MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

Newsletter.

Volume Seven

26 June 2026

Principal's Letter.

Principal's Prayer

Loving God, give me courage when I feel unsure. Help me to do what is right, even when it is hard. Fill my heart with your peace, and guide my words and actions today. Amen.

Dear Parents/Carers, Staff and Students,

"Why FIT IN when you were born to STAND OUT!"
- Dr. Seuss

Year 7 Camp

This week, I had the pleasure of accompanying Year 7 on their camp to Collaroy. Guided by the theme Courage and Aspire, the experience provided a strong foundation for every activity, grounded in faith, hope, and a belief in each student's God-given potential. It has been a joy to witness the students step outside their comfort zones, support one another, and grow in confidence across the week.

In the main dining hall of the Collaroy Centre, there are inspirational quotes on the walls for students to read. The Dr Seuss quote above is one example of what appears, and it felt especially fitting for our Year 7s across the week. Time and again, students were encouraged to be themselves, to have a go, and to show courage in new situations.

Whether it was trying an unfamiliar activity, speaking up within their group, or simply persevering through moments of challenge, the camp created many opportunities for growth. It was wonderful to see students building new friendships, strengthening teamwork, and practising kindness and encouragement as they supported one another.

Special thanks to Year 7 Pastoral Coordinators, Anna Vandenbroucke and Henry Mahony for their leadership in organising the camp, and to the many teachers and executive members who attended. We were proud to witness students leaning into the theme of Courage and Aspire. Year 7 are to be commended on their manners, conduct, and positive behaviour throughout the camp, as well as the respectful attitude they showed to staff, instructors, and one another.

Congratulations

I am sure you would have seen the recent communication from the Executive Director of Catholic Education, Mr David de Carvalho, announcing that Mr Lachlan McNicol has been appointed to the position of Principal at St John Paul II College from 2027. Mr McNicol has been a teacher and leader within the MacKillop community for 25 years, and we are thrilled to see his experience, commitment and service recognised through this appointment. We warmly congratulate Mr McNicol and wish him every blessing as he prepares to lead St John Paul II College.

Mr McNicol's current role as Head of Campus, St Peter's Campus will be advertised in the coming weeks for 2027.

Association of Josephite Affiliated Secondary Schools (AJASS)

Our College is a member of the 41 AJASS (Association of Josephite Affiliated Secondary Schools) network of schools across Australia. Since 2006 this association has worked hard to establish connections with secondary schools in Australia and New Zealand whose mission is driven by the charism of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods; founders of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

It is the intention of Mr Ernie Pisani, Executive Officer of the SE Cluster to write to families each semester to share information and updates on AJASS events and initiatives. His introductory newsletter can be viewed by following the link below.

AJASS NEWSLETTER

French Exchange

As a part of the ongoing relationship between MacKillop College and Institution St Joseph's, Le Havre, our sister school in France, a small number of students from St Joseph's participate in an unaccompanied long stay exchange each year. We have welcomed Manon Magoarou and Timothé Nevville in recent weeks. Manon and Timothé have been attending classes at the College and will return to France on 7 July. Thank you to Mr Peter Johnson who has been liaising with staff at the school in France and our MacKillop host families. A wonderful partnership for our schools!

As Term 2 draws to a close next week, I wish all students a safe and restful break. This term has been rich with learning and a wide range of activities that have strengthened the life of the College. Students have worked consistently towards their goals, and this effort is reflected in their reports. I commend them for their perseverance and engagement.

Students return for Term 3 on Tuesday 21 July.

With respect and encouragement to you.

Jacqueline Heffernan • Principal

MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra
FAITH AND COURAGE
Disney
HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL
ON STAGE!
©Disney
FOUR SHOWS • 10-15 AUGUST
TICKETS AVAILABLE THROUGH COMPASSTIX
GET TICKETS

What's Been Happening

Year 7 Camp

Year 7 students have been up in Collaroy, Sydney, this week for the Year 7 Camp. Students participated in a range of team challenges and activities, including the Giant Swing, High Ropes, and Archery Games. The Camp served as a great opportunity for students to build their relationships with one another, develop their teamwork skills, challenge themselves, and to enjoy some time away after a busy first semester of high school.

Year 7 student Lana Muongsene provided the following reflection:

Camp was an incredible experience for all of us. It encouraged everyone to step outside their comfort zones, and throughout the week there was a strong sense of support and encouragement among the group. The Collaroy staff were friendly, engaging, and always willing to help. Camp provided opportunities for everyone to try new activities and connect with people beyond their usual friendship groups. Overall, it was a fantastic experience, and we are all looking forward to returning in Year 12. - Lana Muongsene

What's Been Happening

Year 8 Activity Days

Participating in the Year 8 Activity Days was a memorable experience because each session challenged us in different ways and helped us learn about teamwork, support, and conflict resolution. Across the two days, we rotated through three activities: Coastlife, First Aid, and Rock and Water.

During Coastlife, we were challenged to work together, communicate clearly, and think outside the box as we competed to earn points. The competitive activities made everything more exciting and really strengthened our teamwork.

The ACTWELL First Aid session was incredibly valuable, giving us practical insight and knowledge about performing CPR on people of all ages, using the DRSABCD steps in an emergency, treating cuts and wounds, tying slings, and safely administering an EpiPen or asthma puffer.

In Rock and Water, we learnt how to stay grounded, centred and focused, manage our reactions, and use basic self-defence techniques such as escaping wrist grabs and blocking attacks. Rock and Water taught us valuable lessons about conflict resolution and resilience.

Altogether, the two days helped us build confidence, problem solving skills, and develop teamwork skills while still being fun and engaging.

Blake Murray, Ashton Murray and Jayden Lekamarachchi • Year 9

What's Been Happening

Year 9 yLead Program

On Wednesday, the Year 9 cohort participated in the yLead program. This program was designed to help us build our leadership skills and to understand what true leadership looks like. Throughout the day we participated in various activities in our respective houses that tested our ability to work in a team, to listen and to encourage others as leaders and not by just taking control. Although at first the activities seemed random, the lessons that we learned from the experience really shone through after we unpacked the reason behind the exercise. The highlight of the day was learning how to be a team player while exploring the St Peter's Campus. Overall, it was a really exciting day filled with different opportunities to become a leader.

Ellie Mathew • Year 9

Year 9 Transition Day

On Thursday, Year 9 went to the St Peter's Campus for their first transition day. We learnt about the range of elective options on offer for Year 10. Some of our favourite electives were Industrial Technology, Food Technology, and the HASS Faculty. It was also interesting to see all the amazing facilities, like the workshops, the new theatre, and the kitchens. Halfway through the day, we all got together as a cohort to celebrate a liturgy. This was a great chance to reflect on the day and the change ahead. Overall, the day was an awesome experience, and we are all excited for our time on the senior campus next year!

Jared Earl • Year 9

English Incursion

Romeo and Juliet

Our Year 9 students recently enjoyed a live performance of ***Romeo and Juliet*** presented by Brisbane-based theatre company Shake & Stir Theatre Co. Renowned for their contemporary high-energy adaptations of classic texts, Shake & Stir has built a national reputation for making literature engaging and accessible for young audiences.

The performance provided students with an exciting introduction to the play they will study in depth next term. For many, it was their first experience with Shakespeare, and seeing the story performed on stage reinforced that Shakespeare's works were written to be experienced live rather than simple read from a page.

Benjamin Bray • English Coordinator (Padua)

What's Been Happening

P.A.R.T.Y Program

On 2 June, Year 11 had a presentation from Cherilyn, Dominique and Nardine from Canberra Health Services P.A.R.T.Y Program. We heard the story of Cherilyn's survival after risk-taking behaviours, that began in her teen years, led to a car accident that changed her life. Dominique spoke about the impact that Cherilyn's choices had on her and how their friendship has changed over the years. Cherilyn's message was 'learn from the story; not the experience' as she teaches young people in the community to listen to the messages around drink driving and risk-taking behaviours and not dismiss it as 'something that won't happen to me'. Cherilyn's story was powerful as she reflected on the effect it has had on her family and friends. Cherilyn may have suffered unimaginably but she now uses her story as a powerful message for youths.

Student Reflections

"The P.A.R.T.Y program allowed the Year 11 cohort to reflect on how easily one bad decision can change a life forever. Hearing about Chenilyn's story showed us that risky behaviour doesn't just impact that one person but everyone around them, including family, friends and the broader community. While this presentation was quite confronting, it showed us the real-life consequences of poor decision-making." - Sienna R

"This presentation was really inspiring. It talked about things that people may find hard to think about, but it's the reality of growing up and having things like alcohol and drugs be normalised. It was an eye opening and emotional experience which left students with a range of emotions. Students left the presentation thinking about their actions and with a better understanding of the real world and what it can actually look like." - Lily B

"The presentation was an emotional story that made me think more deeply about my actions. The part where Cherilyn spoke about her rehab was confronting because her injuries were so challenging. The presentation influenced the way I think about resilience, empathy, and the challenges others may be facing as it makes me want to do better, do the right thing and check up on mates." - Ewan D

Kate Warren & Belinda Fox • Year 11 Pastoral Care Coordinators

Student Achievements

Past students Tim Fraser (Class of 2017) and Monique Suraci (Class of 2018) have been selected to represent Australia at this year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Tim competes in race walking and Monique in boxing.

Taylor Kontny, Douglas Dixon, and Felix Botticchi (Year 7) have been selected in the ACT U13 Cross Country squad for the upcoming National Championships.

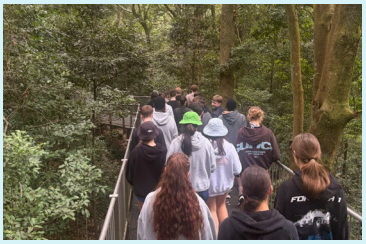
Status Awards

Congratulations to the following students who have been presented with Status Awards:

Bronze Status: Jude Conlon (7E4), Diana Habash (7F1), Nate Francis (8W1)
Silver Status: Aryzona Campbell-St Clair (8E4)

What's Been Happening

Year 9 Geography



On Wednesday 17 June, 40 Year 9 Geography students woke up very early to travel to the South Coast for their Geography excursion. The bus trip took around four hours and we even got to see the sunrise on the trip, which was really beautiful. This semester, we have been learning about biomes and natural environments and the impacts of human activity. This excursion provided us with the opportunity to visit the Minnamurra Rainforest for a walking tour and the Minnamurra River for a kayaking tour of the mangroves there.

When we arrived, we split into two groups to do each activity separately. At the rainforest, we learnt about how people have negatively impacted it previously and how it is slowly coming back to what it used to be. At the Minnamurra River, we learnt about the mangroves there and how important they are for this ecosystem and its marine life.

Even though it was a long day, we had a great time and it was definitely worth it!

Georgie Hart • Year 9

Other Recent Events

PE PATHWAYS PREVIEW DAY

Year 9 students visited the St Peter's Campus to check out the PE Pathways program for elite athletes.

WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

In teams, 145 students in Years 7-12 participated in the Write A Book In A Day Competition on Tuesday.

CREATIVE CLASSWORK

Students have been submitting their final assessment tasks, including a range of creative pieces.

EXAMS

Years 10-12 sat their exams to conclude their assessment for Semester 1.

AFL SUCCESS

Both the boys' and girls' Year 7-9 AFL teams won the ACT AFL Competition.

PERFORMANCES

Several performances have been held for our Drama and Senior Dance classes.

Information & Notices

Subject Selections

This is the time of year when MacKillop students in Years 7-10 start planning for their subjects in 2027.

Year 10 students had an electives information session with Mr Cruwys on Friday 19 June and the Course Preview Day on Friday 26 June where they learned from teachers and senior students about the subject opportunities in each faculty. Parents/carers had the opportunity to attend the Year 11 2027 Information Evening on Thursday 25 June. A copy of the slides can be found here for anyone who missed the evening. Next week at Course Counselling, guided by the Senior Handbook, they will make their subject selections for Year 11 2027.

Year 9 students attended a Course preview Day at the St Peter's Campus on Thursday 25 June to help inform their decisions about Year 10 2027 subjects.

Year 7 and 8 students will have a subject selection presentation in Week 1 of Term 3, Wednesday 22 July, and that evening there will be a **Parent Information Session** for the families of current Year 7- 9 students about electives selections for 2027 (6:00pm in the Moira Nadjecki Theatre at the Padua Campus).

A weblink and access code to our online subject selection portal students will be sent to current Year 7-9 students on Thursday 23 July and these choices must be made, with the parent-signed selection printout returned to school, by 7 August.

More information about the 2027 subject selections and course-specific information, will be published in the next newsletter.

Tristan Burg • Assistant Principal, Academic Care

INSPIRE Art Competition

The annual INSPIRE Art Competition is open to students in Years 7 to 12 and prizes are awarded in the following categories: Overall Winner & People's Choice Award, Digital & Media Arts, Drawing, Painting, Photography and Sculpture. Following a display of all entries at MacKillop Day, a selection of the best works will be exhibited in the 7 Brunswick Street Building at the St Peter's Campus. **Artworks are due by Friday 28 August.**

Tamara Murdoch • Visual Arts Coordinator

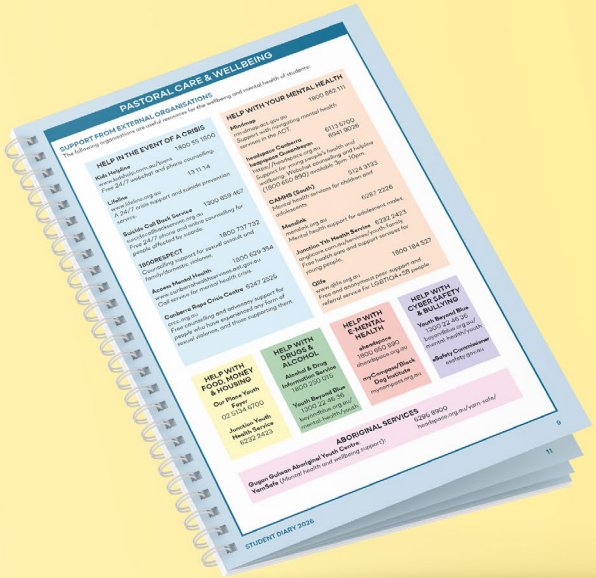
Information & Notices

Holiday Support

For students and families who require extra support during the school holidays, the Student Diary has an extensive list of services and links that may be of benefit. Please turn to page 9 of the Diary for the list of resources.

I would also like to recommend Headspace in Tuggeranong, which is a free, confidential service with a range of supports including mental health, vocational and educational support, drug and alcohol counselling and GP services. Students (and/or families) can self-refer via phone, website or by dropping in to the Centre. Phone (02) 6298 2920 or email info@headspacetuggeranong.org.au

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care



SchoolTV *The Power of Sleep*

This week's SchoolTV feature article is *'The Power of Sleep'*.

This article explores sleep and its essential role in young people's wellbeing, learning and development. With increasing pressures from school, social media and busy routines, many young people are not getting the quality sleep they need, which can impact mood, focus and resilience.

In this article, specialists highlight why sleep matters and offer practical, supportive strategies families can use to build healthy sleep habits and support their child's overall wellbeing.

VIEW THIS WEEK'S FEATURE

Information & Notices

Enrolment Offers

All families who applied for a place in Year 7, 2027 should have now received communication from the College regarding the outcome of their enrolment application. If you have not heard from us, please contact enrolments@mackillop.act.edu.au.

Jo Lubinski & Rebecca McKenzie • Enrolments

School Fees

Fees for Term 2 should now be finalised unless paying by Direct Debit or other approved arrangement. Any outstanding fees should be paid immediately.

Please note: BPay is our preferred payment method. To arrange a Direct Debit through Bpoint please contact us by email at fees@mackillop.act.edu.au. For other approved payment methods or a payment plan, or if you are experiencing difficulty paying the fees, please contact the Fees Office.

Michelle Predovan • Fees Manager

Second-Hand Uniform Shop

There will be some temporary changes to the regular SHUS opening days over the coming weeks. The SHUS will be open on the following dates:

- Tuesday 30 June
- Saturday 18 July
- Wednesday 29 July

Regular openings will resume on Tuesday 4 August.

For appointments please contact the SHUS at uniforms@mackillop.act.edu.au or 0427 089 370.

Judy • SHUS Manager

Collection Notice

The Australian Government Department of Education would like to advise the community that it will collect certain information about St Mary MacKillop College, its staff, and student body as part of the non-government schools census collection and special circumstance applications.

The Collection Notice can be viewed here.

What's Coming Up

Year 10 Urban Challenge **29 JUN - 3 JUL**

Junior Drama Production **30 JUN**

MON	**29** JUN	• Year 10 Urban Challenge - Group A departs • Year 10 Reflection Day - Group B • Year 7 Poetry in Action
TUE	**30** JUN	• Year 10 Course Counselling - Group B • Junior Drama Production
WED	**01** JUL	• Year 10 Urban Challenge - Group A returns • Year 10 Urban Challenge - Group B departs
THU	**02** JUL	• Year 10 Course Counselling - Group A
FRI	**03** JUL	• Year 10 Urban Challenge - Group B returns • Year 10 Reflection Day - Group A • Term 2 concludes
MON	**20** JUL	• Pupil-Free Day

What's Coming Up

Term 3 begins **21 JUL**

Year 12 Retreat **5-7 AUG**

TUE	**21** JUL	• Term 3 begins • Year 11 ATAR-seeker interviews
WED	**22** JUL	• Year 11 ATAR-seeker interviews • Year 7 and 8 Electives Info Session • Electives Info Night
TUE	**04** AUG	• Australian Maths Competition • Year 12 Retreat preparation
WED	**05** AUG	• Year 12 Retreat departs
THU	**06** AUG	• Year 10 Course Counselling catch-up
FRI	**07** AUG	• Year 12 Retreat returns • Pilgrimage to Eden departs • Year 10 Course Counselling catch-up

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Tuggeranong ACT 2901

Mackinnon Street, **Wanniassa** (Years 7-9)
Ellerston Avenue, **Isabella Plains** (Years 10-12)

Absentee SMS Line
0429 131 463

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Do you need help with a particular issue?

IT Support, Compass and Canvas	helpdesk@mackillop.act.edu.au
Enrolments	enrolments@mackillop.act.edu.au
Fees and Finance	fees@mackillop.act.edu.au
School Reports	reports@mackillop.act.edu.au
Absences & Attendance	attendance@mackillop.act.edu.au