TAS
THE ARMIDALE SCHOOL

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Cover: *Jack Lucas leaps for joy in a scene from the school production of Footloose (Photo: Yolanda Kreuzen)*

TAS THE ARMIDALE SCHOOL



FROM THE Principal

The Courage to Have a Crack

The TAS Strategic Plan is guided by a clear vision: Excellence inspired by character, built through challenge. Developing graduates who are capable, kind and confident. While each of our values plays an important role in bringing that vision to life, courage is perhaps the value that sits at the heart of growth itself.

Courage is often misunderstood. We can think of it as something reserved for extraordinary moments or remarkable achievements. Yet for young people, courage is more often found in the everyday. It is the student who volunteers an answer despite not being certain it is correct. It is the boarder arriving at school for the first time and stepping into an unfamiliar environment. It is the musician performing before an audience, the athlete entering competition, the student standing up for what is right, or simply someone willing to try something new despite the possibility of failure.

As a school community, we cannot underestimate how challenging these moments can be. Young people today are navigating the complex task of establishing their identity in a world that often celebrates perfection and public success. In such an environment, putting yourself forward can feel risky. To try, knowing there is a chance you may not succeed, requires genuine courage.

Yet it is precisely through these moments that capability is built. One of the great misconceptions is that capability emerges from success alone. In reality, capability is developed through challenge, persistence, reflection and growth. Every time a student steps beyond their comfort zone, they strengthen qualities such as resilience, confidence, leadership and self-belief. These are the foundations of lasting success and meaningful character.

This understanding sits at the centre of our Character Development Framework, where courage is intentionally connected to the capabilities we seek to develop in every student. Our Deputy, Bronwyn File, explains the language we will explicitly use to describe this, on page 4.

Our responsibility as educators, parents and community members is to create an environment where this is possible. Young people must know they are supported not only when they succeed, but when they take the risk of trying. When we celebrate effort, growth and courage as much as achievement, we give students permission to learn, develop and discover their potential.

Most importantly, we should celebrate those who live this value each day. Courage is not weakness exposed; it is vulnerability transformed into strength. It is having a crack when success is uncertain. In doing so, our young people demonstrate a quality that will serve them well long after they leave TAS.

Ray Pearson, Principal

TAS, UNE formalise partnership

TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES



Principal Ray Pearson and UNE Vice Chancellor Professor Chris Moran

Committed to strengthening regional secondary and tertiary education, The Armidale School and University of New England have formally agreed to work together on a range of areas of mutual benefit.

Principal Ray Pearson and UNE Vice Chancellor Professor Chris Moran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at TAS in April, the alliance being officially launched at Booloominbah, UNE on 26 May.

The Memorandum, that will be in force for two years initially, will see UNE provide practical support for TAS academic programs particularly in Agriculture and Business Entrepreneurship; professional development opportunities for teaching and administration staff, and innovation in education through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

For the University, the agreement will profile UNE to senior TAS students as an institution of choice for academic and residential life; provide work experience and research opportunities at TAS for UNE students in teaching, nursing, sports science and psychology as part of their degree requirements, and also promote employment opportunities at TAS for UNE students particularly in academic, co-curricular and boarding support roles.

A number of other areas include sharing knowledge in the field of education and related research; support for Indigenous students of both TAS and UNE through the Oorala Aboriginal Centre; promoting Armidale as an educational centre of excellence across regional and metropolitan markets, and sharing facilities and logistics for events.

Mr Pearson said the partnership is grounded firmly in a shared regional context and mutual desire to contribute positively to Armidale and the wider New England North West region.

"UNE's Strategic Plan clearly articulates its commitment to being Australia's first regional university, focused on expanding access to education, supporting individuals and communities to thrive, and strengthening regional outcomes through collaboration and innovation. These priorities strongly align with TAS's role as a proudly regional boarding and day school, committed to providing accessible education that serves both individuals and the communities they come from," he said.

Professor Moran said the partnership was a logical collaboration that strengthened secondary and tertiary education in a vibrant regional centre.

"Strong regional education systems depend on schools and universities working together in practical ways. This agreement creates clearer pathways for students, expands access to real-world learning experiences, and helps develop the skills our communities and industries need into the future," Professor Moran said.

"Formalising our relationship with TAS means we can fill gaps neither institution could address alone, such as supporting Indigenous students through Oorala or to giving our nursing, teaching and psychology students hands-on experience in a school setting. This MOU positions UNE not only as a place of learning but as an active partner in regional life."

The launch event in May brought together staff members from both institutions who also investigated collaboration opportunities. Some of these have already begun, with more to be rolled out in the terms ahead.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

PUTTING WORDS TO OUR ACTIONS

As part of an ongoing series delving into the TAS Strategic Plan, Deputy Principal Bronwyn File explains the TAS Character Development Framework.

For 132 years, The Armidale School has been known for something deeper than achievement alone. Again and again, when I speak with Old Armidalians or current parents, the same theme emerges; TAS graduates are recognised for their character. They are steady, grounded, thoughtful and courageous young people, shaped by faith, challenge and community, guided by our Anglican tradition and our motto Absque Deo Nihil; "Without God, there is nothing."

To those outside TAS, our graduates are known for being able to give a strong handshake and look someone in the eye. To contribute to their communities as volunteers and local leaders. And to 'have a go' when faced with opportunities or challenges, often when others do not have the capacity to do so.

It is why I am genuinely excited about our TAS Character Development Framework. In many ways, this framework does not introduce something new. Rather, it names, clarifies and strengthens what has always been at the heart of a TAS education.

At its core, character education at TAS is about forming young people for lives that are worthwhile and well-lived through our values of Connection, Courage and Commitment. Connected young people build strong, respectful relationships and contribute positively to their communities. Committed young people give their best, embrace growth and invest in something beyond themselves. Courageous young people stand up for what is right and lead with integrity and humility.

The framework clearly identifies eight character capabilities that we intentionally develop from Pre-K to Year 12: Resilient Learner, Ethical Citizen, Empathetic Connector, Courageous Leader, Critical Thinker, Global Contributor, Collaborative Teammate and Self-Directed Individual.

What we value most about this framework is that it makes character visible. These are not aspirational words for a brochure. They are observable and developmental.

We have carefully mapped what growth looks like at different ages so that students, staff and parents share a common understanding. A six-year-old learning to persist when reading becomes tricky, is building resilience. A Middle School student choosing honesty when it would be easier not to, is practising ethical citizenship. A senior student mentoring a younger boarder is demonstrating empathy and courageous leadership. These are the moments that matter.

From 2027, we will formally reflect these character capabilities from K-12 in our reporting processes across academic and boarding contexts. Staff will use clear indicators to provide meaningful feedback, and students will be guided in age-appropriate self-reflection, particularly through co-curricular and activities programs.

Our parents are essential partners in this journey. One of our goals is to ensure that the language of resilience, integrity, empathy and courage becomes shared language between school and home. When students hear the same messages in both places, growth is strengthened.

As a co-educational regional boarding school and proud AAGPS member, TAS continues to honour its heritage while looking forward with confidence.

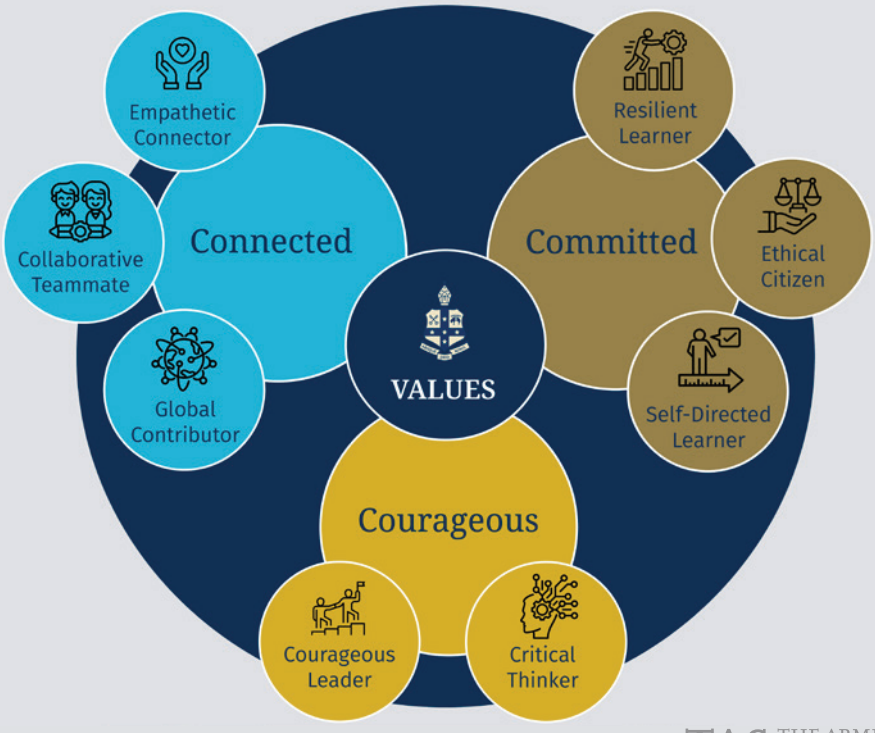


Ms Bronwyn File, Deputy Principal

This framework is a progressive step, but it is deeply consistent with who we have always been. Ultimately, we want our graduates to leave TAS not only with strong academic results, but with the wisdom and character to use their gifts well; young men and women who are capable in their thinking, kind in their actions and confident in their leadership. Young people who are, in every sense, Connected, Courageous and Committed.

I look forward to working alongside our staff, students and families as we continue to bring this framework to life in very real and practical ways across our School.

CHARACTER CAPABILITIES



TAS ranks in top schools statewide

FOR NAPLAN IMPROVEMENT

A focus on ongoing teacher professional development is paying off for students at TAS, which has been ranked as one of the highest-performing schools in New South Wales in both primary and secondary categories in two separate reports.

Analysis in May by two media companies – Nine's The *Sydney Morning Herald* and News Ltd's *Daily Telegraph* – mined data from the MySchool website to track improvement in NAPLAN results from 2023 to 2025. Averaging performance in the five domains assessed by NAPLAN (Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Numeracy) from Year 7 to Year 9, the Herald ranked TAS 31st of those schools in NSW with the highest ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage), and 60th of all schools for student improvement, across all ICEAS quartiles. In it's Primary School analysis, TAS Junior School ranked 11th in its ICSEA quartile and 37th overall, for improvement from Year 3 to 5.

The results provide a reliable and accurate picture of student growth, with 88 percent of students in Year 5 being tested at TAS in Year 3; 77 percent of Year 9, 2025 sitting NAPLAN at TAS when in Year 7 and an overall participation rate of 99 percent.

Meanwhile a separate study by the *Daily Telegraph* placed TAS Junior School as the 62nd best independent primary school in NSW and 139th nationally, based on an analysis of more than 2000 independent primary schools nationwide that also included student-staff ratios and attendance. TAS was the third-highest ranking primary school outside Sydney, behind schools in the Illawarra and on the Central Coast.

TAS Director of Teaching and Learning Luke Polson said the results affirmed the work being done in and out of the classrooms and beyond NAPLAN testing.

"Our teachers do not 'teach to the test', nor do we ask some students not to sit the tests – our participation rates of above 98 percent in all year groups is important in giving us feedback so we can help every individual, and also every teacher," he said. "Unlike HSC league tables which only focus on the higher performing students, the beauty of this analysis is that is shows the improvement of the whole cohort over two years of schooling. This is a much more realistic overview of how all students who sat the tests at TAS in both years, have improved above the state average, regardless of their academic ability."

As reported in the previous edition of *Binghi*, last year TAS was one of just 20 schools across New South Wales selected to be part of the High Impact Teaching Initiative conducted by Independent Schools NSW, which has a strong focus on refining teaching practise based on educational neuroscience.

"A lot of strategies we were already undertaking, but being part of this project has formalised our approach and understanding, allowing teachers to have greater impact," Mr Polson said.

Principal Ray Pearson said the results were a testament to the quality of academic programs and teaching staff. "The results are an affirmation that we are getting better at tracking individual student performance, at identifying opportunities for both academic support and extension sooner, and reinforcing teaching practise that engages our students to learn effectively," he said.

Farewell, Mr Beaker

Cheering him along a tunnel of goodwill was how the School farewelled Mr Gordon 'Beaker' McLennan, who officially retired on the last day of term after almost four decades of service.

The heart and soul of the Science department as Lab Assistant extraordinaire for more than 36 years, he has been affectionately to generations of students as 'Mr Beaker', sharing a passion for learning that is often unseen but never un-appreciated by students, teachers and the various heads of department he was worked with. He has been the mainstay of the nationally-recognised TAS Forensic Science Camp, managed the Mission Possible program and helped organise Year 9 Science excursions to Yarrahapinni, Grassy Head NSW. He has also contributed to co-curricular life in cadets, as a football manager, as a photographer at school events, and as a parent to Andrea ('94-'99) Hayden ('97-'08) and stepson Julian Vogt ('13-'18). Recognising his contribution to TAS, the Old Armidalians' Union made him an Honorary OA in 2023.

On his final day, Mr McLennan unveiled the framed biography of his cardiologist and TAS Old Boy, Professor Rajesh Subbiah ('85-'88), the first to feature on the Science Building's wall of honour recognising eminent Old Armidalians in the fields of science, engineering, technology and agriculture.

That evening, tributes continued from a range of former Heads of Science at his staff farewell. It was, in true form, not his actual last day at TAS, staying on to see out the Forensic Science Camp held in the first week of the school holidays. Thank you Mr Beaker for your vast contribution to TAS and all best wishes in retirement.



'Mr Beaker' is farewelled by students

Crime spree intrigues young detectives

Motive, means and opportunity – the foundational triangle for solving crime was at the forefront of thinking for 84 Year 8 boys and girls from across eastern Australia who attended the annual TAS Forensic Science Camp from 27 June – 1 July. During the camp the young sleuths set about solving a slew of hypothetical crimes including murders, fraud, kidnapping and vandalism, spurred on by a deadline to have their suspects 'convicted' by a legal professional. Along the way, they developed skills in laboratory techniques, critical thinking and teamwork, and made friendships with others of similar interest.

Part of what makes it unique is that it is run by students – this year's team comprising 11 TAS students from Years 9 and 10. Divided into 23 'Crime Task Force' teams, the Year 8 'campers' solved one of five crime scenarios that were developed and road-tested by 10 'camp controllers' as part of a unique semester-long TAS Year 9/10 elective.

"It's a really niche opportunity that not everyone gets to do in such a hands-on way, simulating the techniques and processes used to solve a crime," said Camp Director Megan Varvari, a Year 10 student who took on on a leadership role in this, her third camp.

The senior management team not only oversaw the controllers who created the scenarios, they were also responsible for various roles including recruitment, catering, accommodation, logistics and entertainment. Five adult staff members were on hand purely to supervise and offer laboratory support.

The scenario controllers supported the teams in their crime solving and case development throughout the camp. On the final day the teams presented their case to Kingsley Chapman, Detective Inspector – Crime Manager, New England Police District at a 'committal hearing'.

It was the final camp for Laboratory Assistant Mr Gordon 'Beaker' McLennan, who has been involved in the camps since its inception in 1994.

"None of the laboratory staff know or have ever known, who has committed the crimes. While some of the equipment and scenarios have changed over the years, what hasn't changed is the camp's capacity for promoting self-oriented learning skills such as learning to think for yourself, to communicate well with other people, think outside the square and teamwork – and of course, the irresistible intrigue to solve a crime", he said.



Year 10 students Hamish Leahy, Mathew Clifton, Albie King and Megan Varvari were the students management team



Edith Bartlett-Taylor, Amelia Wadley and Thara Dhinakaran synthesise the profiles of their suspects

When the Chemistry is right

Year 12 Chemistry students attended the annual HSC Booster Day on 10 June, presented by the UNE Chemistry Department in the Faculty of Science, Agriculture, Business and Law. This all-day event showcases the multi-million-dollar equipment at UNE used to analyse organic and inorganic substances and gives students a unique opportunity to see how spectroscopy is performed in practice. Students competed against regional schools in the annual Titration competition, with Ty Nixon and Dax Blair-Pevitt (pictured) winning the two-person category.



da Vinci Success
AT STATE FINAL

A team of Year 11 students made a strong impression at the State Finals of the da Vinci Decathlon at Knox Grammar School on 13 May. The team came away with third place in the Engineering challenge, a magnificent achievement against the best young minds in the State. It was the fifth State Final for Peter Thompson (back, far right) and Richard Ma (front, far right), joined by teammates (back) Erik Larsen, Dustin Uebergang, Cody Uebergang, (front) Thomasina Guerrero, Georgia Cadzow and Maddie Meyer.

The State Final was the culmination of various qualifying events around NSW, including the 13th Northern NSW da Vinci Decathlon hosted by TAS in March. Devised by Knox Grammar School, the Decathlons are an academic competition in which teams of eight complete 10 challenges in the subject areas of Engineering, Mathematics, Code Breaking, Art and Poetry, Science, English, Ideation, Creative Producers, Cartography and Legacy.



Acclaimed artist shares his inner sanctum

Year 11 Visual Arts Students attended the studio and gallery space of world-renowned, local artist Angus Nivison, on his family property, Yalgoolygum, near Walcha in June. This excursion provided a meaningful opportunity for Mr Nivison to share his art practice as well as discussion around where he finds the inspiration for his artmaking. Mr Nivison gave thoughtful advice on the role of those who view art, as different from the artist themselves, and the value that critical feedback can play in informing future work. The students were challenged by both Mr Nivison and their teacher Ms Xeros to consider what might inspire their Body of Work in HSC next year, as well as their chosen artistic medium. The School is gratetful to Mr Nivison and his wife Caroline, also an artist and former TAS teacher, for a wonderful afternoon exploring artistic possibilities.





Half marathon, full effort

A group of dedicated TAS runners took on the challenge of the Bay-to-Bay Half Marathon on the Central Coast on 14 June, with students, parents, gappies and staff proudly representing the school in one of the state's most popular distance running events. Months of training, preparation, and commitment were evident as runners tackled the 21.1-kilometre course from Woy Woy to Gosford with courage and commitment. The majority of runners were students of the Stage 5 (Year 9/10) Marathon Athlete elective. Regardless of individual finishing times, every participant demonstrated the qualities that underpin successful distance running, and indeed life itself: perseverance, discipline, and a willingness to push beyond personal comfort zones.

Students, gappies and staff who completed the Bay to Bay Half Marathon in June

Sydney Girls' joins TAS for 'High Weekend'

A long-held tradition of multi-sport competition between Sydney Boys' High School (SBHS) and TAS took on a new significance on 22-23 May with 'High Weekend' also welcoming students from Sydney Girls' High School (SGHS) for the first time.

Since 2012, TAS has hosted Sydney Boys' for competition in a range of fixtures for the Hannon and Harris Cup, named after former Deputy Headmasters of both schools. Director of Co-curricular Lachlan Fear said the expansion of the competition to include Sydney Girls' High was a logical extension.

"The innovation reflects an evolution in our inter-school sports offering, to provide more opportunities for all our students to match up against other schools with similar values and history, and we are confident it will only strengthen what is already one of the major highlights on the TAS calendar," he said.

Across the weekend, TAS and SBHS competed in volleyball, basketball, football and rugby. The two schools were also joined by NEGS for the long-running Tank Shell Shield competition between the three schools, this year narrowly won by High. TAS and Sydney Girls' matched up in volleyball and netball, with mixed gender tennis also part of the schedule. TAS won all seven rugby clashes including a dynamic 69-0 showing for the First XV in the start of the GPS Third Grade competition, particular delight to members of the 1984/85 TAS rugby team that were present for the unveiling of a memorial to their teammate Sam Bailey (see story p 22).

Ultimately the visitors won 10/18 clashes – giving High the Hannon and Harris Shield, presented by former TAS Deputy HM Grant Harris, for the second successive year.



Players from all three schools took to the tennis courts in mixed competition



Senior volleyballers in action



Lesley Grant in pursuit of a player supported to TAS teammate Naida Noonan



TAS, High and NEGS shot for the Tank Shell Shield

Saddling up at Coona

TAS was represented at the North West Equestrian Expo at Coonabarabran on 29 May – 2 June by a young team of enthusiastic riders. Over the course of the five-day event, students competed across a wide range of disciplines, including the One Day Event, Combined Training, Pentathlon, Dressage, Show Jumping, Working Horse Challenge, Polocrosse, Sporting, Warrumbungles Way, Teams Barrel Race, Team Penning and the Gymkhana.



The demanding schedule required students to balance competition with the care and management of their horses, with days often commencing as early as 6:00am and concluding well after dark. The Expo continues to offer a valuable opportunity for riders of all experience levels to participate in a supportive and inclusive environment and students are encouraged to engage in a variety of disciplines, including those they may not have previously attempted.

Camping onsite throughout the event. This fostered a strong sense of community and teamwork, with evenings spent enjoying the camaraderie of camp life. The expo would not be possible without the generous support of parents and grandparents, who contribute significant time and effort through event duties, preparation of horses, and ongoing encouragement of students.

Left: Isla Pike, Lucy Kelly, Hannah Murray, Mathew Clifton, Austin Kelly and Nicholas Clifton with their ribbons from the expo

TAS Farrer MAHS share the spoils in annual multi-sports fixtures

A dominating display by TAS' top rugby team saw them successfully retain the Jim Levy First XV Challenge Shield against Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School on 15 May, but the Tamworth hosts once again won most of the multi-sports fixtures to retain the Dick Hodgson Shield.

In what is a highlight on the co-curricular calendar of both schools, TAS and Farrer competed in chess, debating, shooting, tennis, basketball, hockey, football and rugby, with wins shared between them.

Commencing the competition was chess, with TAS taking four senior boards and Farrer winning the junior boards. The results were reversed in debating, whilst Farrer took out both senior and junior basketball. At Calibre Country indoor shooting range it was a close encounter, Farrer taking the day 193 points to TAS' 188. Farrer won the hockey in a match closer than the 5-0 scoreline; and got the points in the three games of football and the First IV tennis, the Second IV scoreboard ended in a draw.

TAS had more success in rugby, winning five of the eight games played, a solid 24-15 result for the TAS Second XV being the curtain raiser for a stunning 38-0 victory for the First XV. It was the third successive pre-season win for TAS following matches against Central Coast Grammar School and Port Macquarie's Hastings Valley Vikings.













Top Left: The TAS First XV with the Jim Levy Challenge Shield
Top Right: William Cooper-Fillios enjoyed the tennis

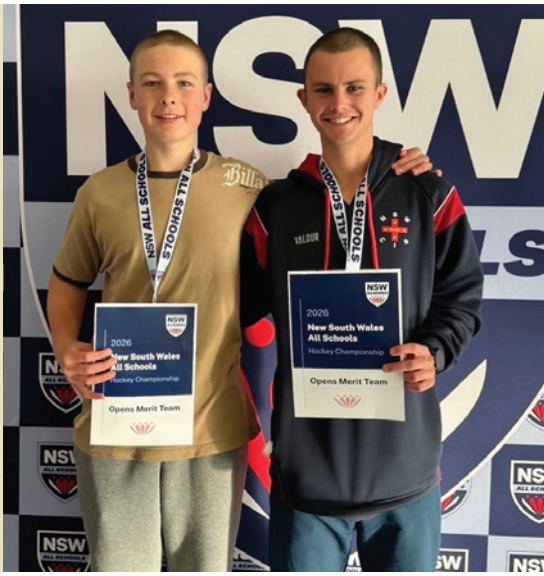
Above Left: Jim Levy presents the shield named in his honour to TAS First XV Captain Will Hall
Above Centre: Mila Nexo played black on junior board 1 for TAS

Above: Nithya Rajendra makes a point in the senior debate
Right: Charlie Henderson in a lineout in a junior rugby fixture

State honours for hockey players

Following an outstanding performance by Combined Independent Schools at the NSW All Schools Opens Championships on 29 May, Senior hockey players Jack Kellaway (goalkeeper) and Luke Schmude (striker) were named in the NSW All Schools Merit team, the highest representative honour in the schools pathway. The CIS team won the All Schools titles for what is believed to be the first time ever, with a solid 6-0 defeat of Combined Catholic Colleges, and then beating Combined High Schools 2-1.

The boys were selected from the North Coast Independent Schools team which finished in second place at the CIS championships at Moorebank Hockey Centre in Sydney a month earlier. Four other TAS players were part of the team which also included players from The King's School, Barker College, Waverley College and Riverina Anglican College.
It was a big month for Luke who, between school tournaments, represented Australia under 18s in a four-test series against India in Bhopal – Australia winning two matches and drawing two.



Jack Kellaway and Luke Schmude were named in the NSW Schools Merit team

EVERYBODY CUT *Footloose*

After months of rehearsals, the cast and crew of this year's school production performed to four sell-out shows in the Hoskins Creative Arts Centre in the first weeks of term. Full of energy, colour and creative talent, the show evoked the popular 1980s movie of the same name, passionately telling the story of a newcomer to a small community who attempts to overturn a ban of dancing and reconcile the sadness behind it.

It was a wonderful showcase of creative talent, borne out of courage and commitment, to something much bigger than each individual. The final night was particularly special for those in Year 12, some of whom have been on the Hoskins Theatre stage since their earliest days in Junior School. The importance of creative arts at TAS is reflected in a suite of opportunities, including the staging of musical productions in both Junior School and senior school, every year.
























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Musicians shine at Eisteddfod

TAS had an outstanding presence at the Armidale Eisteddfod, with students achieving across composition, HSC performances, choir, band, string ensembles, voice, piano, strings, brass, woodwind, guitar and chamber music, demonstrating exceptional dedication and musicianship. At Band Night, one of the highlights of the month-long event, the TAS Senior Jazz Combo was awarded first place in both sections it entered, while the TAS Orchestra and TAS Senior Concert Band each achieved second-place awards. Particular praise was given to the TAS Senior Jazz Combo, whose polished and mature performances provided a fitting conclusion to the evening.

Misaki Wright (cello), Raymond Wang (violin), Bridie Farrell (voice) and the TAS Camerata String Ensemble were selected to perform at the final Gala Concert which showcased outstanding performances from across the Eisteddfod. In addition to various ensembles which won championships, two students were honoured with special individual awards – Anna Trevaskis Year 6: Adjudicator's Award – Junior – Brass, and William Minter Year 5: Adjudicator's Encouragement Award for Brass; New England String Ensemble Championship (AMEB Grade 5/6) and New England Woodwind & Brass Age Championship (12 Years and Under).



The TAS Orchestra with Director Paul Marshall at the Armidale Eisteddfod

Records fall at Athletics Championships



Above: Broughton House runners won both the boys and girls Cloisters Run relays

Right: Quill Osborne set a new record in the 13 years shot put

Inter-house athletics events bookended Term 2, with the Middle and Senior School Athletics Championships held in the second week of term but the Cloisters Run postponed to the final week, due to scaffolding around the Science Building. A total of nine new athletics records were set at this year's championships: three by Athletics Captain Emily Ussher (18 years and over girls 800m, 1500m, and Open girls 3000m); two by Scarlett Templeton (13 year girls 100m, 200m); two by Chloe Harmer (12 year girls 200m, 400m); one by Layla Macfarlane (17 year girls 400m) and one by Quill Osborne (14 year boys shot put). As always, the Lawrance Quadrangle was a cauldron of house spirit for the Cloisters Run, a running relay throughout the heart of the school. For the first time ever, the same house won both boys and girls relays – well done to Broughton House.



United Nations (UN) Evatt Competition

Does your opinion on global matters change if viewed through the lens of another country? Sixteen students from Years 9-12 took on that challenge at Evatt, a debating and diplomacy competition staged by UN Youth and held at O'Connor Catholic College on 30 April. In teams of two, the students played the part of different United Nations Security Council representatives and debated three topics, on issues of international security, human rights and current affairs. Included in the topics are a number of resolutions, which can be debated individually and voted for or against or amended. For the Armidale round, the topics were 'the question of the conflict in South Sudan', 'the question of privacy in the digital age' and 'the effects of climate change on the Arctic Circle'. The competition aims to increase knowledge of global affairs and the perspectives of different countries, as well as the workings of the UN Security Council. Ty Nixon and Nithya Rajendra then attended the State Final at the University of Technology, Sydney, on 13 June. There they debated two main resolutions 'the question of trans-boundary basins' and 'the question of tensions in Cyprus'.



Students who took part in the Evatt competition

Footy and Faith

Rugby players from across age groups enjoyed a barbecue breakfast with former Wallaby James Holbeck ('90) on Wednesday 6 May. Mr Holbeck, a strong supporter of both the TAS rugby program and the TAS Chaplaincy Department which hosted the breakfast, spoke about his rugby career at TAS, his seven tests with the Wallabies, when he often faced the challenges of injuries, his current work with the Rugby Union Players' Association, and his journey in the Christian faith.

A Q&A session offered interesting insights into his life and his search for meaning in both his professional and spiritual life, and was appreciated by all who attended. Mr Holbeck is pictured below with Rev Stone and Rev Benham from the Chaplaincy team and Captain of Rugby Baxter Williams.



Indigenous Students Program

This term a number of the School's Indigenous students have had wonderful opportunities to explore their culture, build networks and cultivate pathways for life after TAS.

In Week 3, eight students supported by the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) attended the AIEF Conference in Sydney, sharing their experiences with AIEF partners in government and the private sector. It included a careers forum run by AIEF sponsors the Commonwealth Bank and Qantas, and a visit to the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Redfern, where Chloe Dennison and other AIEF students were photographed for *The Australian* newspaper. TAS is proud to partner AIEF in providing quality educational opportunities for Indigenous students, and is grateful for the corporate, private and government support AIEF receives.

In late May, William Dennison, Kody Ford, Naomi Miller and Tyler Minchell attended a range of Indigenous cultural events in Sydney for Reconciliation Week, including visiting Cockatoo Island, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australian Museum and the NSW War Memorial. The trip culminated in the Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service at the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park, which honoured the service of Indigenous men and women to their country in conflicts from the Boer War to current campaigns, highlighting the often-neglected acknowledgement of their contribution. The students, from one of only three NSW schools selected, were able to attend thanks to a grant from NSW Veterans won by Naomi Miller, whose application outlined the inspiration of her brother Harry (OA '23), who attended the Royal Military College Duntroon and is now an officer in the Australian Army.

Meanwhile at TAS, Reconciliation Week was marked with several activities. Keeping with this year's theme being 'All In', at a special K-12 Assembly, Kindergarten delivered an Acknowledgement of Country; there were presentations by some of our Indigenous students, and Anaiwan representatives Josh Tool-Thurston and Sharnae Smith conducted a smoking ceremony. The following weekend all senior sporting teams wore specially-designed jerseys for the 'Indigenous Round' of fixtures with a smoking ceremony held on Backfield prior to the TAS First XV match against St Joseph's College on 13 June.





Above: William Dennison, Kody Ford, and Tyler Minchell in Sydney during Reconciliation Week

Left: Naomi Miller speaks with WO1 Paul Simpfendorfer OAM about the contribution of Indigenous service personnel to the nation

Lest we forget

School paused on the afternoon of Friday 24 April for the annual ANZAC Service as we honoured the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. With Anzac Day falling on a Saturday and the NSW Government declaring a public holiday the following Monday, the arrangement offered the opportunity for boarding parents to attend before collecting their children and for the youngest Junior

School students to attend, for the first time. Members of the Cadet Unit Ceremonial Guard provided the catafalque party, MAJ Monique Fienberg (Ret'd) gave the address and the Senior Prefects read out the names of the 103 former students and staff who lost their lives in conflicts from the Boer War to Afghanistan.

On ANZAC Day itself, TAS students were front and centre in local commemorations. Continuing a tradition into its fourth decade, the Ceremonial Guard provided the catafalque party at Dangarsleigh and also at the main Central Park service in Armidale. Cadets from Years 6-12 took part in the town march and students also led hymns and laid wreathes on behalf of the School and the New England Conservatorium of Music. It was a fitting tribute to the legacy of all who have served in various conflicts.



Junior School students who took part in the Armidale Town March



The Ceremonial Guard at the main Armidale Service in Central Park



OAU President David Ross and Prefects Jordy Cullen and Marshall Kellett before the service where they would lay wreaths



Bridie Farrell and Steven Walters laying wreaths in Armidale



Cadet Unit CO Johnathon Woodbridge and Principal Ray Pearson with MAJ Monique Fienberg at the TAS service



Ceremonial Guard member Elsie Caulfield at Dangarsleigh



Ceremonial Guard members Clare McDouall, Henry Larsen, Vernon Toakley and Zac Ridley

Students cut a new record for World's Greatest Shave

Support for Leukaemia research and sufferers is $55,006 better off, thanks to the efforts of Year 12 who set a new benchmark for the Leukaemia Foundation's World's Greatest Shave. An initiative of the senior student leaders involved 75 Year 12s and 15 staff being sponsored to have their heads shaved or their locks cropped for the cause - with students also chipping in for the chance to wield the clippers or scissors. This year's campaign was launched at the Athletics Championships and officially wrapped up on 20 May when Mr Pearson submitted his scalp to the cause after his challenge to raise a TAS record of more than$50,000, had been achieved. The cropped and shaved hair did not go to waste, either being donated for wigs for cancer patients, or to a company that makes hair mats used to mop up damaging oils in the ocean, human hair being lipophilic (absorbing oil while repelling water). It was a wonderful example of making a genuine difference to those in need.







Right: Mr Pearson sported a mohawk after the World's Greatest Shave; Marshall Kellett, Luke Schmude and Jack Kellaway; Mr Pearson and Ms File joined by some of the participating Year 12 students.

House colours unveiled

DURING NATIONAL BOARDING WEEK

There was appropriate fanfare at Assembly during National Boarding Week in May when Mosie Wright and Brooke Tudor unveiled the official colours and crests of the two girls' boarding houses, Nina Macdonald House and Charlotte May Wright House.

Nina Macdonald House draws on the livery of Clan Donald, with the house colour purple and the secondary colour, teal, referencing the 'Macdonald Clan Variation Tartan' able to be used by anyone associated with Clan Donald, rather than a specific family line. The Clan Donald motto 'Per mare per terras' means 'by land and by sea'.

The livery for Charlotte May Wright House borrows from the crest of Wright College, University of New England, with orange as the dominant colour and yellow as a subsidiary colour. Added to the crest is a new motto - Victory 2 Victory, from which the pastoral family's famous V2V cattle brand was derived. The colours and livery will build a distinct identity for the girls' boarding houses.

Also at the assembly Heidi Cannington, Will Hall and Aiden Earnshaw shared their experiences of boarding life before Aiden shaved the head of Director of Boarding Mr Drain, for the Year 12 World's Greatest Shave fundraiser. During National Boarding Week a number of teachers were invited by boarders to spend some time in the boarding houses and get an insight into their home away from home.

NINA MACDONALD HOUSE

PER MARE PER TERRAS

CHARLOTTE MAY WRIGHT HOUSE

VICTORY 2 VICTORY



Charlotte May Wright House Vice Captain (and descendant) Mosie Wright and Nina Macdonald House Captain Brooke Tudor and Vice Captain Heidi Cannington with the new house colours



Junior girl boarders have fun in Moyes



Mr Harry Rorke with junior boy boarders



Romy Berti and Elsie Post at the National Arboretum



Mason Grace-Booth, Edward Murray, Hassan Almohtar and William Douglass

AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY AT THE HEART OF
Canberra excursion

Year 6 had an action-packed excursion to Canberra in Week 3, visiting more than a dozen national institutions that gave them meaningful insight into Australia's political, social, natural and military life. The excitement of a night visit to the National Dinosaur Museum and orienteering at the National Arboretum; cultural reflections at the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery; honouring the fallen at the Australian War Memorial and role-playing democracy at the National Electoral Education Centre and Parliament House were just some of the activities. Not only did the students return with a greater knowledge of Australia's political system and cultural identity, but also the place of the island continent in the wider world.



Nash Kellett meets his relative Albert Jacka, VC, at the Australian War Memorial



Maddie Pearson, Bronte Polson and Wren Osborne at the National Portrait Gallery



Emily Grayling, Evelyn McDonald, Misaki Wright and Penelope Larsen learn about Prime Ministers



Hassan Almokhtar, Daniel Jackson and Bill Mayne tempt fate at the Dinosaur Museum

Story time with a personal touch

Year 6 spent last term working on an art assessment where they made a children's book using handprints and thumbprints for the illustrations of their animal characters. At the culmination of the assessment, the students visited Kindergarten and read them their stories. The delightful display of connection between Junior and Middle School students had positive outcomes for visual arts and literacy and built confidence with communication skills.



Year 6 student Grace Dunn (right) reads her story *A Chicken Adventure* to Kindy's Grace Mettam

Ag students accept merino challenge

The Year 8 Ag program focuses on local agricultural enterprises and this term expanded into super fine wool production with a visit to Cressbrook Merino Stud at Dangarsleigh. Students took on the knowledge they learnt during the excursion to identify one problem faced in wool production and then design a potential solution to solve it. Amongst those nominated, with potential solutions, were: drought (trough cover and water level detection technology); predation (sensor alarms) and internal parasites (automatic dose guns). The class was grateful to the Fulloon family for giving them an insight into the merino industry and some of the issues faced by producers. The visit was just one of a number of excursions that are planned as part of the new Middle School Agriculture program, with dairy a focus next term.



Year 8 students get insight into sheep and wool production

Silently celebrating slapstick

During Term 2 Year 8 Drama students channelled their inner Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Lucille Ball, exploring the conventions, history and techniques of slapstick comedy. In collaboration with their class teachers Miss Denton and Ms O'Sullivan and Creative Arts Operations Supervisor Miss Showell, they devised, performed and filmed their own silent movies in the classic slapstick style, along the way developing performance skills and gaining insight into the art of film making. Experimenting with physical comedy and comic timing brought laughter to the classroom. To wrap up the term, the Year 8 Slapstick Film Festival screened their efforts to Middle School, complete with complimentary popcorn.





Stills from two of the four silent movies made for the Year 8 Slapstick Film Festival

JUNIOR SCHOOL news



Head of Junior School, Mr Scott Chittenden

Outstanding NAPLAN

RESULTS FOR JUNIOR SCHOOL

TAS Junior School has been ranked amongst the best primary schools in the state, according to an analysis comparing NAPLAN results from 2023 with those of 2025.

The deep dive by the *Daily Telegraph* ranked TAS Junior School as the 62nd highest independent primary school in NSW and 139th nationally. In a list heavily weighted towards large metropolitan schools, TAS was the top genuinely regional school in NSW, with only The Illawarra Grammar School and Central Coast Grammar School listed above the 'non-metropolitan' list. Meanwhile in the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Primary School analysis, TAS Junior School ranked 11th in its ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage) quartile and 37th overall, for improvement from Year 3 to 5.

Head of Junior School Scott Chittenden said the results were a strong endorsement of the work being done across classrooms every day.

"What is worth emphasising is that we do not teach to the NAPLAN test and we never have. The data reflects good teaching, consistent expectations, thoughtful differentiation and a real commitment to extending our high-performing students, while supporting all learners well. A completion rate of over 95 per cent also says a lot about student engagement and the culture you create," he said.

"These outcomes align neatly with our school values and the kind of holistic education we aim to provide. Academic growth matters, but it sits alongside wellbeing, balance and knowing our students properly."

Challenging ethics

Can animals feel the same emotions as people? Is it ever okay to steal? To what extent should a minority group conform to the expectations of the majority? And is it possible for everyone to do good things all the time? These were just some of the issues that Year 5 and Year 6 teams contemplated in the Primary Ethics Olympiad, a collaborative competition where students engage with real world ethical dilemmas through respectful dialogue, careful listening and responding to a range of different perspectives in a format different to a traditional debate. Both groups earned Honourable Mentions for their efforts, reflecting their integrity and genuine curiosity.



Year 5 students Nirvan Sapkota, Jackson McLean, Sabine Kiehne and Evelyn Barwick test ethical issues

Studying solar solutions

Year 5 students enjoyed an excursion to Metz Solar Farm on 7 May as part of their inquiry into renewable and non-renewable energy. It was fascinating to learn more about the New England Renewable Energy Zone, the regulations and infrastructure involved, and the environmental benefits associated with reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Students were amazed by the high-tech equipment, including a drone fitted with thermal imaging to identify faults on solar panels, and by the fact that the solar farm alone generates enough electricity to power around 40,000 homes each year. With Science learning in Terms 1 and 2 focusing on electricity and circuitry, students were fully engaged when exploring series and parallel configurations in a real-world context.



Learning about circuitry at the Metz Solar Farm

Egyptian antiquities transfix Year 2

Linking to their learning about Ancient Egypt through legends and stories as part of their International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) Unit 'How We Express Ourselves', Year 2 had a fabulous visit to the Antiquities Museum at UNE on 12 May. They were able to carefully handle ancient objects from Egypt, including an oil lamp and perfume bottle, and also learnt about the process of embalming mummies – then got to turn each other into mummies!



Winifred Gordon with an ancient artefact at the UNE Antiquities Museum

Author brings her books to life

Author Sophie Masson shared a world of imagination with Years 1-5 students on 7 May when she visited as an initiative of the Children's Book Council of Australia's Armidale/New England chapter. With 40 books to her name, from children's picture books and fantasy to adult crime, mystery and romance, the Armidale-based author spoke about her inspiration, the influence of her multi-cultural heritage and the process of writing and illustrating. There was no shortage of questions from the students keen to know more.



Sophie Masson with young readers

Students say Kon'nichiwa to global learning

Year 4 students have been enjoying Japanese classes, developing language skills alongside a deeper appreciation of culture and global connection. While primary schools are not required to teach a second language, TAS offers French across the Junior School, with Japanese introduced from Year 4. Recent lessons have focused on cultural understanding, including learning how to use chopsticks, an experience that will serve students well as their international horizons expand.

This learning is strengthened by the school's longstanding relationship with Tezukayama Gakuin Elementary School in Osaka, a valued partner school. In the December holidays this year, 20 selected Year 5 and 6 students will travel to Japan, an opportunity offered by only a handful of primary schools. It is an exciting and authentic extension of our commitment to language learning, cultural awareness and meaningful global engagement from an early age.



Year 4 get used to using chopsticks in the senior Japanese class

FOUNDATION news

Fundraising is not always an easy task, but it is one of the most rewarding. When the courage to ask is met with generosity, we see, quite literally, the difference it makes. It may be the students who walk through our doors thanks to our donors, or the building projects that move from concept to reality because someone believed in the power of a TAS education.

One of the most common reasons prospective donors give for not supporting an organisation is simple: "I was never asked." Our hope is that everyone in our community understands that giving to the School through the TAS Foundation has a real and lasting impact. Our School was built on philanthropy, and its beginnings depended on it. Through our latest Annual Giving campaign, as well as the huge efforts for the Solstice Dinner, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed in whatever way they could. We would also like to thank those who did not need to be asked but gave and continue to give. Your instinctive generosity strengthens our School in ways that cannot be overstated. And for those who have not yet had the opportunity to contribute, We will continue to ask, to invite, and to ensure that everyone has the chance to give back in a way that is meaningful to them.

What makes our School unique is the opportunity for our community to help shape its future. We actively seek ideas, aspirations, and visions for how we can continue to grow. I often refer to the Venn diagram of School and donor priorities, where project costs, School needs, donor capacity, and donor passion overlap. That shared space is where meaningful projects come to life.

We already have several powerful examples of this partnership in action:

- Community support for the new rugby benches and the launch of Wallaby Way, raising over $30,000 (read more on page 23).
- The Solstice Dinner, now in its third year, which raised over $40,000
- The TAS Foundation Stock and Crop Club, which has raised $27,000 to support the development of the TAS Athletic Hub, opening in Term 4.

You can explore our current live fundraising projects on page 22 and join us in creating a future defined by excellence. We invite you to consider how you might help shape the next chapter of our School, whether through a gift today, a recurring contribution, or a bequest in your will. Every form of support makes a meaningful difference.

Thank you.

Emily McOrist
Director of Development





Sold out Solstice

RAISES A RECORD $44,000

The 2026 TAS Foundation Solstice Dinner was a vibrant celebration from start to finish, with the masquerade theme transforming the entire evening into a colourful mix of mystery, glamour and playful imagination. Guests were welcomed with a beautiful carriage to celebrate the theme, then led into Big School, where all the fundraising efforts really took off.

The atmosphere lifted even further thanks to a brilliant lineup of honorary guests who added their own flair to the night. The 17th Earl of Bruce (William Wallace), a few masked super heros, and a very enthusiastic spider inspired man, all made appearances, mingling with time travelling figures from across the ages who were glamoured up behind their masks. Their presence set the tone for an evening that was full of fun and surprises.

This was where the real fun began. The sold out event didn't just fill the room, it sold out the entire balloon raffle in record time. The live auction reached new heights with record amounts raised on multiple items and the crowd fully engaged from start to finish. One of the standout moments was the special addition of 'Ray the Steer', who quickly became a crowd favourite and raised an impressive $2000 for the TAS Foundation Stock and Crop Club.

With all this energy and generosity combined, the Solstice Dinner raised $44,000 for the Building Fund's Big School project. This achievement reflects the incredible spirit of the TAS community and the enthusiasm everyone brought to the evening. A huge thank you goes to the attendees, supporters, donors, volunteers and everyone who contributed their time, creativity and goodwill. The success of the night was only possible because of the collective effort of so many people. A special thanks to the Membership and Planning Committee of Fiona Nash, Dorianne Coventry, Simon Wright and Emily Griffiths.

The momentum from this year's masquerade has set a fantastic tone for what is possible in 2027, and there is already a sense of excitement building for the next Solstice Dinner.

Emily McOrist
Director of Development



Toast to the School



Will Gell got into the spirit of the night



Anthony Chick and Andrew Draney



Organising committee Simon Wright, Emily McOrist, Dorianne Coventry, Fiona Nash (not in photo Emily Griffiths)

Your generosity at work...

The support for replacing the Backfield rugby benches was phenomenal. What began as a $19,000 fundraising goal grew to an incredible $31,500, allowing us to install additional benches on the eastern side of Backfield and create Wallaby Way to recognise Old Armidalians who have represented Australia in rugby. This enthusiasm and support has now led to the creation of two distinct sporting projects that you can be part of:

- Built for the Boundary, replacing and installing new benches on Cricket Oval
- Backfield Game Ready, replacing the retaining wall on Backfield

BUILT FOR THE BOUNDARY- BUY A BENCH FOR THE CRICKET OVAL

There are 40 chances to buy a bench with your name on it, with 11 reserved for the honour of the Douglas Shield 2026 winners.

For just $500, celebrate your TAS years now and through the future by donating a bench for the War Memorial Cricket Oval. The cricket oval is long overdue for more seating, especially when our supporters put in innings of loyalty every weekend, showing up with the same courage, commitment and connection that define our school community.
This year gives us an especially meaningful moment to lift our sights: as for the first time in over 20 years, the TAS First XI claimed the Douglas Shield, a remarkable achievement that speaks to the commitment of our students.

Now is the time to etch your bench into the school's history. Donate your tax-deductible gift by buying a bench today.
https://asf.org.au/campaigns/the-armidale-school-tas/cricket-oval-benches

BACKFIELD GAME READY - RETAINING WALL REPLACEMENT

The enthusiasm for Backfield was on full display with the replacement of the benches, however there were many interested families that weren't quick enough and missed out on having their name on Backfield. Well, now is your time to continue improving this important rugby space.

We are now raising funds to replace the ageing retaining wall along Backfield with a modern wall design that matches the McConville Centre gardens, incorporates the TAS logo, and creates additional bench seating. Each 2.4m wall section costs $600 and will be recognised with a plaque, just like the benches. With 34 sections to replace, this is an opportunity to support TAS rugby as an individual, team, or alumni group and help create a Backfield the whole School can be proud of.

Donate your tax-deductible gift today.
https://asf.org.au/campaigns/the-armidale-school-tas/backfield-game-ready-retaining-wall-replacement

Bell Tower Society Luncheons

Senior Old Armidalians enjoyed each other's company at Bell Tower Society lunches in Canberra on 19 May and Brisbane on 19 June. Canberra. Those attending shared stories from their time at school, as well as hearing updates on TAS from Ray Pearson in Canberra and Emily McOrist in Brisbane.



Canberra

Clockwise from left: Rob Busby, Ashton Robinson ('60-'68), Douglas Widdup ('55-'62), John Widdup ('53-'60), Geraldine Collison, Lindsay Collison ('62-'65), Julia Widdup (wife of John), Nicholas Keatinge ('70-'73), Poppy Martin, Ray Pearson, Joanne Widdup (wife of Douglas), Dennis Martin ('55-'65).



Brisbane

Left: Graeme Crampton ('65-'69), Rob Busby ('63-'68), Jon Crawford ('60-'64), Joe Carter ('69-'73), Richard Vyner ('51-'55), Lloyd Hancock ('52-'55), Emily McOrist, David Hall ('63-'68), Miles Robertson ('65-'67) and Phil Curtis ('65-'68).

Wallaby Way

The School's First XV win against St Joseph's College provided the perfect backdrop for the launch of Wallaby Way on 13 June.

Wallaby Way is a dedicated row of benches honouring those Old Armidalians who have pursued their passion for rugby and reached the pinnacle of the sport by representing Australia as Wallabies. Several unmarked benches remain, awaiting the next Wallaby or Wallaroo to emerge from our community.

Twelve benches have now been installed, each with their own plaque. The first, sponsored by the Old Armidalian Union, explains the purpose of Wallaby Way, while the remaining benches celebrate each individual player.

The bench commemorating the first Old Armidalian Wallaby, Francis George Finley (1894 -1901), has also been generously sponsored by the OAU. A full list of those recognised on Wallaby Way appears on right.

This launch was more than a celebration of sporting achievement. It was a moment that reflected the values at the heart of our community. Wallaby Way stands as a reminder of the strength of community connection, the importance of perseverance and the pride we take in supporting one another. It honours not only those who have reached the highest levels of the game but also the shared spirit that binds students, families and Old Armidalians across generations. In recognising these players, we also celebrate the culture of commitment and courage that continues to shape our school.

At the launch, following a brief overview of each player and their biography, we were honoured to welcome back three of our Wallabies: Greg Cornelsen OAM ('63-'70); James Holbeck ('83-'90); and Sam Payne ('84-'89) for a question and answer session with Director of Development, Emily McOrist. They reflected on the importance of friendships forged on the field, shared memories of games on Backfield and spoke about the joy of simply playing the game. Thank you to each of them for their support of this initiative.

Our thanks go to everyone who supported the launch of Wallaby Way, including Michael Webb ('61-'63), who assisted with preparing the player biographies.

Below: Principal Ray Pearson and OAU President David Ross unveil Wallaby Way on 13 June. Watching on were plaque donors (l-r) Bill Bailey, Libby Bailey, (son and wife of Wallaby Grahan Bailey); Wallaby Sam Payne, Jenny Bailey (daugher-in-law of Graham Bailey), Wallabies Greg Cornelsen and Jamie Holbeck, and former Deputy Headmaster and rugby coach Grant Harris (donor of John Hipwell's bench).



TAS Australian Rugby Representatives

Francis George Finley (1894-1901)
Wallaby 59 (1904) 1 cap

Sir Bernard Croft (1917-1921)
Wallaby 260 (1928) 1 cap

Graham Bailey (1951-1953)
Wallaby Tourist (1957-58) 17 tour matches

Dr Richard How (1953-1962)
Wallaby 504 (1967) 1 cap

John Hipwell OAM (Staff 76-79 & 89)
Wallaby 519 (1968-82) 36 caps, Captain 9 Tests

Greg Cornelsen OAM (1963-1970)
Wallaby 574 (1974-1982) 25 caps

Adrian 'Moose' Skeggs (1978-82)
Wallaby Tourist (1993) 1tour match

Richard Tombs (1984-85)
Wallaby 698 (1992-1996) 5 caps

Sam Payne (1984-1989)
Wallaby 726 (1996-1997) 6 caps

James Holbeck (1983-1990)
Wallaby 737 (1997-2001) 7 caps

Joseph Roff (1986-88)
Wallaby 719 (1995-2004) 86 caps

OLD ARMIDALIANS' news

Canberra – 18 May

Thirty Old Armidalians from 1968 to 2025 enjoyed the opportunity of each other's company at OA drinks at Walt & Burley, Kingston Foreshore on Monday 18 May. The convival mood, and opportunity to meet and hear from Principal Ray Pearson, Director of Development Emily McOrist and OAU Hon Sec, Tim Hughes meant most opted to stay on for dinner. The gathering comprised a good number of leavers from the past decade, offering plenty of scope for networking across the cohorts.



Abbott House boys across the years: Charles Mason ('85), Wylie Wright ('23), Ben McAlister ('97), Fred Kearney ('23), Tim Hughes ('83), Daniel Emmery ('25).



Morgan Broadbent ('14), Georgia Donoghue ('21), Lee Reid ('00)



Edward White ('00), Lachlan Abbott ('02), Angus Capel ('03)



Emily Palfreyman ('22), Wylie Wright ('23), Louis Ross ('23), Phebe Hunt ('19)

Sydney OA Lunch – 22 May

Around 80 Old Armidalians from seven decades of the school's history enjoyed the Paddy Flower Long Lunch at Sydney's York Club on 22 May. Organised by the Sydney Branch of the OAU, the lunch featured a moving tribute to OA Sam Bailey ('85), quadriplegic farmer, motivational speaker and advocate who died in September last year, delivered by his brother Bill Bailey ('88). Principal Ray Pearson provided an update on the school and the new strategic plan 'Excellence Inspired by Character', answering several questions from the floor. Guests travelled from inter-state for the lunch, with many attendees then going on to watch the Waratahs play the Brumbies at Sydney Football Stadium. Special thanks to the organising team lead by John Steuart ('65); to Alistair Flower ('93) and Grant Burge Wines for donating the beverages and to the Class of 1981 who subsidised the cost of attending for the younger leavers.

Below: Bill Bailey ('88), Stuart Aggs ('88), Nick Pearce ('88), Craig Willoughby ('88)





Father and daughter alumnus, Simon Deshon ('92) and Nina Deshon ('25)



Peter Quayle ('66), Ian Hutchison ('63), Peter Johnstone ('67), Richard Chaffey ('67)

Sam Bailey Memorial unveiled

"Because you don't need wings to fly" - such is the wording at the bottom of a special memorial plaque to Old Armidalian, "rugby player, quadriplegic farmer and friend" Sam Bailey ('80-'85), that was unveiled by his wife Jenny in the company of family, friends and rugby players from TAS and Sydney Boys' High School on 23 May. An initiative of his teammates from the historic undefeated 1985 First XV, the plaque is set at the base of an access ramp to McConville Centre that was partly funded by the team and officially opened by Sam and Richard Tombs ('84-'85) in November 2024. Teammate David Alker and Principal Ray Pearson addressed the large crowd that gathered in front of the McConville Centre just prior to the First XV fixture against High; earlier in the day members of the 1985 team presented the First XV with their jerseys for their 2026 GPS campaign.



RIght: Jenny Bailey (front, centre) with Sam's mother Libby, sister Kate and former TAS rugby teammates, at the unveiling of the plaque.

Congratulations

Hearty congratulations to **Paul Griffiths** ('53-'61) who was named as a recipient of an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the General Division in this year's King's Birthday Honours List. Whilst the official citation is for "service to sport, to people with disability and to the community", this somewhat underplays Paul's significant contribution to a decades-long media career and advocacy for worthy causes. Professionally, his career as a regional television newsreader in Wagga Wagga was followed a long stint with the ABC, most visibly with the evening current affairs shows This Day Tonight and The National; as a panellist on The Inventors and a commentator of major events including royal tours and the 2000 Sydney Olympics. An association with the Disabled Skiers Federation led to his role as Director of Media for the International Paralympic Committee at three Paralympic Games and continued advocacy for people with disability.

He continued to run his own media company after 'retiring' to Mudgee with his wife Robbie, where he involved himself in a range of organisations. A life-long supporter of TAS, Paul served two terms on the School Council between 1983 and 1994, had roles in the long-running Music Halls, produced and voiced promotional videos for the school, and with Robbie, hosted Old Armidalians events in Turramurra and Mudgee. No doubt proud of his recongition are Robbie, sons **Bryn** ('83-'88), **Dai** ('87-'92), **Llew** ('95-'00), their daughter Myfanwy and grandchildren **Amelia** ('17-'18) and **Oliver** ('19-'22).



Paul Griffiths OAM

Recognising more than half a century dedicated to keeping regional communities safe, **Garry Bashford** ('66-'71) was one of just six recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal announced in the King's Birthday Honours List. Having been a member of the inaugural TAS Bushfire Brigade in 1971, he joined the Kentucky RFS brigade in 1973. He is currently a group officer in the RFS New England senior leadership team, having a special responsibility for crew training and support, most notably through the past decade with the Crew Leader program, motivating and mentoring new crew leaders. He is also the chairman of the New England Bush Fire Management Committee. Garry was also one of a number of New England RFS personnel who helped deliver training in Botswana as part of an RFS international relations project. In an interview with the Armidale Express he reflected on the many changes in fighting bushfires over many years, from "beaters and knapsacks"and using their own farm spray equipment, to tanker trailers and then trucks. Garry's sons **Adam** ('96-'01) and **Graham** ('98-'03) are also members of the Kentucky RFS brigade.



Garry Bashford

Callum James ('08–12) is currently working as a Strategy Director at global advertising agency TBWA, where he recently won a Gold Lion award at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity (advertising's most prestigious global award show) for a campaign he was the strategy lead on. The idea, ***The Sunburnt Car***, saw the agency reupholster the entire interior of a working car in synthetic human skin which would visibly burn when exposed to UV rays in the same way real skin does as a way of raising awareness of the hidden dangers of sun exposure when driving. The synthetic skin, developed specifically for the campaign for client mycar Tyre & Auto, was a first of its kind created in partnership with Oscar-winning prosthetics studio Odd Studios and leading burns surgeon and scientist Dr Joanneke Maitz, to ensure both scientific accuracy and genuine shock factor when experienced by audiences.

OLD ARMIDALIANS' news

Having represented Australia last year at the World University Games in Germany, **April Draney** ('17-'21) has been in the UK rowing for Thames Rowing Club at the famous Royal Henley Regatta. April was the only non-Brit in the TRC Women's B Eight crew which was runner up for the Wargrave Challenge Cup, the premier women's Eight club event. Earlier this year April deferred her nursing studies at Australian Catholic University and relocated to London for the greater opportunities for female rowers. April is pictured proudly wearing her TAS blazer at Henley. We think she is the first OA to row at Henley since **Martin Inglis** ('89-'94) in 2003.



April Draney

Condolences

A scion of the Australian family printing and stationery business WC Penfold founded in 1886, **William Frederick Penfold AM** ('48-'53) died on 10 March, aged 90. Enrolled at TAS for health reasons, Will enjoyed his time at school, being a Monitor and playing in the First XV in his final year. After TAS he spent two years as a trainee at the family company, WC Penfold, before joining the Navy as a gunner for six months as part of the National Service program. He then went to the London School of Printing for two years, during which time he met his future wife Penelope, and returned home to WC Penfold, eventually running the business. Will was an early member of the Australian chapter Young Presidents' Organisation (YPO), an international association of chief executives, and stayed involved for decades, and also served on various medical charity boards, receiving the Order of Australia (AO) in 2000 for services to the community. He loved golf, tennis and later croquet with his mates, including **David Uther** ('51-'58) who delivered a eulogy at his funeral service at St Mark's Anglican Church, Darling Point on 19 March. Will was pre-deceased by his wife Penny and survived by his children Melissa, Kate and **Andrew** ('75-'78).

John Douglas (Doug) Turnock ('46-'48) so loved his time at TAS that years ago he gave instruction that a school prayer that was said at the end of each school term be read at his funeral – a wish fulfilled, after he passed away on 14 April 2026. The prayer, which starts 'Go forth into the world in peace' speaks of courage, honour and service – things that summed up his belief in life, according to his family. Coming to TAS from the small town of Chinderah, Doug was a prefect and keen rugby player. After TAS he studied Pharmacy at the University of Sydney, eventually purchasing Park Pharmacy in Burwood, but lived in Killara, where community involvement included advocating for local fire-fighting resources, following a bushfire in 1994. Probus and travel with his wife Patricia (including to school reunions) were keen interests in retirement. Doug is survived by Patricia, three children and their families.

A son of noted Federal politician **William Charles Wentworth** AO ('21-'25), **D'Arcy Hamilton Wentworth** ('54-'58) died on 15 June. Excelling in swimming, diving, athletics and rugby at TAS, he was Captain (Dux) of the School in his final year. This all-round excellence would continue at the University of Sydney, where he was awarded the University Medal in Mining Engineering and was elected Senior Student at St Paul's College. Further study at the Boulder School of Mines in Colorado, USA, set the foundation for a life-long career in mining management in South Australia, NSW and Central Queensland, also helping establish a coal mine in Indonesia. While he worked in the mining sector, he had a particular interest in solar power, funding the Darcy and Patricia Wentworth Rural Scholarship in Renewable Energy at the University of NSW. Darcy's funeral was held on 27 June at St Peter's Anglican Church Watson's Bay, where **Campbell Anderson** ('52-'57) delivered a eulogy.

Also attending were **Ross Anderson** ('52-'57), **Rob Busby** ('63-'68) and **David Uther** OAM ('51-'58). He is survived by his brothers **William** ('52-'56), **John** ('62-'66, also known as Darcy whilst at TAS), sister Georgina, his wife Patricia, three children and 10 grandchildren.



D'Arcy Wentworth, right, with students and falcoln friends at TAS.

John Walker ('58-'62) reports the death of his younger brother **Tim,** ('60-'64) in Sydney on 23 June 2026 from a brain tumour he suffered over the last two years. Tim graduated from UNE with a degree in Rural Science and then completed a PhD in poultry nutrition, his lifelong calling. He is survived by his wife, Prue, three children and seven grandchildren.

Out 'n' About

While undertaking a trip across Australia in May, **John Steuart** ('61-'65) caught up with 'long lost sheep' and former Wallaby Dr **Ric How** ('53-'62) in Perth, having not seen each other for 64 years! Ric, who is Adjunct Professor, School of Human Science, The University of Western Australia is one of TAS' rugby greats who has been honoured in Wallaby Way, (see story page 23). Never not busy for long, John has just returned from Mongolia where he visited the pharmaceutical company IVCo, that he helped set up around two decades ago and now produce millions of IV (intravenous solution) packs for doctors and hospitals in Mongolia and across Europe.



John Steuart and Ric How

Sixty years after writing his landmark university thesis on the Myall Creek massacre of June 1838, **Father Brian Harrison** ('60-'62) returned to the historic site near Bingara while helping with local Easter church services. The massacre of 28 Aboriginal men, women and children was noted for being the first time where European perpetrators were convicted for their crimes, but was little known to most people at the time Brian wrote his thesis whilst studying at University of New England and he learnt of the event from History Professor Russell Ward. A memorial was unveiled at the site in 2000, with hundreds visiting every June long weekend when commemorations are held.

It was lovely to host a visit from **Kwun (Kwan) Lam** ('61-'62) and family on 11 May. Kwun last visited TAS for his 50th reunion dinner in 2012, but has often caught up with fellow Old Armidalians during his regular visits to Sydney, where his daughter and family reside, and with OAs visiting Hong Kong, particularly **Rob Busby** ('63-'68). Kwun is pictured outside the chapel with his wife Pansy, daughter Bella Clark and granddaughter Naomi Clark.

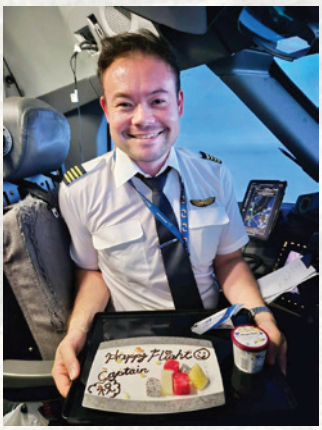


J Kwan Lam (right) & family

Back in 1992, **Sam Coulton** ('65-'69) founded regional apparel business Goondiwindi Cotton to value-add to the family's primary production. Now, the company sells its products through more than 220 retailers nationally and has just lodged a formal expression of interest to supply uniforms for volunteers and officials at the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The campaign has been gaining considerable momentum with plenty of media interest. More info: goondiwindicotton.com.au

A small world moment at a global gathering during the Global Food Safety Initiative Conference in Vancouver, Canada in March 2026, **Todd Redwood** ('85-'90) now delivering his global role with the British Standards Institution from Armidale, unexpectedly crossed paths with **Greg Pritchard** ('89-'90). Greg who has worked for Nestle for 30 years has been based in the United States for over a decade in a regulatory and scientific affairs role.

Studying Aviation during his years at TAS has led to an exciting career for **Kent Honour** ('05-'10) who is literally scaling new heights. After gaining his Commercial Pilot's Licence, Kent flew for Airlines PNG in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, was then based in Cairns for Qantaslink where he was promoted to Dash 8 Captain at the age of 24, and then, to Auckland, flying Boeing 737s for Jetconnect. A move to his country of birth, Japan, followed, where he flew Boeing 767s and later the Dreamliner Boeing 787 for All Nippon Airways. Laid off during Covid, he found work flying for a cargo company based in Florida before returning to flying duties with ANA after the pandemic. Last year he was promoted to Captain on the B787 Fleet and is looking to become an Instructor, as his experience closes in on 10,000 flying hours. "He is extremely happy working from his Tokyo base and has no plans to move elsewhere," his father Garry writes. "Kent will be forever grateful of the opportunity to launch his aviation career from his senior years at TAS."



Kent Honour

After making a name for himself competing on the rodeo circuit in Queensland, **Sam Weston** ('12-'17) is currently living his dream, saddle bronc riding in Canada and the United States. Sam is currently ranked 25th for saddle bronc in the Australian Professional Rodeo Association national standings, with podium results at events in Tooloombilla and Warwick, prior to his departure.

Graduating as a chartered accountant last year, **Will Forsyth** ('14-'19) has a new role at Macquarie Asset Management where he worked for the past four years including whilst studying at the University of Sydney. Will's new role largely involves investing funds on behalf of superannuation companies into infrastructure, agriculture and other real assets and business in the Asia Pacific region, including Paraway Pastoral Company and Viridis Ag. "I enjoy living and working in Sydney, but it's also nice having a connection back to the land and industries I grew up around at Croppa Creek," Will writes.

Adam Jenkyn ('07-'16) has given the original Mount Mitchell schoolhouse a new lease of life, transforming it into unique country accommodation on his Black Mountain property. The building was moved to Guyra decades ago and formed part of Guyra Central School and then later, by Guyra Shire Council and as Guyra Men's Shed before falling vacant. Adam purchased the building and then set about restoring it, retaining its historic character whilst transforming it with four bedrooms, three bathrooms, a living area, kitchen and laundry. The farm stay will soon welcome its first guests, offering visitors a unique countryside retreat where historic charm meets the comfort of modern rural living.



Adam Jenkyn

There were no doubt plenty of tales of cadet camps of the past shared by four Old Armidalians who attended an Army Reserves course at the Puckapunyal training camp in Victoria in May. Held over two weeks, the challenging Royal Australian Armoured Corps Cavalry Scout Grade 2 course is the final step in qualifying as a Light Cavalry Scout in the Army Reserve. Attending the course were TPR **Hugo Catterall** ('14-'22), 1/15 Royal NSW Lancers; TPR **Cameron Holcombe** ('11-'16) and TPR **Angus Murray** ('93-'00, Staff 2014-present and TAS Cadet Unit Commanding Officer 2017-21), 12/16 Hunter River Lancers).

It was a case of the student teaching the teacher, with former TASCU SUO, now CPL **Josh Miron** (10-'22), 1/15 Royal NSW Lancers, being as a course instructor!



Hugo Catterall, Angus Murray and Cameron Holcombe

Attention golfers - GPS Golf Day is near!

Details have been finalised for the annual GPS OBU Council Annual Golf Tournament to be held at Manly Golf Club (MGC) on Thursday 20 August 2026. Always a fun day of golf and even better friendship, this year's event will be a 12:30pm shot gun start. Green fees, a light lunch and post-game refreshments are included.

The trophy presentation will be held during refreshments and finger food after golf, enabling all participants to head home for the evening. Beverages before and after golf will be payable at the bar. Manly Golf Club has increased the playing fees to align them with visiting associations, but the GPS OBU Committee has negotiated a reduction, so all non-MGC members can play for $170 whilst MGC members will pay their usual $40 fee.

The event's convenor John Steuart ('61-'65) is encouraging all TAS golfers who may be in Sydney at the time, to join in the fun. For more information contact John on 0422 860 606 or at johnsteu@bigpond.net.au or click on the link to register www.golfgenius.com/pages/12679168617946831096

Reunion Weekend – only weeks away!

It's not too late to join Old Armidalians from across the generations for Reunion Weekend, 14 -16 August. Official reunions are being organised for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60+ leavers – in other words, if your leaving class ended in a 6 or a 1, it's your time to reconnect! But of course, Old Armidalians of any year group are warmly welcomed over the weekend.

The weekend commences on Friday afternoon with the Future Pathways Forum where a panel of 5-year leavers connect with current students about life after school. Meet up with your year group at Welcome Drinks at the Hoskins Centre on Friday from 5:00pm-8:00pm.

As always, friendly rivalry will be on full display as OAs compete for the coveted Croft Cup, taking on the School in hockey, rowing ergs, chess, shooting, tennis, netball and Tug-o-War. The TAS First XV will take on The King's School in the final home game of the GPS Third Grade competition, with kick off at 1pm. It's 130 years since the first rugby game between the schools, and with the Firsts currently undefeated, bound to be a wonderful showcase of schoolboy rugby.

The official Union Dinner for 40+ year leavers on Saturday night begins with drinks in Big School at 6.00pm, moving to Memorial Hall for dinner, and reunion groups of 40+ year leavers are invited to attend ($100pp). Younger year groups will celebrate at various functions in town organised by their Reunion Coordinators.

The Bell Tower Society brunch for those aged 65+ will be held in Big School on Saturday at 10.00am ($30pp) – a wonderful opportunity to reminisce with stories from the tower and more. The weekend wraps up with the OAU/TAS Community Chapel Service at 9:30am, followed by the Union's AGM at 11am.

For more information including the list of reunion organisers, head to **oau.as.edu.au.** To register and secure your spot, simply scan the QR code or click the bookings link below:
Register now: https://community.as.edu.au/OAUReunionWeekend2026

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