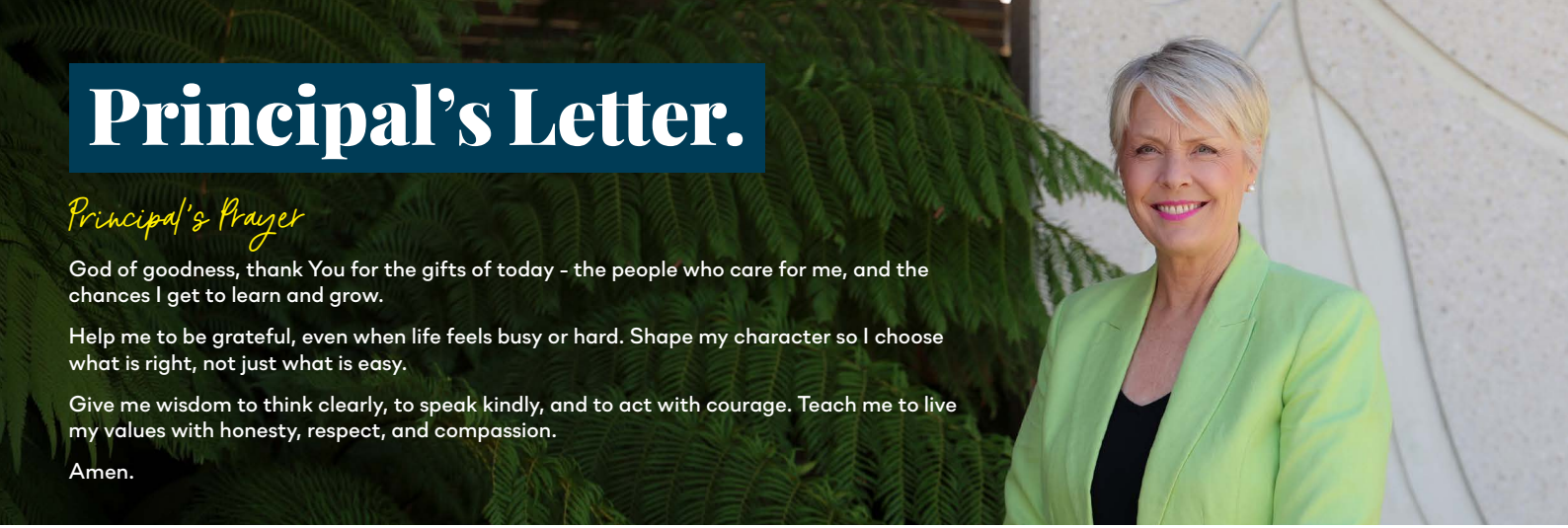
MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

Newsletter.

Volume Ten

4 September 2026

Principal's Letter.



Principal's Prayer

God of goodness, thank You for the gifts of today - the people who care for me, and the chances I get to learn and grow.

Help me to be grateful, even when life feels busy or hard. Shape my character so I choose what is right, not just what is easy.

Give me wisdom to think clearly, to speak kindly, and to act with courage. Teach me to live my values with honesty, respect, and compassion.

Amen.

Dear Parents/Carers, Staff and Students,

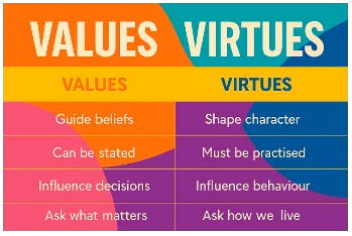
I hope this newsletter finds you well. As we move through the term, there is much to celebrate across our College community. This edition captures some of the many opportunities for learning, growth, creativity, service, and connection that our students have embraced in recent weeks. I appreciate that many students are currently juggling a range of commitments alongside their studies, and I commend them for the dedication and perseverance they continue to demonstrate.

The Defining Features of Catholic Education

Our annual Staff Spirituality Day was held this week, facilitated by Professor Br David Hall. David, a Marist Brother and foundation Dean of La Salle Academy at the Australian Catholic University, leads programs in Educational Leadership, Faith Formation, and Religious Education. With 30 years in Catholic schools and a doctorate in theology, he has led international formation programs across Africa, the UK, Europe and the Pacific. David has also received the Dr Paul Brock Medal for excellence in educational leadership.

Br David's input was exceptional, providing insight and inspiration as he challenged us to reflect deeply on our vocation as educators in Catholic schools. Through a rich blend of theology, personal experience and practical wisdom, he invited staff to consider how hope, presence and authentic relationships lie at the heart of flourishing communities. His thoughtful and engaging facilitation encouraged personal reflection and a renewed sense of purpose in our shared mission. We are grateful to Br David for the generosity with which he shared his knowledge and faith, and for the opportunity to pause, reconnect and be refreshed in our commitment to the young people and families we serve.

A central theme of Br David's presentation was the formation of character in our young people and the important role we play as educators in nurturing the virtues that enable them to flourish as people of faith, compassion and integrity. I am proud to say that the MacKillop staff hold to a collective vision of education that extends far beyond academic achievement. We are committed to forming young people of strong character who will make a positive contribution to their communities and the wider world. Br David captured this vision powerfully when he explained that while knowledge and skills are important, it is ultimately the character of a person that shapes how they use their gifts in service of others.



Principal's Letter.

MacKillop Day

On Friday 11 September the Feast Day of St Mary MacKillop College will be celebrated with a whole College Mass at the Tuggeranong Basketball Stadium commencing at 9.30am. The Mass will be celebrated by Father Simon Falk, and you are warmly welcome to attend. Parents and carers wishing to attend the Mass are asked to be seated by 9.20am. I hope you can join us! Full details of the day's events have been communicated to families.

Year 10 Spring Zing

We are looking forward to the annual Year 10 *Spring Zing* being held on Friday 18 September at the Canberra Southern Cross Club, Woden. A great evening of fun, friendship and creativity awaits as our Year 10 students embrace fancy dress to set the scene! I am looking forward to seeing some great costumes!

"Operation Caffeination"

Last Friday evening, MacKillop staff gathered for a Trivia Night to raise funds towards the purchase of a coffee machine for MacKillop House. Together, we raised more than $2,000 while also having the privilege of farewelling Sr Noelene Quinane, the founding Principal of MacKillop College.

Over many years, Sr Noelene has worked closely with our College, advocating for MacKillop House and helping our students and staff develop a deeper understanding of homelessness and disadvantage in Canberra.

After more than six years with Marymead CatholicCare, Sr Noelene recently commenced a new role with the pastoral care team at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney, where she supports pilgrims who visit the historical pilgrimage site and museum and pray at the tomb of St Mary MacKillop.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Sr Noelene for her friendship, advocacy, and support of our College community, and we wish her every blessing as she settles into her new home and ministry in Sydney.

Father's Day

Happy Father's Day to all the fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers and significant carers in our MacKillop community. We thank you for the care, encouragement and guidance you offer our young people, and we celebrate the positive difference you make each day. May you feel appreciated and loved this Father's Day. Enjoy a special weekend!

With respect and encouragement to you.

Jacqueline Heffernan • Principal

CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA & GOULBURN EDUCATION LIMITED

Grounded in Faith
Growing in Service

Apostolic Action Plan 2027 – 2033

What's Been Happening

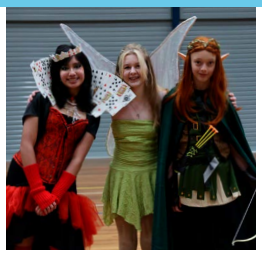
Book Week *A Symphony of Stories*

Book Week was once again a tremendous success at MacKillop, with students and staff embracing the excitement of reading and storytelling last week. Pastoral Classes and teachers eagerly competed in a range of Book Week challenges including scavenger hunts, PC challenges, zine making stations, and various puzzles and games.

The St Peter's Campus was treated to live jazz with MacKillop Unplugged, taking place in the library at recess and lunch, as a great wind down for Year 12 after the AST exams. At Padua, a Mega Mystery Book Sale raised over $150 for MacKillop House, thanks to the enthusiastic support of the school community. This week, the St Peter's Campus is continuing with MacKillop House donations via a great Book Bonanza.

The highlight for many was the Dress-Up Day, which was an overwhelming success, with more than two-thirds of students coming dressed as recognisable book characters. At Padua, Learning Commons Coordinator Amanda Knott said, "The standout costumes were undoubtedly the impressive homemade creations. It was clear that many students had dedicated significant time, creativity, and effort to bringing their favourite book characters to life". Thank you to everyone for getting involved in the week!

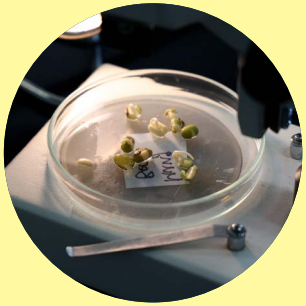
Sarah Kearns & Amanda Knott
Learning Commons Coordinators



What's Been Happening

Science Week

Lots of activities happened inside and outside of the classroom during Week 5 to celebrate Science Week. Students got to grow their own cress pets, build a mini herb garden to take home, dissect and inspect various seeds, complete a scavenger hunt and compete in daily PC challenges!



Performing Arts Enrichment Day

On Friday 21 August, the St Peter's Campus held a Performing Arts Enrichment Day for some local Primary Schools. Students broke into groups of dance, drama, musical theatre and choir, and spent the day working on a performance, which they showcased to the wider group at the end of the day!

Meup Meup House Charity Week

This week has been Meup Meup's House Charity Week where all funds went towards MacKillop House. Students got involved in the various events which occurred throughout the week, including donation day, the selling of sausage sandwiches, soft drinks and subway cookies, and to finish the week off, jersey day!

What's Been Happening

Nihongo Tanken Centre

Japanese Classes

On Thursday 27 August, Year 9 and 10 Japanese students travelled to Sydney to visit the Nihongo Tanken Centre. Departing the St Peter's Campus bright and early, we arrived in Kirrawee in South Sydney at 10:30am, where we were greeted by our two hostesses, Matsui sensei and Akutsu sensei. When we got inside the centre, it took us all a few moments to adjust to being spoken to entirely in Japanese, but once we had the chance to acclimatise we settled in very well.

To walk around on the floors inside, we took our outside shoes off and replaced them with traditional slippers. After this, we got our name tags and went into the tatami room, taking off our slippers when we entered this room, and were sorted into four teams. We were informed on important names within the centre, such as the entrance (genkan) and garden (niwa), before we engaged in many fun activities, including speed introductions, balancing objects on our hands while walking around a course, doing maths in Japanese, and a variety of letter and vocabulary games.

Throughout the day, we ate a range of Japanese snacks, such as Pocky, rice crackers, and sushi bento boxes – they were all amazing! Once we completed our final activity, a gameshow-style quiz against our peers, we played Kendama and Daruma Otoshi (two traditional Japanese games) before saying our goodbyes and leaving the centre. It was a long day, but an incredibly rewarding one, helping all of us grow in our Japanese skills and draw closer with our classmates.

Archer Geier • Year 10

ACT Legislative Assembly Committee Challenge

On Friday 21 August, a group of Year 7 and 8 students participated in the ACT Legislative Assembly Committee Challenge held at the ACT Legislative Assembly. During this challenge, students learned about the Committee process in our ACT parliament, before collaborating with students from Merici in a mock Committee challenge.

Our MacKillop students rose to the challenge of developing committee submissions from different interested stakeholder groups on whether ACT sports infrastructure needs more funding. The students demonstrated excellent teamwork skills, innovative ideas, and were articulate in delivering their proposals to the committee.

The day finished with the students meeting different MLAs and asking them questions about the parliamentary process and the process of politics here in the ACT. All of the students were excellent representatives of the College and should be proud of their contributions.

Nathan Wagner • IHUM and English Teacher

What's Been Happening

Year 12 AST

Congratulations to our Year 12 Tertiary students who sat the AST Exam on Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 August.

Year 8 Forensic Science Incursion

On Thursday 27 and Friday 28 August, Year 8 Forensic Science students participated in an Incursion where they were presented with a crime and various pieces of evidence. Students had to comb through evidence to determine who, what, where, when, why and how the crime took place.

Exploring Faith Parish Program

Congratulations to Isabella Steinle, Charlize Rankin and Susannah Felstead who, in August, completed the *Exploring Faith* Parish Program, and were Baptised and Confirmed in the Catholic Faith.

The *Exploring Faith* Program is a 'parish based, school supported' program for teens who wish to explore the Catholic Faith. In its present form, students attend formation and discussion sessions at Holy Family Church on a Tuesday afternoon. The program includes a pathway for students to receive the Catholic Sacraments with other teens on a similar journey. For more information, contact Crystal Wilkes at crystal.wilkes@mackillop.act.edu.au.

Sacrament Day at St Jude's

Year 10 CSYMI Youth Ministry students were invited to St Jude's Primary School for their Sacramental Retreat Day where they led activities and taught Year 6 students about the Holy Spirit. Our students courageously shared about their faith and inspired the primary school students with their energy and enthusiasm!

Crystal Wilkes • Liturgy and Mission Coordinator

What's Been Happening

Visiting Holy Family ELC

Year 11 Social and Community Work

Year 11 Social and Community Work students recently visited the Holy Family Early Learning Centre to explore how young children learn through play. Students were warmly welcomed by ELC staff and quickly engaged with learning activities in each classroom. The visit provided an authentic opportunity to observe children's play, interactions and developing skills in an active school setting.

Students participated in indoor and outdoor experiences, including phonics activities, Book Week-themed learning, oztag and sandpit play. They also gained insight into everyday challenges young children may experience, such as independently managing lunch boxes. They experienced the inquisitive nature of four-year-olds firsthand, responding to curious questions about why they were visiting and joining classes.

Our Year 11 students were clearly popular with the young learners and were often the first chosen to join in play activities. This experience supported classroom learning about play's important role in children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Thank you to Holy Family Early Learning Centre Staff for sharing their expertise, time, spaces and learning experiences.

Janelle Maas • Food and Textiles Coordinator

Fr Rob Galea

Pastoral Program

MacKillop had a very special visit from Fr Rob Galea on Wednesday 19 August, who gave a presentation to the entire St Peter's campus during Pastoral Program, spoke with all of our CSYMI students and visited one of our senior Music classes. Fr Rob is well known for his work as a Catholic Priest, international speaker, author and award-winning musician.

2026 ACTcent Concert

On Wednesday 2 September, Katie-Lee James represented MacKillop at ACTcent, a special concert bringing together one student act from each college across Canberra.

The event provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase local student talent across public, private, and Catholic schools. Performers shared their music and creativity with an audience of fellow students, families and the wider community. A big congratulations to Katie for her wonderful performance of 'Jolene' by Dolly Parton at this event!

Helena Maher • Music Teacher

What's Been Happening

Girls ASC Netball Competition

Our 7/8, 9/10 and 11/12 girls Netball teams competed at the ASC Gala Day on Tuesday 11 August.

Our 11/12 team took out first place in the competition, playing some exceptional netball with a positive attitude and willingness to challenge themselves throughout the whole day!

Both our 7/8 and 9/10 teams finished the competition in third place. They played against lots of tough teams, winning the majority of their matches, and bringing the energy from the first whistle to the last. Our defenders were outstanding, reading the plays and getting many crucial intercepts, the midcourters moved the ball down the court seamlessly, and our shooters stayed calm and converted almost every time.

Adding to the wonderful atmosphere was an immense cheer squad on the sidelines. A heartfelt thank you goes to the many friends and family members who came along to support the team. Your encouragement and enthusiasm provided an extra boost and helped make the day such a memorable experience.

Lillian Gerada & Rhiannon Harrison • Year 9 Student & PE Teacher

Sporting Teams

Various sporting teams have competed throughout Term 3 and achieved some great results. These sports include Basketball, Rugby Union, Oztag, Soccer, Netball, Mountain Biking and AFL.

There are a handful more sports to compete in at the end of this Term and in Term 4.

What's Been Happening

ACT/NSW AFL Finals Day

Congratulations to the 7-9 Girls AFL team that competed in the ACT/NSW AFL Finals Day held on Wednesday 2 September. The team took on some very strong schools, making it to the grand final and finishing the day in second place!

Student Achievements

Aiden Henderson (Year 12) made his debut with the Giants VFL in Southport in August.

Alana Fraser (Year 12) has been invited to take part in the 2026 Telstra AFLW Draft Combine in October.

Lewis Rice (Year 8) has been selected in the U14 All Australian AFL Team.

Ryan Brown (Year 9) was awarded "Best First Year Junior Umpire" for the year by AFL Canberra.

Fraser Henderson, Joseph Rutten, Ava Cunanan, Evie Durham, Mackenzie Holdway (Year 9) and Jasmine Summers (Year 8) have all been selected to represent School Sport ACT in the 15&U Touch Football Teams in Newcastle in October.

Jade Merriman, Poppy Claveria, and Eadie Morrow (Year 7) have all been selected to represent School Sport ACT in the 12&U Football (Soccer) Team in Newcastle in October.

Jack Miels-Barrett (Year 12) competed in the Australian Schools Golf Championships finishing with a silver medal in the Nett for the Individual Stroke.

Lewis Holdway (Year 11) will be competing in the National Clubs Gymnastics Championships as a trampolinist in the International Qualification Round on the Gold Coast in September.

Oenone de Ligt (Year 9) competed at the Horse Den State Interschools competition in both Vaulting and the Combined Training categories. Oenone finished with 2nd in Vaulting and 20 out of 45 in Combined Training.

Karen O'Connor, Lily Young and Darcy Davis (Year 11) all competed in the 2026 NSW Speedo Senior State Age SC Championships achieving many results:

- **Lily:** 1st – 100m IM, 50m Butterfly and 50m Freestyle. 2nd – 50m Backstroke. 3rd – 100m Freestyle and 50m Breaststroke.
- **Darcy:** 2nd – 100m Backstroke, 3rd – 50m Freestyle and 4x25m Meledy Relay. 4th – 4x25m Freestyle Meledy Relay. 5th – 50m Butterfly. 6th – 200m Backstroke.
- **Karen:** 2nd – 100m Backstroke. 3rd - 200m Backstroke. 4th – 50m Backstroke.
- **Lily & Karen:** 1st – 4x50m Meledy Relay 4x25m Meledy Relay. 2nd - 4x25m Freestyle Meledy Relay. 4th – 4x50m Freestyle Relay.

What's Been Happening

Sophie Luchterhand

Athlete Profile

YEAR 11 • FLAG FOOTBALL, AFL, NETBALL & DANCE

Representation Level
Making the U17s Girls Australian squad for Flag Football, First Grade for womens AFL, Division 1 for Netball, and Advanced classes for Dance.

Best sporting memory/achievement
Getting into the Australian team, travelling to Los Angeles and meeting new people from many different countries.

How do you balance your sport and academic studies?
I find my allocated study periods and the option to use a pathways lesson as a study very helpful to catch up on my academic work.

What is your current training schedule?
I train/play everyday of the week, which works out to be 25.5 hours.

How long have you been in PE Pathways and how has it supported you as an athlete?
I have been in PE Pathways since the start of Year 10. PE Pathways allows me the time in school to go to the gym, build my strength and conditioning, and catch up on study. The people, who are also in PE Pathways, are also great! They are so supportive and willing to push you and themselves to be the best athlete possible.

Favourite thing about being in PE Pathways
There are many things, such as the overall help and support that I get from teachers and students, learning about different strength exercises and injury prevention, and being in a class that targets everyones specific sports.

Favourite strength and conditioning exercise and why?
Lat pull downs, bulgarian split squats and the rowing machine because they target the muscles I use most.

If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?
Don't get so frustrated with yourself, training comes with many challenges and hardships, it will always get better if you put in the work. Injuries can unfortunately happen, but do your rehab and come back bigger and better. Don't procrastinate when studying, use the time you have. Don't be so hard on yourself and don't let small things ruin your confidence and ruin the game.

What is your 'big' sporting goal?
Go to the 2032 Olympics for Flag Football.

ACT MTB Championships

On Friday 28 August, students from all year levels competed at the ACT Schools Mountain Bike Championships at Mt Stromlo. The junior high school team battled it out for a spot on the podium all day narrowly missing out, while the college male team finished second in their category, completing 12 laps of the 5.5km loop.

All in all, it was a great day with fierce competition across all categories.

James Brahe • Year 12

Information & Notices

National Child Protection Week 2026

Every Conversation Matters

From 6-12 September, National Child Protection Week invites all Australians to play their part in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. This year's theme, "Every Conversation Matters: Shifting Conversation to Action," reminds us that meaningful conversations are often the first step in creating safer environments for children.

As parents and carers, simple actions can make a significant difference, including checking in with your child, listening to their experiences, supporting other families, being a positive role model, and speaking up when something does not seem right. By valuing children's voices and working together as a community, we can help ensure every young person feels safe, supported, and heard.

To learn more about National Child Protection Week and access a range of practical resources for families, **visit here.**

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

SchoolTV

Healthy Study Habits

As students prepare for upcoming assessments and exams, developing healthy study habits is essential for both academic success and overall wellbeing. Effective study is not simply about spending more time on schoolwork, but about creating positive routines, maintaining balance, taking regular breaks, and prioritising healthy lifestyle habits such as sleep, nutrition, and exercise.

We encourage parents and carers to access the latest SchoolTV Special Report: Healthy Study Habits, which provides practical strategies to help young people study effectively while managing stress and maintaining wellbeing.

This resource also includes a short video presentation and interactive polling questions, offering valuable insights and opportunities for reflection and discussion at home.

VIEW THIS WEEK'S FEATURE

Information & Notices

Pastoral Program Term 3

This term, students have been exploring the theme of Relationships, Future Responsibility, and Leadership. Each year group has focused on different aspects within this theme, with the overall aim of helping students build practical skills that will keep them safe, strengthen their relationships, and prepare them for the future.

Over the next fortnight, Pastoral Program lessons across the College will include:

- Managing and resolving conflict – using restorative conversations
- Reducing worry and anxiety – practical wellbeing strategies
- Exploring conflict resolution styles
- The impact of relying on AI for interaction and how it can shape relationships
- Finding freedom and celebrating diversity in community
- Making wise financial decisions for the future

These sessions are designed to support students in developing resilience, empathy, and confidence as they navigate both their personal relationships and future responsibilities.

Status Awards

Congratulations to the following students who received Bronze and Silver status at the Padua Assembly on Wednesday:

Bronze: Hunter Everding (7A1), Olivia Buckley (7A1), Ava Edwards (7A2), Anna Mathew Thomas (7A4), Hannah Patron (7A4), Kristina Cook (7E1), Emily Wood (7E1), Isabella Flood (7E1), Olivia Costin (7E2), Claire Collins (7E4), Liam Kerrigan (7F1), Bonnie Bryce (7F2), Eva Thornton (7F2), Alison Stone (7F2), Sara Geraghty (7F2), Nikola Arrouk (7F2), Brian Sunil (7W2), Eline Tomy (7W3), Keira Logan (7W3) and Audrey Eldridge (7W3).

Silver: Madeline Werts (8F1).

Paul Durham • Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care

Enrolments & Withdrawals

If families have made alternative arrangements and are withdrawing students from MacKillop, please notify us via email to enrolments@mackillop.act.edu.au at your earliest convenience.

Jo Lubinski & Rebecca McKenzie • Enrolments

Information & Notices

School Fees

Fees for Term 3 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.

For other approved payment methods or a payment plan or if you are experiencing difficulty paying the fees please contact: fees@mackillop.act.edu.au.

Michelle Predovan • Fees Manager

Second-Hand Uniform Shop

Reminder that appointments are being taken for your summer uniform requirements. The best way to request an appointment is to email uniforms@mackillop.act.edu.au or you can text on 0427 089 370.

Thank you for your recent uniform donations. The SHUS is grateful to receive these. Donations are accepted at front office on either campus.

Judy • SHUS Manager

Community Notices

ACTING OUT: ON SCREEN
Rebus Theatre's school holiday program for LGBTQIA+ young people aged 12–17.

Website | Flyer

CANBERRA OFF ROAD CYCLISTS
A fast and fun summer MTB series at Stromlo Forest Park.

Website | Flyer

WILDCATS SOFTBALL CLUB
Accepting registrations for all ages and abilities to our small inclusive softball club.

Website | Flyer

ANU TAX CLINIC SCHOOLS
Free workshops about tax literacy.

Website

What's Coming Up

MacKillop Day Mass and Celebrations **11 SEP**

Year 10 Spring Zing **18 SEP**

FRI	**11** SEP	• MacKillop Day Mass and Celebrations
WED	**16** SEP	• Floriade Music Performance • Education Perfect and AI Parent Information Session
THU	**17** SEP	• Floriade Music Performance
FRI	**18** SEP	• Floriade Music Performance • Year 10 Spring Zing
WED	**23** SEP	• Variety Night • College and Portfolio Captain Elections
THU	**24** SEP	• Term 3 Concludes

What's Coming Up

Term 4 Begins **13 OCT**

AST Second Sitting **20 OCT**

FRI	**25** SEP	• Pupil-Free Day
MON	**05** OCT	• Labour Day (Public Holiday)
MON	**12** OCT	• Pupil-Free Day
TUE	**13** OCT	• Term 4 Begins
THU	**15** OCT	• Parent-Teacher Interviews
TUE	**20** OCT	• Parent-Teacher Interviews • AST Second Sitting

MacKillop
St Mary MacKillop College Canberra

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mackillop-act.bsky.social

Do you need help with a particular issue?

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