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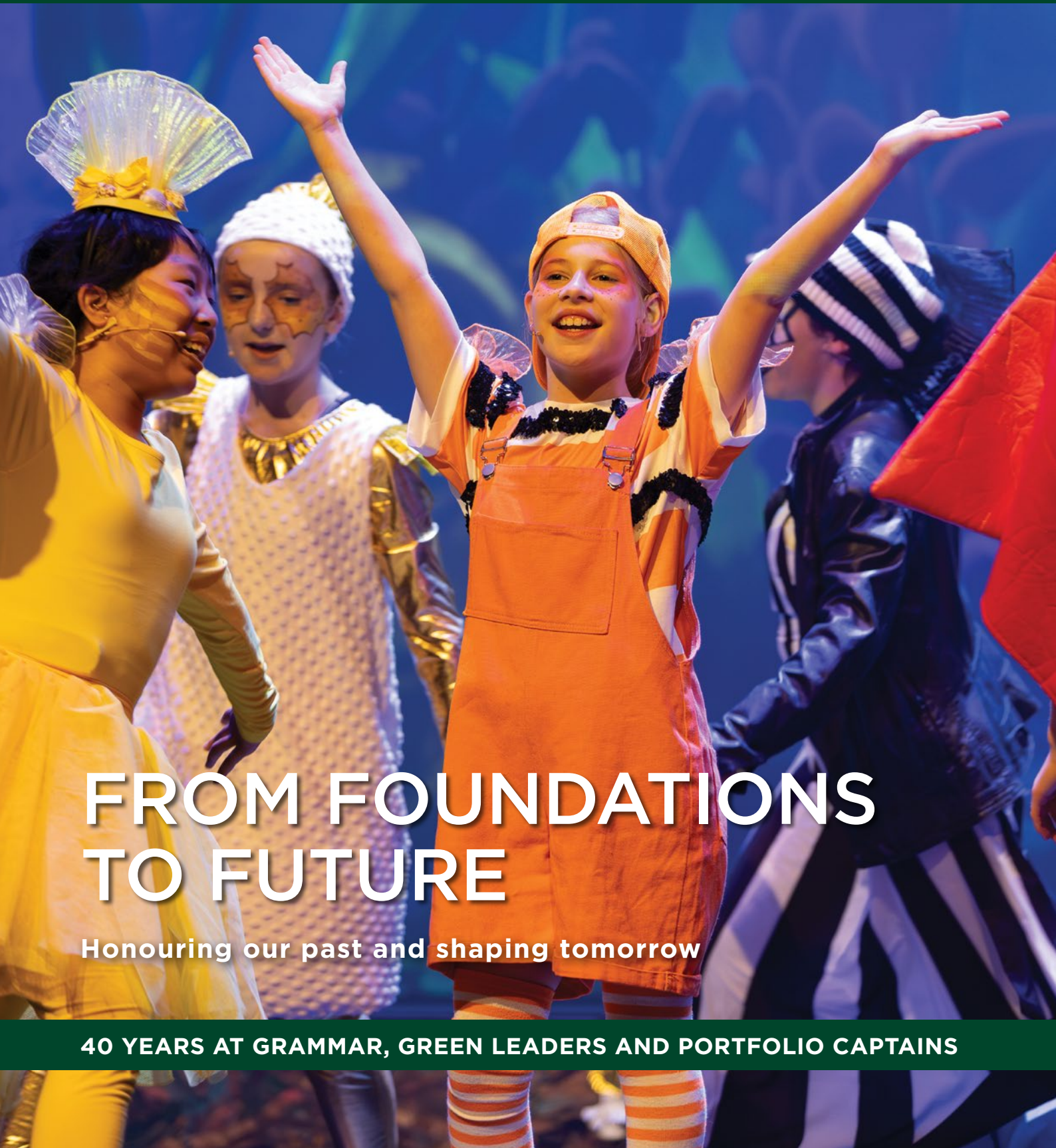


CENTRAL COAST  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

# BUNDARA

Magazine

Issue 65 • Summer 2025



## FROM FOUNDATIONS TO FUTURE

Honouring our past and shaping tomorrow

40 YEARS AT GRAMMAR, GREEN LEADERS AND PORTFOLIO CAPTAINS



BUNDARA is the biannual magazine of Central Coast Grammar School.

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*Central Coast Grammar School acknowledges the Darkinjung people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which the school is located. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country.*

## From the Board

The end of our 40th year at Central Coast Grammar School is one that is filled with pride. Over the past four decades, Grammar has grown from a bold vision into a thriving educational community. Over the past 15 years that I have been on the School Board, we have seen remarkable expansion in enrolments, facilities, cocurricular opportunities, and solid academic achievements. This is a testament to the dedication of our staff, the support of our families, and the strength of our leadership throughout the past four decades.

We accept that growth and evolution bring both new opportunities and challenges. We embrace the importance of strategic foresight and collaborative governance. The partnership between our executive team and the Board has never been more vital. Together, we are navigating these headwinds with resilience, guided by a clear strategic plan that ensures our values and vision remain at the heart of every decision.

In 2025, our beloved Spring Fair was a perfect example of our community values that have endured. This event really brings together our students, their families, alumni, and local community for a day that showcases our magnificent grounds but also reflects the spirit of who we are.

While anniversaries invite us to honour the past, they also compel us to imagine the future. As one of our other Board members wisely noted, we must not dwell solely on past achievements. Instead, we must ask: What will the next 40 years look like? How will we continue to innovate, inspire, and lead a rapidly changing world?

In this regard, we acknowledge the contributions of those who have shaped our journey. I would like to thank Arthur Stanley and Kylie Tritton for their long service to the Board. They, among many others, have played pivotal roles in steering the school through transformation and challenge. Their commitment exemplifies the spirit of service and excellence that defines Grammar.

The Board takes immense pride in all that has been accomplished and remains firmly confident in the opportunities that lie ahead. The next chapter of Central Coast Grammar School is ours to shape collectively, and I have every confidence it will be exceptional.

**Stephen Brahams FAICD**

Chairman of the School Board

# From the Headmaster



As we conclude the 40th year of Central Coast Grammar School, it is an apt time to embrace both the defining elements of our foundation and our aspirational future. We have much to be proud of and this edition highlights some of our activities and those who have helped make them happen.

Among the many key events were our annual Foundation Day service, Spring Fair, and the Legacy Leaders Event, bringing together attendees from our current and extended community. We also hosted *Music and the Mind* and two remarkable Performing Arts productions of *Singin' in the Rain* and *Finding Nemo JR*. This year saw the launch of our new Dance Academy, which culminated in a spectacular end-of-year showcase.

The evolution of our school is a powerful combination of who we are and where we want to go next.

Our new strategic plan emphasises the development of our students' intellectual, moral, civic, and performance character. It draws on contemporary research in character formation and associates closely to the evidence and practices emanating out of the University of Birmingham's Jubilee Centre. In the coming years, Grammar aims to foster deep learning and character competencies, with a Graduate profile emphasising the principles and concepts of accomplishment, humanity, justice, and agency. We trust this approach will

position our students for the future, with all its possibilities, challenges and opportunities.

Excellence takes many forms, and we want every student here to find their own personal and collective version.

At the 2025 Australian Education Awards, Central Coast Grammar School was recognised for its outstanding contributions to education, highlighting our ongoing commitment to the highest of educational standards and cocurricular innovation. The school was nominated for Primary School of the Year (Non-Government) and Best Co-Curricular Program for our Cambodia Service Program. These achievements also reflect our dedication to nurturing our students and fostering strong character and wisdom to choose and act with integrity.

In this issue of *Bundara*, we celebrate our students' sporting achievements, including selection for the NSW State Rugby 7s and Rugby Union teams. Our Girls in STEM program continues to thrive, highlighted by our first all-girls Year 8 championship team.

We also bid farewell to several long-standing staff who have made indelible contributions to the teaching fabric of Grammar. Our culture of learning and innovation go hand in hand, and their legacy will remain woven here for years to come, while we keep growing and evolving.

I hope you enjoy a peaceful and meaningful time with your family over the summer break, and may the new year bring fresh opportunities and inspiration.

With gratitude,

**Phil O'Regan**  
Headmaster



# Strategic Plan 2026–2030: A Vision for Living and Learning Well

Our new Strategic Plan is built around eight priority areas across three pillars: Our People, Our Practice, and Our Place. These pillars support excellence in student development, staff experience, community engagement, professional practice, curriculum, cocurricular programs, ICT and systems, and governance. Each area is designed to empower students and staff to thrive, contribute meaningfully, and shape a better future.

A key feature of the plan is the Graduate Profile, which outlines the character strengths and aspirations that define a Central Coast Grammar School graduate. Students are guided to develop

intellectual, moral, civic, and performance character, and to aspire to lives of accomplishment, humanity, justice, and agency.

The new Strategic Plan also speaks from the heart when it comes to reconciliation. It embraces *Dadirri*, a deep, respectful listening, and acknowledges the wisdom and custodianship of the Darkinjung people, on whose land we live and learn. By engaging truthfully with our shared history and building authentic relationships, we are committed to making reconciliation something we live every day, not just something we talk about.

At its core, this plan is about helping every student grow in their character and practical wisdom to make thoughtful choices, show compassion, and contribute meaningfully to the world around them.

This is more than an educational strategy. It is a commitment to human flourishing, grounded in timeless wisdom, and refined in a way that is unique and purposeful for our community.

We believe this plan will propel Grammar forward with a redefined purpose.



# From Homestay to Hometown: A Lifelong Journey of Culture and Connection

**When Matthew Chudleigh walked back through the doors of Central Coast Grammar School earlier this year, he returned not only as an alumnus but as a leader.**

Accompanying a group of Japanese students on their exchange journey, his visit was more than nostalgia. It was the continuation of a story rooted in family, friendship, and global connection.

Matthew's ties to Grammar run deep. His father served as Senior Master and Nicholii House Master, and their home often welcomed visiting teachers and students from Kanto Daiichi, our sister school in Tokyo. These early encounters sparked Matthew's fascination with Japanese culture, and when the chance came to join the exchange program, he embraced it wholeheartedly.

He vividly recalls his first days in Japan: being greeted at

Narita Airport, guided through homestay life, and supported by caring teachers and classmates. A treasured memory was evenings with his homestay grandmother. Her dementia meant conversations repeated nightly, giving Matthew confidence and fluency in Japanese. Even an unexpected hospital stay became a lesson in kindness, as friends and teachers visited daily with gifts and encouragement.

Those experiences shaped his future. Inspired by the hospitality and harmony he encountered, Matthew studied Japanese at university and later returned to Japan, where he has lived and worked for over 25 years. "The exchange really gave me a sense of direction," he reflects.

Bringing Kanto Daiichi students to Grammar felt like a full-circle moment. From showing them his photo in the 1985 foundation yearbook to ensuring they felt as



welcome as he once did, Matthew remains proud to strengthen the partnership between our schools.

He believes exchange programs remain as powerful today as ever. Beyond travel, their true value lies in homestay life, cultural immersion, and friendships that last a lifetime. "It's really like having another family," he says.

Matthew's story embodies the essence of a Grammar education: experiences that spark curiosity, nurture character, and inspire global citizenship.



At Central Coast Grammar School, adventure and learning go hand in hand and sometimes that means opening your home to the world.

This year, the school's first-ever French exchange brought a little piece of Toulouse to the Coast, as Year 10 student Amelie welcomed Manon from Le Caousou School into her family for six unforgettable weeks.

## A World of Learning: Grammar Students Build Friendships Across Continents

"It was such a great experience having someone from another country living with us," Amelie shared. "She came here to learn about Australia, but I ended up learning just as much about her life in France."

Manon quickly noticed how different school life looked Down Under. "Everything here feels so open and outdoorsy and the library! It's huge. Everyone has been incredibly kind, which made me feel comfortable straight away."

Between classroom discoveries and weekend adventures, the

two formed a bond that felt more like sisterhood than a short-term exchange. "By the end, it didn't feel like she was visiting; she was part of the family," said Amelie.

Manon said she'd never forget spotting kangaroos in Canberra or the long drive up the coast. She also loved the Australian style of learning: "Here, you think and create, not just memorise."

For Grammar, the French Exchange is more than travel, it's about growing young people who see the world with curiosity, kindness and confidence.



# Celebrating 40 Years of Connection and Community at Grammar



**Grammar's 40th anniversary year has brought together generations of students, families and friends to celebrate four decades of learning, growth and community spirit. From alumni returning to campus to the success of the 2025 Spring Fair, it has been a year to remember.**



## Alumni Reconnect

Among those revisiting Grammar were Foundation students Annette Turner (formerly Low) and Jennifer Williams (formerly Low), who returned for the first time since the 1980s. They were delighted to rediscover old Yearbooks and photos from Grammar's earliest days. Annette was part of the first Year 12 class in 1986, while Jennifer served as Head Prefect in 1987.

"On our final day before the HSC, we celebrated with cake," Jennifer recalled. "There were pies in faces and the traditional pool toss. I narrowly escaped one but not the other."



Annette Turner and Jennifer Williams

## Intergenerational community spirit

During her Foundation Day address, Judy Stokes, past Board Chair and current Grammar grandparent, shared a photo of her four children who all came back to help in the Kidz Zone at the Spring Fair, with James trying his hand at the Chocolate Grab.

## Looking to the Future

This year's Spring Fair was built on more than 40 years of tradition, reaching new heights of colour, creativity and connection. The day was filled with laughter, music and movement, from thrilling rides and adorable animals to high-energy sports, engaging performances and an expanded Kidz Zone that drew families from across the Central Coast.

More than 150 volunteers, including students, parents, staff and community supporters, helped bring the Fair to life. Their generosity and enthusiasm captured the true spirit of Grammar: collaboration, belonging and joy. We extend our gratitude to all who executed the planning this year. It was truly a wonderful day that paved the way for the future of Central Coast Grammar School events to come.



# Growing Green Leaders: Junior School SRC leads the way in sustainability

**The Junior School Student Representative Council (SRC) has had a busy and inspiring year, empowering students to take action and make a tangible difference in the life of our school.**

Each semester, one boy and one girl from every class in Years 2 to 5 are elected by their peers, while Year 6 representatives serve the full year through the Student Voice Portfolio. Together, they represent the ideas and interests of their classmates, learning to lead with purpose and compassion.

In 2025, the Junior SRC focused on sustainability and recycling initiatives that nurtured responsibility and care for the environment. Working alongside the Environmental Action Group, students helped drive the *Clean Up CCGS* and *Clean Up Australia Day* campaigns and introduced two worm pods and food scrap buckets to each classroom in Years 3 to 6. Every day, SRC members have collected fruit break scraps to feed the worms, turning waste into nutrient-rich compost.

Junior School Teacher, Ms Natalie Kell, said it has been rewarding to see students' enthusiasm grow. "Our SRC members have really taken ownership of these projects. They love explaining how our worm farms work and why it's so important to reduce what we send to landfill," she said. "They've become true sustainability champions in our school."

The SRC also established *Banish Boxes* to recycle tricky items such as sushi fish soy containers and yoghurt squeeze-top lids, ensuring they can be repurposed rather than discarded. Their *Waste-Free Wednesday* and *Waste-Free Every Day* campaigns encouraged students to think about lunchbox choices, supported by student-designed posters and weekly reminders at Monday Musters.

Playground improvements were another area of focus, with SRC students surveying

peers to identify ideal spaces for new handball lines and playground equipment. They presented their ideas to the Head of Junior School, Mrs Boys-Smith, for review and approval. It was an exercise that built communication, problem-solving and teamwork skills.

Ms Kell said the group's influence extends well beyond environmental action. "Through the SRC, students learn that small changes can have a big impact," she explained. "Whether it's kindness, recycling or respect, they're helping to shape a Grammar culture that values care for each other and the planet."

For K-12 World Kindness Day, the SRC led activities, reading kindness stories and sharing a student-created video about what kindness means at Grammar. In addition, they created a Kindness Booklet quiz to reinforce the message in a fun, interactive way.

As the SRC wraps up the 2025 Kindness Day, their message is clear: when young voices lead with heart, our whole community grows stronger and greener together.

# Nurturing Leadership Through Purpose

**This year marked an important milestone for Central Coast Grammar School with the introduction of Portfolio Captain roles supporting students from Kindergarten to Year 12. Students can now aspire to leadership at three key stages: Years 6, 9 and 12, providing a clear pathway for progression, service and mentorship.**

Head of Junior School, Mrs Boys-Smith, said the initiative was designed to help Year 6 students become active leaders by giving them opportunities to shape school life. "We wanted to provide experiences that match the unique strengths of our students, helping them grow their skills while making a positive difference in their school and community," she said. "Leadership is about service, teamwork and using individual talents to support others."

Head of Senior College, Mrs Janine Comber, explained that the structure broadens leadership opportunities and strengthens continuity across all stages. Each Portfolio Captain is a member of the Student Executive

(Junior School, Middle School or Senior College) and works closely with senior staff mentors to foster school spirit and model Grammar's values. "They help ensure every student feels included and inspired to contribute," Mrs Comber said.

In the Junior School, every Year 6 student belongs to a portfolio overseen by their peers. Captains collaborate with teachers to roll out initiatives and liaise with the Head and Deputy Head of School. "It's wonderful to see students taking ownership of projects that build community," Mrs Boys-Smith added.

During their inaugural year, captains championed initiatives that brought our community together. These included the annual Staff vs

Students Sports Day, the STEM Breakfast Series and student-led service and social justice projects. Junior School captains also introduced role descriptions for Class Captains, a student newspaper, the Calm Courtyard initiative and an equipment borrowing shed for active play.

The leadership group has reflected thoughtfully on ways to raise the visibility of all captaincy roles. From next year, House Captains will present at fortnightly Services alongside the Head Prefects, while Portfolio Captains will MC Assemblies, giving equal profile to all leadership positions.

Interest from students has been strong, with leadership training beginning in Semester 2 of Year 5. "Every student wants to be part of a leadership team, whether as a captain or a portfolio member," Mrs Boys-Smith said.

The Portfolio Captain program has already shown what can be achieved when leadership is shared, inclusive and purposeful, helping our students grow in confidence and character as they serve their community.



# *Singin' in the Rain:* A Sparkling Celebration of the Performing Arts



Earlier this year, our Senior School students took centre stage in a vibrant production of *Singin' in the Rain*. The much-loved musical proved the perfect choice to mark the school's 40th anniversary, a joyful celebration of creativity, innovation, and the enduring power of the arts.

Set during Hollywood's transition from silent films to "talking pictures," *Singin' in the Rain* captured a moment of artistic revolution. In many ways, it reflected the school's own spirit, embracing change, blending tradition with innovation, and showcasing the extraordinary talents of our senior students.



The production was a testament to the collaborative leadership of Head of Drama Mrs Cate Whittle, Head of Dance Mrs Larissa Koch and Head of Music Mr Peter Corkill. Together, they guided students through months of preparation, transforming dedication and talent into a truly professional performance.

Mr Corkill said, "Rain or shine, we've kept singing, dancing, and playing, united by a common purpose and a shared love for the stage."



Audiences were captivated by dazzling choreography, live orchestral music and a set that brought 1920s Hollywood glamour to life. With countless tickets sold and glowing community praise, *Singin' in the Rain* stood as a reflection of 40 years of creative excellence and a glimpse into a bright future for Central Coast Grammar School's talented students and staff.





# A Sea of Talent:

Year 6 Dive into *Finding Nemo JR.*

**There was something truly magical about the Junior School's recent production of *Finding Nemo JR.*, which transformed the Performing Arts Centre into a vibrant underwater world bursting with colour, movement and music.**

Featuring a cast of 124 Year 6 students, the show was a joyful celebration of creativity, teamwork, and courage. Over two terms and more than 50 hours of rehearsals, students developed not just their performance skills, but confidence, collaboration and lasting friendships.

Split into two ensembles, the Broadway and West End casts showcased remarkable energy and stage presence. Emma, Mimi and Belle shone as Nemo, Marlin and Dory in the Broadway cast,

while Harper, Evie and Eleanor brought equal sparkle and heart to the West End cast. From sleek shark costumes and the hilarious antics of Crush and his turtle crew to the expressive Tank Gang ensemble, every scene radiated personality and polish.

Head of Drama Mrs Cate Whittle praised the dedication of both students and staff.

"The team of wonderful teachers, led by the incredible director Sinéad Zille, was truly inspiring.

One of the most special things about Junior School Performing Arts is the opportunity it gives our Year 6 students to perform on stage, often for the very first time. It's such a joyful experience that builds confidence, friendships and memories that last a lifetime."

The production was a true splash of talent and a reminder of the creativity that continues to flourish at Central Coast Grammar School.

Bravo, for an incredible 2025 production!





## Rising Star: A Central Coast Talent Making Waves in Rugby

**At just 15 years old, Jessica Boreham-Cole has already achieved what many athletes dream of, being selected to represent NSW in both Rugby 7s and Rugby Union. Her passion, drive, and deep family connection to the sport have shaped her journey so far. We sat down with her to talk about her inspirations, what it means to represent her region, and how she balances life as a student and an elite young athlete.**

**You've already achieved so much at such a young age. Being selected for both the NSW State Rugby 7s and Rugby Union teams is incredible. What inspired you to start playing rugby, and what do you love most about the sport?**

My dad was definitely the biggest inspiration for me to start playing rugby. My grandpa (his dad) coached him when he was younger, so rugby has always been something that's been passed down through our family. Now, having my dad coach me



and share the same advice and skills that he had once learned makes the sport really special.

I love that rugby brings people together, no matter what level you're playing at, everyone is treated equally and supports each other. The friendships you make while playing are some of the best parts of it; some of my closest friends are from rugby. It's also a sport that's constantly growing, and I feel like there's still so much more for me to discover and unlock as I keep playing.

**You're the only Central Coast girl in the Under 15 NSW squad, how does it feel to represent your region at state level?**

It honestly feels like a great privilege to have this opportunity. I never imagined that playing rugby on a Saturday would lead me to where I am now. Being able to represent my family, friends, community, and the Central Coast is something that I'm really proud of and hold close to my heart.

It's such a special feeling knowing that I get to stand for where I come from and hopefully inspire other girls in my area to give rugby a go.

**Balancing school, training, and competition must take a lot of dedication. How do you manage your time and stay motivated throughout the season?**

I definitely haven't quite figured it all out yet, but I'm learning more each year and with every team I get selected for. Each new season helps me get better at managing my time between school, training, and competitions.

Sometimes that means studying in the car on long drives to games or planning out my nights to make sure I have time for what matters most. It's all about finding balance. Even when it's challenging, I've learned that every bit of effort helps me grow as both a student and an athlete. The hard work is always worth it.

**You've played for several teams including Northlakes, Lake Macquarie Roo's, and The Entrance Tigers. What have these experiences taught you about teamwork and leadership, on and off the field?**

Playing for different teams like Northlakes, Lake Macquarie Roo's, and The Entrance Tigers has taught me so much about teamwork and leadership. Each team has its own style and culture, which has helped me learn how to connect with others and make friends who share the same passion for rugby.

I've realised that leadership isn't about being the loudest voice, it's about supporting your teammates, encouraging them, and helping

everyone perform their best. Off the field, these experiences have made me more confident and have shown me how important communication and respect are in any team environment.

When everyone works together and trusts each other, amazing things can happen.

**Looking ahead, what are your goals for the next few years in rugby, and how do you hope to continue growing as an athlete?**

My main goal is to keep working hard and hopefully earn the chance to play for both my state and country in the next few years, whether that's in Union or League. I know I'll need to keep pushing myself, not just in skill but in mindset and leadership, to become the best version of myself.

That means staying committed, putting in the hours, and learning from every challenge. Rugby has already taught me a lot about determination and discipline, and I'm excited to keep building on that.

This summer, I've been selected to play for the Central Coast Roosters in the Lisa Fiola Summer Squad. That's my next step now that the Rugby Union season has wrapped up. I'll also continue to play and trial for the NSW 7's and NSW XV teams next year and hope to be selected again.

# Shaping the Future: Girls Leading the Way in Robotics

*Andrew Cameron, Innovative Learning and Digital Literacy Curriculum Coordinator*

**Interest in robotics has been steadily growing across Central Coast Grammar School, but what's particularly inspiring is the surge of enthusiasm among our girls.**

This year, two new teams represented Grammar in the VEX Robotics competition, one of Year 7 boys and another of mostly Year 8 girls, alongside one male teammate. Both teams competed strongly against schools such as Abbotsleigh, Barker College and Pymble Ladies' College, but it was the girls' team that captured the spotlight. In their first year, they've shown remarkable creativity, teamwork and determination, setting their sights on qualifying for the state championships in 2026.

This rise in female participation is no coincidence. It's the result of intentional effort and a culture that values curiosity, creativity and courage. Several years ago, two senior students, Lana Pavy and Janine Southwell, noticed that fewer girls were choosing advanced Mathematics and Science subjects. Their curiosity

sparked a conversation that led to the first Grammar Girls in STEM Breakfast, which brought together guest speakers and alumni to share their experiences with students, staff and parents. Since then, a series of Girls in STEM Breakfasts has continued to spark interest and certainty among female students, creating more opportunities for them to explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

These conversations have encouraged more students to see themselves as innovators and leaders in fields that were once considered male-dominated. Portfolio Captains of Innovation and STEM, Ruby Curtis (2025) and Olivia Stevens (2026) will carry this legacy forward into life beyond Grammar, championing inclusive opportunities to find their voice in science and technology.

For the Year 8 team, robotics has become more than building machines. It's about building confidence. They've discovered that collaboration, persistence and learning from setbacks are just as rewarding as winning. Each challenge develops not only technical skill, but also resilience and leadership.

The goal now is to sustain this momentum. As these students continue their journey, they will take on mentoring roles to inspire younger learners and help them discover the joy of creating something from the ground up. Watching them collaborate as they problem-solve, test ideas, rebuild and celebrate success reflects the essence of what learning at Grammar is all about.

Their success is not measured solely by trophies, but by the trust to think critically, act courageously and contribute positively to the world. In that sense, the robotics program is doing far more than building robots. It's shaping the next generation of young people who will lead with imagination, wisdom and heart.





# A Wheelie Good Day For a Great Cause

**At Central Coast Grammar School, service and compassion are woven into everything we do. Our Junior School initiative, Wheelie Good Days, was a shining example of how learning, leadership and empathy come together to make a real difference.**

The event, held earlier this year, brought together students from Kindergarten to Year 12 in support of Project Samel, raising funds for a young Cambodian boy living with cerebral palsy. Samel lives at Sunrise Cambodia, a home supporting vulnerable children and their communities, founded by humanitarian Geraldine Cox. Samel is fully aware and understands everything happening around him, but like many children with cerebral palsy, he can't communicate his needs or move independently.

Thanks to funds raised through Wheelie Good Days, Australian therapist Bec Penfold from Coastwide Therapies was able to travel to Cambodia to work with

Samel and train his carers. Bec has supported children with additional needs on the Central Coast for many years and is generously giving her time to ensure Samel can receive the therapy and physical support he needs.

Our Infants students participated with great enthusiasm, bringing their scooters for a day of fun and learning. Four stations made up the events; a scooter obstacle course, a mobility aid experience using wheelchairs loaned by Aidacare, a bike stunt demonstration by a Senior student, and a video and ice block station featuring Isaac, one of our Year 6 students who also lives with cerebral palsy. In his video, filmed when he was in

Year 1, Isaac shares what life with cerebral palsy is like, reminding us that while we may face different challenges, we share the same hopes, humour and humanity.

Year 6 students led the day, guiding younger students and explaining the purpose behind the event. They were supported by helpers from Middle School and Senior College, creating a true Grammar-wide experience of teamwork and service.

Headmaster Mr Phil O'Regan said, "Wheelie Good Days beautifully combined learning and philanthropy to help our global community." Students contributed donations in exchange for a 'Wheelie Licence', with funds going to Project Samel. "It was a powerful way for them to learn that small actions can make a big difference."

Through events like this, our students are not only learning about generosity and global citizenship, but they are also living it.



# Alumni Return to Cambodia to Continue Life-Changing Work

**In September, four of our 2024 Year 12 graduates, Daniel Vickers, Maya Clarke, Lea Eksteen, and Scarlett Heazlewood, returned to Cambodia to build another house with Volunteer Building Cambodia (VBC).**

Daniel, Maya, and Scarlett had previously participated in the 2023 Cambodia Service Program, and the experience left such a lasting impression that they felt compelled to return.

“It was an incredibly rewarding opportunity,” Daniel shared, “not just for us, but for the single mother and child we helped build a home for. It gave us the chance to do something hands-on and meaningful during our gap year travels.”

The group reached out to VBC founder Sinn Meang, who placed them with another Australian team. Their return is a powerful example of how the Cambodia Service Program continues to inspire long after graduation.

Since 2006, students and staff from Central Coast Grammar School have immersed themselves in the Cambodia Service Program, a 12-month cocurricular initiative for Senior College students that includes workshops, fundraising, and global engagement. Over the past two decades, the program has built 255 homes for families in need, with plans to construct five more by 2026. Through partnerships with

VBC, Sunrise Cambodia, and All Kids Cambodia, our school community has raised over \$510,000 to support these efforts.

During their recent trip, Daniel, Maya, Lea, and Scarlett worked side by side with staff and community members, forging lasting relationships and rediscovering the warmth of the Khmer people.

“Despite language barriers,” Maya reflected, “they consistently go out of their way to help others. In just five days, we were able to give back to these generous communities, showing how even a short amount of time can make a meaningful difference.”

The house they built for San, a single mother, was a steel-framed structure with two rooms, a fan, solar panels, a toilet, shower, and water filter.

On House Blessing Day, San spoke through tears about how her new home would change her life.

“She told us she could never sleep on stormy nights,” Daniel recalled. “Rain would drip through the roof of her old straw house, which had only a plastic sheet for a wall. Seeing that fragile

shelter replaced with a secure home was incredibly moving.”

The entire village gathered to help celebrate and assist San and her daughter move in. “The joy and pride in the air made it clear that this transformation meant as much to the community as it did to San,” Maya said. “Everyone found a way to join in, like carrying sand, passing up screws, and mixing concrete. It showed how deeply connected and supportive the community truly is.”

Their focus was not only on construction but also on connection. “We wanted this moment in their lives to be truly special and memorable,” Daniel explained, “a turning point that marked the beginning of better circumstances and a brighter future.”

One unexpected highlight was seeing the broader impact of VBC’s work. “Compared to our visit two years ago,” Maya noted, “this time we were building in a larger village where several VBC homes had already been completed. We hadn’t expected to see so many established houses. It was amazing to witness the visible impact of their ongoing work.”

The return of these alumni to Cambodia is a testament to the enduring spirit of service and global citizenship that is the DNA of the long-standing Cambodia Service Program.



# A New Chapter in Opportunity: Grammar's 2027 Scholarships

For the first time in the history of our school, Grammar is expanding its All-Rounder Scholarships in 2027 to include students in Years 8, 9 and 11, in addition to Years 7 and 10, recognising those who shine across many fields, not just one.

Traditionally, Grammar's scholarship program has celebrated excellence in academics and music. But as education evolves, so too does the way talent is identified. The All-Rounder category acknowledges students who demonstrate a balance of academic ability, leadership, creativity, and contribution to school life.

It's a forward-thinking move that reflects Grammar's broader educational vision: nurturing character, curiosity, and capability in every student. By rewarding versatility and engagement, the school is signaling that success comes in many forms, from the concert stage to the classroom, the

sports field to community initiatives.

Alongside All-Rounder Scholarship, Academic Scholarships for Years 5, 7 and 10 and Music Scholarships for Years 7 and 10 continue to offer life-changing opportunities for students with exceptional talents.

*Applications for entry in 2027 are now open, closing Thursday 12 February 2026, with the online exam scheduled for Sunday 22 February 2026.*

The scholarships are open to both current and new students, and there are also means-tested options available for families who might not otherwise access a Grammar education.

With this expanded initiative, Grammar is taking a bold step toward empowering the next generation of thinkers and dreamers. We are nurturing young people who lead with heart, curiosity and a love of learning.



**To find out more about each scholarship category or apply online, visit <https://www.ccgns.edu.au/enrol/scholarships-2027> or simply scan the QR code below.**



**40**  
YEARS  
1985-2025



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