaf people, moved to Ballarat to support her parents as her mother had Alzheimer's and Vascular dementia. During this time, Anne undertook the University of Melbourne's Master's Program in Clinical Psychology. After graduating, Anne worked at Ballarat Health Services as a Clinical Psychologist for 12 years, in part to support patients and clients impacted by dementia and nursing home staff charged with their care. Finally, five years of part-time training in Melbourne enabled her to have a most satisfying professional life as a Clinical Psychoanalytic and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist until she retired in 2014.

In 2005, the same year Anne's mother died from dementia, her partner, Edie, for more than 20 years at the time, started showing signs of change. Despite their best efforts, a diagnosis was not made until 2010.

Anne and Edie contacted Dementia Australia and completed a three-day live-in information and support program. After this, Anne and Edie began receiving requests to become dementia advocates and public speakers locally, in Victoria, nationally and internationally. They made two commitments. To fulfil their respective role in their journey with dementia in the best way they could- for Anne as a carer and Edie, as someone living with dementia. The second was to support fellow travellers.



Anne says that being inducted as a Damascus Shining Light was a huge surprise, but this recognition has deep personal meaning. Anne has a very personal story that explains a great deal about the positive impact of teachers on her life. On 14 January 1967, Anne's eldest brother, Leo, was killed in a car accident. Three Sisters of Mercy came to her home two days later to support their family. Anne had left school in 1966, after Year 11, with no intention of returning. She did not have much confidence in herself despite being a good student. It was because of the visiting Sister's persistence that day, insisting that she could pass Year 12, that changed her mind, and she returned to complete her secondary education.

Anne believes that without the support of her teachers, the Sisters of Mercy, their encouragement, their committed teaching and living their values, she would not be the inspiration we find her to be.

Anne has provided service to the community for many years in a myriad of ways – locally, in Victoria, nationally and internationally – to increase dementia awareness and understanding of the importance of inclusion and empathy in the community. Anne's dementia advocacy includes the Bigger Hearts for a Dementia Friendly Ballarat campaign in 2016, Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance, in 2017, Carer's Support Group in 2018, Bigger Hearts Dementia Choir in 2019 and Woowookarung Dementia Friendly Forest and Sensory Trail in 2018-2021. The latter project spanned four extremely challenging years for Anne, with the progression of Edie's dementia, Edie's move to residential care, a major car accident in 2019, and Edie's sudden death in June 2020.

'Anne's grace, generosity, and unrelenting commitment to making a difference in the lives of people impacted by dementia inspire all who meet her', Maree McCabe, CEO of Dementia Australia, said of Anne.

In 2021, Anne was Victorian Senior of the Year. In the Queen's Birthday Honours, she received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division for her service to people living with dementia and their supporters.

Our second inductee is Dr Jason Kelly, Class of 1991, inducted as a 2024 Shining Light in recognition of his significant contributions to Academia/Career Excellence and STEAM Achievement.

Following VCE, Jason studied Medical Laboratory Science at RMIT's city campus, and during this degree, he secured a job working in pathology at the Ballarat Base Hospital. His pathology career began in 1994 and included a 15-year stint at Dorevitch Pathology and five years at St John of God Pathology. He worked across all areas of both blood and tissue pathology and developed an interest in how various diseases, particularly cancer, manifest in people. The strength of this interest in cancer was such that when an opportunity to study cancer as a PhD student at the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute (FECRI) arose. At the tender age of 43, he once again became a full-time student.



Anne receiving Order of Australia Medal

Jason's PhD studies investigated the immune system and bowel cancer. In particular, how specific immune cells that respond to bacteria may be contributing to the progression of bowel cancer. He published some of his findings last year and was fortunate enough to win some travel awards, allowing him to present his work at conferences both nationally and overseas.

His most recent presentations saw him visit Adelaide, Bangkok, and San Francisco, though the timing of the global coronavirus pandemic put a halt to his conference hopping.

Jason's post-doctoral research continues to be published and shared with the scientific community, and he is currently a leading bowel cancer researcher at the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute.

Our third inductee is Pete Gervasoni, Class of 1994, for Academia/Career Excellence.

Pete has had a diverse career since leaving St Martin's in 1994. He was a baker and an award-winning singer-songwriter, having performed his original song, "What are they marching for?" at the MCG on Anzac Day. For the past fifteen-plus years, he has forged a successful international career in risk management and resilience.

Pete is an Institute of Strategic Risk Management Fellow and a Certified Practicing Risk Manager. He has been nominated for risk manager of the year and is also a finalist in the Institute of Public Administration Awards for contributing to public sector risk management.

Pete has held senior risk management roles across many government organisations, including the Department of Defence – Deputy Director for International Quality Assurance City of Ballarat – Risk Manager Transport Accident Commission (TAC) – Senior Risk Partner / Chief Risk Officer City of Greater Geelong – Strategic Risk Advisor Victorian Managed Insurance Authority – Client Capability Partner.

He is considered an international expert in organisational and community resilience, representing Australia on international committees, and writing global standards to support developing countries, the UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction, and more than 80 developed countries in enhancing their resilience.

Pete has toured the globe as an invited expert presenter at many international conferences, including Singapore, Norway, the USA, the United Kingdom, and Croatia, to name a few. He is an internationally recognised expert in risk management and organisational and community resilience. He is leading an international team writing a standard to support organisations and governments in formulating resilience policies and designing strategies.



Dr Jason Kelly



Dr Jason Kelly and Steven Mifsud



Pete speaking at Enterprise Risk Management Conference

Pete has worked with government departments such as Defence as the lead of their international quality assurance program, Victorian state government's risk advisor and insurer VMIA, as the lead educator in risk management to more than 4,500 government organisations and locally in local government, including Ballarat City Council and the City of Greater Geelong.

In these roles, he has transformed their approach to risk management and embedded better decision-making processes based on effectively managing risk. He partnered with Federation University in 2013 and again in 2017 to undertake a world-first research study into organisational resilience and support. PhD student Imogen Stockton is achieving her Doctorate as part of these innovative studies.

Pete volunteers his time to the International Standards Organization (ISO) and Australian Standards to develop new standards for the global community in the resilience domain.

He is considered in his industry as a strategic leader, which has led to him being invited to speak at conferences around Australia on a range of topics from risk management to resilience. Pete shares his personal story of resilience and how the ability to absorb or adapt to changes in your life can lead to an enhanced state of resilience.

Pete has dedicated his professional career since 2004 to the public service across all three levels of government. He has proven to be an innovative leader in his chosen field of risk management and resilience and is constantly asked for advice by other government and private organisations.

Pete is now based back in Ballarat and continues his international work. He works for the state government and is constantly looking for new and innovative ways to support his industry in improving its risk management and resilience approaches.

Our final inductee for 2024 is Samuel (Sam) Rizzo, Class of 2018, who received the Young Achiever Award - Sporting Achievement.

Sam was inspired to be a world-class T54 Para-athlete by listening to Richard Colman speak at a spina bifida camp when he was just eight years old. He began wishing that one day, he might have the opportunity to wear the green and gold for Australia and bring home a gold medal from the Paralympics. After another four years of trying different sports, such as swimming and wheelchair basketball, in 2012, he received a call from Colman's mother, asking if he wanted to come and give a racing chair a shot. Sam jumped at the opportunity, and so began his love of racing.

Sam has competed in his chosen sport at the local, state, national and international levels, winning gold at the World Para-Athletics Junior Championships. He has also represented Australia at the Commonwealth Games and the Paralympics in Tokyo.



Pete Gervasoni and Steven Mifsud

In 2017, Sam was at the World Para-athletics Junior Championships in Nottwil, Switzerland, where he put his T54 rivals on notice with four medals from four events – silver over 400m, and bronze over 100m, 800m and 1500m. Fittingly, he was also given the honour of carrying the Australian flag as flagbearer of the Australian team.

In 2018, Sam graduated from Damascus College and took on a four-year apprenticeship in Metal Fabrication at Astec Equipment Services, hoping to get into the field of fabrication of wheelchairs to contribute to this growing industry in Australia. In 2023, Sam joined the Rove team in Melbourne. Sam is proud that Rove made one of the lightest wheelchairs on the market. During this year, Sam also competed at the Commonwealth Games representing Australia, and in 2019, he competed at the World Para-athletics Championships in Dubai. In 2023, Sam represented Australia at the World Competition in Switzerland and the World Para-athletics Championships in Paris.

In 2023, Sam earned the right to represent Australia at the World Para-athletics Championships in Paris when he set six world qualifying times in eight events at the world competition in Switzerland.

Sam is still training hard on the track and chasing his dream of representing Australia in Paris at the 2024 Paralympics. He has been competing domestically and internationally each year since graduating to chase qualifying standards for world-significant events. In early 2024, Sam was in Dubai, chasing times to qualify for the Paralympics with two B-grade qualifying standards in the 1500m, making him eligible to be selected later this year. Along with these qualifying times, Sam also broke a 12-year Australian record in the 1500m held by Kurt Fearnley, a time of 2.53min.

Sam is a shining light of Damascus College who holds a special place in his heart for high school. He remembers the “Be My Best” statement; this is something that he strives for in everything he does in his life, whether on the athletics track, at work, or just in his day-to-day life, by showing compassion and respect for others.

Sam advises others to take every opportunity, as you never know where the path will take you.

Congratulations to all 2024 Shining Light Award inductees.



Samuel (Sam) Rizzo



Sam at his graduation



Sam's Dad receiving award on his behalf with Steven Mifsud



Susannah Berens



Lynda Calistro



Maddie Fry



Christine Gawne



Michelle Jans



Jasmina Kirkham



Joanne Lawrence



Justin Marson



Kahlia McDaid



Keran Mewett



Sally Murphy



Kayla Robson



Patricia Rowe



Lauren Stirling



Tony Van der Ploeg



Brianah Walsh



Kristiana Withers

FAREWELLS & RETIREMENTS

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

FAREWELLS

We wish the following staff members well on their new adventures, Susannah Berens, Lynda Calistro, Jason Carey, Maddie Fry, Michelle Jans, Jasmina Kirkham, Justin Marson, Kahlia McDaid, Eloise McGifford, Keran Mewett, Sally Murphy, Kayla Robson, Lauren Stirling, Brianah Walsh and Kristiana Withers. And we thank them for their service to the Damascus College community

RETIREMENTS

Christine Gawne

Over the past four years, Christine shared her teaching skills and experiences with the students and staff in the Technology Learning Area, specifically in the areas of textiles, food technology and art. Christine always showed a passion in the areas she was teaching and a genuine care for the students in her class, continually going above and beyond. We wish Christine all the best as she travels and spends more time with her family.

Joanne Lawrence

Joanne was a teaching staff member for over 25 years at Damascus

College. She supported many students in their career path as the Careers Advisor, she taught humanities, and, more recently, VCAL. Joanne will enjoy her retirement, spending more time with her family. We thank Joanne for her dedication to the students of Damascus College.

Patricia Rowe

Damascus College thanks Trish for her significant contribution to the school community throughout the past 40 years. From the early days at Sacred Heart College, St Martins in the Pines and then onto Damascus College, we thank Trish for her leadership and teaching contributions throughout this time, in particular in the learning areas of English and humanities. We wish Trish all the best as she enjoys her retirement on the coast.

Tony Van der Ploeg

We thank Tony for his contribution to the Damascus College community over the past three and half years. His continual work in supporting the upkeep of the college grounds, painting works, and COVID-19 infection control measures have ensured our students and staff have an environment that they feel safe and proud of. Tony will enjoy his retirement travelling, and spending time with his family.

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

ALUMNI ART AND TECHNOLOGY PRIZE

Would you like
the opportunity to
showcase your art or
technology talent at
Damascus College?

The 2024 Alumni Art and Technology Prize is seeking expressions of interest from alumni to produce a commissioned piece for the new senior building.

The piece must speak to this year's Mercy Values theme of Respect, Compassion, Justice, Courage, Service and Hospitality.

The mediums used could include wood, metal, bronze, graphic design, textiles, paint and much more - all creative ideas and interpretations welcome.

For more information please visit
damascus.vic.edu.au/community/alumni/alumni-art-and-technology-prize



Applications close
Sunday 2 June 2024



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damascus.vic.edu.au