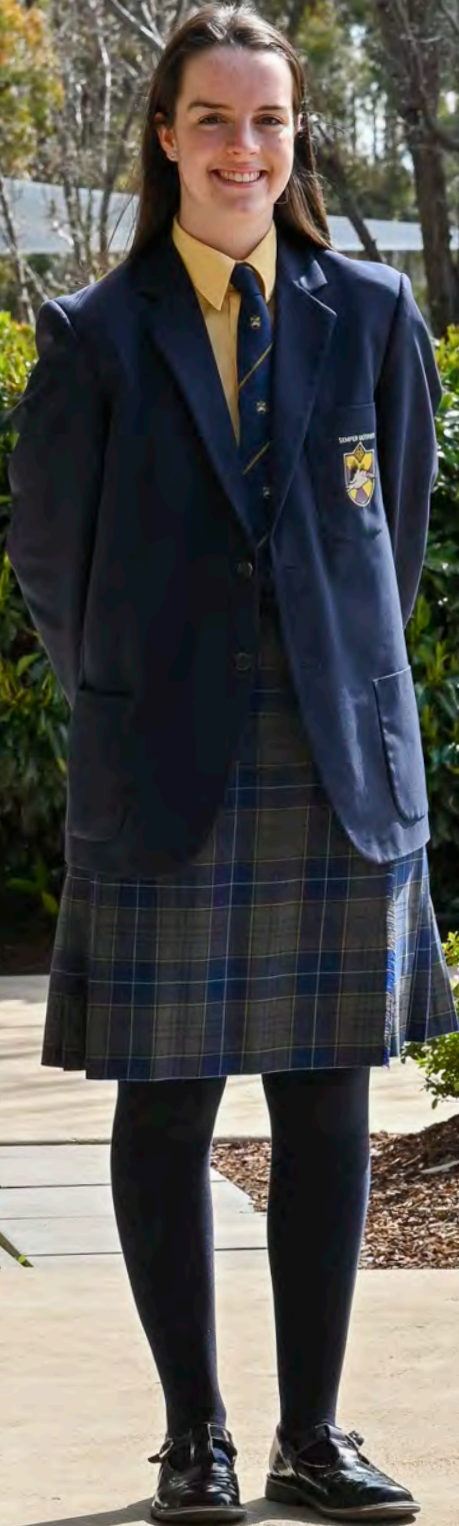


Spring / Summer 2020

Nexus

GOULBURN VALLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL



INSIDE
Virtual
Classroom
Programme



Nexus

Nexus is a GVGS school community publication largely brought together by members from within our community. It is published twice a year. We welcome submissions to *Nexus* from staff, students, alumni and those connected with the school community.

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COVER PHOTO: L-R Isabelle Trezise, Elly Miechel and Nell Ryan achieved excellent results in the recent national Indonesian Embassy speech competition. The full article is on the back page.

From the Principal

Since the last issue of *Nexus*, the only constants of the pandemic have been its unpredictability and resilience. In late May we were hoping that the worst was over and that there would be minimal disruptions for the remainder of the year. Sadly, at the time of writing, the virus is literally on our doorstep in Shepparton.

Over recent decades Australia's quality of life has improved remarkably in terms of life expectancy, income, wealth, education and health care. Most of our population has not experienced war or mass disease. This resulted in a somewhat blasé approach to risks such as pandemics, despite the warnings for decades from scientists. It also enabled a long-term underinvestment in Victorian public health agencies. In this affluent climate conspiracy theories, populist leaders and evangelical influencers have bloomed. They have encouraged distrust of science, expertise and government. This proved a fertile environment for the pandemic to exploit.

At the same time, the spread of the virus, particularly Victoria's second wave, has created a new-found respect for the evidence-based advice of health experts trained in the traditional sciences. The pandemic has also shone a positive light on the essential role of the public service and government leaders in a crisis. On many occasions this year, Australia's much maligned politicians have consistently outperformed some of the most high-profile leaders of other nations. While it has not been perfect, our leaders have generally tried to act in the best interest of the Australian people. Australia's low case numbers reflect these efforts by our leaders to manage the pandemic following science informed approaches.

The pandemic has also placed the critical role of schools in society at the forefront of community awareness. A deeper respect has emerged for the work of teachers. Their knowledge, skill and professionalism is now viewed by many with awe. Equally society now has a greater appreciation for the importance of the social engagement and co-curricular experiences provided by school programmes. School communities are one of the most important places where young people learn to weigh-up decisions about their own behaviour and the interests of fellow community members.

The pandemic has also reinforced the key significance of a high-quality education for Australia's young people and our nation's future. An education grounded in the key disciplines of English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities develop the capacity of young people to analyse arguments and evaluate evidence. These are powerful defences against the kind of populism and quackery we have seen in recent years. Equally they are vital capabilities when making important decisions regarding behaviour that affects their own and other people's health. This is surely the learning that matters in the lives our young people are likely to lead. The Coronavirus, while causing enormous hardship, will hopefully also result in both school education and the profession of teaching being held in the regard they deserve.

Semper Ulterius

Mark Torriero,
Principal





Offering assistance to GV Health during COVID-19

Goulburn Valley Grammar School has been putting its 3D printer to excellent use by creating ear saver straps and donating them to the health care workers at Goulburn Valley Health (GV Health).

The unique personal protective equipment assists with the correct wearing of face masks and to eliminate fatigue issues associated with continuous wear of common ear loop surgical face masks.

GV Health Executive Director Clinical Operations, Donna Sherringham said the initiative had proven to be a great success with the medical staff able to adjust the face masks to fit their faces properly, ensuring full protection from any infection.

“The ear saver straps are a very popular item not only at GV Health, but other health services around the country as they are extremely comfortable for staff that has to wear face masks for long periods of time,” Ms Sherringham said.

“We are so thrilled that one of our local schools was able to undertake such a great initiative and we sincerely thank

Goulburn Valley Grammar School for its ongoing support in supplying the straps to GV Health.”

GVGS was originally approached by a local medical professional enquiring about the possibility of producing face shields. While researching the various face shield designs available, GVGS small team that came up with the idea of using the 3D printing equipment to help during the COVID-19 pandemic identified the ear saver devices as being another potentially useful item and suggested printing some.

GVGS Head of Information Systems, Trevor Pye said that while the ear savers were not the primary drivers of the project, they have turned out to be the most useful items.

“With 3D printing being used in a lot of industries now, GVGS has invested in this technology to provide students with an opportunity to become familiar with the concepts and processes involved, Mr Pye said.

“The opportunity to work with GV Health has been really exciting, showing students a practical application of the

technology with the added bonus of community service.”

Two thousand of the colourful, plastic devices were hand-delivered to GV Health in June, with another two thousand about to arrive at the health service any day.

“They have been so popular with everyone using them, that we had to put in a request to make us some more,” Ms Sherringham said.

“Luckily GVGS was more than happy to help us out again and we cannot thank the school enough for their innovation and generosity.”

PICTURED: GV Health Executive Director Clinical Operations, Donna Sherringham and GVGS Head of Information Systems, Trevor Pye.

GVGS Virtual Classroom Programme

At the time of publication, the school had completed two separate periods of offsite learning due to the Coronavirus pandemic. For most students, this totalled 15 weeks and 2 days or 1½ terms.

The first remote learning period ran from March 17 to May 22 with the second phase from 5 August to 12 October.

The Virtual Classroom Programme was a detailed set of protocols and guidelines designed by staff to ensure a successful remote learning experience. The Virtual Classroom Programme utilised existing digital platforms of Agora and Zoom. The protocols for teachers and students established how classes and the school day would operate in a virtual context.

The aim was to maintain the learning continuity, purpose and routine for our students during a disrupted year.

Early on we identified that remote learning would involve a range of challenges for students, families and teaching staff. In order to maximise the efficacy of the programme the school monitored closely the perceptions and wellbeing of the school community. Surveys were distributed to students, staff and parents at numerous phases throughout the year. The information was collected and analysed by the leadership team. Student voice was particularly powerful in identifying areas for improvement such as management of workload and fatigue. This resulted in significant adjustments

being made to the programme's protocols throughout the year.

While we never expected remote learning to be a replacement for on-site learning, its impact exceeded our expectations. This reflected the incredible patience and goodwill of our students. It equally reaffirmed the inspirational hard work, professionalism and flexibility of our staff. Our teachers took risks and were forced to work in completely different ways to normal. They often had to make significant adaptations at short notice.

The success of the programme was also a result of excellent Information Systems infrastructure. This has been achieved through years of strategic planning and ongoing monitoring and improvement

23,075
Virtual Classroom
lessons

15,515,825
Virtual Classroom
participation minutes

387,491
Virtual Classroom
student participants

**Co-curricular
Programme**

2,918
Virtual Music
Tuition lessons

340
Virtual Voice and
Communication
lessons





by our Information Systems team. The complete implementation of Agora prior to the pandemic was a critical step which dramatically enhanced communication and learning management for students, staff and families.

On behalf of the school I congratulate and thank all our staff, particularly our teachers and the Information Systems team. In addition, the oversight and leadership from the Directors of Learning Kath D'Elia and Tim James throughout the year has been invaluable in managing the remote learning experience.

Parent Teacher Interviews

65 staff held **2,392** meetings resulting in **11,960** minutes of interviews

Parent survey

94%

of students felt comfortable learning at home

Student Voice

1,074

responses collected via Virtual Programme Survey

98% Student attendance

15

Virtual Assemblies

22,264

Virtual Assembly community attendances



Cognizance tools for learning



by Ms Kath D'Elia,
Director of Learning
Senior Years

Do you know what changes occur to the neurons in your brain when you learn something new? Are you able to remember new information easily, or do you have trouble recalling concepts you have just learned? Do you think people are born to be good or bad at school with no ability to change their achievement levels?

In 2020, for the first time, GVGS was invited to take part in an exciting partnership with Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) called The Cognizance Project.

Facilitated by renowned neuropsychologist Dr Jared Cooney Horvath, The Cognizance Project provides students with the tools to take charge of their own learning. Students learn how the brain works, what rules guide its function and how to leverage these rules in study and life. Cognizance also allows teachers to improve their ability to coach students on metacognition.

Beginning with an introductory session for teachers in Term 1, a key feature of the project is helping teachers see how they can help students develop metacognitive skills that will last them throughout their entire schooling lives and beyond.

After that, Dr Jared was set to travel to Shepparton to run in-school sessions with all of our Year 9 students learning about how the brain works, how it can be utilised to maximise academic success, and how knowledge about the processes involved in learning can help us to learn more efficiently and effectively.

These sessions ended up being held virtually over Zoom sessions due to the Coronavirus restrictions. It was a testament to the quality of the program that despite the sessions being held online most students reported very high levels of engagement and interest in the program.

"I just wanted to let you know that I found the program really fascinating and enjoyable! I'd definitely be keen to see Dr Jared again next year, as it was super valuable, thought-provoking and interesting, and one of the highlights of online learning for me. Thanks for organising it!" said Year 9 student Imogen Templeton when asked about the effectiveness of the program.

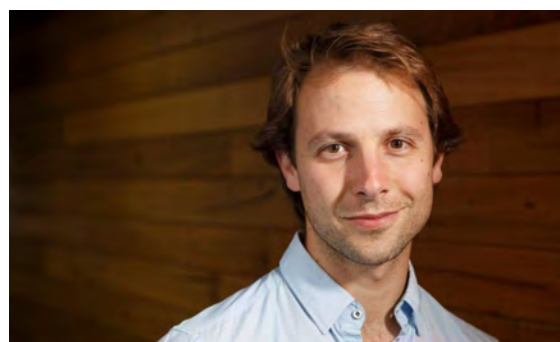
Another Year 9 student, Millar Carter, commented, "I think the Program was really worth it and I learnt heaps from this experience,



I think it would be fantastic for Dr Jared to come to school to speak to us again next year.”

Students explored concepts related to the brain and memory such as what happens neurologically when an error is made. When students make an error in thinking and this is pointed out through feedback or becomes clear through subsequent learning, the brain essentially has two choices to make – we can engage with the error or we can avoid it. Although we generally find it more comfortable to go on ignoring the error – and thus believing incorrect information – if we actively engage with it we are very likely to remember the new information correctly. Knowing this can help students to make an active decision to engage with errors when they get the ‘funny feeling’ that accompanies realising they have made an error.

Throughout the program, students submitted ongoing reflections about what they were learning and how this applied to them. Some of their comments are included below.



The Cognizance Project is lead by Dr Jared Cooney Horvath. Dr Jared Cooney Horvath has a PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience from the University of Melbourne and an MEd in Mind, Brain & Education from Harvard University. He has worked as a teacher, curriculum developer, brain researcher, and is currently an educational researcher at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.

For more information visit <https://is.vic.edu.au/programs/cognizance/>

My mum is always going on about how important sleep is. I guess I knew it was important for physical health, but I didn't realise how important sleep (and especially REM sleep) is for consolidating learning.

I definitely agree that it is much better to space out some study rather than trying to cram. I didn't know there was a proper reason for this – because it allows the neural chains in your brain to be ‘refreshed’ and that helps them to get stronger just like doing bicep curls makes your muscles stronger each time you do them.

I didn't realise before that doing 5 blocks of 15 minutes of sustained, focused, genuine study would lead to 50% more recall than doing 5 hours of study with my attention divided (by looking at my phone or other distractions). But now that I think about it, this really makes sense. Sometimes I sit down on the weekend to do a full day of “study”, afterwards I can't remember anything from it. But if I spend a short amount of time really focused on one task, I always remember that well.

I really agreed when Dr Jared said we aren't good at transferring information from one context to another. I found this with virtual learning – I would sit at home on my bed to do virtual learning, but found I couldn't remember that content very well when we got back to school. Yet I could remember things from Term 1 quite easily that I had learnt in the same classroom at school, and sometimes I found just looking around the classroom triggered my memories.

I have been trying out the recall and feedback activities suggested by Dr Jared. I get my parents to ask me questions about school and I try to remember as much as I can without looking in my textbook. I've only been doing this since our last session two weeks ago but I can already see it is making a difference.

It was nice to hear Dr Jared talking about Narratives and Stories – how humans think in stories. Whenever I hear a story, I find it easy to remember, but I find slabs of information from textbooks hard to recall. I didn't realise this was the same for everyone, so knowing that turning information into stories will help me remember and there is a reason for it, is good to know.

This information was gathered from anonymous student feedback.

James Nethersole



While COVID-19 has meant James Nethersole's School Captain experience has been very different to most, the Ardmona local has taken the year and its challenges in his stride.

With his two sisters Sarah, Class of 2015, and Ellie, Class of 2018, awarded Prefect positions in their year levels, it was no surprise the talented footballer and budding businessman followed in their footsteps.

However, he admits the School Captain title was one he never expected to land.

"I was definitely very surprised when it happened, a bit nervous as well but a fair bit of excitement," James said.

"My sisters were both Prefects so I thought if they can do it I can do it."

James joined GVGS in Year 7 after attending St Mary's Primary School in Mooroopna.

While his education was always top priority, James also ensured he found time for his love of sport, competing in many interschool competitions along with playing football and tennis in his spare time.

"I played in the interschool competitions from Year 8... I love my sport I played footy

for Mooroopna and tennis for Shepparton Lawn," he said.

"I definitely spend a fair bit of time playing sport, I really enjoy it."

Being assigned the role of School Captain in late 2019, James said he knew positive mental health would be a focus for him during his time in the role.

Teaming up with Nell Ryan the pair decided to focus their efforts on improving the mental health of their cohort, something which James admits was not always discussed.

"We have tried to focus on mental health this year, we decided that at the start which became more important with COVID-19 and everyone being very isolated," he said.

"We started a few initiatives and we have tried to keep some sort of engagement... we have also sent out a few letters from Nell and I reminding everyone of the importance of looking after yourself, staying connected and checking in on each other.

"Coming from a country area mental health is not necessarily at the front of everyone's minds so I think continuing to raise awareness of it and making it a part of everyday life is important."

While previous School Captains have had many roles to play during popular event days and school competitions, James admitted it was disappointing he and Nell missed out on most of these due to COVID-19.

Despite the difficulties James ensured he made the best out of every opportunity, including many virtual assemblies to engage with other students online.

James' VCE subjects are English, Maths Methods, Accounting, Economics, and Industry and Enterprise.

While he said he is unsure what the future holds, he is hoping his love of business and relevant subject choices will help inspire a career he enjoys.

"I'm hoping to do Commerce next year at university, but after that I'm not all that sure - I know I like all the business subjects so

something broad will hopefully let me figure out what I enjoy most and decide from there," James said.

He also plans to fit in some more travelling once he has finished school, with the 2018 GVGS Italy trip inspiring him to see more of the world.

"I went on the Italy trip in Year 10, it was amazing. Two weeks of travelling around Italy it doesn't get much better than that all while eating some of the best food going around," James said.

"Hopefully I will find some time after COVID-19 to travel the world and see all the sights."

Looking back over his time at GVGS James said he would miss the people the most.

Describing the school's culture as welcoming and kind, he believes the students and teachers were what made his time at the school so memorable.

He said the opportunities offered at the school along with the warm sense of community were things that made GVGS stand out.

"In general I think how nice people are, it's a really welcoming community and something that is not probably so common in other schools," James said.

"I will always remember the people, and the teachers they have been amazing really especially in Year 12 and during these COVID-19 times."

When asked what his advice would be for the 2021 School Captains, James said he would encourage them to remain positive and focused on their mental wellbeing.

Having learnt the year goes faster than most, James said he would also tell them to be present and take any opportunity that comes their way.

"Hopefully it is not the same as this year with COVID-19. I'd say just make it your own, and have fun," James said.

"Practice what you're doing, do your best and be true to who you are."

Premier's VCE Award achievers



The Premier's Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Awards for 2019, have been announced. Each year the Victorian Department of Education and Training recognises excellence in learning achievement demonstrated by students undertaking the VCE in the previous year through the Premier's VCE Awards.

There were 276 Study Awards announced based on the outstanding efforts of students in their 2019 VCE study scores. Due to Coronavirus, the Department of Education and Training has decided to postpone the presentation ceremony until further notice.

Premier's VCE Awards are presented to the students achieving the highest results in each VCE study in a given year. Over the years, a significant number of GVGS students have achieved this outstanding distinction. This year was a particularly significant one for our School with a total of four Premier's VCE Awards won by three students.

We congratulate each of these students on their dedication to learning and the organisation and discipline they

Recipients	VCE Study	Teacher
Meg Eishold	Industry & Enterprise	Mrs Judy Grace
Farhan Islam	Mathematical Methods	Mr Gary Warner
Farhan Islam	Specialist Mathematics	Mrs Cheryl Garratt
Eliza York	Industry & Enterprise	Mrs Judy Grace

demonstrated throughout their studies. They have seized the opportunities presented and made the very most of them. I am sure they can take confidence from this recognition in their continuing efforts in 2020 and beyond. Their examples are certainly ones that inspire students and staff alike.

These exceptional achievements also reflect the outstanding quality of teaching provided by our staff. On behalf of the School community, I congratulate teachers Mrs Cheryl Garratt, Mrs Judy Grace and Mr Gary Warner. This is a very exciting year for our Mathematics teachers being the first time a GVGS student has achieved a Premier's VCE Award in either Mathematical Methods

or Specialist Mathematics. The school notes the outstanding effort of Mrs Judy Grace, who in her 36th year of service to GVGS taught Unit 3&4 Industry and Enterprise for the first time and had two students achieve Premier's VCE Awards. This continued the fine achievements of Mrs Mary Bayly, who has a long history of teaching recipients of the Premier's VCE Award and was on long service leave in 2019.

The school officially congratulated the students and staff on this achievement during a recent Virtual Assembly.

L-R: Meg Eishold, Eliza York and Farhan Islam.

Furphy Literary Awards success

On Saturday, July 25 the Furphy Literary Award winners were announced via an online presentation ceremony. Some 230 short stories and poems from young people in the Goulburn Valley were judged in this year's competition. Categories included Junior (12 and under) Short Story, Youth (13-18) Short Story and Youth (13-18) Poetry. Impressively 7 of the 9 placegetters across the 3 categories were GVGS students. In addition to this, several GVGS students were shortlisted in the various categories.

Senior English Department Co-ordinator, Mr Sean Templeton believes these achievements are a reflection of the school's commitment to and the student's passion for writing at GVGS. "I am immensely proud of the work done by our students for this competition. Student writing has a freshness and fearlessness which is inspiring; I am impressed by the variety and sophistication of the pieces entered, exemplified in these winning entries," he said. Mr Templeton says writing had been particularly important in 2020, "In a year of isolation and social distancing, writing offers a chance for students to form connections with readers by exploring stories, ideas and imagination. Rather than isolating, students write about human experiences and emotions, bringing writer and

reader closer together". Each category and the prize-winning GVGS students are listed below:

Youth Short Story

In the Youth Short Story category there were 56 entrants. Elly Miechel (Year 12) won first place with her entry titled "An Atlantic Night". Layla O'Callaghan (Year 9) was awarded third place with her piece titled "To Love a Faery".

Youth Poetry

A total of 57 students entered the Youth Poetry category. First prize was awarded to Miya Smith (GVGS Class of 2019) with her poem titled "Persimmons". Ben Shelton (Year 9), came in second with "Colours of a Lakeside Life" and Layla O'Callaghan (Year 9) was third with "The Flavours of Demurity".

Junior Short Story

A total of 115 entrants submitted works for the Junior Short Story. First prize was awarded to Lila Plunkett (Year 5) for her work titled "Off Track". Second place went to Alice Bouchier (Year 7) for "Fortune Favours the Bold".

Elly Miechel's entry has been printed here for our Nexus readers. To read the additional winning stories visit the Furphy Literary Awards website.

PICTURED FROM TOP: Elly Miechel, Layla O'Callaghan, Miya Smith, Ben Shelton, Lila Plunkett and Alice Bouchier.



AN ATLANTIC NIGHT by Elly Miechel

The cabin door burst open.

"Ma cherie, wake the children. Hurry — we have little time."

Pierre strode the 10 feet across the cabin's wooden boards and placed a cold, sweaty hand against my perplexed cheek.

I blinked, "What is it? What is the matter? I — I've just put them back to sleep." I nodded towards Colette and Louis, their small, sleeping figures dozing soundly in the bunk.

"Wake them. We must hurry." His eyes, the colour of the sapphire sea below us, met my own with such intensity that, for a moment, the breath stopped dead in my throat.

Somewhere, buried deep in a subliminal consciousness, I knew what was happening. We'd all felt the jolt; every cabin aboard the ship had shaken, menacing and deliberate, waking me from a nervous sleep.

My wide eyes locked with his. "It's sinking."

Pierre gripped the iron bedpost. My whole body seemed to convulse within, churning and threatening to tear me apart. It couldn't be happening. Surely. Surely there must be some mistake.

"I was on deck, Blanche — I saw the ice debris. It's serious. There's a panic. We must get up on deck before they close the gates." He started grabbing clothes, books, and other belongings, jamming them into our worn, leather suitcase without hesitation.

I felt my blood run cold. It was as if the iceberg had missed the ship and rammed into my trembling body instead, knocking the breath from my lungs and rendering me speechless. The cabin, small beforehand, now seemed claustrophobic.

My dilated pupils drank in the sight of the children — Louis' arm wrapped protectively around his younger sister as they drifted through a distant land, many miles from the disaster they would wake to.

"Colette," I croaked, gently caressing my daughter's silken, blonde curls. "Colette, you must wake up, mon cherie."

Her young eyelids dreamily fluttered open as she shifted under the blanket, stirring Louis as she stretched. Their crystal irises gazed at me, disoriented, and my heart melted in an effusion of motherly affection. I had to get them off the ship; nothing else mattered.

Louis' cough broke the trance. "Mama? Papa? What is going on?" His smooth

forehead folded quizzically as his eyes darted from one parent to the next, searching for answers.

Without leaving the suitcases, Pierre glanced over at Louis, a weak smile barely concealing the terror I knew he was feeling. “Louis, you must be a big boy now. There is a problem with the ship, but I’m sure,” he glanced at me, “I’m sure the captain will fix it.” I could hear the quiver in his voice.

The yellow lamp suddenly flickered, leaving us, for a moment, in total blackness. Colette whimpered, unaccustomed to being woken twice in one night.

“But, Mama? Will we still get to see Amerique? Our new home?” probed Louis, his small hand creeping tentatively into my own like a lock and key.

I squeezed it, mustering a contrived smile, and soothed, “Oui cherie.”

Was I lying through my teeth? No point in speculating — there simply wasn’t the time.

The stark white corridors of E Deck seemed to close upon us, engulfing our bodies within an eternal snowy maze. Pierre, the suitcase in one hand and clutching Louis with the other, strode briskly in front, stopping only to turn and check that Colette and I were paces behind. Despite my ethereal, deafeningly silent surroundings, my insides screamed with adrenaline. I held Colette tightly to my chest, trembling and tense. The suffocatingly narrow corridors wound left, right, right, left as we passed cabins upon cabins, soundless with sleeping families.

I could sense my husband thinking it too — if we woke them, they’d at least have a chance.

“Pierre? We must warn them.” The thought of all those innocent lives drowning in their slumber made me nauseous.

He stopped then, turning to me with eyes that poured with sorrow. “Non — if we wake them, we’ll never get off this ship.”

Pain, sharp and bitter as icicles, pierced my heart. He was right. We needed to escape the lower decks before the crowds began to swarm and the crew closed the gates. We needed to fight to survive.

It had been a challenging Parisian winter. The snow had fallen thickly, smothering the streets in a layer of white slush. In our bare apartment, Colette and Louis had been forced to spend the days in their bed beneath a thin blanket, curling up together to keep their young bodies from freezing. I was powerless. Pierre couldn’t find work, and he relied on his sister for the few supplies and food we had. It seemed

an endless fight for survival. And so, when we first heard the news that a ship, the RMS Titanic — the largest passenger vessel ever to journey the seas — was heading to America, the land of a new life, Pierre and I had bundled up the children and boarded a train to the Cherbourg docks. Unsinkable, they’d claimed. We couldn’t believe our luck as the majestic ship’s horn blasted its arrival. Our future lay before us like the dazzling blue jewel of water. It had seemed a dream.

Biting wind stung our stunned faces. On the upper deck, masses of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, swathed in long greatcoats and furs, bustled about. From beneath our feet, the big ship groaned. It really was sinking.

Taking in his surroundings like a whip, Pierre signalled to a queue forming beside the railing. Crewmen were rapidly untangling the ropes around lifeboats, their panicked faces red against the black starry night.

“Like I said ‘afore, mister, first-class passengers only.”

The ruddy youth looked us up and down, screwing his eyes up at our patched coats and worn leather boots.

Calmly, Pierre managed a smile. “Please, sir. Only four of us,” he pleaded, in his best English.

The crewman stepped back. “Frenchies, ay? Listen. I don’t give a rat’s tail if there’s a hundred of ya — like I said, we’re only taking first class. Wait ya turn.” He pushed Pierre aside and beckoned for a young couple, guiding them into a lifeboat.

Fuming, Pierre grabbed my hand and nudged us over to a vacant wooden bench. I sat down, exhausted by the long walk up to the deck, my frigid muscles slowly easing their tight grip on Colette. The children yawned and shivered, burying their cold faces into our coats. There was nothing else to do but wait. Looking around at the orderly scene before me — courteous ladies and gentlemen waiting patiently in straight lines as crewmen directed them to lifeboats — I sensed the chaos was yet to begin.

I gazed at Pierre, the one solid space in this nightmare. He kneaded my raw fingers soothingly, and I nestled my weary head on his firm shoulder. There was no horizon beyond the ship’s railing, only infinite darkness; my eyes seemed to lose themselves in the ebony night.

The ship was motionless, floating listlessly on the enormous black sea. It was as if we were in a kind of stasis. The monster below creaked and moaned, tilting its body so that we had to grasp at the bench to stop from sliding. Elegant ladies gasped at the sudden

movement and clung to their husbands in fear. What was to become of us? Were we to be devoured by the savage beast, choking on saltwater? It couldn’t be a dream — the wind bit too viciously for my imagination.

“Calling all women and children! All women and children on deck,” yelled the crewman closest to us. Down the length of the ship, others took up the same call, and suddenly the air became a salty thick cacophony of cries, moans and tears as fathers parted from their families and sons kissed their mothers goodbye.

My heart stopped. Pierre.

Bitter tears blinded my vision. Pierre, fat droplets in his eyes, kissed me and the children, swallowing the urge to scream. Louis and Colette started crying too, clutching their strong father, unsure as to what was happening but alarmed by their parents’ show of emotion. It was surreal.

“I can’t, I can’t, non, non,” I sobbed through gritted teeth.

Pierre grabbed me firmly and fought the lump that rose in his throat. “Oui, you can, Blanche. You must. Be strong for our children, and I’ll see you in Amerique. I love you, ma cherie.”

Just as he bent to kiss me for a final time, a loud bang rang out across the deck. Screams cracked the heavy air.

“Somebody shot a crewman!” a man yelled.

People started shoving forcefully and pushing their way towards lifeboats. I was swept up in the moving chaos, too stunned to fight back. In the mayhem, I glanced around me. They were gone.

“Pierre! Pierre!” I shrieked.

Before I had a chance to grasp what was happening, someone pushed me into a lifeboat. The hard wooden boards thumped my shoulder, and burning pain sliced through my arm. I could barely feel it.

“Cut the ropes!”

Crewmen flashed before me, swiftly severing the hemp fibres with glinting knives. To my horror, the wooden boat began to descend. I lay, dazed and staring up at the ship’s railing, my heart pounding into oblivion.

“Non, non, stop,” I mumbled helplessly.

The boat continued its journey down the side of the black ship, jolting, sporadically, as the ropes unravelled. Through the blurry flood of tears I made out my family, their small heads peeping over the railing at me, mouths open in silent screams.

‘Smart glasses’ give vision to life



Creating visual prostheses where the objects themselves seem as if they are alerting people has been just one of Morgan Talbot’s (pictured) achievements.

The former GVGS student, whose family returned to North America in 2011 after he had completed Year 10, says, “Imagine the device saying the word ‘table’ and it appears as if the table in front of you was actually saying it. It will allow people to identify what’s around them as they navigate through the world. There are all kinds of ways to expand on it – reading barcodes on products in a supermarket, so it can tell you if that’s the can of tomatoes what you wanted, or if it’s your friend Bob in front of you ... the possibilities are endless.”

After finishing his schooling in the USA, Morgan studied neuroscience at Brown University, followed by an MD-PhD in the Harvard Medical School-Massachusetts Institute of Technology Health Sciences and Technology program. His studies across neural-data

analysis, computer vision, software engineering and behavioural testing of novel user-interfaces all came together in developing the Intelligent Visual Prosthesis – or “smart glasses”.

Developed for US veterans with funding support from the Providence VA Medical Center in Rhode Island, Morgan, who now lives in Boston (Massachusetts) says the goal is for the technology to eventually be applicable for anybody who has visual impairment.

“Another really useful application is clothing colour. Many people have trouble matching colours in their wardrobe, and it was a lot of fun to develop what colour even meant – at times it was a crazy experience to describe two different blacks!”

With his warm, gentle smile and highly empathetic nature, Morgan found himself fascinated by how the brain works – and wanted to create ways to help people from a holistic human-behaviour and mental-health perspective.

“In high school – especially at GVGS – I’d been really interested in computer programming, electronics and building stuff, so more an engineering direction. I went to Brown thinking that I was going to do medical school, which is all about biology, so in my mind was like ‘that’s okay to give that stuff up now’. But then I found this project, which is a lot about biology and neuroscience, and also very much about technology, software and hardware developments. I couldn’t have predicted at the time just how I would be able to combine so many of my interests into one project.”

Morgan says he hopes the device can help more people reach a point of independence that allows them to explore the world however they like, or makes it easier for them to build up independence skills at a pace that suits them – but he notes that’s different for everyone.

“I began working on something that would help a person find their cup on

the table when they’re eating, because I thought how annoying that would be. After hours and hours of work, I spoke to somebody who is blind; she said that wasn’t a problem – you just leave it in the same place every time!”

As well as the “smart glasses”, Morgan is part of a team developing Sophya. The educational software combining video and PDF used by some 2,000 medical students is in an early-stage start-up founded by a Harvard Medical School graduate, who is a friend of his parents.

“It’s been really fun to work on. I think that having some insights like this is going to be valuable as I go forward because I’m quite interested in medical and education technology and how they might combine.”

Still with a slight Australian accent on some words, Morgan explains how GVGS contributed to his development as a person.

“I think that one of the biggest things was just not being afraid to explore lots of different interests – even if they don’t seem to connect with each other. That was really celebrated at GVGS, such as being involved in both music and science.

GVGS allowed me to explore all of my different interests, encouraging different ways of thinking about, and engaging with, the world. It has certainly set me up.”

He relays “a bunch of funny memories” from junior production, names Eisteddfod as an annual highlight, being on the debating team, taking part in ensemble, building robots and launching rockets in science class.

“There were really so many amazing teachers, but the one who made an especially big impact on me is Mr Humphries who retired as Vice Principal shortly before I left the school. He was an amazing maths teacher but he taught me a lot about character and what it means to be a good person in ways that I didn’t even realise until much later.”

Mr Darlington with students from the Class of 1989-1990 at the Shepparton Sports Stadium.



Foundation staff

Mr Darlington

Foundation staff Mr Ian Darlington commenced teaching at GVGS before the school buildings were complete. Here he reflects on the schools early development.

Ian Darlington began working at Goulburn Valley Grammar School in 1982 as a foundation staff member for the then newly established school, teaching physical education to a cohort of less than 100 students from Years 5 - 8. "We [the teachers] all came from different backgrounds," Mr Darlington says. "Some of us came from the education department, some from private schools... it was a mixture of men and women."

Prior to commencing his role with GVGS, Mr Darlington relocated to Shepparton in search of a 'tree change' after moving from the UK to Australia in 1977. "My wife and I decided we'd rather live in the country than in the city," he says, "I was lucky enough that [inaugural principal] Vic Ryall offered me a job."

Having previously worked in both Melbourne and Swan Hill, Mr Darlington stepped into his new role without any precedents. "Vic Ryall was really good and let us do our own thing," he says. "Obviously we had a curriculum to follow, but he allowed us a lot of freedom as well which was great."

Mr Darlington initially taught physical education classes to his students at a local football oval while all other classes were carried out from inside the adjacent club rooms, a far cry from the modern facilities we see today at the north end of Verney Road. "The best part for me

was when we first started and we were at Deakin Reserve," he says. "It really was quite weird that we were teaching 90 students out of the club rooms... that was very different."

Mr Darlington recalls the early years of GVGS' involvement in local interschool and weekend sporting activities and the initial struggles the teams faced. "We only had 90 students and so we usually lost, but they always tried so hard," he says. "Sometimes they said they knew they were about to lose a game by eight goals, but they would still go out and give it their all regardless." He notes the importance of these losses and how each loss built resilience and character for the students. "They learned early on how to lose gracefully, and then they became gracious winners," he says. "Everyone always gave 100% regardless."

The inaugural group of students undertook classes from Deakin Reserve for approximately six months before relocating permanently to the current campus. "When we first got there it was just the basics," he says. "Everything was in that one area around the Copulos Area - that was the whole school."

Arguably, Mr Darlington's biggest legacy is the annual GVGS Eisteddfod. Teaming up with colleague David Garwood, the two Welshman worked together to integrate the foreign festival into the school calendar. "Where I come from

in Wales the Eisteddfods are a big thing in schools," Mr Darlington says. "They [the GVGS Eisteddfods] aren't exactly the same as the traditional Eisteddfods in Wales, but they do follow the same lines... we modified it a bit to suit an Australia school." He fondly recalls that due to the small size of the school at the time everyone was 'more than happy from the word go' to be involved in the festivities of the yearly event. "It's become a part of the school now and everyone enjoys having it, which is great," he says.

After spending a decade developing teaching precedents and playing a key role in establishing the school traditions we still celebrate today at GVGS, Mr Darlington relocated to Saudi Arabia where he taught at the King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals in Dhahran. He then moved back to Australia and spent time running a private business in Queensland for seven years. A keen traveller, Mr Darlington spent time teaching across the world and continent hopping between Nigeria, Arnhem Land and Pakistan before settling back along the Gold Coast hinterland in 2017. "That's why I came to Australia in the first place," he says. "I really enjoy travelling and I've got to see plenty of the world." Nowadays, Mr Darlington enjoys semi-retirement in North Tamborine, Queensland with his wife Val. —————>

Looking back on his time at GVGS almost 40 years ago, Mr Darlington has many fond memories and is proud of how the school has progressed over the years, saying that the facilities available to students today are 'brilliant'. "The best thing about the school was that it was always a family school and everybody looked out for each other," he says. "It really developed that way because that's what we [the teachers] wanted."

Having taught all over the world throughout his long career as a physical education teacher, he proudly says that GVGS tops the list. "As far as schools go – I've worked in lots of different schools, in lots of different countries – GVGS is still the best one in my mind out of all the ones I've worked at," he says. "I've got lots of happy memories of that place...the vast majority of students looked forward to coming to school every day and thought it was a pretty good place to be."



ABOVE: Mr Darlington was instrumental in establishing the GVGS Eisteddfod. Early Eisteddfods were held in the Copulos area and later the school would put up a marquee for the event.

BELOW: Mr Darlington is pictured with fellow foundation staff members. **BACK ROW L-R:** Mr Bob Buntine, Mr Alan Humphries, Mr Ian Darlington, Mr Paul Freeman, Mr David Garwood, Mr Geoff Shacklock and Mrs Barbie Gillett. **FRONT ROW L-R:** Mrs Bev Manson, Ms Peta Kinmond, Mr Vic Ryall, Mr John Kaye, Ms Gayle Joyce and Ms Carrie Michael.





Farewell Mr Chris Atkins

Immaculate gardens and high-class facilities were all in a day's work for Chris Atkins.

After 20 years as Property Manager at Goulburn Valley Grammar School Chris worked his final shift on June 19.

Beginning at the school in 1999 before being appointed the first ever Property Manager in 2001, Chris says it was not an easy decision to make.

"I actually envisaged retiring from GVGS," he said.

"However, situations in life change along with personal priorities and a change was needed for me."

Chris began at GVGS as the Seymour school bus driver however he quickly took up general maintenance duties throughout the day.

He soon spent many hours mowing lawns and ensuring the school's gardens were always well maintained.

His attention to detail and commitment to the school's facilities soon saw him offered the role of Property Manager where he led the Property and Works department through a major construction phase in the school's history.

"I was there at a time of huge growth with regards to facilities and grounds work and it was a real pleasure to see what we achieved as a school community," Chris said.

"The way that GVGS has grown of the last 20 years or so is truly remarkable."

While he can list many key projects at the school, he said some of the highlights were the Ian and Robyn Rule resource Centre, the W.B Hunter Music Centre, Sports Centre and redevelopment of the Administration Building.

The role also saw him at the forefront of the response to many emergency incidents over the past two decades including storms, floods and security issues.

While completion of any project was always rewarding, Chris said the highlight of the role was working alongside other like-minded and hard-working team members.

"Building a team that always put the school first was one of the best parts of the job," he said.

"I had a fantastic group of people on the Property Maintenance team who I

am extremely proud of and who have become very good friends."

It is these colleagues and friends he said he missed the most upon leaving GVGS.

He has since transitioned into self-employment where he has opened his own earth moving business.

Looking back at his time at GVGS Chris said he was proud of where the school had come and the progress in the facilities it now had to offer students and families.

"The friends that I have made during my time at the school, some of them were staff and others were trades people, I have made some lifelong friendships because of my association with GVGS and I do miss seeing these people on a regular basis," he said.

"It feels great to know that I was able to contribute to the growth of the school over such a long period."



Megan Fisher, Shepparton News

Stefan takes Australian rules football to Switzerland

Class of 2013 alumni Stefan Burgener now calls Switzerland home. The following article by **Aydin Payne**, printed in the March 11 edition of the *Shepparton News*, gives some insight as to what he has been up to.

Whether it be an athlete or not, each sporting code across the world has its own trailblazer.

They are always the pioneer long remembered in a sport's history for how their determination and contribution helped shape the sport.

Their hard work means their names are forever etched into the sport's folklore.

And for Australian Rules football in Switzerland, Stefan Burgener is the latest innovative figure of the sport.

In 2016, the former Kialla East resident and AFL Switzerland president took it upon himself to reboot the foundations of football in the country after a brief movement faltered in 2011.

Two years before the game disappeared from Switzerland, Burgener's family sold its farm south of Shepparton and moved to his father's country of birth.

In his adopted town of Winterthur, just north of the city Zürich, Burgener pulled together a group of his friends and began teaching Australian football in the town's parks.

"I had stopped playing soccer and I was searching the internet for a sport that would interest me," Burgener, 25, said.

"I found that there was a football team from Lugano in the Italian speaking area of Switzerland that had started a team for a couple of years.

"But that finished in 2011 and I soon realised that there was nothing else going on.

"And in 2016 I found out about AFL Europe and the Euro Cup and, so, I kind of went from there really."

But it wasn't until the following year that the AFL Switzerland wheels began to slowly move and a national Swiss team contesting the Euro Cup seemed possible.

When the tournament in Bordeaux finally rolled around, Switzerland had enough numbers to participate and a football side from Switzerland was revived.

"There were 11 of us at that 2017 Euro Cup and for every single player, it was our first competitive game of football," Burgener said with a laugh.

"Myself and my brother never played a game in Australia, we only played Auskick, and the rest were learning football from us.

"We lost every game, but the experience was the main thing, we went in with no expectations and just to have fun really.

"That first tournament in Bourdeaux is a very special memory."

It is safe to say football in Switzerland would never be the same after that tournament.

The national team went back to the Euro Cup the following year and again last year, although in last

year's edition a women's side went for the first time.

In the months following the 2018 Euro Cup and the lead-up to a historic 2019, Burgener and AFL Switzerland reached a memorable milestone.

The inaugural AFL Switzerland season — consisting of five rounds — was thrashed out between Burgener's club the Winterthur Lions, Basel Dragons and the Geneva Jets.

Burgener, who founded the Lions more than two years ago, said the growth of football in Switzerland since the 2018 Euro Cup had really taken off.

"It's gone from 15 blokes in Winterthur running around a park, to 90 players in the league, all in the matter of 18 months," he said.

"We have four clubs all up, with the Northern Bears competing in the reserves competition and a new side, the Zurich Giants will enter this year which is really exciting."

But it hasn't all been smooth sailing for Burgener and the sporting code in Switzerland.

Burgener said bringing a game played predominately on an oval ground, mixed with player numbers and off-field components had been a stressful task.

"Getting it started was definitely a hard process, but it's been really rewarding," he said.

"I play rugby as well and when I tried getting (AFL Switzerland) started my rugby friends came and tried out and they were really supportive, but one person didn't take it seriously and that definitely drove me to invest more to grow (it).

"I'm not sure why, but I just always believed that it would work."

Although AFL Switzerland is in its infancy, Burgener said there had been plenty of memories made along the way.

"There have been some funny moments, one that sticks out is when we first started back at Winterthur," he said.

"The guys were learning how to handball and some of them didn't quite grasp the concept.

"And so they would hold the ball above their head and punch the ball forward, calling it a 'Swiss Fist' which was a bit of a laugh."

But it's the growth of Australian football in a country of 8.5 million people — where skiing, tennis, swimming, soccer and cycling dominates — that the trailblazer is most proud of.

"I remember at our first training session in 2016 we had seven people there," Burgener said.

"And to see it get to where it is now is crazy.

"Every new step that the sport takes in Switzerland is a unique and special moment."

With dreams to one day take the Swiss team to the International Cup and to create a women's league, Burgener and AFL Switzerland are set for plenty more special moments in years to come.

GVGS Alumni Sporting career milestones



Class of 2012 alumni Ollie Wines recently celebrated his 150th AFL game. Wines plays for Port Adelaide Football Club and is currently the clubs Co-Vice-Captain.



Class of 2018 alumni Jordan Butts made his AFL debut with the Adelaide Crows on August 22 of this year.

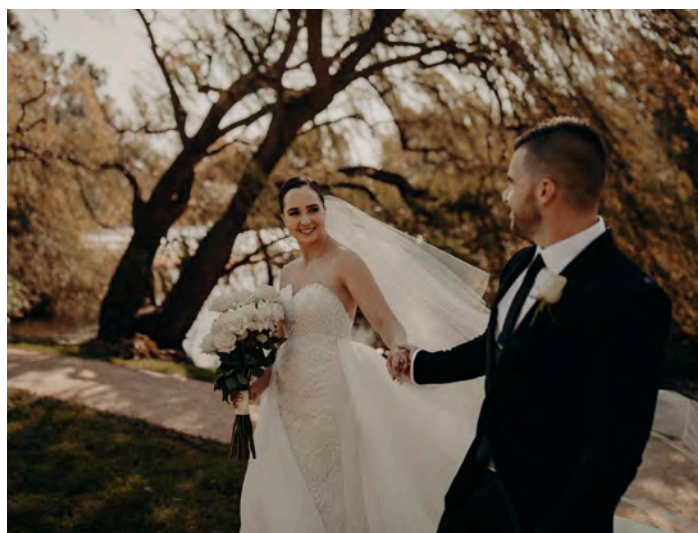


Class of 2010 alumni Maddie Garrick has resigned for a 6th season with WNBL outfit the Melbourne Boomers. The upcoming season will also see Maddie as Co-Captain for the team. In addition to this, Maddie has recently launched an online coaching program where she shares her wealth of knowledge with the up-and-coming basketballers via zoom sessions. Maddie's site can be visited at mgcoaching.com.au/

GVGS Community News

Community announcements

Thanks to GVGS teacher and Class of 1987 alumnus Mr Glen Edwards for sourcing many of our community news items printed here. Glen does at an excellent job at maintaining connections with past students and his former classmates and he would love to hear from you. Please don't be shy about sharing your news with the school via glen.edwards@gvgs.vic.edu.au



Catherine Hart (Class of 2013) married her partner Luke Davis at Mitchelton Winery on March 14, 2020 amongst family and friends who travelled from all over the world including South Africa and Spain. They were very thankful they didn't have to postpone due to Covid 19 the week later.



Ella Arnold (nee Steinfort, Class of 2012) married Bobbie Arnold on March 20, 2020 at the Steinfort family farm in Benalla. Ella works as a cotton agronomist in the Riverina, and they live on Bobbie's family farm in Jerilderie.



John Woodcock (Class of 2012) married Jess Smalley on March 16, 2019 at Tooborac. John and Jess are now living in Shepparton.



Sally Haye-Burke (Class of 2006) and husband Simon welcome their second child Roma Grace Hayes-Burke who was born on May 25, 2020. Roma is a sister for 2 year old Frankie Carmencita. The Hayes-Burke family live in Euroa.



Timothy Arnold (Class of 2004) and wife Milla recently brought into the world a daughter Elsie Dorothy Arnold. Elsie was born on August 24, 2020. The Arnold family live in Arcadia, South of Shepparton.



Lisa Newton (Class of 2012) and Brendan White are delighted with the arrival of their first child. Harper Mae White was born on the May 15, 2020.



Kate Walters (nee O’Connell, Class of 2007) and Drew Walters who are currently living in Seattle had their first child on September 9, 2020. They’ve named him Benjamin McMillan Walters.



Ellana Haw (Class of 2012) and her partner Matthew Daniel welcomed their first child Ava Jane Daniel on September 15, 2020 at Gold Coast University Hospital.



Andrew Lancaster (Class of 2003) and wife Zoe welcomed their first child on August 6, 2020. They have chosen the name Arthur Winter Lancaster.



Congratulations to GVGS teacher Ms Kim Starkey and former GVGS teacher Mr James Sheehan on the arrival of Ronin James Sheehan who was born on July 8, 2020. Ronin is a brother for 2 year old Samson.



On September 13, GVGS Property Manager Troy King and wife Jaimi welcomed their fourth child, Lachlan. Lachlan is a brother for Maddison, Charlie and Fletcher.



Congratulations to GVGS staff member Bryce McMurray and his partner, Kate on the birth of their first child. Elias James McMurray was born on October 14.

Vale The school community was deeply saddened by the death of former students Ben Carmichael and Timothy Murphy.

Ben Carmichael (Class of 2002)

Ben commenced in 1997 as a member of Fairley House in Year 7 and completed Year 12 in 2002. He was active in a range of co-curricular activities including; leadership as a Junior SRC representative and Prefect. Ben enjoyed productions performing in Anything Goes and in the lead role of the Sentimental Bloke. He was a keen contributor to Fairley House in the Eisteddfod Drama and Debating. He also represented the school in ICCES debating.

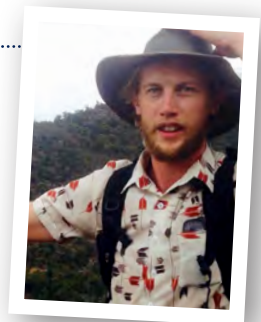
Staff recall Ben being someone who delighted in being part of the school and described him as a gentle and caring person. We extend our deepest sympathies to the Carmichael family including his mother Ann, brother Joshua (Class of 2004) and sister-in law Caitlin. We extend our condolences to the Class of 2002.

Timothy Murphy (Class of 2004)

Timothy studied Arts Law at La Trobe University and Gottenburg University in Sweden. He worked as a Lawyer in Mildura with Maloney Anderson for five years before starting his own practice in Wangaratta after travelling around Australia with his brother John Paul for a period of 12 months where he utilised his experience as a truck driver. He later worked with Parks Victoria, Wineries and on the family farm he loved. He loved physical work preferably in nature.

He played hockey, football and tennis which he loved and was very fond of bush walking. He practiced yoga and meditation. Timothy was especially proud of his sustainable home which he had built on the family farm and where he spent the last year of his life. Despite his illness Timothy lived life to the full with courage, humour and kindness to many. He reached out to those less fortunate than himself. Timothy’s parents John and Kathy, his brothers Patrick (Georgie, Eve Annabel and Tom) J.P and sister Bronwyn are proud of Timothy’s inspiring life. As Timothy’s Dad I found a notebook where he wrote “ALWAYS BE KIND TO PEOPLE”.

Text provided by the Murphy family.



Indonesian speech competition success

Three Goulburn Valley Grammar students have put their Indonesian language skills to the test, taking out the top three spots in a national Indonesian Embassy speech competition.

Elly Miechel, Isabelle Trezise and Nell Ryan were awarded for their efforts after each submitted a video of themselves giving a speech in Indonesian.

While GVGS students have entered the annual competition before, head of the LOTE department Grant Findlay said this year's result was the best the school had ever achieved.

"It is great news for the students," he said.

"Indonesian is the language Grammar teaches and it has been a strong tradition in the school - the students go in various competitions and external exams. There have been some years where GVGS students have been successful but this year is obviously different."

Year 12 Prefect Elly Miechel finished first in the competition for the secondary college section, a win she said she was incredibly excited and honoured to take home.

Having travelled to Indonesia before and having a true appreciation for the culture, Elly said her speech discussed how younger generations could work to tighten the relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

"As a young person myself I talked about the ways we can do that, I think it's important for high school students to learn Indonesian because they are our closest neighbouring country," she said.

"On our side it's quite poor that unfortunately a lot of us don't know about the true culture of Indonesia."

While the students submitted their entries in July, the winners were announced on August 17 on Indonesian Independence Day.



Having studied Indonesian throughout her entire schooling years at GVGS, Elly said she had loved learning about another culture.

"We're very lucky, there aren't many schools that are teaching Indonesian which is really sad," she said.

"I'm really into linguistics and the way language works - it's a real treat to learn about the ins and outs of another culture and tradition."

L-R: Isabelle Trezise placed 2nd, Elly Miechel 1st and Nell Ryan 3rd in the national Indonesian Embassy speech competition.



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