



### Nexus

**Nexus** is a GVGS school community publication. We welcome submissions to Nexus from staff. students, alumni and those connected with the school community.

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**COVER PHOTO:** Taking the next step beyond GVGS - Jack and Matt Whitlock (Class of 2024). Read their story on page 829

### From the Principal

cross the world there is a rise in populist governments and democracy seems to be falling from favor including among youth. In broader society civil discourse is rare and is frequently replaced by emotive tribalism where consideration of alternative viewpoints is considered treachery. Individuals seem to be increasingly taking viewpoints or making important decisions based on the opinions of influencers and hucksters, rather than based on objective reasoning or evidence from science.

Such an environment is deeply concerning given the many wicked problems confronting our world, including the rise of authoritarians with extremist policies, climate change and wars.

Based on abundant evidence the School sees education as one of the most powerful tools we have to maintain and enhance a thriving equitable society where all can participate and engage freely.

It is our position that when young people are able to understand the enduring knowledge from the greatest minds they are in a powerful position to critique new ideas and form their own opinions based on reason and rationality. Such engagement requires understanding of the broad body of knowledge that the literate and powerful take for granted.

While many future global challenges are already clear, it is impossible to know all the problems that the next generation will face. Our observation is that the knowledge that has stood the test of time is a best bet for what will most likely remain relevant and powerful in the future and will sustain our youth in the lives they are likely to lead.

We contend that a powerful curriculum endows students with a rigorous and extensive knowledge-rich education, drawn from the best and most important work in both the humanities and the sciences. The aim of such an education is to transform young people's minds so that they can make reasonable and informed judgments and engage fruitfully in conversation and debate: about contemporary issues, and also the universal questions that have been troubling humankind throughout history.

This requires a curriculum that is carefully sequenced, prioritising knowledge in the core academic disciplines of English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities. At the same time, the curriculum should include knowledge of the visual and performing arts, sport, community engagement and opportunities for specialisation in areas of personal interest.

The provision of such an education also requires a supportive school culture. There is a well-documented crisis in Australian schools involving deteriorating norms of school behaviour. While there is no cultural emergency at our School, our motto challenges us to strive further. Our aim is to ensure our School culture is optimised for student safety, wellbeing, belonging and purpose. This is why we are currently undertaking a review of school culture in partnership with Tom Bennett, eminent school culture expert from the UK. We know that a positive culture is one of the best ways to protect the wellbeing of all students, particularly the most vulnerable, but also to support the achievement of every school aim.

We believe that a knowledge based education experienced within a positive school culture, will be a bulwark against populism, ignorance, prejudice and social disengagement. For our School, providing students with a rigorous and knowledge based education is an end in itself and therefore is at the core of our School's moral purpose.



### Major Award Recipients - Presentation Evening

Pictured above from L-R: Mollie Chambers Year 6; Year 5 and 6 All-Rounder - The Glen Edwards Prize Aditi Xavier Year 9; Junior Citizenship Award - The Parents & Friends Association Prize Ayra Fatima Year 9; Principal's Junior Award for Service to the School Liam Tuohey Year 11; The Reverend John Leaver Award - Ecumenical Schools Australia Prize Denise McCarthy Year 12; Senior All-Rounder Award - The Maxwell Brown Memorial Prize Felix Dom Year 12; Principal's Senior Award for Service to the School Josephine Low Year 12; Senior Citizenship Award - The Hunter Family Prize



Students studying Indonesian Language from Years 10-12 participated in cultural workshops during November.



**School Captain profile** 

# 2024 School Captain Felix Dom

elix Dom started at GVGS in Year 5 after commencing at St Luke's Catholic Primary School in Shepparton and was followed in the coming years by his brothers Fenil (Year 10) and Cyril (Year 5).

"Starting at GVGS was a big change from St Luke's, it's a much bigger school and so it felt very daunting on the first day," he says.

"I was the first person in my family to go to GVGS and I had a lot of anxiety around the transition to high school, but from day one the teachers made me feel welcome and I made friends easily."

Even in those initial days in 2017, Felix was encouraged to consider leadership roles as they arose. "I had that thought in the back of my mind - I was always hoping, but never had my heart set on it," he says of his current School Captain role.

"One of my teachers told me in Year 5 to apply to be School Captain when the time came. It seemed like a lifetime away then, but I was Fairley House Captain in Year 6 and had a number of other leadership roles over the years after that, so I began to consider it more seriously."

Felix says he was shocked when his family received the phone call and were informed that he would be a School Captain in 2024.

"The role is a lot of responsibility, but working with my School Captain partner, Denise we share the load evenly and it makes everything more manageable with her by my side," he says.

"A lot of those initial stressors have wained as the year has gone on and it's actually been a lot of fun. Being School Captain has made prepping for Year 12 exams easier because I've had this accelerated level of time management right from the start."

Next year, Felix plans to begin studying at Monash University. "I've really put in the effort this year and I hope it all pays off and I end up in Clayton next year," he says.

"Going to university in Melbourne has always been a goal of mine. I've always been someone who puts other people's needs ahead of my own, so I'm really looking forward to studying medicine. It's going to be a challenge and will put my skills to the test, I couldn't be more excited for what's to come."

Felix's advice for the GVGS 2025 School Captains is simple, collaboration and enjoyment are key.

"Getting involved is the best way to be a school leader. If you're thinking about putting your hand up, then definitely go for it. The role isn't as daunting as you might think it will be, as long as you approach it with the right mindset," he says.

"It's a privilege to be School Captain and working together is so important, there are two School Captains for a reason. You can have a great partnership and make the experience so much fun for you both."

## **Long Serving Staff**

Long term staff hold the institutional memory and culture of the School and therefore play a particularly important role in the School's stability and evolution. During 2024, we thank and congratulate the following staff on their outstanding contribution to the School.





# **Retiring Staff**

We thank the following staff for their years of service and contribution to the School and wish them all the very best.









**Student achievements** 

# Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize 2024

ear 11 student, Sophie Birrell, was one of only eleven students across Victoria to win the prestigious Spirit of Anzac Prize in 2024. This achievement took Sophie on a study tour to Türkiye during the September school holidays with the other prize recipients. The study tour provides the students with a deeper understanding of Australia's military history, the service of our veterans and the enduring friendship between Australia and Türkiye.

The Spirit of Anzac Prize recognises students who embody the Anzac spirit through their work and Sophie has done so in an extraordinary way. Her winning entry, a meticulously crafted quilt, was inspired by the Changi quilts of 1942. These quilts, created by British, Australian and New Zealand women imprisoned in Changi Prison during World War II, carried messages of hope and support to the men imprisoned nearby. The judges commended Sophie on her application and personal statement which demonstrated her community focus and commitment to exploring our significant war and peacekeeping history.

We also congratulate staff member Mrs Natalie Wyatt, Humanities and Business Coordinator, who was selected for the volunteer role of Teacher Chaperone on the study tour to Türkiye.





### **GVGS Equestrian Team success during 2024**

In March, 10 students competed at the Scots School Albury Interschool Equestrian Challenge. The team was very successful finishing 2nd overall out of 20 schools.

Following this success, 4 students competed at the Equestrian Victoria Interschool State Championships held in April. The School placed 14th overall out of 171 schools. With some excellent individual results at the championships, Eliza Abrahams (Year 7), Felicity Grant (Year 10) and Amelia Petrie (Year 9) qualified to compete at the National Interschool Equestrian Championships in Toowoomba. Due to the distance to travel for students and their horses, they did not attend the event.

### ICAS Medal achievement

For many years GVGS students have had the opportunity to participate in the ICAS competitions. ICAS is an independent skill based assessment programme which tests primary and secondary school students in a variety of subjects. The tests assess skills and learning abilities in students across Australia.

Medals are awarded to the individual student from a year level who achieves the top score in the state for a subject. In 2024, two students received ICAS Medals.



Alice Bourchier (Year 11) Writing and Science



Patrick Sharp ( Year 11) Science



### Indonesian Independence Day Canberra Scholarship

Year 11 student, Charles Locke, won the opportunity to experience Indonesian culture at the Hari Kemerdekaan – Independence Day celebrations at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra held on 16-18 August.

Charles was selected after he wrote a speech about promoting Indonesian Language in Australia through social media and was successful following an interview with embassy staff. Charles

was one of only 5 students selected from Victoria.

Whilst visiting the Indonesian Embassy, Charles participated in cultural workshops such as playing traditional gamelan music. The Ambassador of Indonesia to Australia, Pak Siswo Pramono was present and Charles delivered a formal speech in Indonesian to the crowd.



### **Furphy Literary Award**

The Furphy Literary Award has been established to promote and extend the tradition of storytelling, both factual and fictional, that is so much part of Australian life. The Furphy Literary Award includes award winning judges, generous prizes and most importantly the platform and opportunity for all writers to use their talents to compete at the highest standard.

In 2024, the following GVGS students were awarded a Furphy Literary Award and Prize:

**Youth Short Story** 

**2nd:** Ayra Fatima (Y9) – Music to My Ears

**Youth Poetry** 

**1st:** Hannah Bhullar (Y12) – Odyssey to the land of Wonder

**2nd:** Ali Al Kundi (Y9) – Hometown

### Success at Royal Melbourne Show

Year 5 student, Henry Scott, recently competed against experienced young beef cattle enthusiasts from across the country in the Agricultural Show Junior Parading (Beef Section) at the Royal Melbourne Show. Whilst simply competing is an amazing experience in itself, Henry achieved incredible success being announced the Champion Junior Parader in the Beef Section. It was Henry's first Royal Show and his first year of showing cattle.

Henry has grown his interest in showing and breeding Angus cattle in recent years, traveling through NSW and South Australia to gain further experience. We look forward to following Henry's journey in the discipline that is a true reflection of our regional heritage.





Matt Whitlock

wins Jack and Matt Whitlock (Class of 2024) had plenty to celebrate during November, they completed their VCE Exams, they graduated and both were successful in the 2024 AFL Draft. Matt selected to North Melbourne Football Club and Jack selected to the Port Adelaide Football Club.

Jack and Matt joined GVGS in Year 7, 2019 after attending Orrvale Primary School. They both agree that attending GVGS has been good for them and has given them an opportunity to make friends from all over the region. They have always enjoyed the co-curricular opportunities the School provides, especially competing at ICCES events

In 2020 when the pandemic hit, the challenges of online schooling were definitely felt in the Whitlock household with Mum Angela a teacher at GVGS, Jack and Matt in Year 8 and younger brother Alex just starting at GVGS in Year 5. Jack describes this period as being difficult for everyone, the students in our year certainly felt like they missed out on experiencing so many of the traditions at GVGS over those trying few years.

In Year 11 they fast tracked Geography and in Year 12 they both studied English, General Maths, Physical Education, Psychology and Biology. "We have had to find the balance between our Year 12 studies and our sporting commitments, but both feel if you are organised and manage your time, both are achievable" says





Jack Whitlock

Matt. "Both Jack and Matt were exemplary role models, they utilised the learning opportunities available to them and made the most of their study periods, recognising their time outside of school for study was limited due to their sporting commitments" says Mrs Brooke McLeod, Year 12 Coordinator.

Since commencing at GVGS both have immersed themselves in co-curricular activities, represented the School in various sports and participated each year in all of the House Carnivals. This year Jack was elected School Community Prefect and Football Captain and Matt was elected as Sports Prefect and Basketball Captain. "We have enjoyed working with the Year 12 cohort arranging activities this year that brings the school community together" says Jack.

Whilst football has always been a passion, basketball also played a major part in their youth. Both with a competitive nature they recall the fierce battles in the backyard.

"We'd compete for everything, we would run down the road and race each other, then back up to play basketball together" says Jack. "Footy, cricket, tennis any sport really, it was pretty much the Whitlock Olympics". So, when the pandemic hit early in 2020, football goalposts were set up in the front yard and the basketball ring and tennis court were prepared in the backyard for a fair work out. Being able to get outside and play sport is what kept them motivated during the pandemic.

"Our parent's commitment to our sport is pretty special" says Matt. There has been a lot of travel involved for both basketball and football over the years and we can't thank our parent's enough for their commitment helping us work towards our dream. "Our family are passionate football supporters and it has been our dream since we were young boys to play AFL and being drafted gives us this opportunity" says Matt.

Both Jack and Matt played for Shepparton Bears before joining the Murray Bushrangers team which they have been a part of since 2022. This year they both played in the same three representative teams, Murray Bushrangers, Vic Country and the 2024 Marsh AFL National Academy. Jack playing a key forward and ruck position and Matt playing as a swingman key forward/back. Following on from a successful season in 2024, both were named in the Coates Talent League Team of the Year, Jack as full forward and Matt as full back. Both were invited to attend the AFL National Combine in October.

The school community wishes them all the very best for their next journey beyond GVGS.



**GVGS Alumni** 

# Resilience and making opportunities light Louise Bannister's approach

ouise Bannister (Class of 2008) didn't plan a career in local politics, but her dedication to community improvement saw her stand for Mitchell Shire in 2020. "It was an opportunity to try and make the shire I live in a better place," she says of the philosophy guiding her through to being elected Deputy Mayor (2022) then Mayor (2023).

One of Louise's proudest achievements came this year, when her shire received a \$900 million funding package for a Hume Freeway interchange. "I actually created the first advocacy document for that project in 2017. To then host the Prime Minister and accept the funding was incredible."

Louise's academic journey at GVGS began in Year 8 in 2004, having received a scholarship. She recalls the encouragement of Maths Methods teacher, Ms Garrett as pivotal and also recalls several past staff members fondly.

"Maths wasn't my strong suit, but Ms Garrett never gave up on me. Later, when I won a School of Science and Technology academic merit award at university for maths, I knew it was because she gave me the confidence to keep trying."

After GVGS, Louise earned a Bachelor of Arts in Media & Communications (2012), Graduate Diploma in Education (2013) and Master of Applied Linguistics (2014). She credits these qualifications with enhancing her communication, analytical and critical-thinking skills – all invaluable as Mayor.

"As Mayor, you're constantly reading hundreds of papers, solving problems and being the spokesperson."

Louise is also an Australian Institute of Company Directors graduate, which continues to provide her with vital insights into governance, risk assessment and budgeting. Completing the course with COVID made the achievement more significant. "Mum told me to give it a go even though I was unwell and I'm glad I did, I passed!"

She names another achievement as founding TRUEVOLT Electrical in 2021. Her partner

Pat is head electrician of the Kilmore-based electrical company. "It's very interesting – different to the other side of life!"

Family is central for Louise and Pat, with Hamish 4 and three-month-old Thomas. "I went into council with a three-month-old and now I'm leaving council with a three-month-old," Louise laughs. Hamish has grown up around council meetings, ribbon cuttings and appearances in the local paper. "He thinks it's a normal part of life to go to these openings!"

Reflecting on her journey, Louise is clear GVGS played a formative role. "GVGS taught me resilience and that you have to make your own opportunities and make things happen. Teachers taught me not to give up. You have to take chances and give things a go."

They're lessons Louise has carried throughout her career and which have allowed her to have a lasting impact on her community.

# From shy Year 7 student to winning awards in the Goulburn Valley

livia Evans-Smith (née Childs, Class of 1996) always knew she was destined for a creative career.

"I've been obsessed with colour and creativity all my life," she reflects on the passion that has guided her life.

GVGS was pivotal in shaping who she is today, initially shy when she arrived in Year 7 in 1991, Olivia says the School transformed her.

"I finished a completely different person. The School gave me the freedom to try everything. I just said 'yes' to anything that came my way – whether I was good at it or not."

Her fond GVGS memories are intertwined with favourite teachers who sparked her creativity.

Olivia recalls several past staff members fondly. "They were everything to a budding art student; I can't thank them enough for inspiring my curiosity and creativity. I still use skills developed then every day in business and in my hobbies. I paint regularly and held my first solo art exhibition as part of the Shepparton Festival in 2023."

After graduating, Olivia completed a Diploma of Graphic Design from Goulburn Ovens TAFE, followed by a Bachelor of Arts/Visual Communications from La Trobe University, setting the foundation for a career that would combine design and business. A 'Psychology in Advertising' elective became pivotal. "That elective sparked a love of understanding how good design influences human behaviour. It's all about understanding what motivates people."



Olivia's adaptability remains one of her strongest assets. From marketing manager for a hotel chain at just 24, to working with big brands including Europear and RACV.

"Embracing change – especially the introduction of digital media – has been pivotal to my success. I'm proud that I've stayed relevant by adapting."

After living in Melbourne for 12 years, Olivia returned to the Goulburn Valley and in 2019, she co-founded So Creative Pty Ltd with Steph Boyle. The Shepparton-based agency provides graphic design, branding and digital marketing services. "We identified a market gap and brought all the skills I developed in Melbourne to regional Victoria. Businesses no longer need to go to the city to get high-quality creative services."

Despite the challenges of starting a business – including launching just before the pandemic – Olivia wouldn't change anything.

"We quit our jobs with nothing lined up and it made us accountable. The only option was to succeed."

Olivia's story is testament to the power of following your passion, adapting to change and always moving forward: lessons she attributes to GVGS. "Semper Ulterius – always further. The School gave me the confidence to trust my instincts. It's always been about doing your best and leaving nothing on the table and that's exactly what I do in business today."

So Creative Pty Ltd won the Excellence in Business – Professional Services Award at the 2024 Greater Shepparton SPC Business Excellence Awards.

### **▶** Class of 2004

**L-R:** Alice McKenna, Nicole Georgiou (Copulos), Zara O'Keeffe (Milenkovic)



### Class of 2014

6 This. 1

**Pictured below: back L -R:** Jason Cohen, Jonathan Nicoll, Miles Rowlands, Tom Ratten, Nicholas Johnson, Ella Murdoch, Emma Black, Mikaela Foster (Hutchins), Georgina Eishold, Bronte O'Connor, Monique Pankhurst, Tom Pendlebury, Ryan Evans, Emily Vise.

**Front L- R:** Michael Brock, Megan Stevens, Nicholas McCallum, Olivia Larson, Emma Cossar, Thomas Caughey, Alisha Buchanan



Pictured above: back L-R: Andrew Block, Benjamin Brown, Alice McKenna, Lachlan Murrell, Thomas Brown, Stuart Emmerson, Andrew McMahen, Justin Stafford. Middle: L-R: Sarah Florisson (Hay), Rebecca Hughes (Crowe), Alannah O'Kane, Prudence Jones (Waterson), Stacey Lothian, Zara O'Keeffe (Milenkovic), Bee-Anna Patullo, Eleanor Brennan, Priscilla Finn, Claire Hocking, Nicole Georgiou (Copulos), Bridget O'Kane, Karissa Wilson, Emma O'Connell. Front L-R: Laura Mitchell, Anastasia Christoe, Katrina Johnson (Newton).

**▼ Pictured below L-R:** Prudence Jones (Waterson), Rebecca Hughes (Crowe), Melissa Brown, Trish McMahen, Debra Block, Andrew McMahen, Thomas Brown.





**▶** Class of 2009

**L-R:** Tim Russell, Robert Jamison, Kevin Ellis, Georgina Russell (Prentice).





## ▲ Class of 2014

**Pictured above: L-R:** Megan Stevens, Ella Murdoch, Ryan Evans, Nicholas McCallum, Thomas Caughey.





### **△** Class of 1994

**Above L-R:** Kylie Altson (Cl of 1996), Alexandra Griffith (O'Toole), Bradley Wootton.

**Left L-R:** Travis Gilbert, Melanie Collett (McMaster), Rosie James (Sali).



### ▲ Class of 1999

**Above L-R:** Thomas Walker, Nathan Carter, Jaclyn McCarty, Jana Cronin (Sidebottom), John Cronin.

▶ **Right L-R:** Roger Ball, Scott Garrett, Narelle Watters, Joanne Ball (Jeffrey), Gary Broadwood, Greg Trevaskis



## Photos from the Archives '95











Bacher, Rebecca Meadows, James Ferguson, Sasha Warden-Parker.

2. Year 6 – Music Students; L-R: Caroline Simson, Timothy Harwood, Chelsea Pinner, Nathan Zurcas, Timothy Seager, Melissa Retzos & John Cooper (back).

Charlotte White, Timothy Seager, Timothy Harwood, Jade Louise, John Cooper, Mrs Annabel Harwood (Yr 5 teacher). **Front Row:** Anna Hanson, Tyson Gleeson, Emma



- **3. Year 6 Badminton; L-R Back:** Julian Hall, Noel Simpson, John Cooper, Tyson Gleeson, Sasha Warden-Parker, Thomas Brazel. **Front:** Adrian Harris, Timothy Seager, James Ferguson, Timothy Harwood & Ryan Poyner.
- **4. Year 6 Swimming; L-R Back:** Anna Hanson, Timothy Harwood, Peta McKinlay, Caroline Simson, Jade Louise. **Front:** Adrian Harris, Thomas Brazel, Timothy Seager, Chelsea Pinner, Ryan Poyner, Sasha Warden-Parker.
- **5. Years 5/6 Camp Soverign Hill; L-R Back:** John Cooper, Thomas Brazel, Timothy Seager, Matthew Meng & Timothy Harwood.
- 6. Year 6 Drama Play; L-R Back: Julian Hall, Thomas Brazel, Melissa Retzos, Tyson Gleeson, Anna Hanson, Noel Simpson, Charlotte White. Front: Timothy Seager & Peta McKinlay.

## **GVGS Community News**

### **Community announcements**

Thanks to GVGS teacher, Alumni Coordinator and past student (Class of 1987) Mr Glen Edwards for sourcing many community news items. If you would like to share your news items with Glen, please email him on GVGS.Alumni@gvgs.vic.edu.au



Michael van Dorsser (Class of 2006 and past staff member) married Chloe in June at Huntly.



Jane O'Connor (Class of 2005) and partner Conrade Beer welcomed their second son Francis Rufio O'Connor Beer on 25 June. Brother to Jon (2 years old).



Marni Hutchinson née Thomson (Class of 2009) and Chris welcomed Ella in May 2023. Marni and Chris got married in November 2023.



Tom Ratten (Class of 2014) married Jasmine in May at the Flowerdale Estate. Their wedding party included many past GVGS students.



Lachlan Maskell (Class of 2019) married Arashdeep in September.



Lachlan McDonald (Class of 2009) and Jamie welcomed Theodore in March. In October, Lachlan and Jamie were married at the Collingwood Childrens' Farm in Abbotsford.



### Vale - Isobella Ainsworth (Class of 2012)



The school community was deeply saddened following the passing in July

of past student Isobella Ainsworth following a serious illness.

Isobella commenced at GVGS in Year 7 in 2007 and completed Year 12 in 2012.

A dedicated and highly motivated student, Isobella worked diligently and always made the most of opportunities for learning. She consistently attained excellent levels of learning achievement.

Isobella's kind, thoughtful yet energetic manner was admired by staff, students and parents alike. Unsurprisingly Isobella demonstrated outstanding leadership in roles including Peer Support Leader, Middle Years Leader and SRC Prefect. Isobella enthusiastically participated in many cocurricular activities during her time at GVGS.

Isobella took the concepts of leadership, support and social justice that were fostered in her time at GVGS and applied them to her life. In particular, she strove for better outcomes for children and young people, working closely with them to improve

their engagement with education and community.

The Goulburn Valley Grammar School community extends our deepest sympathies to the extended Ainsworth family and friends. We particularly hold in our thoughts Isobella's partner Mitch Barrett, son Saf, father Garry and siblings Matthew (2007), Alexander (2010) and Xavier (2016). We recognise that the Class of 2012 and many in the local community have deeply felt the loss of Isobella.



Madagascar JR. and was performed over three nights at Westside Performing Arts Centre.

The production was a great success, with an enthusiastic and supportive audience appreciating energetic, entertaining performances from the cast.

The many months of rehearsal and planning were clearly evident through the level of confidence and polish in the student performances. From the opening number students delivered self-assured performances, high quality singing, acting and dancing.

The students were supported by Mrs Helen Janke - Director, Mrs Amanda Harry - Stage Manager and Ms Nicola Bolton (Class of 2013) -Choreographer.

