

LU

Luceat





Front cover:
(L-r) Charlotte
and Gemma
(both Year 12) as
Princess Fiona
and Shrek.

Back cover:
The set of the
*Little Shop
of Horrors*
production.

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

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We will take an active role in supporting our community to come to grips with GenAI

Welcome to the winter issue of *Lux Luceat*.

In this issue we examine generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and some of the issues around integrating it into our teaching and learning programs.

As you are no doubt aware, GenAI has made what feels like rapid and profoundly significant inroads into our use of technology and - by extension - our lives. To most of us this new technology appears to have been sudden and, at times, overwhelming. GenAI has the capacity to create new content, including text, images, music and video. There appears to be no limit to what can now be achieved, when only a few short years ago this seemed like a distant possibility in the imagination of some, and existing in the realms of impossibility for others. Like all changes of this significance, there is a degree of uncertainty for us all. What will be the actual consequences?

In late 2023 the Australian Government Department of Education released the *Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence in Schools*. Beaconhills is also completing our AI Framework in consultation with industry experts and our staff to

ensure we are prepared for this uncertain future and capable of meeting the challenges, as well as grasping the opportunities that this new technology will provide. Our Framework will identify key areas where the College will not use AI (referred to as 'no AI'). For example, no student reports or letters to our families will be generated by AI.

For people of my age, this form of technology represents a stark difference to the technology I had as a student. I grew up in an era when you could forget to save and therefore lose hours of work, or accidentally step on your floppy

disk putting weeks of work at peril - only to be recovered through what appeared to be genuine luck. All of this represents change and at Beaconhills we will take an active role in supporting our community to come to grips with GenAI in the education of our young people. This will include a range of family workshops, already underway this year, which I highly recommend you attend. It will be the responsibility of all of us to understand this technology so we can guide our students.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Lux Luceat*. ✕

AWARDS FOR DANCER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

TOP CLASS DANCER

Year 12 Berwick Campus student **Mia Agland** earned a prestigious Top Class award this year, putting her at the top of Victoria in her VCE Dance subject.

Mia has more than 15 years of experience in dance and completed Units 3 & 4 VCE Dance in Year 11.

This year she is continuing with contemporary/lyrical dancing each week while she focuses on her other VCE subjects.

Mia performed her skills-based solo on Wednesday 6 March at the Melbourne Recital Centre, as part of the VCE Season of Excellence. x

TOPSHOTS PHOTOGRAPHER

Catherine Oliver

(Class of 2023, Berwick Campus) had her 2023 VCE Media photography selected for the 2024 TOPshots exhibition at the Museum of Australian Photography (MAPh).

TOPshots is an annual celebration of emerging photo media artists, showcasing exceptional photographic work produced by VCE, IB, and VET students who have completed Art, Media and Studio Arts subjects.

For her Media unit, Catherine created a marketing magazine for local award-winning restaurant O.MY which beautifully encapsulated the work of the Bertoncello brothers (Beaconhills alumni) and the story behind their business.

The selected photo from Catherine's magazine was titled 'Veggies Composition'. x

Berwick Campus
Mia Agland



Berwick Campus
Catherine Oliver



THE BRAVE NEW WORLD OF AI

Leon Furze
AI expert and PhD
candidate studying
GenAI



Chances are your son or daughter, if they are old enough, have already used GenAI, or generative AI.

They may have created a custom filter that turns them into a cartoon character on Snapchat, or asked ChatGPT for relationship advice.

No doubt, AI is here to stay. Beaconhills College, along with the wider education sector, is now busy devising ways to integrate GenAI into teaching and learning.

GenAI refers to AI specifically used for generating content, such as texts, images, or information.

Beaconhills College is collaborating with **Leon Furze**, along with staff and students, to develop detailed guidelines for the use of GenAI at the College. Mr Furze is an international consultant, author, speaker and PhD candidate studying GenAI in education.

Last term he ran a webinar for College parents on understanding GenAI and has also worked with teachers on topics such as using the technology for lesson or resource planning.

In the webinar, he said people should be aware that dataset on which AI models are built is biased and only captures the small portion of society that is reflected in internet content.

“We are building data sets that are predominantly written by 18-35 year old white American males,” he said, adding that while there was nothing inherently wrong with that, it was important that students understood that this was the world view encoded into the model.

Mr Furze said many older school students were very aware of the ethical concerns of GenAI.

“I’ve spoken to students in senior art classes, for example, who know that image generation is problematic because it’s built on a data set of scraped artists work, which was unlicensed (and) wasn’t given with the artist’s consent. So the students out there... they do know a lot of these ethical issues exist.”

Beaconhills Head of Education, **Dean Pearman**, agreed that students were able to differentiate

between situations where they needed to “engage in deep, active learning” and those where they could leverage AI tools to support or streamline certain aspects of their work.

“Our approach aligns with the principles that AI should be used to enhance and support teaching and student learning, rather than replacing or restricting critical learning skills, Mr Pearman said.

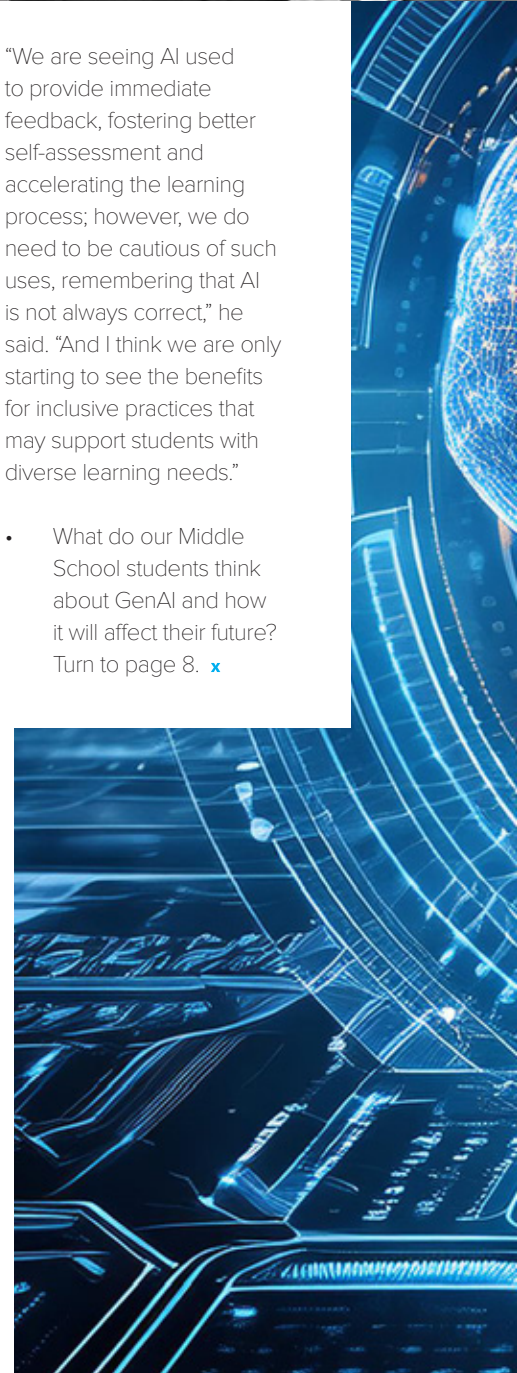
To that end, he believed it was important to reframe the AI conversation around the positive impacts it may have on learning, rather than how it could be used to cheat.

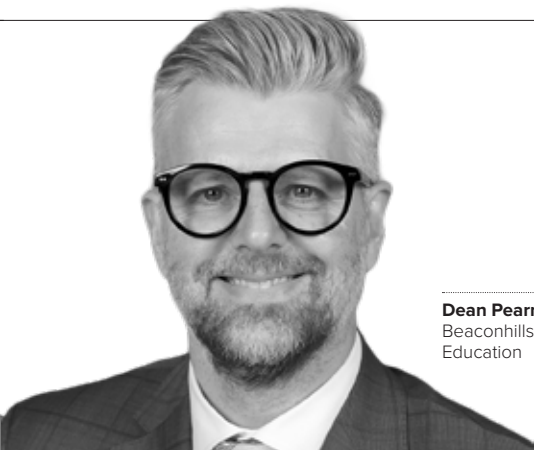
“I see students and adults being able to leverage AI to develop personalised learning experiences, improve research skills and engage in more creative problem-solving,” he said.

Mr Pearman believes AI technology will enable students to quickly complete some of the “administrative elements” of tasks – which was a positive – so they could then focus on the learning that matters.

“We are seeing AI used to provide immediate feedback, fostering better self-assessment and accelerating the learning process; however, we do need to be cautious of such uses, remembering that AI is not always correct,” he said. “And I think we are only starting to see the benefits for inclusive practices that may support students with diverse learning needs.”

- What do our Middle School students think about GenAI and how it will affect their future? Turn to page 8. **x**





Dean Pearman
Beaconhills Head of
Education

BEACONHILLS AI GUIDELINES – KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Academic integrity:** The College requires students to acknowledge any use of GenAI in their work, including for idea generation and inspiration.
2. **Evidence of learning:** An 'AI Assessment Scale' will be introduced to students to guide appropriate GenAI use in various learning tasks.
3. **Professional development:** The College is committed to ongoing staff training on GenAI technologies, ethics, and practical applications.
4. **Classroom integration:** GenAI may be used to support quality teaching and learning, not as a distraction from core skills and knowledge.
5. **Privacy and security:** Our guidelines emphasise protecting student privacy by prohibiting the input of personal information into GenAI applications.
6. **Fairness and equity:** The College acknowledges potential biases in GenAI and commits to educating its community about these risks.
7. **Transparency:** Any use of GenAI by teachers or in communications must be disclosed.



AI AND THE FUTURE

What are your thoughts on GenAI and how it will affect your future? We put this question to Middle School students at each campus.



I have no doubt that it will become a vital part of our lives. In mere decades I believe we will have the ability to replace simple jobs with AI and all jobs would be aided by it. Perhaps in half a century, devices like the neural link would have become far more advanced and carry far more knowledge with aid of AI, hence disregarding the need for schooling. One day there will be no requirements in the work force and the world will be run by intelligent robots. It also pans to a moral dilemma, of at what point can AI have consciousness, let alone freedom of thought? In a situation like that, being used as tools, will they retaliate?

Zander, Year 8,
Berwick Campus x



GenAI is neither good nor bad, it both excites me and terrifies me. GenAI, through children's eyes, is thought of and used as if it were Google, but better - you get an instant and direct response. However, despite seeming to provide logical answers, it has been trained on a world of information that is not always accurate, fair or inclusive, leading to bias. GenAI is not trustworthy, making research in schools so important by finding reliable answers yourself. We need to remember to use GenAI well, by making high-quality, and ethical decisions, while understanding that AI is not always accurate. Ultimately, I believe AI will benefit the future so long as we use it in a positive way.

Vera, Year 8,
Berwick Campus x



GenAI can be a good thing, but people are relying on it too much. It takes away from our natural abilities. GenAI doesn't really help us expand as humans. It's not letting us unleash our full capabilities. It takes over our brains and we need our brains to help us grow and become more complex human beings. When we dive deeper into the meaning, we discover that we do not need AI because we have amazing abilities, using our own strengths and talents.

Ekam, Year 8,
Berwick Campus x



I think AI could help take pressure off students, but I don't think it should be used for everything. I think it can take a lot of pressure off homework because some students just don't have enough time to do homework especially during some parts of the term where every class has handed it out. I do sport most nights a week and there are many others who do the same. There are also some activities in class where AI can help students learn. For example, it can help give feedback on work or help students out when they're struggling. One of the only times I don't think AI should be allowed is during a test or something that is being graded, because it can change a student's mark and the end result is not achieved by the student.

Rory, Year 8,
Pakenham Campus x



I find GenAI is bit scary because I have heard and seen images that have been falsified. I feel that GenAI is somewhat beneficial and does help, for example, in facial recognition for identifying criminals. However, I think GenAI shouldn't have a lot of power and it is creating more work for teachers and is confusing because you must question whether you are looking at a legitimate source.

Zoe, Year 8,
Pakenham Campus x

STAFF PROFILE

Head of Visual Arts,
Berwick Campus.

DEB SPILSBURY

Many of us remember a teacher from our school days who brought that magic mix of wisdom, subject knowledge and life experience to their role.

Deb Spilsbury is one of those teachers.

In her pre-Beaconhills teaching days, Deb may have been found travelling through India and Turkey, living in an Israeli kibbutz, and working in a South African School for children with intellectual disabilities. Most of these children acquired a brain injury through disease or an accident, and she believes that these experiences shaped her world view and gave her the impetus to become a teacher.

Her natural habitat is now in Berwick Campus' visual arts department where she is Head of the faculty, combining those duties with a Head of House role and teaching Media subjects – from Film and Photography to Year 9s new Digital Marketing elective.

Media is a rapidly evolving study area and Deb has seen enormous change since she joined Beaconhills College in 2010.

She said senior students studying Media subjects were now interested in learning about content marketing, skilling up on content creation techniques and how to influence audiences.

“Media is a such a massive subject with so many career pathways, you can go into media law, a marketing company or small production company,” she said.

“Media is one of those skills in your toolkit that will make you more marketable, no matter which career path you choose.”

The arrival of AI (artificial intelligence) has changed the media landscape again, but Deb is interested to observe that senior students aren't necessarily rushing to adopt it just yet.

“There is no doubt students are starting to use AI in research and writing, but I would say they are also desperately wanting to create their own production work,” she said.

“I pitched Adobe Firefly (generative AI used for design) for storyboarding recently and no one wanted to use it. They don't want to generate something that's not theirs.”

Deb said what brings her the most pride is to see students succeed. That might mean having their work accepted for VCE Season of Excellence awards, TOPshots or Casey Council's annual Emergent exhibition, or simply achieving more than they thought possible. x



MAGICAL MUSICALS



The College's performing arts departments have delivered two professional-standard musicals to the stage at Pakenham and Berwick campuses this year.

Students in Years 5-12 were part of the cast and crew of the magical fairy tale *Shrek The Musical* last month. In May, Pakenham Campus staged *Little Shop of Horrors* – a comedic horror story of a bloodthirsty plant which takes over the world.

With spectacular costumes and the well-known colourful characters of the ogre Shrek, Donkey, Princess Fiona and Lord Farquaad, *Shrek The Musical* was an extravaganza that showcased students' singing, dancing and acting talents.

Year 12 student **Gemma**, who played the Shrek role, said delving into the ogre's complex

layers had been a "journey of self-discovery and joy".

"I have learnt to improve my confidence in singing and better understand the balance of acting, singing and dancing," Gemma said.

At the Pakenham Campus, students performed *Little Shop of Horrors* to appreciative audiences at the Lois Maghanoy Centre for Performing Arts.

Director **Rhiannon Winterbine** said the cast of talented young performers, musicians, technicians and stage crew had worked hard to prepare the show in a relatively short amount of time.

"Their determination to bring this show to life was a credit to them," Ms Winterbine said. "It has been an absolute privilege working with each and every one of them to witness their growth in confidence and skill."

She said despite the bizarre narrative of the bloodthirsty plant – 'Audrey II' – the quirky characters of the

LITTLE SHOP OF

HORRORS



production revealed the universal themes of love, power and greed.

Year 12 student **Sarah**, who was Audrey II, described playing the iconic female role as the highlight of her time at Beaconhills.

“The hard work put in by my peers and teachers was highly praised by the audience. I cannot thank the cast and crew enough for their dedication and effort in making the production so successful,” Sarah said. x

SHREK



THE MUSICAL



NEW CAMP FOR BEACON EXPLORERS

Beaconhills College has launched a new camp in 2024 which focuses on helping people in need in our local community.

The Beacon of Hope five-day camp is part of a suite of offerings to Year 10 students in the College's huge global and outdoor Beacon Explorers Program.

Beacon Explorers spans all year levels, and a community service element is already integrated into the Middle and Senior School camps. For example, Year 9 students hiking on the Great South West Walk near Portland will spend a day collecting up to 60 garbage bags of beach waste, while Year 10s who visit Timor-Leste will volunteer in schools in remote villages.

However, the Beacon of Hope Camp is the first that is dedicated solely to service. The camp ran in term 1 for students from both the College's Pakenham and Berwick campuses and was a great success.

Head of Experiential Learning, Lachlan Groh, said students on the camp experienced a real growth in personal understanding and "the feeling that they can have a positive impact on the world".

The itinerary began with a health and social planning workshop attended by Cardinia Mayor **Jack Kowarzik** (also a Beaconhills College alum).

On the second day, students visited Cardinia's United African Farm where they worked in the garden to help support the farm's mission of harvesting healthy and diverse food for the community.

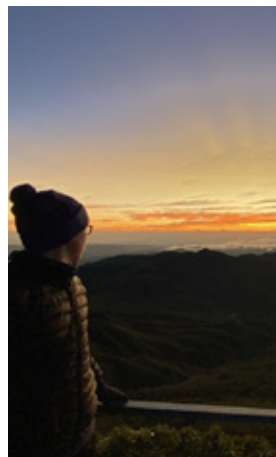
Day 3 took them to the Officer Sikh temple (Gurdwara) where they explored the Sikh faith and the importance it places on prayer and servant leadership. They also enjoyed a traditional meal prepared by Gurdwara.

On the final two days, students helped set up and serve meals to people experiencing food insecurity, working with Cardinia's Follow Bless Collective food service.

They also visited the Lime Box Café, learning about social enterprises and the types of community programs available in the area.

The College's Head of Citizenship and Service, **Sarah Dyce**, said the Beacon of Hope camp left students and staff grateful for the area's supportive agencies, and a stronger sense of compassion and motivation to keep helping those in need. x

A student in Timor-Leste.



THE BE HOPE C FIRST D SOLELY

Beacon of Hope Camp - Thuch Ajak from United African Farm with students.



YEAR 10S ON TOUR

Snapshots from some of the Year 10 experiences so far in 2024.



Students on the Tasmanian camp.

ACON OF CAMP IS THE DEDICATED TO SERVICE

Berwick Campus students New Zealand camp April 12.





WELLBEING

WELLBEING FOR ALL

BEACONHILLS IS COMMITTED TO CREATING A SUPPORTIVE AND LASTING WELLBEING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE IN THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY. WE HIGHLIGHT SOME OF OUR INITIATIVES.

A positive sense of wellbeing is essential to student learning.

One of the powerful ways the College’s wellbeing team is helping support students is through the Teen Mental Health First Aid course, first launched at Beaconhills in 2019.

Each year, all Years 7 and 10 students complete the course, which gives them mental health literacy skills and enables them to seek help from a trained adult when needed.


A total of **600 students** across both campuses are now completing the three, one-hour training sessions each year. The College has four accredited trainers from the wellbeing team.

Many staff are also completing an extended version of the student training, including heads of House, section leadership, Beacon Explorers and health centre staff.

Head of Wellbeing, **Yvonne Ashmore**, said the College’s approach to wellbeing was about “having multiple safe hands” on students. As a peer-to-peer support program, Teen Mental Health First Aid is an important means of helping students connect their friends to adult support as well as providing accurate language around the subject of mental health.

Students learn how to recognise changes in a friend or classmate’s thinking, feelings or behaviours that may indicate a mental health problem.

For Year 8 students, the course hours could also count towards their Certificate of Excellence. x



VOX POP

Why do you like yoga?

Because it makes you happy.

Remy,
Little Beacons
Pakenham.

PUBLIC SPEAKING EXPLORES DIVERSITY

Term 3 began with the Middle School House Public Speaking Competition at the Pakenham Campus, where students delivered some compelling speeches on the topic of 'diversity'.

The competition built on the term 2 theme of diversity and inclusion which was explored across both campuses in a variety of ways.

As part of the College's Wellbeing Plan, one of the priority areas identified for 2024 has been to continue fostering 'an inclusive College'.

Harriet Mitchell,
Year 7

At the Public Speaking Competition, each House tackled a different topic, with students exploring issues such as 'why it's cool to be different?', how immigration has shaped Melbourne's diversity and how fashion can express cultural identity.

Year 7 student Harriet spoke on the topic of living with a disability and how to promote accessibility and inclusion.

She told the audience that "education is the key" and that people with disabilities should "not just be accommodated, but celebrated for their strengths and talents".

Berwick Campus Middle School held its public speaking event in term 2. **x**

STAFF WELLBEING DAY

Beaconhills College staff kicked off term 3 with a College conference day focused on wellbeing.

Called *Spark, Build, Connect*, the day was a chance for staff to enhance their own wellbeing as well as improve wellbeing practice in their work.

Some of the keynote speakers including anxiety and wellbeing specialist Jodi Richardson and Amna-Karra Hassan, co-founder of Auburn Tigers Women's AFL, spoke about building cultural safety within the College. **x**



COUNSELLOR CHOSEN FOR ADVISOR ROLE

Berwick Campus Student Counsellor **Jane Negus** will join an advisory committee for Mental Health First Aid Australia to consult on their new Mental Health First Aid Support Children Program.

Ms Negus was chosen from a pool of 180 candidates to join the committee, run by the University of Melbourne.

She said the new program was specifically to support children. The committee will now meet each month for a year to consult on its design.

MHFAA is a global provider of mental health first aid education. Mental Health First Aid training serves as a bridge to professional care by guiding individuals on how to connect

someone to appropriate resources and support.

Ms Negus and the College's Head of Wellbeing, Yvonne Ashmore, have run the MHFAA youth course for Beacons Hills teachers and the teen course for Years 7 and 10 students for the past four years.

College counsellors **Brad Ginger** and **Lelania Currie** are also now trainers for the teen program, which gives students the skills they need to recognise mental health issues in their friends - and seek adult help quickly. **x**

Jane Negus, pictured with the Beacons Hills College therapy dog Smudgee.



WELLBEING CHECK-IN

In 2021, the College's wellbeing team launched a new online wellbeing 'check-in' tool on BeaconNet (the College intranet).

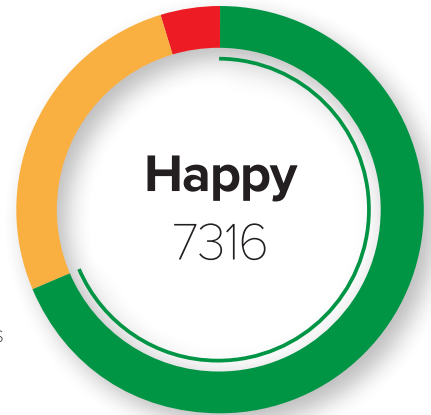
The simple resource encourages students to consider how they are feeling (with the choice of three emojis) gives them support information and enables fast access to help if they need it.

They are also asked if they are feeling safe and can request a person of their choosing to contact them, either via email or in person.

Head of Wellbeing Yvonne Ashmore said for term 2 there were a total of 16,124 student check-ins across the College with a one per cent increase from term 1 in students reporting feeling happy (77 per cent). The number of 'sad' check-ins dropped one per cent, to five per cent in term 2.

Most students (96 per cent) reported feeling safe, with four per cent feeling unsafe.

"It's a blunt tool, but really simple and quick. And it is showing that the vast majority of our students are feeling happy and safe," Ms Ashmore said. **x**



"It's a blunt tool, but really simple and quick. And it is showing that the vast majority of our students are feeling happy and safe,"



I AM FEELING GREAT TODAY!



I AM FEELING OK TODAY.



MY WELLBEING IS NOT GREAT TODAY.

OM'S THE WORD AT LITTLE BEACONS

Little Beacons children are discovering the joys and the benefits of regular yoga practice.

The weekly sessions at each campus not only help build strength and flexibility, but enable children to reset, calm down and enter a space of mindfulness.

Acting Head of Little Beacons, **Vasie Govender**, said the sessions took place in different indoor and outdoor spaces around the centres, allowing children to focus on their breathing and the sounds around them.

"Children are more relaxed when doing the yoga movements, they have more energy and generally they get into a happier and more positive mood after these sessions," she said. x



ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE

Teachers and students braved the winter chill to take on the Fight MND Ice Bucket Challenge at each campus in the last week of term 2.

It's the second year of the fundraiser to help those living with Motor Neurone Disease. Year 9 Berwick Campus student, **Thassia**, initiated the event last year.

The Pakenham Campus event this year included Cardinia Shire Mayor and College alum **Jack Kowarzik**, along with Pakenham MP **Emma Vulin** and local **Matt Strickland**, both who live with MND.

The College raised a total of more than \$6600 for the cause. x



HELP FOR HEARTS

The Berwick Campus Junior School has raised more than \$13,000 for the Heart Foundation's Jump Rope for Heart Program, putting it 11th on the leaderboard of Australian schools.

Students loved the 'Jump Off Day' on 14 June, where they were joined by the giant Happy Heart mascot to cheer on their skipping efforts.

The primary school skipping challenge encourages children to have a positive attitude towards exercise, healthy eating and heart health, while raising vital funds to fight heart disease.

The College has been a long-time participant in Jump Rope for Heart, with Pakenham Campus joining in since the program was established in 1983. x



Caption: Teacher Janelle Alsop (left) and Berwick Campus Principal Sam Watson (right) with leading fundraisers Wil from Prep (left) and Ocklan, Year 3 (right).



THE KINDNESS REVOLUTION

Kindness is a universal language. It does not matter what culture we belong to, what gender we are, what language we speak or what religion we believe in – kindness is the way we can communicate with one another. Kindness is a way of life, and it can inhabit every bit of our thinking, actions and words.

Hugh Mackay, Australia's best-known social psychologist, has written a very important book, *The Kindness Revolution*, noting the changes in our country after the pandemic and bushfires. Mackay suggests that starting a revolution in bringing kindness back to our Australian culture can be beneficial not only for individuals, but also for the collective.

It is essential for our society to think about how we care for others – not only in feeding the homeless and looking after those less fortunate, but in the way we treat others. Hugh Mackay asks, "Could we become renowned as a loving country, rather than simply a 'lucky' one?"

In the miracle from Matthew, Jesus feeds 5000 people with a boy's lunch of two fish and five loaves of bread, illustrating how God's love and kindness can provide for everyone. One act of kindness has consequences that go well and truly beyond the act itself.

"By direct example and by more subtle influence, there will be a ripple effect. A kind person in our midst affects us all in a positive way. The influence of kindness spreads to those who 'catch' the loving spirit and pass it on."

Make sure to pass on some kindness today. Let's start a 'kindness revolution' at Beaconhills College and in the communities we belong to - and shine the way for others. x

Revd Peggy Kruse
Senior Chaplain,
Pakenham Campus



HAPPENINGS AROUND
OUR COMMUNITY

ALUMNI



MENTOR PROGRAM MAKES AN IMPACT

“HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS’ SCHOOLING JOURNEY HAS BEEN EXTREMELY ENJOYABLE.”

MENTOR SHUBHNEET SODHI

Eighteen Years 10 and 11 students have worked with alumni mentors this year as part of the College’s inaugural Alumni Mentor Program.

The program teams students up with volunteer alumni mentors for three hours each term from March to October.

It’s hoped once the program is formally assessed at the end of the year that it will be ongoing.

Shubhneet Sodhi (Class of 2021, Pakenham Campus) is a volunteer mentor who is currently in his third year of a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering/Energy Science at the University of NSW.

Shubhneet tutors part-time and is also a lecturer

assistant, helping to manage and mentor a class of 20-25 students.

He said he volunteered to join the Beaconhills College program because he saw it as an opportunity to offer students essential guidance he wishes he had a few years back.

“Since I’ve gone through the VCE phase quite recently, I understand how difficult the journey can be for students and how stressful the final years can be, especially Year 12, where students are dealing with VTAC applications, SACs and final exams,” Shubhneet said.

He said that having a mentor to help connect mentees and give them “key guidance and reassurance” for the latter part of their

schooling could be very helpful – and rewarding.

“Having the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the students’ schooling journey has been extremely enjoyable,” he said.

“The best thing about this program has been that not only are the students asking questions during our set meeting times, but we’re having continuous interaction.

“I’m regularly getting messages from them on Teams or emails asking me to give them tips on how to prepare for their SACs and exams, and how to effectively manage their time.

“The feeling of being able to offer guidance and support,

knowing that it can help ease the mentees’ stress and set them on a path to success is truly fulfilling.”

Year 11 student Charlotte, from the Berwick Campus, is currently working with mentor Alexandra Whyte (Class of 2011, Berwick Campus), a qualified psychologist.

“What I’ve most enjoyed about the alumni program is getting advice and real-life experience from someone who isn’t a parent or teacher,” Charlotte said. “She helped support and give me and the other students any information we wanted.”

“Being part of the Alumni Mentor Program has been an amazing experience, and I’ve had lots of fun.” ✕

FEATURE

“Being part of the Alumni Mentor Program has been an amazing experience, and I've had lots of fun.”



MIDDLE SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL — 2013 BERWICK CAMPUS

For Zachary Vogrig,

Class of 2017, the Middle School Performing Arts Festival was a highlight of his Beaconhills education. He writes:

Like all performing arts festivals, the 2013 event holds a special place in my heart. While I am not in the photo, I am undoubtedly dancing just out of shot in the McConchie area. It was my second time participating in this event, and in this year I had the experience already under my belt, having joined Beaconhills the previous year. As House Captain, it was truly a moment for me to shine, both literally and figuratively. Performing Arts Week was always my favourite House event of the year, offering something for everyone—set design, writing, stage management, acting, and dancing. It always brought out the best in each of us and showcased our diverse talents, even though I seem to recall some levels of stress.

Although I can't recall the exact theme of the 2013 event, I vividly remember the excitement and energy that filled the air. The whirlwind of rehearsals, last-

minute changes, and the thrill of performing in front of our peers. Each House put on an incredible show, but it was the teamwork and dedication behind the scenes that truly made the event special.

However, the performances were just one component of the event. Another one of the highlights of every Performing Arts Festival (aside from the day off normal schoolwork) was undoubtedly the antics of Mr Ramos, or should I say DJ Ramos (his alter ego). His infectious enthusiasm and playful spirit made the event even more enjoyable. Whether it was his impromptu dance routines, or, as you can see in the photo, his costumes, he really brought the crowd along with him.

Reflecting on our House's performance, I am filled with pride. We poured our hearts into every aspect of the production, from the intricate set designs to the powerful performances on stage. It was a true team effort, and the sense of unity and accomplishment we felt was unmatched.

Although the 2013 event was memorable, the

pinnacle of my performing arts journey at Beaconhills came in my Year 12 performance in 2017. For those who didn't know, I was the one in the purple morph suit that provided an interpretive dance during our performance. It was a performance that still brings a smile to my face.

Looking back, Performing Arts Week was more than just an event—it was a celebration of creativity, teamwork, and school spirit. It allowed us to express ourselves and bond in ways that went beyond the classroom and these memories (along with many others) remain some of the most cherished from my time at Beaconhills. x

Zachary Vogrig at his recent university graduation.

Below: The 2013 Middle School Performing Arts Festival.



CLASS OF 2019
FRIDAY 24 MAY

5 YEAR REUNION



ALUMNI PONDERINGS



This has already been a memorable year for the alumni community. We have hit milestones, introduced programs and expanded the reach of the alumni into the everyday life of the College in a meaningful and impactful manner.

There are now more than 4000 members of Beaconhills Alumni Facebook group. While Facebook is not everyone's social medium of choice, having this many people connected to us means more of this community have a perspective on the current life of the College, along with the opportunity to add their voice to our decision-making.

Such logic lay behind the creation of the Alumni Steering Committee who worked collaboratively with us in a determined and focused way to bring to life the Alumni Mentor Program, which was formally launched earlier this year. In this first year of the program, 18 students in Years 10 and 11 are currently working with volunteer alumni mentors to clarify their own future thinking or to further their passions, interests and potential careers. We are assessing the program regularly but are confident that, once we conduct a full review at the end of the year, the Alumni Mentor Program will become a stable feature of College life long into the future.

Another wonderful initiative that has finally come to fruition has been our Alumni Breakfast Series of lectures giving current students and their families, as well as staff members, the opportunity to hear from inspirational alumni. With two successful events already held, and one more to come this year, this program also looks like becoming a welcome fixture on the College calendar.

Of course, none of these programs would be possible without the direct involvement of our wonderful alumni. There are an increasing number of you in regular contact with me these days offering help and support for these and other ventures within the College, but I mean it when I say that I want to hear from more of you even more often. A perfect way to begin this conversation is to help me update the alumni images around the College. I will shout this out on Facebook too, but it's time to launch Photo Project '24. I would like to see images of you at work or engaged in study that we can use to help shape the futures of our current students. I know how much they influence students and resonate with them.

So, if you have a photo you would like to share, are interested in contributing to our current programs – as a mentor or as a breakfast speaker – or would like to offer your support in any way at all, I would love to hear from you. If I don't see you at one of the two remaining reunions of the year, you can reach me any time via alumni@beaconhills.vic.edu.au ✕

Alan James
Community Relations
Co-ordinator

f
4000
members of Beaconhills Alumni Facebook group

ROGER HEADS TO GREENER PASTURES

After 20 years of service as Gardens and Grounds Manager, Beaconhills staff member **Roger Churchill** has finally decided to hang up his secateurs (well, at least at work).

Roger has played an instrumental role in developing landscape plans across both College campuses, particularly at the Berwick Campus due to its rapid growth.

He said he has enjoyed almost every aspect of his time at the College, particularly the social enterprise nature of the vegetable gardens.

"Improving the gardens and delivering the produce from these gardens to the food technology areas, the canteens and early learning centres has been great, but seeing the faces of the people at the Salvos where we deliver boxes of fresh produce is particularly rewarding," he said.

"I can only hope that this continues."

Business Manager David Young thanked Roger for his wonderful work and wished him all the best for his retirement.

"From the landscape design and planning, to

co-ordinating 30-40 families at parent working bees and managing the final stages of the gardens, his knowledge on horticulture has been an asset to us," he said.

Roger said he was looking forward to some travel, spending time with family and friends and catching up on his own garden "which had been neglected for a long time now". ✕

20

years of service



BREAKFASTS OF CHAMPIONS

The new Alumni Breakfast Series events launched in 2024 look set to become a permanent fixture on the College calendar.

Two alumni with expertise in science and medicine shared their fascinating career journeys with students, staff and parents at the Pakenham Campus on Friday 24 May.

Dr Lauren Macreadie (Class of 2005), who has a PhD in chemistry, spoke of her groundbreaking work investigating how porous materials can be used to solve key energy questions around hydrogen storage and transport.

Dr Leaha-Marie Hill-Buxton (Class of 2010) is an orthopaedic surgeon who discussed her passion for medicine and the challenges and delights of juggling a career and parenthood.

Both speakers reminded students that there was more than one road to a future career, and to not fear 'changing lanes' along the way.

MC for the event was **Wendy Prendergast**, who is the Pakenham Campus Head of Science (5-12). The breakfast was a great success and left plenty of food for thought for our students.

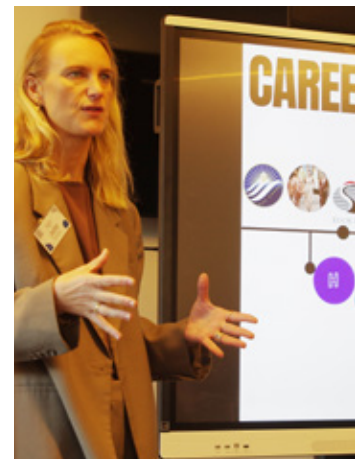
Earlier in the year the Berwick Campus hosted the first Breakfast Series event on 8 March to celebrate International Women's Day.

Guests were also treated to inspiring talks by **Associate Professor Lauren Ayton** (Class of 2000) and Founder/Creative Director of raraPR **Jade Roberts** (Class of 1997).

A/Prof Lauren Ayton shared her academic journey, her work in the area of traumatic brain injury and ocular motor function and her involvement in the first-in-human trial of Australia's first bionic eye device during her time as Clinical Research Team Leader of the Bionic Vision Australia consortium (2010-2017).

Jade Roberts charted the challenges and triumphs of her time in the PR industry, her experience in boutique to big name PR and advertising agencies, media outlets and retail brands and what inspired her to start her successful business raraPR back in 2011.

Event MC was **Belinda Dalziel**, with an inspiring opening address by College Board member **Sandra Ennor**. The final Alumni Breakfast Series event, with a health and wellbeing theme, was held in August at the Berwick Campus. **x**





WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Dylan Norrington

(Class of 2017, Berwick Campus) is a skilled photographer/videographer who studied Live Production at RMIT after graduation. He has worked as a freelance technical co-ordinator for Beacons Hills College, as well as an audio visual and sound and light technician. In 2019, he founded Norrington Media which offers services ranging from corporate events, business and training videos to sports and wedding photography. x



Georgia Verhey

(Class of 2013, Berwick Campus) embarked on a culinary journey after graduation that began with a three-year apprenticeship. Over the years, she gained valuable experience working in diverse culinary settings, honing her skills and passion for cooking. For the past six years, she was dedicated to “crafting delightful experiences in cafes”, perfecting her skills and preparing for the next big step. In September 2023, Georgia made her dream of owning a cafe in Beaconsfield come true. Middle Ground is a welcoming space where locals and visitors can savour delicious food and enjoy memorable moments. x



Roxy Tamlin

(Class of 2013, Pakenham Campus) completed a Certificate of Dance and Bachelor in Acting after graduation and has begun building a versatile CV in performing arts.

Some of her credits include Nancy Wake in the Australian Cast recording of *The White Mouse* (2016), Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2018), lead performer at Witches in Britches Theatre Restaurant (2019 to 2021), and all of the young women in a 3-hander (three character) version of *Women of Troy* (2022).

In 2023, Roxy was a Take the Mic Australia finalist at Chapel off Chapel and also played the villain character and co-produced a short fantasy film called *Legacy*, working with partner and Beacons Hills alum Phil Roberts.



This year, she is playing the lead female in a new comedy feature film called *It's Showtime, Dan!* due for release in late 2025. She is also thrilled to become a member of the Green Room Awards Musical Theatre panel.

Despite a busy schedule, Roxy says she "gets bored too easily between contracts" so is now studying a Bachelor of Health Science, majoring in Psychology and Psychophysiology.

Roxy's philosophy is that every experience and encounter in life contributes to the building of wisdom. And she believes the opportunities she had to perform at Beaconhills helped shape the performer she is today.

"Just recently I was watching a film and found myself thinking back to Miss Jensen directing me in *The Wedding Singer*, our school production of 2013, saying 'Got arms! Got arms!'," she said.

"She was pointing out that my upper body was stiff and frozen, and that I wasn't making strong gestures - a crucial component of communicating on a stage. When I see professionals do this now (and they do sometimes!) I can hear Jenno in my mind saying 'got arms!'"

"It is a challenge for me to balance all of my commitments, and the most difficult thing for me is to allow all of them to take time.

"By taking time, and by setting up boundaries so that there is time to switch off every day, there is more space and permission to enjoy the wonderful learning and creativity that happens along the journey." x



Tim Norrish

(Class of 2006, Pakenham Campus)
worked for an event and marquee hire company while studying a marketing and accounting degree, but decided to move to Tasmania in 2008 where he "fell in love with hospitality". Back in Melbourne in 2013, he worked as an assistant manager for Beaconsfield's Cardinia Park Hotel and Koo Wee Rup's Royal Hotel, before joining TGI Fridays. At TGI Fridays he became the highest performing venue manager, at one point running four venues. Tim now owns a Jim's Mowing franchise and in two months had employed extra staff and increased revenue by 30 per cent. x





THE MAGAZINE OF
BEACONHILLS COLLEGE

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