

Spring 2025

Nexus

GOULBURN VALLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The Browns'
lasting impact
on GVGS

INSIDE:

GVGS Alumni

Chris Albert

Ben Richardson

Kiera Howell





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: Louise and David Brown have given outstanding service to the School, pages 6 & 7.

The power of culture

"...I was working (in uniform) at the Flinders Street Railway Station steps in the Melbourne CBD and was approached by four Year 9 boys in Goulburn Valley Grammar School uniform. The student group had a conversation with my offsider and I and were articulate, polite, respectful. They asked us some questions about Melbourne and environmental sustainability and were very professional. ... they should be commended for how they carried themselves."

Above is an extract from an unsolicited email written by a police officer in August this year.

The behaviour of people in a school community is a very visible product of culture. Positive behaviour is a prerequisite for just about every possible desirable outcome that schools might aim to achieve.

Positive behaviour is a necessity for optimising the learning, personal growth and flourishing of all students and particularly the most vulnerable. When clear positive behaviour rules and expectations are enacted and enforced, they become part of the community's norms.

GVGS has partnered with Tom Bennett, eminent UK school behaviour advisor. Tom reminds us that behaviour is a curriculum that needs to be explicitly taught and reinforced every minute of every day. If schools teach a behaviour curriculum consistently and explicitly clarifying expectations, giving feedback and enforcing when required, good behaviour is likely to become the norm. We certainly believe that these norms then become the culture of a school.

For a long time, the explicit teaching of and enforcement of positive behaviour standards has been very unfashionable in education circles. There has been a popular view in teacher training

that a behaviour curriculum with rules and expectations is authoritarian and repressive. The recommended approach has often been laden with the implication that poor behaviour is a failure of a teacher to address a student's unmet need. A common argument runs that rules and consequences only result in students complying for fear of negative consequences.

We take the view that a behaviour curriculum grounded in maximising student safety, wellbeing and growth, will, if consistently communicated and enacted, become internalised by students as a habit. We also see that the vast majority of students value good behaviour as the ethical thing to do out of respect for the rights of others. We have observed that when students internalise what good behaviour looks like, they transfer those same expectations beyond school into other settings.

The thoughtful email from the police officer describes one such situation where students have transferred that positive school culture into another setting. We are of course delighted with the feedback. At the same time, we see the behaviour as unremarkable; it is what we would expect our students to do.

What is particularly heartening is the reminder of the power of culture to touch the lives of others and even broader society. The impact of this positive behaviour on a stranger was so powerful that it gave them hope and optimism in young people and inspired them in what must often be a challenging work environment.

This is a reminder to us of why we believe that culture is everything.

Semper Ulterius
Mark Torriero, Principal

Knowledge is the learning that matters

At GVGS, our aim is to positively change the lives of young people through learning. We are committed to delivering an education that instils respect for reason, evidence, civility, diversity and the value of hard work. A knowledge-rich curriculum is central to this mission, serving as a moral, practical and intellectual foundation for every student.

A knowledge-rich curriculum does not assume students come to school with equal knowledge. International research shows that knowledge gaps are already present when children start school and without a carefully designed curriculum and teaching practices, those gaps widen. This is the “Matthew Effect” in action: students with prior knowledge learn more easily, while those without fall further behind. Our curriculum is explicitly designed to address this by systematically and cumulatively building essential knowledge equipping all students, regardless of background, with the cultural capital they need to thrive.

The GVGS curriculum specifies in detail the knowledge that students will learn, with that knowledge taught to be remembered, not just encountered. Knowledge in the curriculum is sequenced and mapped deliberately and coherently, ensuring that students build their knowledge across year levels and departments and have the opportunity to build large, complex and rich schemas

in order to reduce cognitive load when learning challenging material.

Our framework is specific, coherent and designed to identify the knowledge that will matter most in the lives of our students. Students engage deeply with core disciplines: English, Mathematics, Science, History, Literature and the Arts, while also studying the perspectives of First Nations Australians, women and Australian civics and history.

Students explore the enduring questions of human civilisation from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment, alongside foundational texts and scientific principles. Through this, they gain the confidence and capability to make reasonable, informed judgments and contribute meaningfully to society.

This education is not simply academic; it supports students’ growth into ethical,

respectful and responsible citizens. It prepares them to live fulfilling lives while contributing to a more equitable, sustainable and just future. Our motto, *Semper Ulterius*—Always Further—reflects this commitment.

With a solid foundation of knowledge and the confidence to use it well, GVGS students are prepared to think deeply, act ethically and lead with purpose in a complex world. With deep knowledge and principled understanding, GVGS students leave school equipped not only to succeed, but to lead, question and improve the world around them.

Semper Ulterius
Tim James, Deputy Principal



School Captain profile

2025 School Captain Stella Trezise



Stella Trezise says she's had incredible role models throughout her life, especially in recent years and credits them for fuelling her passion to be a vibrant and impactful leader as she progresses through 2025 as one of GVGS School Captains.

"I really connected with last year's School Captains and thought they were great" she says.

"I fast-tracked a subject in 2024 and one of the School Captains was in my class. I had the chance to form a close relationship with them and got to see that being a successful leader isn't about just being influential when you're up at assembly in front of everyone, but all the time. Even when you're in class, out of the limelight and just chatting, you can really have an influence on how people feel."

Stella is looking forward to using her position to replicate the warmth and compassion from the leadership she's experienced over her past eight years at the School, alongside Joshua Winkler, also School Captain.

"It's a daunting feeling starting secondary school and when I started I only knew my sisters, so I know what it can be like. It's so important to have a familiar and approachable person you can talk to if needed - that's what I want to be" she says.

"I felt very honoured and excited when I found out I had been chosen. I've really looked up to past School Captains and knowing that the students and staff saw my leadership potential was really lovely. I'm going to use this opportunity to ensure that GVGS is as welcoming and encouraging as it was when I was younger. I want to use Joshuas' and my collective efforts to make the School the best place it can be for everyone, every day."

A few months into her final year of secondary school, Stella is enjoying the challenges and responsibilities that come with being one of the most senior student leaders.

"Year 12 does come with a busy workload and this role has added to that" she says. "But honestly, I've really loved every minute of it."

All the events and activities we get to plan are something I really look forward to. Concert Under the Stars was a favourite for everyone, because it was such a fun night and the whole year level felt like one big friendship group. It was great to hang out and just have fun."

"I'm really appreciating these moments that we get to have together for the last time, it's only just clicked recently that we won't all be together next year, so we need to cherish these times and make the most of them."

At the end of the year, Stella is looking forward to enjoying some international travel with her family and then continuing on to university in 2026.



SCHOOL LEADERS 2025

PICTURED ABOVE BACK ROW L- R: Principal Mark Torriero, Charles Locke, Austin Telford, Cael Walker, Aden Schreck, Mackenzie Calleja, Alice Bouchier, Elizabeth Ford, Phoebe Cross, Rebekah Lawson and Year 12 Coordinator Brooke McLeod.

FRONT ROW L- R; Julia Nguyen, Lily Byers, Olivia Jackson, Joshua Winkler, Stella Trezise, Aarushi Srivastava, Ruby O'Callaghan, Maeve Wehner



HOUSE CAPTAINS 2025

PICTURED LEFT L-R:

McLennan: Baylan Ruska and Archie Evans

Ryall: Mason Heywood and Maia Libro

Fairley: Addison Fiore and Liam Tuohey

Dunlop: Ella McIntyre and Grace Burnett



GVGS Life Fellowship

More than fundraising: the Browns' lasting impact on GVGS

Lou and Doc Brown's legacy of service, together

When Louise and David Brown were awarded Life Fellowship of Goulburn Valley Grammar School (GVGS) in 2023, they joined a small, distinguished group recognised for their outstanding contribution to school life, but for the Browns, the award was not about accolades. It was simply the continuation of what they have always done: serve their community.

Better known as Lou and Doc, the Browns became involved at GVGS in 2007, when their eldest child began Year 7. Lou laughs at attending her first GVGS Parents & Friends meeting: "I came away as Treasurer".

She was then on the Board until 2024 and held various positions during that time, including Treasurer, Vice President and President. Doc held the Treasurer's role from 2019-23. Both of them also held roles on Grahamvale Primary School Council, overlapping for six years as the boys attended both schools.

“

Everything is for the kids and about the kids

”

With her father's example, community service has always been second nature for Lou. "It's what we grew up with and what our kids have grown up with," she explained, recalling her father's leadership on a school council. For Port Fairy-born Doc, the service tradition, too, runs deep. "We met through Rotaract when we were 18. Community is really just part of who we both are".

Across 17 years with Grammar's P&F, the Browns guided projects that left lasting impact. Lou recalls the joy of fundraising enough to air-condition the gym, which the kids thoroughly appreciated and then Founders Hall. "The grandparents said, 'thank god there is air conditioning this year!'. It became a bit of a joke that we were the 'air-conditioning committee'".

The Browns' leadership also helped redevelop the Music Centre and create landscaped areas that enrich the daily school experience, such as the Indonesian area, while Doc also spent many years managing and coaching soccer.

So how did two people fit so much voluntary service into full working and family lives? Because it's who they are innately. "It wasn't about making time for it, it was for the love of it," Lou said.

Much of their motivation stems from a desire to make a difference for their children – Rodney (Class of 2012 and School Captain) who uses his Bachelor of Biomedicine, Diploma of Education and Master in Management, analysing major events in

Melbourne for IER Management and Samuel (Class of 2020), who lives and works on the Gold Coast after graduating with an Honours in Physiotherapy).

Doc said, "Everything is for the kids and about the kids".

Indeed, their sons' interest and dedication to dancing, saw it become something they do as a family as well. In mid August, both Rod and Sam made the final at the Tasmanian Dancesport Championships. Lou said, "It was amazing to have two in the top six and then Sam actually won it on the first time out with his new partner".

Both parents hope their boys saw their service as care, an investment in their education and the environment in which they thrived, but perhaps most special of all for Lou and Doc is that they did it together. Lou sums it up in one word "Absolutely".

Reflecting on being named Life Fellows, they remain modest. "There are people that have contributed far more than we have to the School," Lou said, while Doc added, "but we're very honoured and humbled".

Together, they extend warm thanks to several people. "We want to thank the School Board for bestowing this Life Fellowship on us and Pam Pogue, who was such a great support to us".

Now having stepped away from their voluntary roles, they "remain only a phone call away", because, as Lou put it "once Grammar is part of you, you're always there".

Along the way, they became the kind of figures everyone at School could rely on: setting up raffles, running film nights, cooking barbecues, handing out drinks, quietly running the wheels that make school life turn.

For Lou, the connection to GVGS predates her own children attending: her father, Maurie Lovell, was one of the original people pledging money towards a building fund. "We feel we were there from the start, even though we didn't attend personally. We're so lucky to have Grammar in rural Victoria. I love the support and that kids are allowed to excel".



GVGS Alumni

Expanding on his career across the globe

Since graduating from GVGS in 1990, Chris Albert's career has taken him all over the world.

After completing his tertiary studies at Deakin University in Geelong, he moved back to the Goulburn Valley for three years and worked as a cameraman in Shepparton before relocating to Canberra and working with Seven's political bureau.

"I've wanted to be a cameraman since I was 14, but it's not that easy," he says.

"The reality is that getting your foot in the door with TV news is hard and you typically need to complete an apprenticeship. Instead, I studied journalism because I knew it would help and I

also studied international relations because I had a general interest in it."

After spending some time backpacking and also living in London working as a freelance cameraman for clients including BBC World News, he moved to Israel in 2003 where he stayed for several years working as a staff cameraman for CBS.

"I covered the West Bank and Gaza Strip - the experience definitely had its ups and downs," he says.

"There was a lot of violence and so my time there was very risky. One thing that made my job easier was that neither the Palestinians nor Israelis had any issue with us filming and they let us do our jobs reporting on the conflict without much issue."

Since 2010, Chris has lived and worked in the USA and currently freelances as a director of photography.

Looking back on his long and successful career across multiple countries, he says one of his standout professional highlights was when he was working for 60 Minutes USA in 2011.

"We were filming a story at Mount Athos, which is a peninsula in Greece that's home to

the largest Orthodox monastic community in the world," he says.

"You can only get there by ferry and the monks that live there have to give you permission to visit. It felt like The Land That Time Forgot because it was so disconnected from the outside world. It was such a spiritual place and there hadn't been a camera crew at Mount Athos for over 30 years before we went. We reported on how the monks lived and how incredibly unique their experience of life was."

With years of globetrotting and many long days filming incredible news stories under his belt, Chris is looking to pivot his focus in the coming years.

"I enjoy what I do, but the work does take a toll on you. When I started out all you needed to know was how to film, but now it's a lot more involved," he says.

"Right now is such an important time to be a journalist though, because there's a lot going on in the world. Each day is different and challenging in its own way, so I can't complain about spending hours sitting in an office being bored. I do think I'll start slowing down in the next few years. I run a studio in DC as a side business that people use to film documentaries, so I'll probably focus more on that."

Striving to connect the hearing and Deaf communities together

After graduating from GVGS in 1995, Ben Richardson studied commerce and arts at Deakin University in Burwood. Throughout his tertiary studies, Ben worked at the Deafblind Association and after graduating spent a few years in the financial sector before pivoting to a career in Auslan interpreting.

Ben has been working as an interpreter for 13 years since completing a Diploma of Interpreting and is also a teacher of the Deaf in Hobart, Tasmania.

“My mum is Deaf, so sign language was my first language. When we were living in Kialla, Mum was the only person who was Deaf, so my brothers and I did a lot of interpreting for her,” he says. “Because I learned from her I’m pretty old fashioned in my style, so I have no idea about the slang kids are signing these days.”

Although Ben’s mum, maternal uncle and maternal grandparents are all Deaf, Ben and his two younger brothers are not. Working all across Australia, Ben is currently the only male Auslan interpreter based in Tasmania.

“Like everyone during the pandemic, I did everything online,” he says. “Before COVID, there weren’t many opportunities for



interpreters to work remotely, but now that everyone is a lot more open to online events it gives me the opportunity to work all over the country,” he says.

In 2002 while studying at Deakin University, Ben participated in a comedy competition at the Corner Hotel in Richmond - and won. This year, Ben made a return to comedy at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (MICEF) with his show ‘Deaf Bridges’.

“Doing comedy is great fun, the stress, the nerves, the relief once it’s all over, it’s really exciting and it can be quite addictive,” he says. “I called my show ‘Deaf Bridges’ because I want to connect the hearing and Deaf communities through what I do. I did 11 shows and had great ticket sales this year, so I’m aiming to do the MICEF again next year with my friend Michelle, who is Deaf.”

Ben’s passion and focus is now on creating more comedy shows and engaging events for the Deaf community. “Sometimes having just an interpreter up on stage isn’t enough to integrate Deaf people into an event. I’m looking to take that extra step and be truly inclusive, not just tokenistic,” he says.

“Michelle and I run a business together called ‘Auslan After Dark’, teaching Auslan and holding events for Deaf people. It’s a lot of fun so I definitely want to focus my time and energy on that project too.”

Community

Focused

Kiera Howell is carving out a career in rural medicine.

Currently in her final year of medical school through the University of Melbourne's Rural Pathway in Shepparton, the Class of 2016 student says her journey reflects the strong foundation laid during her time at GVGS.

Kiera's passion for healthcare began early, leading her to pursue a dual degree in nursing and psychology at Deakin University. However, it was during her nursing career that she discovered her true calling.

"I probably more enjoyed the challenge of learning about medical conditions and the different ways we can treat them, as well as getting to know patients on a longer-term basis."

This realisation, coupled with her commitment to rural communities, steered her towards becoming a rural GP.

"We have a shortage of rural female GPs," Kiera notes, highlighting the importance of her chosen path.

Kiera says her time at GVGS played a crucial role in shaping her future. She fondly remembers the School's emphasis on community involvement and leadership development.

"The School was always very good at organising fundraisers and being involved in the community in a variety of different ways," she recalls. This ethos has clearly influenced her career choice and approach to medicine.



Kiera says GVGS's academic rigour also prepared her well for her tertiary studies. "I probably wouldn't have made it through three degrees if I hadn't had such a good, solid academic grounding!" she acknowledges.

Kiera's GVGS experience was enriched by dedicated teachers and the overall supportive atmosphere.

"Especially in Year 12, they just had this open-door policy. They really cared about your education and you could feel that with how approachable they were to helping us learn."

Kiera's connection to GVGS runs deep, with her mother, Merryn Howell (née Binnie, Class of 1987), being among the School's founding students and her two sisters, Ella and Anna, also attending the School.

Looking ahead, Kiera aspires to become a rural generalist, a role she describes as "that rural GP with advanced skills in one or two areas, who you can place in a town and they can do a little bit of everything".

Her enthusiasm for this versatile and community focused role is palpable. Kiera's journey showcases not just academic achievement, but a balanced approach to life. She's proud of maintaining a work-life balance, having worked as a nurse in Esperance WA, as a nanny on a cattle and tourist station in the Kimberley and travelled solo in Europe.

As Kiera continues her medical training, her journey exemplifies the GVGS ethos of community service, learning and personal growth.

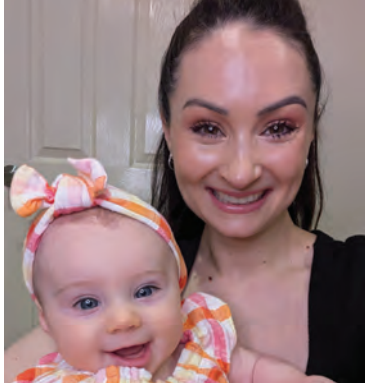
GVGS Community News

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



Ruth McLeod (Class of 2010) married Jordan in October in the Yarra Valley.



Sarah née Borrman (Class of 2005) and husband Dale welcomed their second child, Blake Ruby in August 2024. Sister to Luke (7 years old).



Ella Thompson (Class of 2005) and partner Scott welcomed Thomas in December 2024.



Sally Collins (Class of 2010) and Kurt Simkin were married in March at Butler Lane in Richmond.



Mikaela née Hutchins (Class of 2014) and husband Nick welcomed Everlee in January.



Olivia née Mechkaroff (Class of 2017) and husband Tarun welcomed Marigold in January.



Amanda Heard (Class of 2013) and Andrew Sait were married in November 2024, at the Olivehouse in Kialla West.



Callan McCabe (current teacher) and wife Ash welcomed Luca in April.



Lucy Asquith and Joshua Dillon (both from the Class of 2019) were married in January.

Vale

The School has learnt of the following recent deaths in our community. We extend our deepest sympathy to their families and friends.

Rachel McKenna – Class of 2006

Aaron Gange – Class of 2002

Dion Themilis – Class of 1996



Senior Production

Cinderella

During May the Senior Production presented Cinderella over three nights at Westside Performing Arts Centre.

This 2013 Broadway adaptation of the original Rodgers + Hammerstein's 1957 Cinderella, introduced themes of social justice and the importance of democracy in ensuring that governments serve all people. The Senior Production was a wonderful celebration of the combined efforts of staff and students.

Over 40 students were involved either on stage or in backstage crew. Their collective efforts resulted in a wonderful performance.

Director: Mrs Helen Janke
Choreographer: Ms Nicola Bolton (CI 2013)
Music Co-ordinator: Mrs Amanda Harry



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For upcoming events visit www.gvgs.vic.edu.au