

SMC

PRAY AND
PERSEVERE

The Monican

ST MONICA'S COLLEGE, EPPING

Volume 35 Number 4 AUGUST 2025



*"Nothing
is far
from
God."*



MOMENTS OF
DISCOVERY

Saint Monica

The Monican

ST MONICA'S COLLEGE, EPPING

MISSION

St Monica's College is a Catholic coeducational faith community. The school values the sacredness and wellbeing of all students, staff and parents and is committed to serving the young people of the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

We promote the truths and values of Jesus Christ and fidelity to the message of the Gospels. Through prayer and perseverance, we nurture genuine and harmonious relationships based on restorative principles.

Our teaching and learning approach is contemporary, global in perspective and aims to inspire life-long learning. We seek to stimulate and develop academic learning and students' personal world view through critical thought, whilst always being respectful of students' abilities and learning styles. We encourage and assist each Monican to reach full potential.

Student-centred educational programs and extra-curricular offerings foster respect of self, others and the environment. The College provides extensive well maintained facilities, resources and technologies which reflect an ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation.

St Monica's College celebrates its cultural diversity and draws strong identity from its past. We endeavour to empower Monicans to flourish and contribute positively to Australia and the world, now and in the future.

OUR STRATEGIC INTENT

St Monica's College is a School of Educational Enterprise. The College is committed to adopting international perspectives focussing on global citizenship and social justice for all. There is an ongoing commitment to the development of programs and facilities including a Trade Skills Centre. The College aims to be a leader in innovation, the use of Information and Communication Technology, with state of the art resources and encouraging digital leadership. The College will continue to expand the repertoire of effective teaching practices and use of data, in order to strengthen curriculum pathways and achievement. Contemporary learning opportunities will be provided for all community members, including students, staff and parents.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Principal Mr Brian Hanley OAM
Ms Santina Giannetta

COVER

Saint Monica



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Principal's Report



▶ **Brian Hanley OAM** | *Principal*



Monicans deserve to feel very proud of how the College promotes the arts throughout the College.

The arts are performing arts and visual arts, and we exceed in our provision of both, available to all, and with great confidence in future growth.

Curriculum-wise, performing and visual arts are well represented in our teaching and learning program. Both have subjects which are compulsory in Years 7 and 8, and both offer electives at Year 9 level. These subjects are Theatre Studies and Music at the junior year levels for performing arts, and art and design via the Visual Arts Faculty. These subjects become more advanced electives at Year 9 when Dance is added through performing arts and Media through visual arts.

At the senior Year 10 and VCE levels, smaller sized classes are maintained for subjects like Media Studies, Music Performance, Theatre Studies, VET Dance, and several visual arts subjects. Each is accommodated in specialized rooms with extra facilities and resources being added constantly. These rooms are of the highest quality and subjects are taught by dedicated teachers.

Each of the arts-based areas is an individual Faculty, led by Ms Alison Fernandes (Performing Arts) and Mrs Samantha Webster (Visual Arts). Both Faculties have several Education Support Officers to assist the leaders and the teachers deliver programs. When needed, members of the Carlo Acutis Program are present in classrooms to aid students in their learning and understanding.

In addition, Performing Arts and Visual Arts are big-ticket, highly profiled areas of traditional recognition of skills and achievement. The prestigious Principal's Art Prize has existed since 2003, and it is a well respected event in the life of the College. Hundreds of parents and visitors attend the event to admire the exhibits and support their student family member.

The Performing Arts Faculty meanwhile is highlighted through the Principal's Cup for Song (since 2004) and the eagerly awaited College Production. The popularity of Mamma Mia this year clearly represented

just how popular our College Productions at Plenty Valley Ranges are. Of course, we have two Dance Showcases each year and two musical events in May and during Springtime.

Other features are important as they promote and celebrate the arts at SMC. Our amazing artwork (both internal and external) is a jewel in the Monican crown. These pieces include our beautiful sculptures that adorn our walls on both campuses and are of the highest quality. Our collection of Leopoldine Mimovich sculptures and art is one of the largest in the world. Look around and see Mimovich works in corridors, classrooms, on numerous walls, and always in holy spaces at the College. This College boasts its Father Fred Chamberlin Art Gallery on Davisson Street Campus, and our art curator keeps it well stocked with works by our students. Television screens beam out our achievements.

Pause a while and listen to our vast assortment of bands and ensembles rehearsing, being taught new skills, and performing. Sessional Music at the College is enormous. The musical accomplishments of Monicans is renowned. Often, the bands are enhanced and supported by our choirs which perform at the highest level in competition and at College events. What would be an Assembly or Mass without our musicians and singers, and on St Monica's Day, our liturgical movement dancers.

Importantly, the staff who are working at SMC in the arts are great aficionados of their particular art. Amongst the large number of arts Faculty members, one will discover artists, writers, performers, experienced cabaret and recital artists, professional designers, and people who are fresh into teaching, eager to share their skills.

Both Performing Arts and Visual Arts activities can be accessed through the formal curriculum or via the co-curricular program.

They enhance academic learning; they provide development of particular artistic styles; enjoyment; and companionship with others who share a love of the arts.

Parents support many musicians through private sessional lessons which cost money and spend time supporting their children. Music camps are offered, and parents are supportive of them. We never hesitate to compete in external competitions.

What amazing 'Moments of Discovery' emerge and are embedded within performing and visual arts. Long may they flourish and be pursued by Monicans of all ages.

Term 3 is the Month of Monica, and our traditional St Monica's Week events are featured in this edition. I urge all members of our school community to avail themselves of the opportunity to join in and celebrate.

This term concentrates heavily on subject selection for 2026, and I am keen to suggest that considerable thought and discussion take place in homes and in classrooms about the ideal program to commit to for next year. Much valuable advice is always at hand for both students and parents.

I do ask that families remain up to date on payment of school fees thus ensuring that the College continues to offer the finest and most comprehensive education. Always I admire and am grateful to parents who loyally and faithfully meet fee obligations. Should times of struggle exist, those affected have an obligation to speak with our Finance Office for confidential support and guidance.

St Monica's College, Epping – Davisson Street Campus, Dalton Road Campus, Ostia, and St Stephen/Gaudete Campus, Reservoir – is an amazing school committed to the children of the northern suburbs of Melbourne. Let us be open to those many 2025 moments of discovery as we embrace 'Pray and Persevere' as the central message of a Monican education.

Executive Deputy Principal's Report



▶ **Paula Di Maria** | *Executive Deputy Principal*

During the month of August, we pause to honour and reflect on the life of our beloved patroness, St Monica, and the ways her enduring faith continues to inspire our College community today.

In the life of St Monica, we find not only a powerful story of maternal devotion, but also a timeless example of steadfast faith, resilience, and hope. Each of these virtues continue to speak meaningfully to our lives today, particularly in the context of family, education, and personal growth.

St Monica, mother of St Augustine of Hippo, lived in the 4th century in North Africa. While we know much about her life through the writings of her son, it is her quiet strength, long-suffering patience, and constant faith that have made her one of the most adored saints of the Church. Her relatable attributes and significant life examples, continue to have relevance for people around the world today in this, the 21st century.

As a Christian woman married to a pagan husband, Monica's early adult life was not without challenge. Her husband, Patricius, was known for his temper and unfaithfulness, and her mother-in-law added to the obstacles at home. Yet Monica responded not with bitterness or despair, but with love, prayer, and perseverance. Her compassion and moral conviction eventually led to the conversion of both her husband and his mother, a profound reminder of the quiet power of witness and integrity.

Notably, Monica spent nearly two decades praying for the conversion of her eldest son, Augustine, who had abandoned the faith of his childhood to pursue a life of worldly pleasure and philosophical scepticism. Monica never gave up. Her tears, prayers, and enduring belief in his potential were not in vain.

Augustine eventually experienced

a profound conversion, becoming one of the most important theologians in Christian history. His legacy as a bishop, teacher, and saint is intertwined with Monica's own legacy as the mother who refused to give up on her child.

For our College community, St Monica's life offers several enduring lessons. Monica teaches us the power of presence, perseverance and prayer. Her example demonstrates that we do not always need grand gestures to make a difference. Quiet consistency, prayer, and deep care often have the most lasting impact.

Monica's story encourages us to stay hopeful and faithful even when change seems slow or out of reach. It reminds us that we can draw upon our faith through challenges and moments of adversity. In Monica's life, we see the immeasurable value of those who nurture, guide, and believe in others, especially in their most formative years. We see the significance of a mother's influence and the enduring care entrusted to the important adults in the lives of young people.

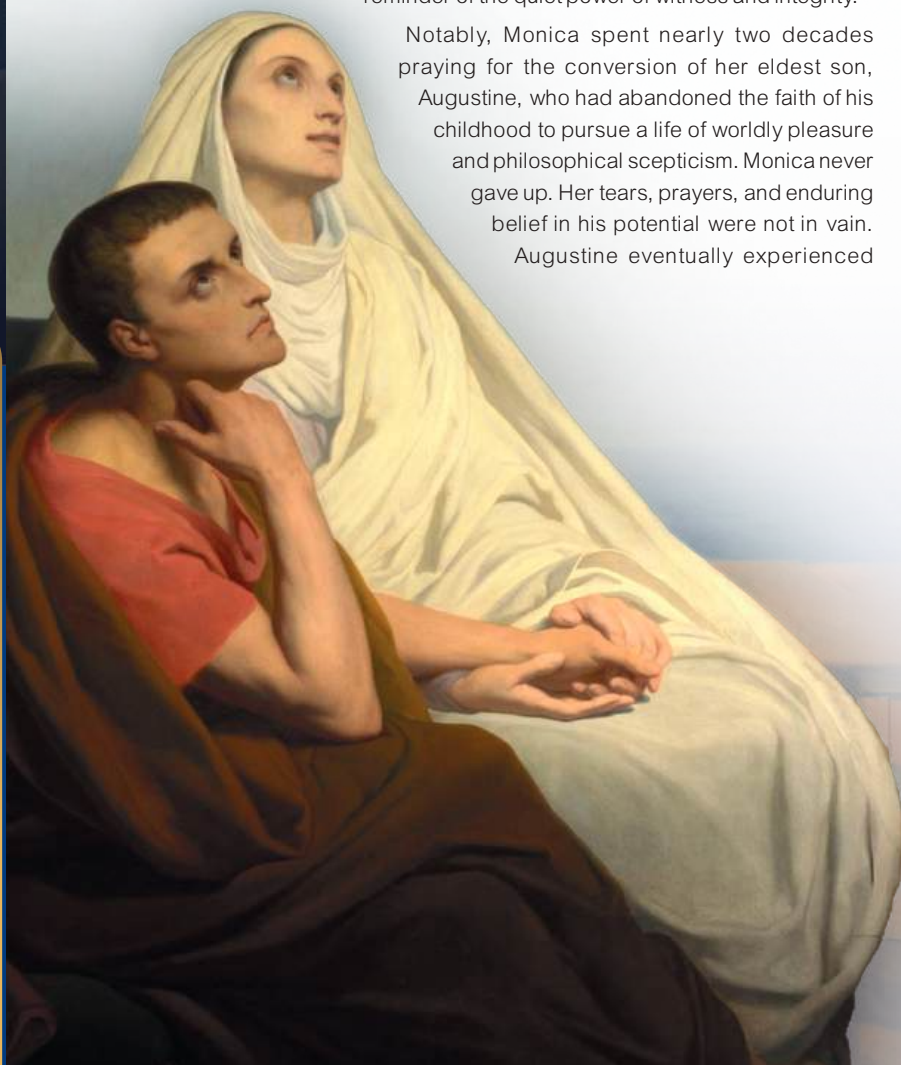
At a time when perseverance can feel difficult and immediate results are often expected, Monica reminds us of the beauty in persistence, in holding hope for others, and in trusting that love and grace are always at work, sometimes in ways we cannot yet see.

As a school named in her honour, St Monica's College aspires to reflect these same qualities in its mission and relationships. Patience in growth, faith in every young person's potential, and love that builds strong, compassionate communities.

May we, like St Monica, be people of enduring faith and hopeful hearts.

“

A Life of Faith,
Patience and
Persevering
Love



Assistant Principal/Campus Directors' Reports

DALTON ROAD CAMPUS



▶ **Alicia Xerri** | *Campus Director DRC*

It is remarkable to reflect on the fact that we have already passed the halfway point of the year. With the winter solstice behind us, the days will soon begin to lengthen. This term has offered many positive experiences. I commend our students for their hard work and dedication, and I sincerely thank our staff for their commitment to the care and growth of our students.

We have many achievements to celebrate on the Dalton Road Campus. I would like to congratulate our Year 7 Premier League teams on their outstanding performances in Term 2. The effort, skill, and teamwork shown by these students are truly commendable and worthy of recognition.

All our students continue the conversation around good decision making. Good decision making is a skill that shapes who we are and how we are seen by others. It requires us to pause, think carefully about the consequences of our choices, and act in ways that show respect and care for the people around us. In today's world, this is especially important when it comes to social media and online interactions. All students on the Dalton Road Campus and St Stephen/Gaudete Campus engaged in presentations regarding online interactions and the law.

Social media offers many opportunities to connect, share ideas, and celebrate achievements. However, it also comes with the risk of negative interactions. Unkind comments or sharing hurtful content that can have real and lasting impacts on others' wellbeing. Thoughtful decision-making means being intentional about what we post, share, or comment on. Before we hit "send," we should ask

ourselves: "Is this kind? Is this true? Could this hurt someone?" By choosing our words carefully, we help create an online environment where everyone feels safe and respected.

Students across all year levels were called to be upstanders. Being an upstander is a key part of good decision making. When we witness negative behaviour – whether online or in person – we have a choice. We can ignore it, or we can speak up. Being an upstander means calling out unkind or harmful behaviour, offering support to those targeted, and showing others that negative behaviours online will not be tolerated. This takes courage, but it also helps build a culture of respect and inclusion.

Our Year 8 students engaged in comprehensive wellbeing programs covering affirmative consent, respectful relationships, gender stereotypes, the impact of pornography, and social media's effect on self-esteem. Using evidence-based practices, these lessons empower them to build healthy, safe, and respectful relationships.

Year 9 students are recognising the significance of informed decision-making, participating in consent education through the Badano program. Consent education is the process of teaching individuals about mutual agreement, communication, and respect in relationships. It plays a crucial role in preventing sexual violence by helping people understand boundaries.

The highlight of Term 3 is, of course, St Monica's Week, and particularly for our Year 7 students, St Monica's Day. August is the month of celebration for all Monicans.

DAVISSON STREET CAMPUS



▶ **Nicole Meade** | *Campus Director DSC*

Stepping into Term 3 is like reaching a scenic lookout halfway through a long hike. From this vantage point, we can pause to admire how far we have come, take stock of the terrain we have covered, and prepare ourselves for the path ahead. It is a moment to reflect, recalibrate, and recommit to the journey – one that will continue to be shaped by our individual and collective effort, support, and courage.

At St Monica's College, Term 3 holds particular significance. It brings with it the first glimpses of the future, as students begin making decisions that will shape their academic and personal journeys. From selecting subjects for the coming year to planning post-secondary pathways, this term is a time of exploration and aspiration. The recent Subject Expo was a wonderful example of our community coming together, with families engaging deeply in conversations about choices, goals, and possibilities. We thank all who attended and encourage every family to continue these discussions at home, supported by the many resources and staff available here at the College.

Parent Teacher Interviews in August provide another vital touchpoint. These meetings are more

than just academic check-ins. They are moments to celebrate progress, identify areas for growth, and strengthen the partnership between home and school. When parents and teachers work together, students are empowered to reach their full potential. We urge all families to take part in these interviews, as they are instrumental in shaping a supportive and responsive learning environment.

Term 3 also invites students to reflect critically on their own performance. This is not always easy – it takes courage to assess oneself honestly and to make changes. Whether it is asking for help more often, establishing a new study habit, or engaging more actively in classroom learning, each small shift can lead to significant growth. We encourage our students to be brave in this reflection and to take ownership of their learning journey.

As we navigate the busy weeks ahead, let us return to that lookout point. Let us take one last moment to breathe in the view, appreciate the journey so far, and set our sights on the next stretch of the path. With courage, collaboration, and a clear sense of direction, we can ensure that Term 3 is not just a continuation of the year, but a meaningful chapter in each student's story.

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Good decision making is a skill that shapes who we are and how we are seen by others

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A New Term, A New Opportunity

Campus Leader's Report

ST STEPHEN/GAUDETE CAMPUS



▶ **Damian Monaghan** | *Campus Leader (St Stephen/Gaudete)*

The second group of Year 8 students commenced at St Stephen/Gaudete Campus on Monday, 23 June. Since their arrival, much time has been spent introducing and familiarising the students with the new subject areas and daily routines at SGC. I congratulate all students and their families on approaching this unique learning experience with a positive mindset and seeing it as an opportunity to learn and grow.

In Semester 2, our students have two overarching goals – to settle in and to flourish.

In regards to our first goal, I am very proud to report that our students have settled in remarkably well, and many of the routines are already second nature! As students continue to settle into life in Reservoir, they will be encouraged to take the necessary steps and make use of the supports in place in order to thrive. It is important for our Year 8 students, and indeed all Monicans, to know that they cannot hope to learn something new, discover a new talent or passion, or grow as young people without stepping outside of their comfort zone. If you do not step outside of your comfort zone, you will never know what you are capable of.

It is natural to want to stay within your comfort zone, where things are familiar and comfortable. However, every time you challenge yourself, you will be better for it – even when you experience failure. Often, we learn more from our failures than we do from our successes. When you step outside of your comfort zone, you open yourself up to becoming more resilient, adaptable, determined and confident.

What was once unknown – much like your new campus – can very quickly become an environment where you can excel.

So how can you start challenging yourself? Firstly, try saying “yes” to new opportunities when they present themselves – from sitting next to a new student on the bus, accepting a friend’s invitation to join their friendship circle, to taking the more challenging option in a classroom activity. Whilst you might initially experience discomfort, sit with this feeling and work through it. You never know what you might learn about yourself when you say “yes” to an opportunity when it comes along.

Secondly, when it comes to your learning at St Stephen/Gaudete Campus, be curious rather than cautious. When students ask questions, unpack ideas, and seek to understand the world around them, they become active participants in their education. Being cautious might feel safe, but it often holds students back from discovering their full potential. When we are curious, we take risks – not reckless ones, but smart ones that help us flourish. We learn more from trying, failing, and trying again than from always playing it safe. Quite simply, curiosity drives learning.

I call upon the current cohort of students at St Stephen/Gaudete Campus to seize the opportunities available in Reservoir by stepping outside of their comfort zone. Doing so may be challenging at times, but it will help each student flourish and reach their full potential.

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If you do not step outside of your comfort zone, you will never know what you are capable of

St Stephen Gaudete Campus – Semester 2 First Day



Deputy Principal's Report



At St Monica's College, we role model life-long learning through a commitment to continual professional development. Our leadership team invests significantly in supporting our staff with their professional growth through both onsite and external opportunities. As always, we have a substantial number of colleagues currently involved in a number of various Professional Learning programs and courses and I thought it apt to take some time to provide our community with a small snapshot of some of the diverse learnings taking place within our college.

We wish all of our colleagues well as they continue in these programs and courses and bring back to the College an enriched sense of purpose and developed skillset.

► **Kirsten Hodgson** | Deputy Principal (Professional Practice)

The Teach Well Masterclass Series

We currently have three of our school leaders involved in the Teach Well Masterclass Series - a year-long program that focuses on supporting educators to embed evidence-based practices into their teaching pedagogy. Attending this valuable course is our Director of Learning, Senior Teacher (Pedagogy) and our Pedagogical Coach. The course involves regular external training days and requires significant reflection on teaching practice with the use of filming and analysis of lesson delivery.

"The Teach Well Masterclass Series has been an enriching professional learning program that has fundamentally shifted how I approach teaching. The program shares high-impact, evidence-based strategies, shifting my perspective from "Have I taught this?" to "Have my students learned it?" It has challenged the way I view teaching by emphasising the importance of long-term memory and highly structured lessons. It has given me confidence in existing strategies while creating a safe, supportive space to try new ones. I have felt empowered to be vulnerable, open my classroom to observation, and reflect meaningfully. By doing this, I have seen improvements in student outcomes and engagement. Furthermore, Teach Well has equipped me with the language and resources to clearly explain the 'why' and 'how' of evidence-based practices and share them effectively with colleagues and students."

– **Amie Panayiotis**, Pedagogical Coach

Teaching Excellence Program

The Teaching Excellence Program (TEP) is a 10-month professional learning program for skilled teachers, supporting them to connect with passionate, like-minded colleagues and deliver outstanding outcomes for students. Since the program's inception, St Monica's College has had members of staff accepted into the program each year, and we have been fortunate to have colleagues across a number of faculties engage in this unique learning opportunity.

"Being part of the Teaching Excellence Program has allowed me the opportunity to critically evaluate my teaching practice and learn and implement strategies that have enhanced student learning. I have connected and collaborated with other passionate teachers and mentors, which has deepened my understanding and appreciation of evidence-informed teaching practice."

– **Melinda Iljeovski**, 2025 TEP participant

Sponsored Study

Each year, St Monica's College, in partnership with the Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools, sponsors a number of colleagues to engage with further studies through the completion of post-graduate courses. These studies span across a number of discipline areas, including Leadership, Wellbeing, Religious Studies and Learning Diversity.

"I am currently in my first year of the Master of Educational Leadership at ACU. The course has provided a rich blend of theory, practical application, and ethical reflection, with a strong emphasis on leadership within Catholic school settings. It is helping me grow as a leader by deepening my understanding of curriculum leadership — particularly through the lens of MACS' Vision for Instruction. The integration of theology, ethics, and philosophy has further strengthened my capacity to lead with purpose and integrity in Catholic education. I have also benefited greatly from networking with other Catholic school leaders, which has enriched my learning and broadened my professional perspective."

– **Clare Turner**, Faculty Leader of Humanities

St Stephen Gaudete Campus – Semester 2 Assembly



St Stephen Gaudete Campus – Sausage Sizzle



Deputy Principal's Report



▶ **Bernadette Harris** | Deputy Principal (Identity, Mission & Community)

Walking Humbly, Acting Justly: A Day of Faith and Community

On our recent Staff Spirituality Day, the theme **'To act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God'** was reflected upon and lived out. From the opening address to the final acts of service, the day was a powerful reminder of the strength found in unity, shared reflection and purpose.

The day began with an engaging and heartfelt address by Father Mark Reynolds EV, whose words invited us to consider how we live out our faith in both our personal and professional lives. His message resonated deeply, setting a tone of openness and contemplation that carried through the day. Father Mark later shared his appreciation for the warm hospitality and genuine engagement he received from our staff – an affirmation of the welcoming spirit that defines our community.

A highlight of the day was the moving performance by the High Street Bells Choir. Their music transcended words, offering a beautiful expression of inclusion, joy, and shared humanity. The respect and encouragement shown by our

staff created a safe and uplifting space for the choir to shine. It was a moment that reminded us all of the power of music to connect hearts and inspire change.

In the afternoon, stepping forward with enthusiasm and compassion, staff embraced a variety of community outreach activities. Whether through hands-on service or quiet acts of kindness, each contribution reflected our collective commitment to service and justice. These moments of action brought our mission to life in tangible, meaningful ways.

What made the day truly special was the spirit in which it was embraced. Staff not only participated, they led, supported, and uplifted one another. The sense of community was palpable, and the willingness to engage deeply with the day's purpose was inspiring.

The day was a shared experience of faith, reflection and renewal, evidence that we continue to serve St Monica's College, Epping, grounded in love, justice, and humility.

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To act justly,
love tenderly
and walk
humbly with
our God



The Walk for Autism 2025

Thank you to our staff that stepped up and participated in the 2025 Walk for Autism as part of the St Monica's College team. This year we raised **\$2058** for Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT). It is a fantastic opportunity to raise much needed awareness, support and donations for Australian people on the autism spectrum and their families.

In total, the St Monica's College team has raised an incredible **\$25,942** for ASPECT since we began participating in the Walk for Autism in 2019. We have been blown away by the support and participation from our Monican community. Thank you to all the amazing staff that have participated in the Walk for Autism over the years, for your generous donations and support. It is greatly appreciated.



► Maryanne Theodosios | Wellbeing Coordinator

Building a Culture of Connection: Embedding Restorative Practices for Student Wellbeing at St Monica's College

At the heart of what we do at St Monica's College, is a strong sense of community where students feel safe, valued, and connected. At our College, we recognise that meaningful relationships are the foundation for student growth and success. This is why we are committed to continuing to embed Restorative Practices (RP) into our school culture.

Restorative Practices is more than just a behaviour management approach. It is a mindset and a framework that prioritises

connection, accountability, empathy, and healing. Rooted in the belief that relationships matter, RP encourages us to move away from punitive responses and instead focus on repairing harm, restoring trust, and building a supportive learning environment for all.

To deepen our commitment to this approach, staff recently engaged in a professional development session with Kristy Elliott, an expert in Restorative Practices. Her session helped deepen our understanding of how to respond to student behaviour in ways that are compassionate, consistent, and grounded in connection. Staff explored practical strategies and

language that align with a restorative and trauma-informed approach, reinforcing our collective responsibility in shaping a safe and inclusive school environment.

At St Monica's College, we believe that every interaction is an opportunity to build connection and trust. Restorative Practices guides us to respond with empathy, hold each other accountable with care, and keep relationships at the centre of our work. When we take the time to listen, to repair, and to reconnect, we are not just managing behaviour, we are helping our students grow into thoughtful and compassionate people.



Counsellors

Teen Vaping: What Parents Need to Know

► Oliver Jones, Laura Guirguis, Nikita Rutland, Gloria Rapisarda and Anita Van Eekelen | The College Counsellors

Vaping, or the use of e-cigarettes, has become common among Australian teenagers. According to the Cancer Council's 2024 Generation Vape research 14.6% of young people aged 14–17 reported vaping at least once. Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) also shows that teenage girls are now vaping at slightly higher rates than boys, marking a shift in patterns previously seen in smoking.

Many teens perceive vaping as a safer alternative to smoking, especially because of the variety of flavours and the misconception that it is "just water vapour." However, most vapes contain nicotine with illegally sold vapes generally containing higher levels of nicotine leading to further implications. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance that can affect brain development, learning, memory, and mental health in adolescents. In the short term, vaping can lead to throat and mouth irritation, dizziness, headaches, coughing, and shortness of breath. There have also been reports of more serious

outcomes, such as lung injuries and burns from malfunctioning devices.

So why are so many young people vaping? For many teens, vaping starts out of curiosity or peer influence. Others may use vapes to cope with anxiety or stress. Unfortunately, the marketing of vapes (especially colourful, flavoured ones) combined with their easy availability, has made them appealing to this age group. In some cases, teens may not even be aware that the products they are using contain nicotine.

As a parent or carer, it is important to talk openly and calmly with your teenager about vaping. These conversations work best when they are non-judgmental and based on facts. Choose a relaxed moment to start the discussion and ask open-ended questions such as, "Have you heard much about vaping at school?" or "What do you think about it?" Listen without lecturing, and share your concerns about the health risks in a way that respects their growing independence. If your teen is already vaping,

focus on understanding why and supporting them in reducing or quitting rather than shaming them.

Staying informed yourself can make these conversations easier. The Raising Children Network (raisingchildren.net.au) provides trusted guidance on health and wellbeing topics, including vaping. To further assist families, VicHealth's full Parent Conversation Guide is freely available via their website (www.vichealth.vic.gov.au). The guide includes practical conversation prompts, tips for navigating challenging moments, and links to evidence-based support services such as Quitline (13 7848), The Better Health Channel, and the Royal Children's Hospital.

Vaping is a rapidly evolving issue, but early education and honest communication at home can go a long way in helping young people make safe, informed choices. If you are concerned about your child's vaping or would like further support, do not hesitate to contact the school wellbeing team or your family GP.

Principal's Address Term 3, 2025

► **Brian Hanley OAM** | *Principal*

Miss Harris, Staff, and Students of St Monica's College, Epping,

I embarked on a search to share stories with you for this Assembly speech. My intention was to tell you about a whole range of people from ancient times to modern times who discovered God in ordinary and extraordinary ways. I was sure that many would appeal to your interest.

However, the task became much too hard as there have been literally millions of people who have discovered or found and encountered God, from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to the women who visited the empty tomb and discovered the Resurrection of Jesus, until this very day when people are meeting God through prayer and through their neighbour.

They include women and men, famous and unknown, all nationalities and from every country and culture, and the list is growing rapidly. Actually, I would not be surprised if you discovered God at some time, maybe when you least expected that discovery. Or perhaps you are yet to be blest by that unique moment.

Now, discovery moments in general are very commonplace. We discover scientific facts we did not know; we discover that suddenly we can sing, and people are made happy by that; we discover the secret to growing red tomatoes, green peas and yellow bananas from our grandparents' backyard garden. Moments wear many disguises.

Others discover love, freedom and joy in their life. Some discover what makes a student happy and satisfied through hard work. You and I probably know of people who discover how easy it is to love and help others with an open heart. You might know a person who suddenly changed when he/she discovered the power of forgiveness, both given and received.

Think of the great discoveries in life. Benjamin Franklin discovered how to generate electricity and ever since we all have benefited. Alexander Fleming discovered the healing power of penicillin thus healing and wellness replaced illness and death for millions and billions. I read a story last week of a boy who discovered that suddenly he liked reading and so wrote and published his first novel at age fourteen. His parents live in Epping. Then there was a girl from Thomastown who realised that she was skilled in sewing and threading so that last year she won first prize in the Whittlesea Show in textiles

and design. Discovery occurs literally just around the corner.

In this third term of discovery moments for Monicans, it is important as St Monica's Week fast approaches in August, that we delve into the great discovery made by Saint Augustine, son of our patron, Saint Monica. He was a haughty and extremely intelligent young man who left the comfort (and demands) of his home in North Africa and sailed to the exciting city of Milan in Italy. There Augustine rejected all the prayers of Monica to be a good Christian and embraced philosophies, practices and pagan beliefs with gusto and delight. We know that Monica prayed and persevered and followed her son to Milan, meeting the great Bishop Ambrose there, to convert Augustine to become a follower of Jesus.

After a while, a very long and arduous while, gradually Augustine's mind was opened, his head cleared, his heart pounded and pumped with passion through reading the Gospels and acquiescing to Monica's pleading. He discovered God, not in a moment, but slowly and surely.

Then it was a vision he and Monica had of Heaven when in Ostia, much scholarly learning about the Bible, deeply rich thinking about the meaning of the Gospel message of Jesus. A very strong-willed man discovered Jesus, and the world has been graced by his teachings about God to this very day. Some men and women have become priests and nuns in the religious group called the Order of Saint Augustine, and they live such a wonderful life as believers in this magnificent saint, Augustine. Question: Guess who has become the most famous Augustinian priest in the history of this religious order. Answer: None other than our new Pope, Leo XIV, for he has been an Augustinian priest for most of his adult life.

And we are Monicans. So, we are called to make a significant and positive difference to the world, following the example of mother and son, Monica and Augustine. Discover what truths and values are at the root of Monican membership here in Epping – in just a few words – prayer, perseverance, compassion, forgiveness, generosity, humility, peace, and love of neighbours (especially those hardest to love).

All of these Monican values are discovered and revealed in moments of encounter with others; moments of reflection in quietness and silence; moments of relationship with others and God; and

moments unexpected, unanticipated and unannounced.

Together as a College community we prepare for the second half of our year, when together we will celebrate the St Monica's Day Mass on Friday, 29 August, when a new cohort of Year 8 students travelled a few weeks ago to St Stephen/Gaudete Campus Reservoir, when senior students rev up, shape up, and stand up to the demands that examinations or starting a job will most certainly demand, when winter turns to spring and the sun shines brightly on all Monicans.

I have told you that people discover God in all different circumstances and ways. And so too will you. Saint Paul was struck by a bolt of lightning while riding his horse; a sinful Samaritan woman drawing water from a well, recognised in Jesus someone whose loving forgiveness of her must have been a sign to her of being in the presence of God; the thief on the cross at the crucifixion turned to Jesus and asked that he be remembered when Jesus entered Heaven; when Hollywood stars, powerful politicians, big noters, beggars and bums, soon discover a moment of grace and the scales of blindness fall from their eyes.

Third term can and will be a long hard slog for some students and staff. We need to be sensitive and alive to that fact whatever our role is at SMC. It will demand of us effort and resilience, and life is made amazingly more pleasant and bearable if there is mutual respect and understanding amongst us. We ought to work together as Monicans for a good purpose and achieve a positive result. However, it demands that all of us do our best, share with each other, swallow our pride or mischief, and always see and accept a true Monican in the face of every child and adult in our school.

I remind you earnestly that school attendance is for working and studying, and specifically at St Monica's College Epping, it is lived through behaving and respecting others. We reach out and we welcome in, we want to leave no person behind.

Monican moments are for discovery, marvellous memories, and to shape us into better persons every day of our life. There exists no greater understanding and no better way to live your life with joy and happiness.

Term 3 College Assembly



The Marian

MOMENTS OF DISCOVERY

Principal's Dinner

The Moroccan



MOMENTS OF DISCOVERY



Paul White | Senior Teacher (Careers Pathways)

Career Pathways

As I write this, we are heavily involved in the subject selection process, particularly at the Years 9 and 10 level. To assist this process, some Badano lessons are used to present and discuss subject options and to consider the reasons why we select particular subjects. The Subject Selection Handbooks have been used in these classes and have proven to be a valuable resource for staff and students.

If a student has not currently got access to their Handbook outside of class time, they can access it via SIMON – in the search bar, type in Knowledge Banks, then go to the Subject Selection folder to locate the relevant Handbook. Parents can also access the electronic version of the Handbook – go to PAM and scroll down until you see Knowledge Banks and then click on the Subject selection link to find the relevant Handbook.

Often a complicating factor for students when selecting subjects, is that they do not know what they want to do when they leave

school. Our advice, for all students, is to choose subjects that they like and/or are good at.

'Pathways' is a word often used in careers conversations. Career pathways are like maps to a destination—they offer routes, side tracks, detours, and thrilling climbs toward personal and professional goals. The pathway might not always be linear, and that is okay; they are dynamic and shaped by passions, experiences, and growth.

Universities are now much more accommodating of students who require pathway options to achieve their study 'destinations'. Students might not get an ATAR, or the ATAR they require, for their chosen Bachelor's Degree. They therefore may need a pathway course (or courses) to get them to their destination. As an example, the following graphic is on the course page for each of RMIT's courses. This graphic is on the Bachelor of Surveying page. Click on 'View pathway options' for an example of pathways offered for surveying at RMIT.



Understanding pathways

Undertaking a certificate, diploma, advanced diploma or associate degree can help you meet the entry requirements for your preferred course. These qualifications often provide credit, reducing the duration of your bachelor degree.

[Explore the pathway finder >](#)

[View pathway details](#)

<https://pathways.rmit.edu.au/course/BH116>

All roads lead to...

Special Announcement

NEW PARTNERSHIP

St Monica's College Announces Exciting New International Partnership with Institut Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, Barcelona

At St Monica's College, Epping, we are proud to be a school of Educational Enterprise, continually seeking new opportunities to enhance the educational journey of all Monicans, whilst achieving meaningful outcomes. This commitment drives us to explore and connect beyond our immediate surroundings, instilling in our students the belief that "the world is bigger than Epping."

In that spirit, we are delighted to announce a new international partnership with *Institut Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia in Barcelona, Spain*.

This exciting new partnership complements our existing international relationships with Takada Junior High School in Japan and Saint Benoît Écoles Collège in France, expanding our global footprint and further enriching our students' learning experiences.

Our mission at St Monica's College is clear, and includes,

“We endeavour to empower Monicans to flourish and contribute positively to Australia and the world, now and in the future.”

True global citizenship begins with understanding. This partnership will provide Monicans with a deeper insight into European culture and contemporary Spanish life through ongoing virtual exchanges. In 2026, the relationship will complement our inaugural Spanish Immersion Trip, offering students the invaluable opportunity to meet their peers in person and understand the student experience and life in Barcelona firsthand.

We are excited by the authentic opportunities this partnership brings, and we look forward to the rich experiences and lasting memories our students will gain as they continue to grow as globally aware, compassionate, and confident young people.



**institut francesc
ferrer i guàrdia**



International Homestay Programs



France

2026/2027

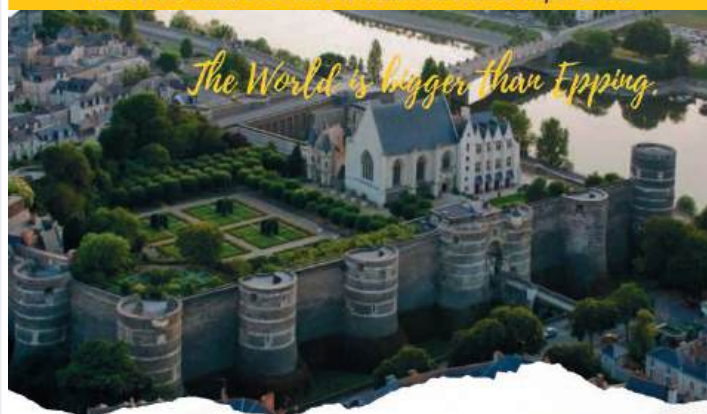
Announcing the Return of the SMC French Homestay Program

Following the tremendous success of our inaugural French Homestay Program in 2024, St Monica's College is delighted to announce its return in 2026. In partnership with St Benoît College in France, this program offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students to immerse themselves in French life, language, and culture.

This unique program is open to students who are currently studying French or who have a genuine interest in European culture. It reflects the College's ongoing commitment to providing exceptional, real-world learning experiences and remains an opportunity that is exclusive to our Monican community.



Places are limited for this incredible education experience.



The World is bigger than Epping.

WHY TAKE PART IN A HOMESTAY PROGRAM

- Authentic, life-changing cultural immersion
- Only available through our College's international partnerships
- A cost-effective way to explore France
- Live and breathe the French language
- Unmatched access to French family life and local insights
- Opportunity for your family to host and build lifelong friendships
- Gain confidence, independence, and global perspective



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Students will travel to Angers, located in the picturesque Loire Valley, home to historic châteaux, vibrant towns, and rich cultural heritage. Participants will attend school at St Benoît College, be hosted by local French families, and fully immerse themselves in everyday life.

In addition to their time in Angers, students will also experience the magic of Paris, visiting some of the world's most iconic sites, from the Eiffel Tower to the Louvre.

However, it must be noted that involvement in this program also involves a hosting component in 2027, reciprocating the hospitality your child received.

PLEASE NOTE

The number of participants is strictly limited. While we hope to offer the next French Homestay Program in 2029, this may be the only chance for your child to participate during their time at the College.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW!

To avoid disappointment, please express your interest by emailing Mrs Enza Sinopoli. An information session will be held in early Term 4, with final selection of participants taking place later this year.

Places are limited for this incredible education experience.



Japan

2026

A Journey That Began in 1994. SMC JAPANESE HOMESTAY PROGRAM

In 2026, St Monica's College proudly celebrates 32 years of partnership with Takada Junior High School, Japan. This program is one of the longest-standing homestay partnerships in Australia, and over the decades, many Monicans have benefited from the life-changing experiences it offers. Our enduring connection is built on trust, shared values, and mutual care, qualities that continue to make this cultural exchange so special.

Since its inception, the program has welcomed students from Japan each March, with our students travelling to Japan in return during September.

More than just a trip, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students to immerse themselves authentically in Japanese language, culture, and daily life.



Places are limited for this
incredible education
experience.



WHY TAKE PART IN A HOMESTAY PROGRAM

- Genuine, life-changing cultural immersion
- Exclusive to our College's international partnerships
- A cost-effective way to explore Japan
- Experience Japanese family life and build lifelong friendships
- Host a Japanese student in return and share your world
- Develop confidence, independence, and global awareness

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Students will travel to Tsu City, in Mie Prefecture, central Japan. This region offers a captivating blend of ancient tradition and natural beauty, with important temples nearby and easy access to vibrant modern cities.

The program concludes with an unforgettable visit to Tokyo, where students will witness the dynamic contrast of timeless tradition and futuristic innovation—highlighted by a glimpse of the iconic Mt Fuji.

PLEASE NOTE

The number of participants is strictly limited. While we hope to offer the next French Homestay Program in 2029, this may be the only chance for your child to participate during their time at the College.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW!

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Places are limited for this incredible education experience.



Music Camp at ADANAC CYC

Harmony in the Hills

This term, our music students travelled to ADANAC CYC in Yarra Junction for an exciting three-day music camp filled with rehearsals, fun, and unforgettable memories. Set in the beautiful Yarra Valley, the camp brought together students from all year levels involved in vocal ensembles, concert bands, jazz ensembles, and rock bands for an intensive and inspiring musical experience.

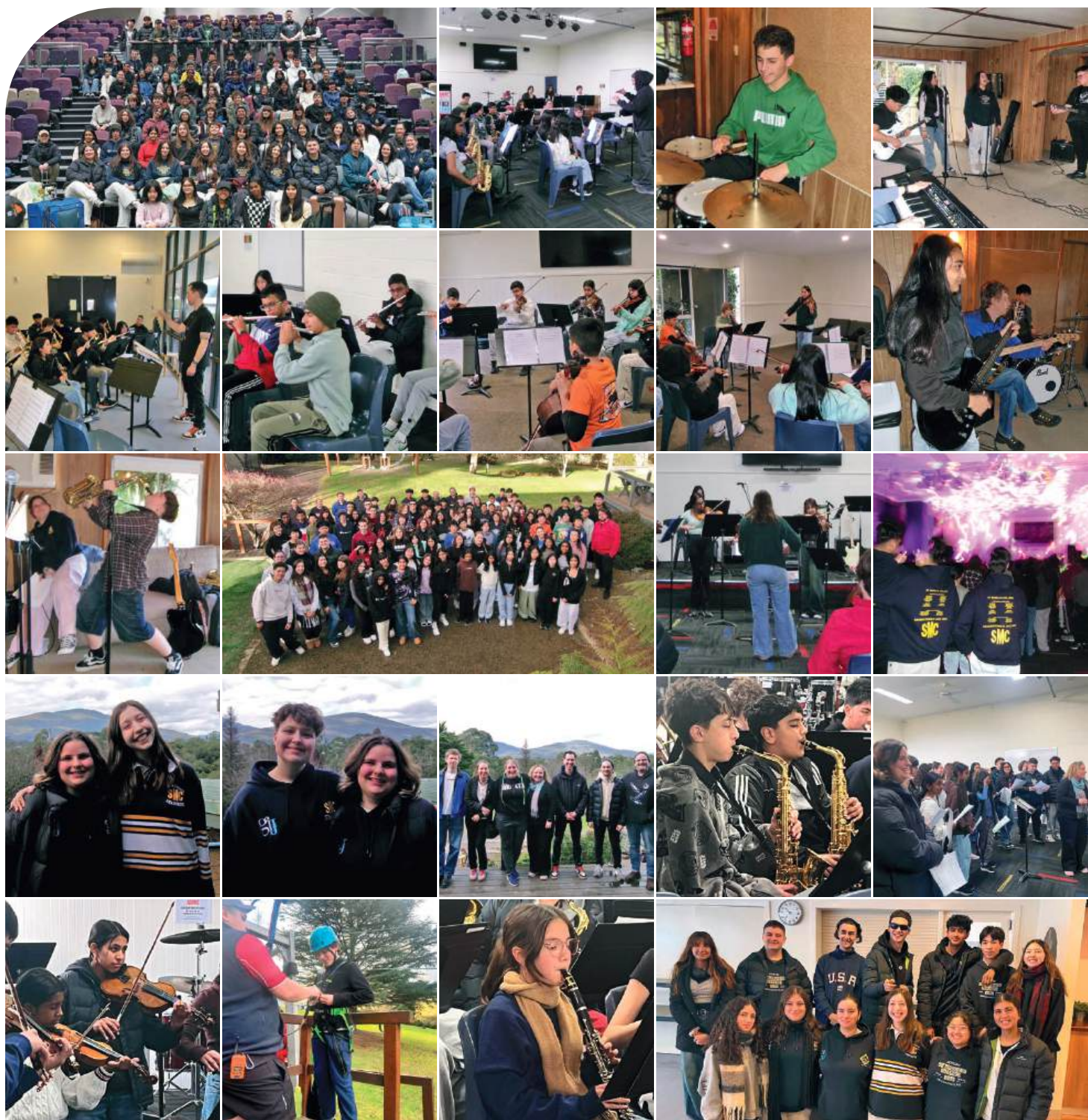
Each day was packed with rehearsals where we worked hard to prepare for upcoming concerts and events. Under the guidance of our dedicated music staff, we focused on improving our technique,

ensemble playing, and confidence. Whether learning a challenging new piece, refining harmonies, or experimenting with improvisation, everyone gave their best.

Outside of rehearsals, we made the most of the camp's fantastic activities. Monday night saw a hotly contested trivia competition hosted by our music captains, that tested everyone's knowledge and sparked plenty of laughter and team spirit. On Tuesday afternoon, students participated in archery, the flying fox, or a scenic bush walk around the property – a perfect way to take a break and enjoy the outdoors.

The camp included two achievement concerts, in which each ensemble showcased the progress they had made over the three days. It was amazing to hear how far we had come in such a short time and to celebrate each other's efforts.

Music camp at ADANAC was more than just rehearsals – it was a chance to grow as musicians, make new friends, and create lasting memories. We cannot wait to take what we learned and bring it back to the stage at school.



Music Soiree



The Marian

MOMENTS OF DISCOVERY

Worship and Faith

Interfaith Dialogue at St Monica's College: A Journey of Understanding and Connection

► **Rev. Ferdinand Correy**

St Monica's College recently hosted students and staff from Al Siraat College for the first Interfaith Dialogue session of 2025. This significant initiative brought together fourteen students and a staff member, Ms Noori Ahmed from Al Siraat, along with six students from St Monica's College. They were guided by Mr Denis Zucchet, Sr May Flor Gedalanga OP, and me to foster mutual understanding and respectful engagement across faith traditions.

The day began with a workshop focused on the art of dialogue. During this session, students explored how to speak and listen with openness, emphasizing the importance

of empathy, curiosity, and respectful exchange. This set a positive tone for a day rooted in trust and shared discovery.

The second session took place in Our Lady's Chapel, where students were introduced to the Christian faith in a reflective and welcoming environment. They gained insight into Catholic beliefs, practices, and symbols, which deepened their understanding of the values that shape our Monican community.

After this, all participants joined together for a moment of shared prayer – a time for silence, gratitude, and hope. A communal lunch provided an opportunity to continue

conversations and form new friendships over a shared meal.

The day concluded with a guided tour of the Dalton Road Campus, giving Al Siraat students a glimpse into the school's learning spaces, community life, and Catholic identity.

This Interfaith encounter highlighted the power of dialogue to build bridges between communities. I extend my gratitude to the staff and students who were involved and look forward to continuing this important journey of learning, respect, and collaboration in the months ahead.



Languages & Cultures Week

► **Chris Zuccala** | *Faculty Leader of Languages*

During the final week of July, St Monica's College celebrated Languages & Cultures Week. This very important week, which features the many languages and cultures that are part of our school community, was full of exciting activities which included food, music, singing, dancing and traditional dress from various parts of the globe.

The week began with an exciting Dodgeball competition, with teams representing different countries around the world. There was also a Greek Dancing Competition which was fiercely contested with several students taking part. The competition was eventually won by sisters Andriana Menikou in Year 9 and Juliana Menikou in Year 7.

Several students also participated enthusiastically in a Languages Music Showcase & Traditional Dress Parade, which saw many cultures represented with the singing of European songs, traditional Indian dancing and cultural dress from various countries. Congratulations to the following students who participated in this event:

Year 9:
Eliana Muscatello and Rajdeep Giran

Year 8:
Michael Abou-Halka, Naman Ahuja, Saicha Bhatia, Armaan Chandi, Dion Chakrabarty, Isaac Liu and Oliver Tran

Year 7:
Anne Chu and Nekitaa Mohanaraj

A big thank you also to all the staff who assisted with Languages & Cultures Week. In particular, I would like to thank Mr Talarico and Mr Novembre for their participation in the Languages Music Showcase and Mr Asquino for his organisation of various events during this important week.



Hearts on Fire



The Marian

MOMENTS OF DISCOVERY

SACCSS Senior AFL Girls Division 1 Grand Final

SMC Senior Girls 1 0 6 defeated by 3 6 24 CRC Sydenham

Goal Kicker: Jessica Aquilina

Voted Best on Ground and Peer Award:
Grace Farah



Best on Ground and Peer Award: Grace Farah



Year 7 Premier League Competition

Results – Semi-final

Boys Basketball	50	—	40	Mackillop
Girls Basketball	21	—	25	Marymede
Boys Volleyball	1	—	2	Caroline Chisholm
Girls Volleyball	1	—	2	St Francis
Boys Football	3	—	0	CRC North Keilor
Girls Football	9	—	1	CRC Caroline Springs
Netball	25	—	24	Mackillop
AFL	16,13,109	—	3,1,19	Mackillop

Results – Grand Final

Boys Basketball	74	—	62	Salesian
Boys Football	3	—	1	CRC Caroline Springs
Girls Football	6	—	0	Marymede
Netball	25	—	37	Salesian
AFL	10,7,67	—	4,7,31	Salesian



Year 7 AFL Champions



Year 7 Boys Basketball Champions



Year 7 Boys Football Champions



Year 7 Girls Football Champions

Year 9 Premier League Competition

Results – Round 1

Boys Basketball	75	–	47	Marymede
Girls Basketball	29	–	54	Marymede
Boys Volleyball	3	–	0	Marymede
Girls Volleyball	0	–	3	Marymede
Boys Football	5	–	0	Marymede
Girls Football	0	–	0	Marymede
Netball	14	–	22	Marymede
AFL	4,6,30	–	3,2,20	Marymede

Year 9
AFL



Year 9
Netball



Year 9
Boys
Football



Year 9
Girls
Football



Year 9
Boys
Basketball



Year 9
Girls
Basketball



Year 9
Boys
Volleyball



Year 9
Girls
Volleyball



SACCSS Chess

Congratulations to the twenty-four students who represented St Monica's College at the 2025 SACCSS Chess Championships at St Francis College, Melton.

Our Senior Division squad dominated the field all day to finish in first place on 25 points ahead of St Francis College on 17.5 points. This is the seventh consecutive Senior SACCSS Chess title for SMC, with a winning run stretching back to 2016. Congratulations to the Senior Squad of Ekin Dang and Gabrielle Malaga (co-captains), Angella Dcunha, Cruze De Giorgio, Peter Kakoliris, Eric Tun, Dean Wu and Max Mircevski. We had seven players among the top 9 individual placings, with Cruze taking out the individual title ahead of Peter, Eric and Ekin in equal second place.

Our Junior Division squad started slowly then powered away from the competition to retain their Junior Division title from 2024, finishing in first place on 23.5 points ahead of MacKillop College on 20 points. Well done to the Junior Squad comprising Adam Halabe, Arman Khoshaba, Joseph Cahayon, Christian Portnick, Kristoffer Malaga, Erik Pizevski, Patrick Taylor and Sarkis Leblebjian. St Monica's had five of the top 7 placegetters, with Adam finishing in second place and Arman and Joseph tying for third place.

In the Intermediate Division, the scores were a lot closer all day, with St Monica's narrowly missing a clean sweep, finishing runner-up on 20.5 points behind CRC St Albans on 21 points. Well done to the Intermediate Squad of Huy Nguyen, Sahib Bhulla, Andrija Saletic, Dev Chopra, Henry Tran, Anshdeep Aulakh, Noah Bucak and Anav Chawla.

Congratulations to the entire squad and to Coach Jake Vasilevski for these tremendous results.



Year 8 Retreat Day



Year 11 Retreat Day



Congratulations to...

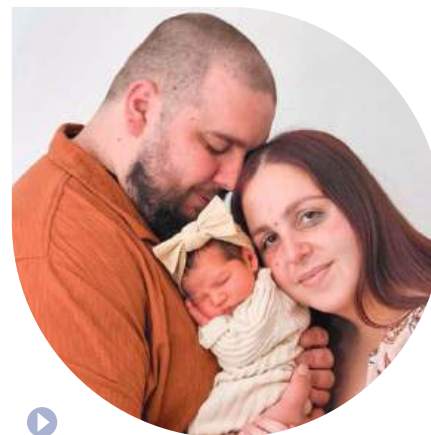
BIRTHS



Julianne Portelli (nee Tenace) (Class of 2011) and her husband Ben welcomed an adorable baby boy, Darcy James Portelli on 5 June, 2025.



Melissa Pisano (nee Lobendan) (Class of 2011) and Kristian Pisano welcomed a beautiful son, Jackson Vincent Pisano born on 4 July, 2025.



Mary Pierakos (nee Ropkas) (Class of 2017) and her husband Peter welcomed their first child, a beautiful daughter. Raphaella Georgia Pierakos was born on 7 July, 2025.

Reunions

Save the Date
Alumni Reunions

50 Year Reunion
Classes of 1974 and 1975

60 Year Reunion
all alumnae who attended St Monica's in 1964 and 1965

Friday, 28 November

St Monica's College, Epping

Class of 1984
40 Year Reunion

Friday, 24 October 2025
7:30pm

The Republic Tavern
at the Mantra Hotel

250 Cooper Street, Epping VIC 3076

Finger food provided. Drinks at bar prices
RSVP via QR code Friday, 17 October
All enquiries to alumni@stmonicas-epping.com

<https://alumni.stmonicas-epping.com/40yearreunion>



St Monica's College, Epping

Class of 1985
40 Year Reunion

Friday, 24 October 2025
7:30pm

The Republic Tavern
at the Mantra Hotel

250 Cooper Street, Epping VIC 3076

Finger food provided. Drinks at bar prices
RSVP via QR code Friday, 17 October
All enquiries to alumni@stmonicas-epping.com

<https://alumni.stmonicas-epping.com/40yearreunion>



ST MONICA'S WEEK 2025

MONDAY 25 AUGUST – FRIDAY 29 AUGUST

MONDAY

25

Annual Oration



Tony Shaw

Australian Rules Footballer

TUESDAY

26

Youth Parliament



Tony Jones

Sports Journalist

WEDNESDAY

27

Sports Breakfast

Featuring Tony Shaw, Tony Jones, Ahmed Kelly, and Rachael Lynch OAM



Ahmed Kelly

Australian Paralympic Swimmer

FRIDAY

29

St Monica's Day Mass and Activities



Rachael Lynch OAM

Australian Hockey Player and Olympian



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

SMC

PRAY AND PERSEVERE

ST MONICA'S COLLEGE, EPPING

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