

Lu Luceat





Lux is growing

With all the student, staff and alumni news to cover, *Lux Luceat* magazine is literally bursting at the seams. So the magazine will now include four extra pages, with issues printed twice a year - in summer and winter.

Don't forget to check out our Beaconhills College facebook page and alumni facebook group, along with Instagram and LinkedIn for lots of other news and updates during the year.

Front cover: Pakenham Campus Principal Sarah Rudiger (right) congratulates VCE graduate Charlotte Van Baardwyk on her results.

Back cover: Berwick Campus VCE graduate Cody Wiese-Ross and Callista Martin celebrate their Year 12 success

Beaconhills College acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Bunurong – Boon Wurrung peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this land on which our College is built.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL



Stephen McGinley
Executive Principal

Welcome to our first edition of *Lux Luceat* for 2024. I hope you have had a restful and relaxing break as we all look forward to another exciting year ahead.

This publication, now in its twenty-fourth year, is such an important platform for us to share and celebrate all the amazing stories of our learning community, our staff, students, families and alumni.

The Beaconhills community is something we should all feel proud to be a part of, as we come together to support our young people through these formative years of schooling.

To our Class of 2023, well done on a successful year and your final year. Once again, our students continue to achieve such impressive results across a broad range of subjects. A special congratulations to our College Dux **Ruby Van Beveren** (Berwick Campus) and our Pakenham Campus Dux **Annabella Samara**, not only for their incredible achievements but also for the hard work and effort they have shown throughout their time at Beaconhills. We look forward to hearing more about the next steps taken by the Class of 2023 through our alumni networks and events.

It is our aspiration that students at Beaconhills find their passions and interests that will lead them towards a fulfilling life beyond school. We are a school where our young people learn the importance of hard work and what they can achieve through focus and persistence. It is pleasing to see so many of our students actively engaged in the opportunities that we have on offer, with the encouragement of their families and our staff.

Wishing you all an exciting and fulfilling 2024. x

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2023

COLLEGE DUX ACHIEVES ATAR OF 99.65

Beaconhills College student **Ruby Van Beveren** has topped the school's VCE results in 2023 with an ATAR of **99.65**.

The results put her on the VCE honour roll of equal highest result in the 20-year history of the College's Berwick Campus.

Pakenham Campus Dux was **Annabella Samara** with an ATAR of **97.75**.

There were **18 students across both campuses who recorded ATARs of 90 and above**, with virtually all subject areas represented. A further **40 students recorded ATARs of 80 to 89.95**.

Executive Principal Stephen McGinley congratulated the entire Class of 2023 for their hard work throughout the year.

He said the results showed a consistent pattern of students achieving strong results across a broad spectrum of subjects.

"Once again Beaconhills students are demonstrating the capacity to achieve outstanding VCE results

while still being fully involved in the life of the College," Mr McGinley said.

"It is these experiences that are setting them up for an exciting future."

With a huge choice of **40 VCE subjects** at Beaconhills College, Mr McGinley said there was plenty of evidence that students who chose subjects they were passionate about had excellent outcomes in their subject scores. x

In 2021, as a Year 10 student, Annabella was accepted into the University of Melbourne's Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program. The academic enrichment program is designed to support high-achieving Year 11 and 12 students.



College Dux
Ruby Van Beveren
ATAR 99.65



Pakenham Campus Dux
Annabella Samara
ATAR 97.75

Ruby shines

College Dux **Ruby Van Beveren** studied English, Chemistry, Mathematical Methods, Specialist Mathematics, French and Biology (in 2022).

She was up bright and early to look at her results, which came through on email at 6.50am.

"It took me by surprise but it was very, very exciting," said Ruby, who now hopes to do a double degree in biomedicine and engineering at Monash University.

Ruby was a school captain in 2023 and as a French student, travelled on an exchange program to Laval, France in term 1. That meant that she was a reciprocal host for her French student for three weeks in October, despite it being right in the middle of exam study period.

"I sat down a couple of weeks before she arrived and planned out everything so I would still be able to spend time with her," she said. x

Passion for Media subject

Pakenham Campus Dux **Annabella Samara** was holidaying in Indonesia with her family on results day but was thrilled with her ATAR. Annabella studied English, Japanese, Indonesian, Mathematical Methods, Media and Music Composition.

She said "having a consistent sleep time" was important during the VCE year, along with keeping up with the workload in subjects such as Mathematics.

In 2021, as a Year 10 student, Annabella was accepted into the University of Melbourne's Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program. The academic enrichment program is designed to support high-achieving Years 11 and 12 students.

Annabella is still considering her future study path but said she enjoyed her Media subject so much last year - particularly making a film - that she was leaning towards a double-degree in arts and media communications. x

EVENT CELEBRATES EFFORTS

Beaconhills hosted a morning tea in January at the Pakenham Campus to celebrate the achievements of some of our top scoring VCE students.

College leaders and teachers were there to congratulate students and families for their outstanding efforts throughout the year.

Students have chosen diverse career paths with many eagerly preparing for their first year of university life. Pakenham student **Terry Prendergast** is aiming for a double degree in science and engineering at Monash University, while Berwick's **Callista Martin** has her sights set on a career in optometry.

Berwick twins **Cody** and **Phoenix Wiese-Ross** both recorded ATARs of more than 90, but have very different passions. Cody hopes to start a Bachelor of Psychology, with a view to studying medicine, while Phoenix will do a double degree in engineering and computer science.

Students **Thomas Stephens** and **Jaskaran Dhillon** described their Berwick Commerce teacher Rodney Gonsalves as a great educator.

"He pushed us and really tried to squeeze an extra five to 10 per cent out of us," Thomas said.

The ceremony saw academic colours awarded to Pakenham's **Terry Prendergast** and Berwick's **Ruby Van Beveren** (absent on the day). Academic colours go to students who are in the top five of their cohort for at least three out of four consecutive years.

Berwick Campus Principal Sam Watson said he was "incredibly proud" of the students' achievements while Pakenham Campus Principal Sarah Rudiger said Beaconhills College was "really just the beginning" and a foundation for the future. **x**



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THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

Eighteen Middle and Senior School students have signed up to be International Student ambassadors this year following the successful launch of a new program in 2023.

The International Student Ambassador Program aims to provide a friendly face and helping hand to international students visiting the College on study tours or for short-term study. This year the program will also expand to provide more support for full-time international students.

Head of International Programs, **Lauren Carter**, said the program stemmed from research showing international students could sometimes feel isolated, particularly during recess and lunch breaks.

Having a point of contact, or someone who could help connect them to other like-minded students, was one way to make international students feel more welcome, she said.

"They are here to experience what Beaconhills College life is all about and we really want them to have a great

experience," Ms Carter said. "We hope they will leave the College saying 'I'd like to come back'."

In fact, that's just what has happened since the program was launched, with two students from Cambodia and Hong Kong planning to return at the start of 2024 as full-time enrolments.

Ms Carter points out that the program has two-way benefits. For the local volunteers, it gives them an opportunity to learn about other cultures, practise a language (for example, Japanese) and make long-term connections.

Year 7 student **Tayla Brown** volunteered to be a student ambassador in 2023 and loves it. As Tayla is studying Japanese, her family also hosted a Japanese student in their home last year and plan to holiday in Japan in June.

Tayla said she wanted to be a student ambassador because she liked making new friends and helping other people.

She said international students were keen to connect with local students

and often just needed a helping hand with the simple things, such as "finding out where all the important places are around the campus."

Year 6 student **Peter Zhang**, said he quickly applied for the program last year when he heard that one of his friends, Victor, was visiting Beaconhills on a two-week study program.

In his application, Peter said that because he was an international student himself, he would welcome the chance to meet more people from his own country (China) and culture.

"I think the number one thing that student ambassadors do to help is definitely finding friends (for international students) or even introducing them to some of their friends," Peter said.

"When I first came to Beaconhills I was nervous to talk to some people who I am not familiar with, so the student ambassadors are there to help the international students find friends - and not be sitting by the steps at recess and lunch." x



"WE HOPE THEY WILL LEAVE THE COLLEGE SAYING 'I'D LIKE TO COME BACK'."



A new International Student Ambassador Program is helping overseas students feel more welcome at Beaconhills.

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS,
BEACONHILLS COLLEGE HAS HOSTED
HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS FROM ALL
PARTS OF THE WORLD.





BE AGENTS OF PEACE

How quickly the summer break has flown, and the new year has gathered pace. The long, lazy days of Christmas celebrations, of family, food and fun are fading away and the business of school is setting in for students and teachers alike. 2024 is shaping up to be a wonderful year of experiences and achievements in our community.

Term 1 is also an important time for Christians, as we journey towards Easter Sunday. Not long ago, we celebrated Jesus' birth – in a few short weeks we will recall his death and resurrection. Easter invites us into the amazing time when God, through Jesus, chose to put to death our shortcomings and make us right with Him, once and for all. Never again do we have to fear retribution or rejection, when we believe in what the Son has done for us.

This gift is the foundation of all we do at Beaconhills – it gives us the drive to be agents of peace in our troubled world; to share our resources with people in need; to recognise

and respect the shared humanity we all have, regardless of race, religion, identity or belief.

Beaconhills' commitment to inclusion and diversity reflects the love of our Heavenly Father, who made us all in His image. We love because He loved us first. As the year progresses I pray that all our families join in this shared commitment to harmony and inclusion, to build a community of light for all to see. **x**

Revd Kathy Mildred
Senior Chaplain,
Berwick Campus



STAFF PROFILE

ANDREW HARBIS

Head of Middle School English and Literacy, Andrew Harbis, is leading his students by example.

Pakenham Campus teacher Andrew Harbis used COVID lockdowns to complete his self-published YA (Young Adult) western drama novel, titled *One Shot*.

He is now well into writing the sequel, *One Shot: Legacies*, which he hopes to publish sometime this year.

Mr Harbis joined Beaconsfields from Oakleigh Grammar in 2022 and is responsible for leading the development of a dynamic and engaging curriculum in Middle School English and literacy. He also works closely with his team to ensure they are supported and to help them realise their own educational aspirations and goals.

Mr Harbis believes that fostering a love of reading in Middle School students comes down to a partnership between teachers and parents. Modelling behaviours of reading is important, but engaging with literature doesn't necessarily have to be limited to full novels – graphic novels and audio books are also good options.

"We work closely with library staff to encourage

reading – for example there is the Beanstack (a reading motivation platform) competition we run for Middle School students where they have to log their minutes of reading.

"And at the start of every English class we also allocate 10 minutes of silent reading."

Mr Harbis agrees that attention spans are decreasing, perhaps thanks to the influence of social media, so it's important for teachers to "chunk down" longer texts, unpacking their characters, themes, and core structures.

He said it was also important to think about the 'Big Ideas' – in other words, the meaningful skills and concepts that students will ultimately use for their future lives. x



MEET THE CAPTAINS

The new College captains explain what they hope to bring to their leadership role in 2024.

In 2024, I want to be a leader who people trust and feel comfortable with asking questions and sharing their ideas. I have always believed that a great leader is someone who shows respect and is, in turn, respected. I hope that by being respectful to everyone I talk to and interact with, whether it's a junior student or a campus leader, I earn their respect for me. I hope that the respect I am given by my fellow peers and teachers is not only because I have been named College Captain but also because of who I am as a person.

Natalie Tivendale-Baker
Pakenham Campus

Having enjoyed engaging with many programs, activities and events offered by the school, I hope to use my role and interest in the community to construct a year full of chances that the students around me (and maybe some teachers too!) do not just participate in, but are able to really appreciate. I am excited to achieve this by suggesting areas in which students are passionate about and connecting relevant opportunities back to our community. As a captain in 2024, I hope to lead by hearing and promoting others' voices by offering my own.

Dylan Crossley
Pakenham Campus

I would like to be seen as someone who is approachable and leads by example. I aim to be a compassionate, positive and trustworthy leader who Beaconhills students feel comfortable talking to and working with. Contributing to the positive environment at Beaconhills is important to me because I believe that everyone should enjoy their time at the College and take every opportunity offered to them. I am looking forward to my own opportunities in Year 12, and I hope to leave a positive impact on the College for years to come.

Shanelle Kingston
Pakenham Campus

I aim to lead with kindness, shaping a school culture where every voice matters, diversity is celebrated, and every student at Beaconhills feels a sense of belonging. In my role, I aspire to leave a lasting positive impact during my final year at the College, extending kindness to all students, teachers, and campus staff. I believe that small acts of kindness can create significant waves of positivity, fostering an environment where understanding and respect thrive, which will further our school's reputation as not just a place of education, but a community where each individual feels valued and supported.

Raine Collins
Pakenham Campus



(l-r) Natalie Tivendale-Baker, Dylan Crossley, Shanelle Kingston and Raine Collins

BEACONHILLS IS FOCUSED ON SERVICE. ALL STUDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

I hope to be a great role model for the students at the school. I aspire to represent the students that go to Beaconhills in the best light and be a positive influence for change in the College. On top of this, I hope to be a person that students within the school can recognise as someone who is able and willing to assist them in any way, shape or form. The goal I regard with utmost importance is being able to work with the other captains to ensure that all students feel welcomed and at home in the College.

Nathan Cockayne
Berwick Campus

2024 is set to be an exciting year with great potential on the horizon. Above all, I hope to be a leader who is able to connect with and support my fellow students throughout the school year. My hope is that they think of me as friendly and approachable so that they can feel comfortable coming to me with their thoughts and suggestions. I will look for opportunities to encourage student involvement and will always be willing to listen to new ideas. By upholding our College values, I aim to not only be a voice that can inspire, but together with my fellow captains, will work to facilitate positive change in our school community.

Gemma Valastro
Berwick Campus

Beaconhills is such a great community and I am so thankful to be a part of it. The College's positive culture empowers every student to work towards their individual goals and builds a sense of unity and pride in our collective achievements and identity as a school. I really value being part of a holistic learning environment that is dedicated to celebrating the diversity of our student body as a whole. At Beaconhills everybody has a voice, which I hope to amplify by creating a bridge between staff and students. I aim to further promote the existing opportunities of all students to get involved in the life of the school. I look forward to encouraging students to cultivate their passions and interests, and contribute to building and maintaining a welcoming, strong, and connected community.

Charlotte Moseley
Berwick Campus

In 2024, as one of the Beaconhills College school captains, I hope to be a leader who is personable and motivating, who anyone and everyone can feel comfortable around. My approach to leadership is getting involved with my peers on a personal level and supporting their individual aspirations and viewpoints, while putting respect, compassion, and integrity first. I hope to foster the collaborative and diverse school culture that celebrates the holistic education that Beaconhills provides. I am looking forward to collaborating with my fellow captains and teachers in to making 2024 an exciting and memorable year.

Tahlia Ziino
Berwick Campus



(l-r) Nathan Cockayne,
Gemma Valastro,
Charlotte Moseley and
Tahlia Ziino.

INNOVATIONS AND CREATIONS

STUDENT CREATIVITY CAME TO THE FORE DURING THE LATTER HALF OF THE YEAR, WITH A SERIES OF EXHIBITIONS SHOWCASING VISUAL ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS.



TECH AND ART ON SHOW

Term 4 served up a creative feast with Year 9 Personal Best and visual arts and technology exhibitions happening across both campuses.

Many creations were totally unique, while others took inspiration from famous inventors. The outcomes were truly inspirational. x



LACHLAN'S LUCKY STRIKE

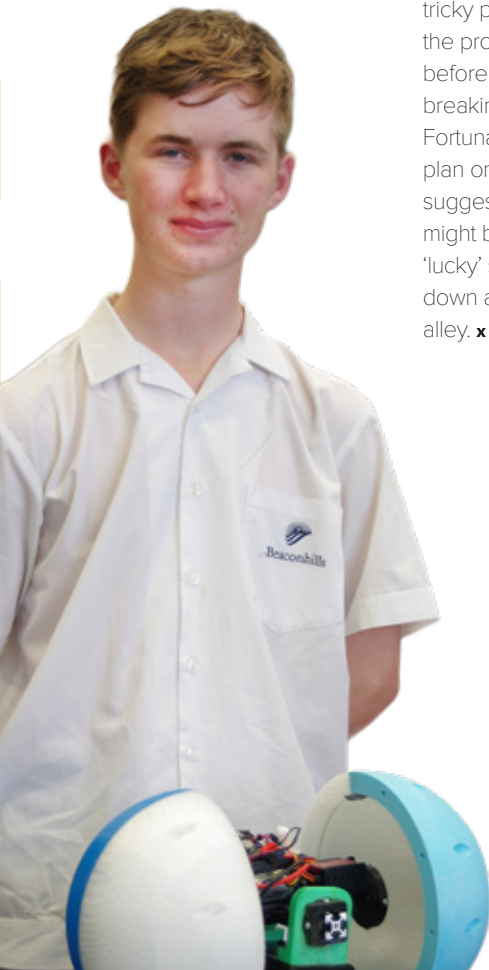
For those who dream of getting a strike every time at the bowling alley, then Year 12 graduate **Lachlan Wells** may have the answer. In his Units 3 & 4 Systems Engineering class at the Berwick Campus, Lachlan created a remote-controlled bowling ball that will always guarantee him a perfect score. Lachlan works part-time at a bowling alley and was inspired by a similar design created by former NASA engineer and American YouTuber Mark Rober.

He said the idea was to create a fun device that would give him a sneaky edge "when in reality the mechanism inside is doing all the work."

"It will also need to make as little noise as possible to deter suspicions from the public in the bowling centre," Lachlan said.

He said another challenge was making the bowling ball strong enough to not smash apart once it connected with the pins – potentially damaging the return mechanism behind the bowling lanes.

The project works by using a pendulum system that has a weight at the base controlled by a servo motor moving the weight inside the ball, making the ball then follow the direction of the weight. Lachlan controls the ball by Bluetooth using an app on his phone called Dabble. The tricky part was ensuring the prototype worked first before risking the ball breaking on its test run. Fortunately it all went to plan on its maiden run, suggesting that Lachlan might be in for a few 'lucky' strikes down at the alley. x



WEATHER STATION

Pakenham Year 12 graduate **Joel Carter Ramadge** designed a weather station in his Units 3 & 4 Systems Engineering class because he has always had a interest in the weather – and wants to study geospatial science.

He said designing the device to measure rainfall, temperature, wind direction and speed was not as straightforward as it looked, but he had a little help from Artificial Intelligence.

"I used ChatGPT to help write the code," he said. "If you've got a problem, you can put the code in (to ChatGPT) and ask 'can you fix this?'" x



VET CLINIC MAKEOVER

Ava Sheehan, another Year 12 graduate for the Berwick Campus, had fun with her VCE Visual Communication Design project.

Ava, who has worked casually as a kennel hand for The Berwick Village Vet since 2021, decided to give the business a complete brand makeover.

"I thought it would be fun to do a new interior space," said Ava, who also created mock-ups of business cards, signage and merchandise as part of her project. x





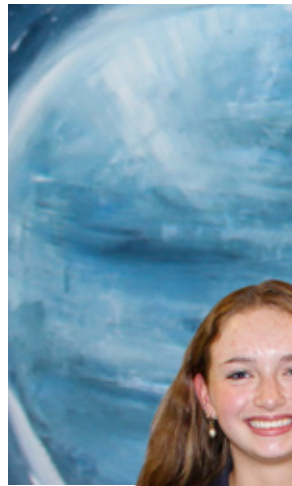
SCARLETT'S SOLAR SYSTEM

For her Year 9 Personal Best project last term, Pakenham Campus student **Scarlett Davis** had the fascinating idea of painting each planet from the solar system on individual canvases.

"I've always found space interesting, especially how big it is and how small we are in comparison," Scarlett said.

Each canvas is a different size depending on the size of the planet. Scarlett decided to include Pluto in the series, despite the fact it is no longer technically regarded as a full-sized planet.

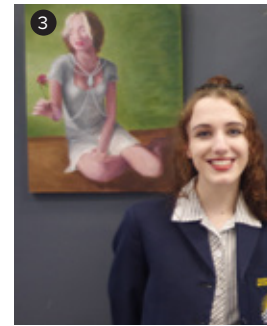
Scarlett said she loved completing Personal Best because it gave her some time to dedicate to her art. x



1. **Adam Hirjee**
Berwick's Adam Hirjee recreated the entire Year 9 Centre in the sandbox game Minecraft.



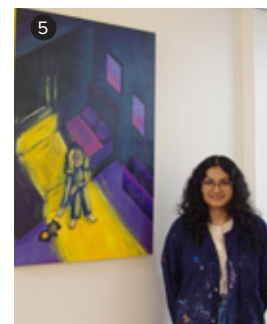
2. **Andrew D'Agostino**
Berwick graduate Andrew D'Agostino made this beautiful desk organiser from American oak and jarrah in his Product Design and Technology subject.



3. **Maddie Johnstone**
Berwick's Maddie Johnstone's art was inspired by the birth of Venus.

4. **Mihini Koongalage**
Mihini Koongalage, Year 12, built this amazing Mars rover in his Systems Engineering class.

5. **Thasara Nandasiri**
Pakenham graduate Thasara Nandasiri created these works which were displayed at the visual arts exhibition.



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JUNIOR AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ART

FEATURE

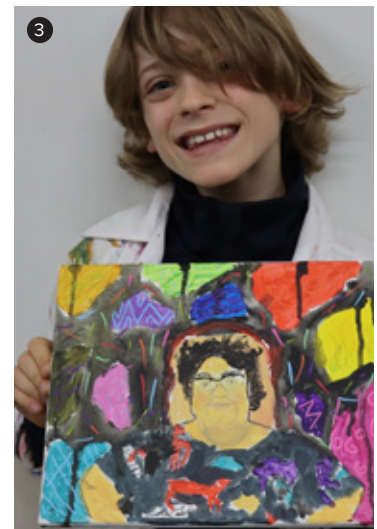
Younger students had the chance to show their budding artistic talents at the Junior and Middle School Art Exhibition held at the Berwick Campus in term 3.

The exhibition featured 2D and 3D artwork from Prep to Year 8 students displayed in the Junior School Art room.

At the Pakenham Campus, the 2023 Pakenham Portrait Prize saw students from Years 3-12 submit their interpretation of a Beacons Hills College staff member.

The competition was inspired by the Archibald Prize and went on display in the Junior School and visual arts buildings.

1. Colourful work by Berwick Campus Junior School student **Jenuk Gunawardana**.
2. **Hailey Hettiarachchi** (Berwick Campus) with her art.
3. Pakenham Portrait prize Junior School winner **Oscar Winder**, with his portrait of teacher Lauren Lee.
4. Middle School Pakenham's People's Choice award went to **Zoe Kee**.



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LITTLE BEACONS AWARD FINALIST

Little Beacons Learning Centre was a finalist in the national Narragunnawali Awards 2023 for its outstanding commitment to reconciliation in education.

Little Beacons Learning Centre is on Wurundjeri and Bunurong/Boon Wurrung Country at Beaconhills College's Berwick and Pakenham campuses. Little Beacons was the only Victorian finalist amongst six finalist schools and early learning services across Australia.

The Narragunnawali program recognises schools and services which champion reconciliation and foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

Finalists were chosen by a judging panel of eminent First Nationals educationalists, who considered criteria such as use of local Aboriginal languages, embedding histories and cultures into the curriculum and the strong relationships with local Elders and communities.

Head of Little Beacons, **Vicki Reid**, said Little Beacons' commitment to leading reconciliation was authentic, and had developed across many years with a clear vision of what could be achieved.

"Our commitment has led others to reflect and review practices and have inspired many to begin their own reconciliation journey," she said.

"We are passionate about making a real difference and understanding the importance of a collaborative community approach."

Ms Reid said Little Beacons proudly launched its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2016, an important step which publicly recognised the centre's commitment to actions set out in the RAP.

"Little Beacons is part of the movement to build reconciliation through strength and respect and create opportunities for children, families and community."

The Narragunnawali Awards winner was announced in a Canberra ceremony on Friday 24 November, with South Australia's Stirling District Kindergarten on Kurna Country the winner. **x**



HAPPENINGS AROUND OUR COMMUNITY

ALUMNI

SET FOR BREAKFAST SERIES

Alumni, students, staff and parents will have the chance to hear from an inspirational line-up of alumni speakers at a new series of breakfast events this year.

The inaugural Alumni Breakfast Series will kick off at 7.30am on Friday 8 March - International Women's Day – at Berwick Campus' Tony Sheumack Centre for Performing Arts. This is followed by two more events; on Friday 24 May (science and technology theme) at the Pakenham Campus, then back at the Berwick Campus again on Friday 23 August (health and wellbeing).

Tickets are just \$10 which includes a light breakfast. More details will be on the College website and socials.

CLASS OF 2022
FRIDAY 13 OCTOBER

1 YEAR REUNION



CLASS OF 2013
FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER

10 YEAR REUNION



30 YEARS OF CADETS

“The military needs intelligent and motivated soldiers and officers. It is not just a job, it is a calling.”

The Beaconhills College Army Cadet Unit has just celebrated its 30th anniversary with strong recruitment and the launch of a new award.

The unit has marked its 30-year milestone in 2023 with the unveiling of its prestigious Major Edward Tregoning Award. Named after one of the College's House patrons, the award embodies values that echo the remarkable character of its namesake.

The inaugural award went to Year 10 student CDT CPL **Tavnoor Kaur**.

Unit Admin Officer, Revd Steve Terrell, said CDCPL Kaur's achievements extended beyond the accolade.

Shortly after receiving the award, she was promoted to CDTSGT and entrusted with one of the unit's Platoon Sergeant roles,” he said.

He said the award sets a “high bar”, recognising individuals who exemplified values dear to MAJ Tregoning - humility, generosity, a gentle approach, courage, and respect.

“What distinguishes this award even further is its inclusivity,” Revd Terrell said. “Any cadet within the unit is eligible, fostering a sense of equality and opportunity for all.”

The Cadet Unit has been busy recruiting for the 2024 school year with tryouts underway during February and March for students in Year 7 or above (13 plus years).

Cadets will attend three camps (bivouacs) during the year, culminating in five nights at the Puckapunyal Military Area in September.



James Van Strijp is a Major with the Australian Army's S8 Regional Force Surveillance Group. He graduated from Beaconhills College in 1997 and was a keen member of the Cadet Unit.

He was delighted at the news of the unit's 30th anniversary and has fond memories of his experiences, including a helicopter landing on the oval to deliver his scholarship to attend the Australian Defence Force Academy, with fellow student Bethany Kemp-Esmore (nee Thearle).

“Peter Hutton, the driving force behind the unit's start-up remains a legend to me,” MAJ Van Strijp said. “Survival weekend, annual camps, rugby on the school oval with a frozen chicken - it was everything a teenage boy needed to expend energy, learn new skills and get outside.

“Peter Hutton's knowledge, enthusiasm and leadership inspired me to stick with Cadets (minus a 12 month hiatus for school in the USA) and led to me joining the Army Reserves in Year 12.”

During his 27 years serving with the Army, MAJ Strijp has experienced military university, parachuting at night at high altitudes, security for the queen, visits and deployments

overseas, service within Special Operations and running Adventure Training throughout Australia.

“The Army has so much to offer. For anyone considering a career in Defence there are many diverse pathways available...a trade, working with tanks or guns, cyberspace, amphibious operations, telecommunications, logistics, special forces and much more. The military needs intelligent and motivated soldiers and officers. It is not just a job, it is a calling.” x



ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAM

The College is pleased to announce that the Alumni Mentor Program - a pipe dream for a long time - is now ready for a trial year in 2024, with the aim of launching a fully-fledged program in 2025.

Community Relations

Co-ordinator Alan James said the program was inspired by the simple question, "What would you like to have known at school, that no one was around to tell you?"

Each time he has asked that question at one of the many alumni reunions, the reaction he received affirmed his belief that even though the College curriculum is increasingly wide-reaching, some important gaps remain.

He said the College had devised the blueprint for the program in consultation with a "wonderful group" of alumni on a steering committee, along with expertise from consultancy group, AlumGrow.

"With all the behind-the-scenes work done, we are now ready to go public with these plans," he said.

For 2024, Mr James envisages up to 10 volunteer alumni mentors working with 10 to 20 students carefully selected from Years 10 and 11, for about three hours a term – from March through to October. These sessions could occur online or, if it suits everyone and protocols are followed, they could take place face-to-face.

"We aim to pair up students with mentors relevant to their likely path of study or possible career," Mr James said. "Each partnership will have the opportunity to focus on skill acquisition relevant to the needs of each student concerned. A vitally important part of the process will be reflection and self-assessment at the end of each term."

He said while the program would deliver immeasurable benefits for students, alumni mentors would experience the joy of giving back and the satisfaction of helping shape a young life – with the opportunity to also do some networking of their own.

For more details, or to express an interest in taking part in the program, keep an eye on the Beaconhills alumni Facebook group or email directly to alumni@beaconhills.vic.edu.au x



ALUMNI PONDERINGS



2023 saw a massive surge in membership of our alumni Facebook group, and I'm delighted to report that we should break through the 4000 barrier sometime this year. We have also held three outstanding reunions, culminating in the 10 Year Reunion for the Class of 2013 which was one of the finest we have ever held. Another huge highlight of the year was the opening of the time capsule stored in the walls of Junior School at Pakenham for more than 25 years. A special group of alumni came back to the College to see it hauled out and they, like the masses of Junior School children gathered around, waited with bated breath to see what memories they had left behind them.

But, as well as looking back, we must also look forward. 2024 will see several new initiatives being delivered by and for this community. We will trial the Alumni Mentor Program, launch the **Alumni Breakfast Series**, and continue with our Reunion Program – there's even a whisper of an event for the Class of 1988!

At the core of my beliefs about the role of the alumni in an active school community, is that they should always be visible to current students. To that end, I am once more asking you to send photos to me with a few brief words explaining their context, so we can display these around the College showing students what career pathways are available to them. I had huge success in this appeal a few years ago and I would love a fresh batch of photos so, if you would like to share – email alumni@beaconhills.vic.edu.au

In short, it's been quite a year in the alumni community and I'm genuinely excited about what lies ahead. **x**

Alan James
Community Relations
Co-ordinator

DIARY DATES 2024

ALUMNI REUNIONS

22 March

20 Year Reunion
(2004)

24 May

5 Year Reunion
(2019)

18 October

1 Year Reunion
(2023) multicampus

8 November

10 Year Reunion
(2014) multicampus

ALUMNI BREAKFAST SERIES DATES 2024

Friday 8 March
Berwick

Friday 24 May
Pakenham

Friday 23 August
Berwick

STAFF HONoured

FAREWELL JOHN WATERHOUSE

Beaconhills College has paid tribute to retiring and long-serving staff at two events in December.

Archivist/historian John Waterhouse, who has been with the College for an incredible 35 years, was fondly farewelled with a special retirement afternoon tea on Thursday 7 December.

The event also honoured five other long-serving retirees; **Anthony Greaves** (30 years), **Clare Polglase** (23 years), **Carmel Byrne** (18 years), **John Bellavance** (16 years) and **Dianne Chikhaoui** (16 years).

At the final Staff Day on Wednesday 13 December, 85 staff received Recognition of Service awards, with five staff completing 20 years of employment at the College, four staff 25 years and one staff member, John Waterhouse, completing 35 years. x

(l-r) retiring Beaconhills staff Clare Polglase, John Waterhouse, Carmel Byrne, Anthony Greaves and John Bellavance (absent Dianne Chikhaoui).



As the Beaconhills College archivist/historian, John Waterhouse has spent a good part of his 35 years of service collating and preserving College life for future generations.

He first joined Beaconhills as a religious studies teacher in 1988, then taught history, before being appointed as the College's first Archivist in 2003. He combined this role with working in the marketing team as the College photographer and co-ordinating alumni projects and reunions.

In fact, John has worn many hats, reflecting his diverse interests and talents. He established the College's RAVE and VCE Ethics courses in the 1990s and was Community Services Co-ordinator from

1994-2008, leading major initiatives such as the 4Cs Food Bank, Red Cross Blood Bank donations and fundraising for Bangladesh schools through Fred Hyde Schools (formerly CO-iD).

His love of performing arts also saw him involved with Rock Eisteddfods and musicals – as everything from backstage co-ordinator to truck driver.

John has published a number of history books and has extensively researched the local history of the Toomuc Valley. In 2014 he was shortlisted for Cardinia Shire's Citizen of the Year Award for services to the local community. x



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

1. Jack Kowarzik

Jack Kowarzik (Class of 2009, Pakenham Campus) is the newest Mayor of Cardinia Shire, elected late in 2023. He was first elected to the council in 2020 and was serving as Deputy Mayor. He has vowed to address some of the big issues facing his constituents, namely family violence, cost of living pressures and employment. Jack is married to Sara and they have two young boys. x



2. Seetali Mack

Seetali Mack (Class of 2020, Pakenham Campus) has recently released her debut album as producer and co-writer. Seetali's album, *It's Not You; It's Me*, features contributions from 10 artists, vocalists, and producers from Naarm/Melbourne. Seetali strives to break through barriers for other diverse producers in her work. Her hope is that every aspiring artist, regardless of background, can find inspiration and see their potential reflected in her journey. x



3. Will Crooks and Hayden Auber

Will Crooks and Hayden Auber (both from the Class of 2015, Berwick Campus) are making an extraordinary mark in the Victorian Wheelchair Football League (VWFL).

Will Crooks, who plays for Collingwood, was last year awarded the Brendan Stroud VWFL team Best and Fairest, and Hayden, Hawthorn's defender, was part of the club's first ever VWFL Premiership victory. x



OBITUARY

VALE

4. **Zac Pattison**

Zac Pattison (Class of 2009, Pakenham Campus) once cooked – as a young student – for Lux Luceat Society dinners at Beaconhills College. Zac and co-owner Lachie Fyfe are now the names behind the popular Thirty Eight O Six Brewing which opened in Berwick in 2022. The business earned the 2023 Casey Business of the Year Award and is leaving an indelible mark on the local culinary landscape. **x**

**David Curtis 1940 - 2023**

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of foundation staff member, Mr David Curtis, who died peacefully in his sleep on 7 December 2023, aged 83 years.

David is the first founding staff member to have died. We have been very blessed as a community to be able to include all of our foundation staff in College events for more than 40 years.

Founding Principal Frank Millett appointed David at the end of 1981 to oversee the English and French courses. He also shared his skills in outdoor education and as a church organist, later becoming the foundation Head of McConchie House in 1989.

David's great love was the outdoors and bushwalking with most of his leisure time spent exploring the Australian wilderness. Many students on Duke of Edinburgh hikes and camps

were surprised to discover that he could easily out-walk all of them!

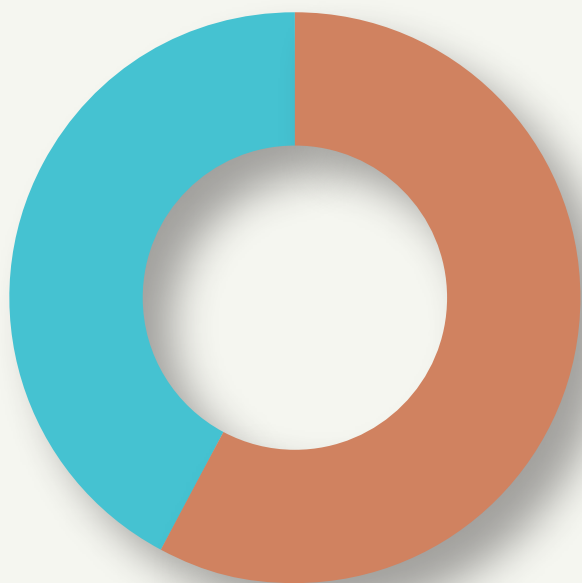
Inevitably, David had a strong interest in environmental matters, and he bought many blocks of land that were significant habitats for flora and fauna. Over time he transferred these to public authorities or environmental groups as nature reserves.

David retired from Beaconhills in 1997 to his beautiful six-acre block in Sassafra, with his own lyrebirds and hundreds of mature trees. In the 26 years since then, he always keenly attended College anniversaries and reunions to catch up with past staff and students.

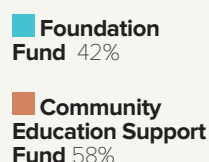
David will be deeply missed by his friends and colleagues and generations of students who blossomed under his wise counsel and guidance. **x**



THE IMPACT



Beacon of Hope Foundation: Total funds received



Beacon of Hope
Foundation

The Beacon of Hope Foundation was established in 2020 with the aim of making a difference in the lives of others. This is achieved by advancing education through scholarships and bursaries, capital developments and meeting the needs of local, national and international communities. The Foundation is run by a Board of Directors. x

The Foundation has three funds.

1. The Community Education Support Fund (CESF)

provides scholarships and bursaries to help families in need. Our list of generous donors also includes Beaconhills College staff, who have regularly contributed to the CESF since it was first launched in 2015. x

2. The Foundation Fund

supports all of the College's service programs, locally, nationally and internationally. This is a gift recipient fund and currently not tax-deductible. x

3. The Building Fund

supports students' holistic education, with money used to enhance or upgrade buildings, grounds, educational equipment and facilities. x

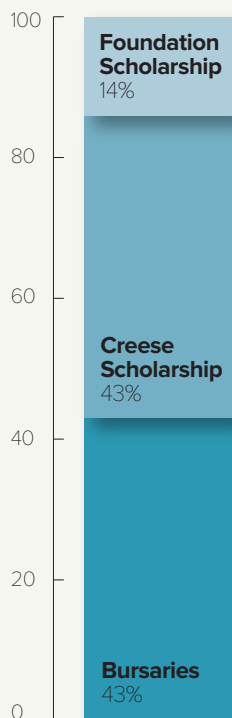
THE
GENEROSITY
OF THE
BEACONHILLS
COLLEGE
COMMUNITY
IS CHANGING
LIVES.

C T OF GIVING

CESF distribution of donations

In the College's 40th year of education in 2022, we launched the inaugural Beacon of Hope Foundation Scholarship with the aim of giving a gift of education to a deserving recipient. Thanks to the generosity of donors, the College has been able to offer two students the opportunity to pursue their Senior School education at the Pakenham Campus.

College bursaries via our Community Education Support Fund (CESF) have also provided vital education support to three Beacons Hills families in 2023. x



Where the Foundation Fund made a difference in 2023

- **Bangladesh** – redevelopment of West Ahmedpur Primary School in remote island, offering better shelter during cyclones. Emergency fund for temporary learning space for 90 students from the Middle Char Aicha School when their school was demolished without notice.
- **East Timor** – student fundraising purchased resources for our seven friendship schools including sporting equipment, lights and medical supplies. Donations also helped repair critical water infrastructure to the village of Dato Rua.
- **Beacon Meals** – creation and distribution of more than 1900 freshly-cooked hot meals to people in our local region experiencing food insecurity. x

DONORS

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SUPPORT FUND

Student bursaries

- Beacons Hills College staff
- Domenic Porter
- A Edmondson
- N & R Baker
- S & J Noney

The Creese Scholarship

- Stephen Creese

Foundation Scholarship

- John Wiley & Sons
- Campion Education

FOUNDATION FUND

- JB Hi Fi Group – Bangladesh
- Ross Office Supplies – Bangladesh
- The Somerville Group – Bangladesh

Thank you to our corporate sponsors for supporting 2023 student awards

- Campion Education
- Clark family
- Dracoulas family

College community donations

Thank you to parents, staff and students - including our Beacon of Hope student committee - for supporting the many citizenship and service programs during 2023. Collectively we have raised tens of thousands of dollars for numerous causes, from fighting Motor Neurone Disease, to Relay For Life and the Hope for Christmas Appeal. Last year around 70 Year 8 students also completed their Certificate of Excellence, volunteering for 20 hours of community service work. x

www.beacons.hills.vic.edu.au/community/our-foundation/





THE MAGAZINE OF
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