



CABRA  
DOMINICAN COLLEGE

EDITION 5 SPRING 2020

*The Good,  
the Beautiful & the True*

THE BIENNIAL MAGAZINE OF CABRA DOMINICAN COLLEGE

# CONTENTS

From the Principal	1
Lived Faith	2
Our School	4
Faith in Action	6
Learning	8
Our Staff	12
Our Students	14
Term 3 Events	16
Old Scholars	20
From the Archives	24



This edition of *The Good, the Beautiful and the True* was prepared with care and attention by Cabra Dominican College. All efforts are made to have the material up to date at the time of printing. Please email [publications@cabra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:publications@cabra.catholic.edu.au) with any feedback.



It is a great pleasure to introduce this edition of our biannual publication, *The Good, the Beautiful and the True*.

Also the name of our school song, “the good, the beautiful and the true” is a phrase from a quote generally attributed to Dominican saint and scholar, Thomas Aquinas, who spoke of seeking beauty in the everyday. This has become a key tenet of our Dominican faith at Cabra. Our students are familiar with the phrase, not just because they love to sing it in full voice at school events, but because our teachers often weave it into their lessons. Our life and our learning are about seeking what is good, what is beautiful, and what is true. We hope this is something that will stay with our students, and that their understanding of it will grow, long after they have left Cabra.

This edition encompasses a very different time for our school and for the world. It would usually be a record of all our masses and assemblies, sporting competitions, musical performances, excursions, trips and other co-curricular activities. But of course, for much of the past months, we had very little of those.

So, what did we do at Cabra? Firstly, we prepared to learn online, and provided students at home with continued learning opportunities. When we were able to come on campus and learn as a school, together and in person, the overwhelming feeling among staff and students was relief, and delight.

Then, we did what many families did. We stayed close to home; we grew a beautiful vegetable garden; we cooked a lot! We continued to learn, and in many ways it was the same. Our friends were here with us, our teachers supported our students, and we were happy to be together. We learned to be truly appreciative of living in South Australia, and for our Cabra community.

We created beautiful artworks, we had liturgies in the classrooms, and we learned our Maths outside when the weather was fine. We supported those in need in the wider community. We saw the world differently, and we practiced gratitude.

In this magazine, you will see so many examples of how our wonderful teachers and support staff continued to provide interesting and fun learning opportunities during the past few months.

As well as many stories about Cabra today, you will also find interesting and inspiring stories of our old scholars. You will also see wonderful photos of some of the events we were able to hold in Term 3, including the much-loved events of St Dominic’s Day.

The Golden Thread is the name of a set of films that staff member Tess O’Callaghan has produced, about the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Cross congregation. This image of the golden thread is a way of thinking about how being Dominican links us together as a community, and comes from a quote by Dominican theologian and scholar Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P. Each page of this magazine is part of the golden thread; each member of our community holds us together.

Please enjoy this edition of *The Good, the Beautiful and the True*.

**Helen Riekie**  
Principal

# LIVED FAITH

## Mission & Identity

### In Communion

Our Catholic tradition is one that is built on the notion of “Communion”, which at its core is moments of sharing and fellowship. Indeed, the word “community” derives from this same root. And it is these moments of sharing and fellowship that enables us to connect deeply with the people around us. We connect through conversation, through touch, through eye contact, through bonding over mutual interests, through eating together, through simply being in the presence of others. And why is it so important? Because in this sharing we start to come to know the joys, hopes, fears, longings, questionings of the human beings around us. We start to see the face of God in others. It helps us to know ourselves. We come to see ourselves as a part of a collective where we feel loved and accepted for who we are.

Christian fellowship has always been a key part of life in the Cabra community. Communion is highly valued in this place. But it seems our perpetual challenge this year has been finding ways to be in communion in a time when we have needed to keep apart.

With restrictions in place towards the end of Term 1, we were fortunate enough to still be able to gather as individual classes to celebrate Holy Week. Our Holy Week celebrations at Cabra are traditionally held as entire Year level events, and when we knew such a large gathering would not be possible, Ms Steller and I developed year level specific liturgies that could run in individual classes and be facilitated by our students. Across the school, various staff joined these class liturgies, enabling us to still gather as a whole community, albeit in this different way.

How truly blessed we were to celebrate our St Dominic’s Day Mass on the 7<sup>th</sup> August. How lucky we are to have such a large space that enabled our school to gather together for this day. Monsignor Ian Dempsey led this celebration beautifully, along with our talented students who once again supplied our homily and fabulous music to enhance our mass. (See page 18 for photos)

We could almost call it a miracle that we were able to give our Year 12 students the retreat that they missed out in March, and that were needed more than ever this year. How precious that our Year 12s have had the time away from the hustle and bustle of life to experience the profound moments

of sharing and fellowship that occur on these retreats. The overwhelming response from the cohort is that they so valued this time away together to reflect upon life, themselves, their spirituality, and their relationships.

Really, Cabra has been so fortunate to be able to continue our spiritual life in the way that we have during this COVID crisis. And while our community has definitely felt life to be different this year, we notice that we have been able to find ways to maintain our religious mission and identity, and we truly thank God for that.



**Valeska Laity, Director of Mission and Identity**



YEAR 12 RETREATS



# OUR SCHOOL

## Welcome to Caleruega Hall

From Cabra Celebrates 2019 to daily PE classes and Saturday games, we are utilising this fabulous facility every minute of every day.



## New Uniform

We are thrilled with the positive response to Cabra's new uniform, launched at the beginning of 2020.

The new uniform has achieved our aims to:

- uphold and reflect our proud history and identity, retaining the traditional Cabra colours of rust, gold, black and white
- remain close to the current price point
- utilise the latest advancements in fabrics and design be manufactured by our current uniform suppliers who engage with ethical and sustainable production practices
- provide a shorts/pants option for girls
- provide a well-designed uniform that continues to instil pride.



## FAITH IN ACTION

Across each school year, students and staff undertake a number of fundraisers and social justice initiatives.

Some of our staff have a knitting club, and they are pictured here with the blankets they have made, for donation to Vinnies and the Adelaide Day Centre.

Part of the work of student leaders is to take the lead in social justice. The students have held a Winter Sleepout at home, and organised to sell Cabra beanies and scarves, as well as Entertainment Books to support Vinnies. They are currently planning a Colour Run to raise funds for Operation Flinders, an organisation that runs wilderness adventure programs for young people at risk.

“As a community, Cabra aspires to follow in the footsteps of St Dominic and be the change we would like to see in the world. We believe strongly in raising awareness for those less fortunate and we do this through participating in numerous fundraising events throughout the year. Whilst these events assist with raising money for a variety of

### Part of the work of student leaders is to take the lead in social justice.

organisations and charities, they are also influential stepping stones towards the fight for social justice. Our students and staff are strong advocates for social justice, and it is the motivation behind our fundraising at Cabra. In my opinion, the fundraising we do at Cabra beautifully captures the essence of what it is to truly be a Dominican. As a senior student and leader, I believe it is important to keep our heritage alive and echo St Dominic’s charisma, mirroring the four pillars; community, service, study, and prayer.”

**Allivia Pratt, Year 12  
College Vice Captain**

Some initiatives are run as part of the curriculum.

“Last term, the Year 12 Integrated Learning – Volunteer Work in the Community class organised a Volunteer project as one of

their tasks. The project was to support the great need being experienced by the Adelaide Day Centre for Homeless People Inc, an organisation coordinated by Sr Janet Mead in Adelaide city. The organisation supports homeless men and had seen a 25% increase of people in urgent need over winter. Students planned all aspects of the project, enlisting help from Cabra staff, students and parents to gather warm blankets, jackets and sleeping bags. They set up a donation centre in Café Crumbs which was quickly overflowing with many donated goods, needing sorting and packaging for the Centre. The students learnt many skills in this task, as well as the valuable experience of knowing they had made a difference to the lives of many people experiencing hardship in the city.”

**Ruth Evans, St Mary’s Unit Coordinator**





**OPERATION FLINDERS**  
*A new direction for young people at risk*

**CABRA COLOUR RUN 2020**

**ALL PROCEEDS GOING TO OPERATION FLINDERS!!**



**WHEN: WEDNESDAY @ LUNCH, SEPTEMBER 23 (WEEK 10)**

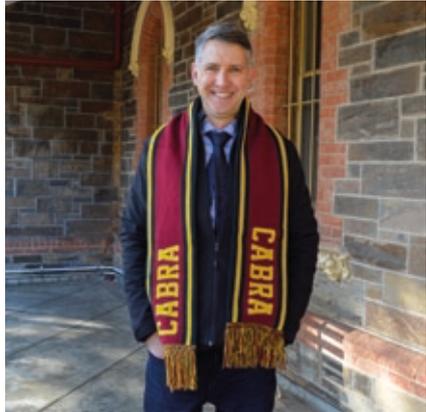
**OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS YEAR 7-12**

**WHERE: LARGE OVAL**

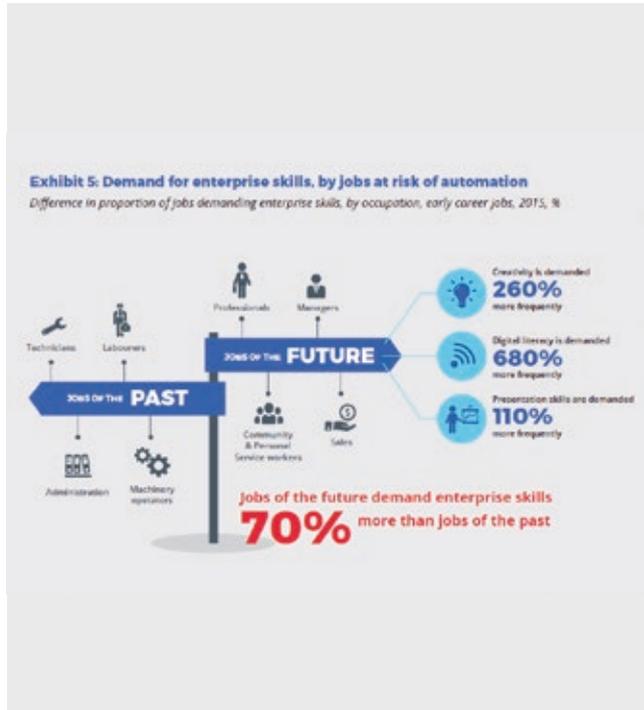
**TICKETS \$18 (include T-shirt and wrist band)**

**MUSIC AND FOOD TRUCKS!**

Available on the QKR! App



# LEARNING



2020 has certainly made us have to rethink and look at what is important in how we approach our learning programs. We often hear buzz words thrown around education circles, particularly the idea of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thinking Skills. It is amazing to think we are one-fifth of the way through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and it is interesting to think about how we develop these thinking skills in our students.

What has fundamentally changed in education is the impact of technology as a tool to support learning. No doubt our students can use their devices in a way to source information like never before. Therefore, schools are challenged to look at how to better meet the needs of student learning and develop the skills required to be active participants in the world today.

The Foundation for Young Australians has produced a number of research papers which look at the changes to the world around our young people. Interestingly, the research is saying that in the future world of work, young people are predicted to have 17 different jobs over 5 careers in their lifetime. The report goes on further to look at the skills our students need to have post school. It is no surprise that digital literacy, critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills are at the top end of the skills required. This has huge implications for how we teach and learn in schools and for us at

Cabra it means we need to continually look at how we deliver our learning programs.

An example of how we are looking to develop the skills in Year 7 has been the implementation of Maths Pathways this term. The use of Maths Pathways has challenged our Year 7 team to look deeply at their learning and teaching approach. It has offered the opportunity to provide students with a differentiated curriculum that enables students to track their own growth. It develops critical and problem-solving skills through the use of rich tasks that makes students have to think deeply about possible solutions.

Additionally, it enables students to learn using both digital media as well as face-to-face classroom instructions with the focus on students developing greater independence. It is a change in delivery, and it is a change in instruction for our teachers. Watching our Year 7 team meet every Wednesday morning as part of their huddle has been a rich learning experience for all involved. The conversation and focus on student learning is at the very centre of every session. It has been rewarding to see the growth mindset of our staff, as they make a change to the delivery of the learning program which will develop the skills of our learners needed for the future workforce.

Another example of the development of skills has been the learning our Year 9 students have been doing in Digital Technology. The students have been challenged to look at how everyday products around them are using artificial intelligence to develop a profile of them or others. They have also had to investigate the future possibilities of AI and the implications this might have on their lives. The students certainly are developing their digital literacy through this program.

As a school we are constantly looking at and reflecting on our practice so that we can seek to provide the students with a learning experience that will ensure they have the skills required for the future workforce and the world beyond Cabra. We will continue to look at ways to be innovative in our practice, holding true to our mission to be a place of excellence in teaching and learning.



**David Nolan, Director of Learning and Teaching**

## An Australian multicultural experience through food!

What do we feel like eating today? Italian, Japanese, Mexican or maybe even Early Settler Australian? The incredible variety of foods we have available in our wonderful Australia is due to our multicultural nature and the demand for traditional ingredients and foods from the wide variety of cultures present here.

So... as a great way to complement the study of language and culture in our curriculum, this year has seen the introduction of a new Semester 2 elective for our Year 8 students – “Cultural Cooking”. During this class, the students are learning that many of the foods we commonly consume today were simply unavailable a decade ago and the common dishes that today we eat such as pasta and rice dishes were even less common 20 to 30 years ago! These products have slowly made their way into our everyday diet and have become popular and readily available foods. So, we are also learning that consuming multicultural food is part of our Australian culture.

Not only are the students learning of this type of Australian food culture but they are gaining an understanding of fusion food, and through this is an appreciation of

language and culture, traditions and story which comes with every dish that we make which is further connecting them to their study of Italian and Japanese at Cabra as part of their learning journey.

As well as eating and savouring every crumb of their creations, the students are thoroughly enjoying working with each other, following instructions, and solving problems as they prepare the various dishes. So far, our cultural cooking class has included recipes such as Damper, Japanese Curry, Italian Bruschetta and Greek shortbread biscuits just to name a few. We have even had the Learning and Teaching administrator, Ms Anastasia Harvey, be our guest chef who shared her family stories behind her recipes as well as facilitate a lesson on dancing the Zorba for the students while the biscuits were cooking!



**Elena Guastella, Leader of Learning: Languages**



# LEARNING

To turn a barren and empty corner of the school into a beautiful garden, Mr Alleway and a Year 10 class spent Terms 1 and 2 cultivating herbs, vegetables and other plants in the space between O'Mara and the staff room. The garden has been an outstanding success from every perspective.

Sandra Ciccarello, Learning and Innovation Coordinator, explains how the project began.

“We were successful in winning a **Natural Resources Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges**

**School Environment Grant** in 2019.

Schools and preschools within the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges were eligible to apply for grants of up to \$2000 to use for projects that promoted environmental sustainability practices within the school. We spent our money on two projects:

1. We bought some materials for Mr Alleway's garden project.
2. We set up composting and recycling to deal with waste at Cabra more effectively.

The two projects work well together and we are already seeing great benefits.”

Clinton Alleway teaches Science, among other subjects, and is also passionate about reducing our ecological footprint on the world.

“Research suggests that growing fruits and vegetables is a terrific way to reduce our carbon footprint. When Sandra approached me with the idea of creating a garden, I knew it presented a great opportunity to engage students in their scientific studies, and also to reinvigorate an almost abandoned space. The Year 10 Essential Science class was the right fit, and so we began. Firstly, the class relocated, weeded and reinvigorated the existing raised garden beds. The students also engaged in surveying the climate as well as the needs of the school, in order to select useful crops that would grow well. We prepared the garden beds and planted a range of seeds and seedlings. During the semester we cared for many varieties of lettuce, radish, peas, beans, carrots, kale and various

herbs. In May, the class prepared salads for Cabra staff, made exclusively from greens grown on the school site. Through salad sales we raised \$75 for the Vinnies Winter Appeal. We raised more money when we sold salad and stir fry packs to staff a few weeks later.

Dr Riekie visited us to see the garden and the salads and we were pleased to present her with one of the plants we have grown.

The course focussed on sustainability, allowing the students to learn theoretical topics such as basic ecology and climate change. The students had responsibility for their own plot, giving them a sense of ownership, and adding to their pride in its successes. They learned many practical skills like researching crop suitability, seed care, watering, composting, fertilising, weeding and harvesting. The class seemed to really enjoy it and it was awesome to see them so engaged in their learning.”

The class seemed to really enjoy it and it was awesome to see them so engaged in their learning.



When Principal Helen Riekie visited the garden, she wrote in the next newsletter of the experience:

“The appreciation of beauty is a key part of our Dominican charism. Consequently, one of the main aims of our Strategic Plan is to create beautiful, functional learning spaces...

Between O’Mara and the staff room is an area that until recently was little-used and distinctly lacking in visual appeal. Clinton Alleway and his Year 10 Essential Science class have worked through the year to turn this disused area into a stunningly beautiful vegetable garden. Visiting during one of their lessons this week I was absolutely delighted to see what they have achieved in such a small amount of time. The garden is not only efficient in supplying salad and vegetables, but is also now an area of great beauty.

The excitement of the students who showed me around was palpable and infectious. Strategic Plans and major projects are necessary, but our charism can only come alive in every single corner of the school through the dedication of our passionate teachers and the enthusiasm of our students.”

The garden is not only efficient in supplying salad and vegetables, but is also now an area of great beauty.



## OUR STAFF



### Dr Catherine O'Halloran

We are very proud to announce that Cabra's Leader of Learning: Science, Dr Catherine O'Halloran, has been recognised by her peers as the Senior Secondary Winner 2020 of the Credit Union SA/ SASTA Outstanding Contribution to the Teaching of Science Award.

Catherine spoke to SASTA about the award and about teaching.

*What does winning this award mean for you?*

Just being nominated made me feel proud, but to win is quite humbling. There are many great science teachers in SA and I've learnt a great deal from them over the years. Teaching can be a little isolating – once you're in the classroom with your students, how do you know that what you're doing is best practice? Winning this award has been affirming.

*What aspects of your teaching are you most proud of?*

Constantly questioning. Why am I teaching this in this way? Is this preparing my students for the future outside the classroom? Am I making Science relevant for my students? How am I ensuring girls (who are quite under-represented in the field of Science) can see themselves in science in the future? I am a reflective teacher who



constantly tries to improve. I love it when a past student who is studying something in a STEM field tells me that I inspired them to follow this pathway.

*What advice would you give a new Science teacher?*

Find a mentor. Someone who will push you to step outside your comfort zone and continually improve. Don't be afraid to try something new, and always reflect on what you are doing. What worked? What didn't work, and why? What are the outcomes for the students you are teaching? Learn and share what you have learnt. We teach our students the importance of continual learning, so we need to model this.

CATHERINE  
O'HALLORAN

CABRA DOMINICAN COLLEGE

SENIOR  
SECONDARY  
WINNER  
2020

**The Golden Thread  
Weaving Dominican Stories**

...the golden thread which runs through the Dominican family story, from Dominic’s days right up to ours, continues to present us with sufficient inspiration and direction.

These words are from the Dominican theologian and scholar Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P in writing on Dominican Spirituality.

In late 2019, Cabra staff member Tess O’Callaghan met with the Cabra Principal to propose a way of capturing some of the stories and insights of Dominican sisters from the Holy Cross Congregation. “The Golden Thread: Weaving Dominican Stories” is the fruit of her labour. It is five documentary style movies, filled with the stories and recollections of the Dominican Sisters.

A little from Tess:

“I see these films as being available for educational and spiritual purposes working with students and for staff, possibly for formation of new staff or for staff development, retreat and discussion. They are there as a historical documentation of all things Dominican in the words of some of our Holy Cross Dominicans. For me this is a project of love, my love for the Dominicans and their ethos and my love for Cabra.

The five films each focus on different aspects of our history.

“Blessed”

This short film highlights what Cabra, as a distinctly Dominican school, should

endow its students with on their departure, resulting from the ‘Dominican’ flavour or influence.

“Stories”

This film is characterised by traditional story telling where the Sisters narrate to camera.

“Passage of Time”

The film moves across time showing the progression from the traditional “Sisterhood” which are their memories about the Sisters, to being “Educated” at Cabra themselves, to becoming “Educators” then “Innovators” explaining very creative aspects of their influence on various schools. Finally, as “Feminists” where they step away from the school scenario, into the creation of “Sophia” a highly significant future pathway, honouring the lived experience of women in creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

“Dominican Spirituality”

This is an essential film to understand Dominican Spirituality as it is now evident and being passed on to lay staff as its custodians. It begins with Dominic and Catherine of Siena as the well springs of wisdom, capturing an explanation of all the tenets of Dominicanism and arriving at

the history of the first Dominicans in South Australia. Their history was intrinsically linked with South Australian Saint Mary MacKillop and Saint Mary’s College. We appreciate the hardship of their journey and the start they made to fulfill the needs of secondary education for girls in Adelaide, complementing Mackillop’s initiation of primary schools across the state. Yet the Dominicans expanded to Boarding schools, country and interstate convents and city primary and secondary schools, as well as Special Education Facilities for students with additional needs. The Dominican sisters spread their tenets of spirituality across their schools and communities, a community that now looks hopefully to the lay staff to instill this same spirituality in our future students. The final section when Sr Maureen explains Shillebeeckx’s “Golden Thread” concept of connecting all those coming into the Dominican story, also pays homage to the strong historical women of the past offering a golden hand to staff today.

“Convent Building”

The school has inherited the beautiful legacy of the traditional Cabra convent building, referred to as the “Mother House” that housed many of the South Australian Dominican sisters across the years.. In this film, the Sisters discuss what various rooms were used for and named in the building’s life. We then become the living history within the building, the custodians, respectful of its past, as well as adapting it to our future usage.”

**Tess O’Callaghan, Producer**



1. Tess with Sr Barbara Specht and Sr Enid Wood, who are both in the films, at the first screening. 2. Sr Maureen O’Connell, who worked with Tess to create the films, pictured with other Dominican Sisters and guests including Fr Bob Wilkinson.

## OUR STUDENTS

*We asked two Year 12 students, Ines and Aaron, to share some of what they have learned in their time at Cabra.*

Both nervousness and excitement were emotions I strongly felt as I entered the gates of Cabra when I arrived to start Year 9. I spent a lot of time finding my feet and making new friends, before really kicking into the education side of things, midway through Year 10. My friends, they're really great, and helped me focus within school. They indirectly encouraged me to work towards getting good grades. They were getting them, so I worked harder in all of my subjects and was rewarded.

Drawing is my passion now. I would draw a lot in class, and still do, just feeling my

way with new ideas and getting them into perspective. I really discovered this passion during Year 11, but it took a while as I always found it a challenge to do the things I wanted to in Art, so after gaining the opportunity to do just that in Year 11 it is where I really began to excel.

In Year 12, this year, I began to experiment with oil based paints, oil painting. I had always used acrylics before that, too stubborn to try new things. Oils just clicked, I really love them as they're more vibrant and you can achieve a stronger sense of depth and perception. They dry with a wetter look. Harder to clean up afterwards though. I'm working on several new pieces currently choosing to paint animals to showcase their uniqueness,

power, and emotion and giving a voice to the voiceless.

I've also pursued digital art externally with CDW Studios, trying some university level courses in character design and while I liked the experience and exposure to gaming creation, I feel better pursuing fine arts.

I love all my friends, teachers, and peers at Cabra, I think they are all unique and have something wonderful to share. My friends truly inspire me to push harder in my creations, always wanting to produce something new and exciting.

**Inès Cook, Year 12**

Drawing is my passion now. I would draw a lot in class, and still do, just feeling my way with new ideas and getting them into perspective.



When I arrived at Cabra in 2016, to be honest, I struggled. I didn't hit the ground running, I found myself constantly on the back foot with work to be handed up, and it was generally not the first year I was anticipating. I did however begin to learn how to be resilient and persevere when things didn't necessarily go my way.

Year 9 was more so the same, struggled to keep up, didn't really know what I was doing, didn't have a real direction with school. However, I continued to understand the importance of not giving up, and endeavouring to always improve myself, both academically, and as a person. Year 10, however, was very different. I seemed to hit the ground running, work seemed to become a little easier as I made some more commitment to getting everything done a little earlier, to still give myself time to relax. I found myself learning more, and having less time stressing about what was due.

With the constant support of my friends and family, I felt like Year 10 was the year I really arrived at Cabra and began to explore my true academic and social capabilities. I found myself making academic progress like I had previously never believed I could make as I began to eventually discover my life desire to fly.

Year 11, probably my greatest year of school, and the year where I knew I had truly found my feet at Cabra. Coming from

a student who struggled to hand up an assignment a week after it was due, to a student who aimed for nothing but the best in each subject, I knew this school had helped me develop into a better learner and individual.

Then finally, our big year, Year 12. It hasn't been the year any of my peers, nor myself anticipated, it however, has shaped a unique relationship amongst all of us. I have seen and been influenced to continue to challenge myself through these hard times through the actions of my fellow peers, and I am eternally grateful for the year level I get to share for our last hurrah. I know, leaving this year, we will be closer than ever before, no matter what occurs, and more than that, I will know Cabra has bestowed upon me skills that I will take into the world, to make a better place.

**Aaron Quick, Year 12**  
**College Vice Captain**

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1. Aaron in his role as College Vice Captain, with Dr Riekie and the other Captains. 2. Aaron in his Year 8 class photo

# TERM 3 **EVENTS**

## **FUTURE PATHWAYS EXPO**



## **RETURN OF SATURDAY SPORT**



## Academic assembly

At our Academic Awards Assembly earlier in Term 3, we acknowledged and celebrated the students who have excelled in their learning and those who have demonstrated consistent effort across all their subjects. Whilst academic excellence is a goal we should aim for, we recognise that excellence is different for every student. So, we also celebrate students who persist and demonstrate academic endeavour across their learning. Whilst a student may not qualify for academic excellence in an ideal world every student should be able to achieve academic

endeavour by demonstrating persistence and grit. Guest speaker Natassia Messent, '17, shared her journey at Cabra and her experience post school. It was refreshing to hear a young adult who has graduated from our school not only share her vulnerabilities but make it clear that we are ultimately in control of the choices we make and the outcomes we achieve.

### David Nolan, Director of Learning and Teaching

“Open yourself up to opportunities to learn and to become the best version of yourself, do your best to be happy with the person you look at in the mirror in the morning,

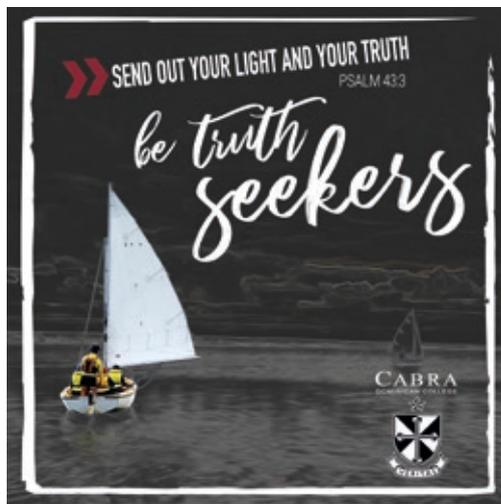
challenge them to be better but also cut them some slack; life isn't always easy. Use this time to push yourself that little bit further and take some risks because by doing so you might just find out what you are meant to do and maybe even more importantly who you might want to be.”

### Natassia Messent '17

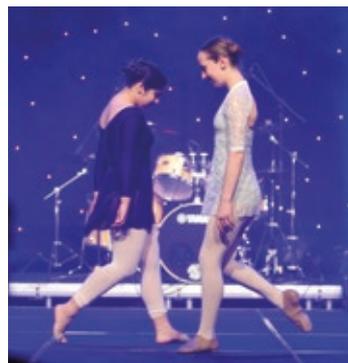


# TERM 3 **EVENTS**

## **ST DOMINIC'S DAY MASS**



**ST DOMINIC'S DAY TALENT SHOW**



# OLD SCHOLARS

## My Journey to Truth

A little over a year ago a call went out from Cabra, asking for volunteers to assist with the Archives. At the time I was working part time and with my family's history with the college, it seemed a good way for me to reconnect with one of the places dearest to my heart and also be able to give back to the Cabra Community. After some emails and an interview I was inducted and have proudly been working as part of the team who cares for the Cabra Dominican College Historical Collection and Heritage Museum.

In this time, I have had the pleasure of working with fellow old scholar Cameron Bradshaw ('14) and Anna Garcia, Marketing and Communications Officer, on collating the collection and re-organising the Museum displays. It also gave me a chance to re-connect and work with Tess O'Callaghan, my Year 11 Home Group teacher, on historical projects.

Recently, as part of these projects, I was privileged to preview some videos of the Cabra Dominican Sisters and Fr Bob Wilkinson speaking about their time at the College, of the boarding house and Dominican Spirituality. I was deeply moved. It was beautiful to hear their stories and experiences. I laughed, and I cried. I recognised what I gained in my time at Cabra and felt such joy and love.

It also made me think of what I may have missed and I mourned the lack. I questioned whether I had experienced the full meaning of what it was to be Dominican during my time at Cabra and if I had really felt its 'spirit'. As Dominicans we are encouraged to be seekers of truth and be attentive to the beauty and joy around us. Had I found beauty and joy? Most definitely. But truth?

It wasn't until I heard Fr Bob talk about the experience for many boarders. That often there is a disconnection to their old life in the small country town they grew up in and the new urban community they are establishing themselves in. He spoke of the inclusivity and sanctuary and that is when the lightning bolt struck me! I realised that I did find truth at Cabra. Or at the very least, in coming to Cabra it was the awakening of my 'truth journey' and what a journey it has been.

I was a second generation boarder at Cabra. My family's connection began in 1944 when my Mum, Ruth (nee Harvey), obtained a boarding scholarship. She attended for 2 years before going home to Bute. She loved her time there, but she was just very homesick. At the same time, Kathleen Slattery from Snowtown attended Cabra, graduating in 1945. As life would have it, my Mum would go on to meet and marry one of Kath's brothers, Tom Slattery, and Kath would go on to join the Dominican Sisters. Taking the name Christopher, affectionately known as Chris by the other Sisters, Aunty Kath went on to work in the Missions in the Solomon Islands from 1957 to 1988. It was the love of her life and she received an MBE for her work. Thus Cabra was now cemented in our family history. My sisters and I would all go on to Cabra as boarders - Dorothy Slattery (1964-1967),

Patricia Slattery (1966-1970), Angela Slattery (1978-79) and me, Alison Slattery (1987-88).

My personal connection with Cabra began around 1978 when we dropped off my older sister, Angela. Have you ever walked into a place and felt a connection you couldn't explain? A sense that touches deep in your soul and you know there's something special about it. You just don't know what yet? I can still recall as clearly as if it was yesterday; my 6 year old self walking into the foyer, passing through the wooden doors of the convent at Cabra. The foyer was darkened, hallowed and there was a peace and sacredness. It was an intense connection. I can't really explain it. I just knew I was meant to be there. So, I waited. Patiently. And when I returned 9 years later, I knew I was home.

You see Cabra was to be the first place where I was able to feel normal, like one of the crowd. I had never had that in my life before. I had never been able to just be 'me', the real me, in public before. I had never not experienced racial discrimination and harassment, in some form, at school before.

I grew up on a farm 10 km north of Snowtown in the mid-north of SA. I was adopted by Tom and Ruth Slattery and was raised the youngest of their eight children. I was the only adoptee and only



coloured child in the clan. In fact, I was one of a handful of coloured children in the whole district, the others being Aboriginal foster children. For much of my childhood I experienced racial taunts and slurs, almost every day. Many of these were directed toward my skin colour and I was called many names, some derogatory to Aboriginal people. I knew I was different. As everyone in my family were white, as were most of the other families in the town, it was very obvious. I also knew I wasn't Aboriginal, I was from the Pacific Islands. But brown was brown and people didn't know or want to know the difference back in the 1970s. It was more than appearance though. I felt I couldn't be myself. I was teased for my love of singing and dancing, for my athleticism in sports like javelin and running. For those things that came naturally.

During my younger years I learned very well how to wear 'my emotional mask', so when I went to Cabra it was exhilarating to not have to hide. It was also daunting as I could now see a whole new way of living and thinking. I felt that I didn't really know who I was or what I wanted to do with my

life. There had only ever been one place I could call 'sanctuary' – our family farm. Cabra would be the second. Thinking back on it now, I am not sure I knew how to cope with being myself 24/7. I was at Cabra to be educated. It just wasn't only academics I was learning. I was starting my journey to truth, to find myself. It was not going to be an easy path.

In the years after leaving Cabra, I struggled with self-esteem and self-identity on my journey to truth. I experienced personal trauma and learned resilience in coping with the racism and bullying that continued. I found my soulmate and rejoiced at becoming a wife and mother. I delighted in finding my birth mother and struggled again with identity when I suffered great loss on the passing of my parents. I confronted those wrongs done in the past and reconciled myself over opportunities missed, chances not taken. I found my voice and overcame my need for acceptance. I have made a truce with my depression and now allow myself time to deal and to heal. I discovered my natural talents lie in Creative Arts, particularly what

is now called Graphic Design and Digital Publishing (pity they didn't teach those subjects in the 1980s). I have learned to work to live, not live to work. I listen and consult rather than condemn or judge. I am not defined by the things that have happened in my past and I know I have been guided by God to places of safety and sanctuary when faced with life's most difficult challenges. I am thankful and humbled by the life I have been given.

I have been thanked for my work in the Museum and told that I have been an inspiration in leading some of these historical projects. Yet to me it is mutual inspiration and a great deal of gratitude. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to play an active role in the guardianship of the college's history. To reconnect with my own history, my family's history. To again find my place at Cabra and have a chance to close the circle of my truth journey.

Thomas Moore wrote:

...the transforming moment may be sensing nature's awe and beauty or feeling a strong desire to offer service to the world. .... you could be open to moments when your sense of self expands and the boundaries melt. The result is not really a loss of self, but an increase. The edges become softer, and, although to a rigid ego the experience may be frightening, if you're prepared, the mystical moment may allow you to enter life more fully. <sup>1</sup>

When I entered the gates on Cross Road in 1987 God knew I was ready. When He led me back in 2019, He knew I was done. I had found my truth and once again I was home.



**Alison Appleby (nee Slattery) '88**

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Moore, *A Religion of One's Own: A Guide to Creating a Personal Spirituality in a Secular World*, Penguin Publishing Group, 2014, p48.

1. "Aunt Kath" with baby Alison on the farm at Snowtown  
 2. Sr Mary Christopher Slattery OP at Cabra on her profession day, 1947, with her parents and three brothers, including Alison's father Tom, middle back. 3. Alison at Cabra in 1988.  
 4. Slattery family members in 1999 at an event held on the closure of the Cabra boarding house. Back row: Alison's sisters Dorothy, Patricia, and Angela with Mum, Ruth (2nd from left) Front row: Sr Carmel Slattery (a cousin) Sr Christopher and Alison. 5. Alison on her wedding day with fellow Cabra boarders Vanessa Carbone (Browne), Robyn Elborough (Jacobs), Alison Hennessy (Seal) and Paula Chapman

## OLD SCHOLARS

### Dr Jodie Avery (nee Wilson) '87

I started my Cabra journey in 1976, as a Year 1 student (they didn't have reception back then – only "Kittens"). The highlight of our day was to watch Playschool on a black and white TV on a tall trolley, whilst we sat cross legged on the floor. Our year 1 classroom was where the woodwork room is now, so I get a little sentimental when I tour through there – it's changed a bit. There was also a giant Moreton Bay Fig tree where the original Calaroga (now Calareuga) Hall was and many games of kiss chasey were played around its base. My sister Vicki was in a class one and a half years below me – that was the last primary class that went through so they were always the babies until Year 6. In Year 3 I made my First Holy Communion with my classmates – It was such an amazing day for a 7 year old! My sister and I left Cabra then as my mum Chris Wilson was a middle school teacher so it got a little difficult. We went to Mercedes but I returned in Year 12 to study music. Many of my original cohort

were still at Cabra then – Rebecca Hunt (nee Murphy), Anna McEvoy, Meg Sheridan, Rebecca Siney, Angela de Angelis, and Tania Mc Inerny (nee Torresan), some of whom also have children at Cabra today! I have Angus in Year 8 this year and Hamish will start next year in year 7. My cousins, the Gallios, also attended Cabra. I married Simon Avery in 1993, and we have lived in Adelaide all our lives.

One year at Christmas, there was a nativity play on the small oval – with live animals – I think camels and sheep – how amazing. We also used to have magnificent fetes. St Dominic's Day was a highlight – we used to have so many activities. I remember also doing my Confirmation preparation at school where we made badges and shields about our saints (mine was Dominique) – so much fun. I fondly remember some of the Sisters, like Sister Joan who taught me modified cursive, as well as Sr Pat who taught me year 12 English. I think one of my favourite teachers was actually Mr James Moncur with his dry Scottish wit, and definitely his wife who was always so lovely to me. In

Year 12 and 13 I was a member of the Cabra Special Choir with Sr Alphonsus. We went on a trip to where the highlight was singing at the Sydney Opera House and Entertainment Centre for the Bicentennial Easter Choral Spectacular where we sang Verdi's Requiem and Handel's Messiah with thousands of other singers! In Year 13 I met one of my best friends Clothilde Henriot – a French exchange student who lived with the McEvoy's – we still visit each other and I attended her wedding in her hometown Nancy, France in 2003 and visited her again in 2004 and 2018, and she has been back to Adelaide with her children Raphael and Sidney.

So since school I have followed an interesting path as a health researcher and Epidemiologist. I have obtained a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Applied Science, a Master of Public Health and a PhD in Medicine. I have worked mostly for the University of Adelaide, the SA Department of Health, and CSIRO. My main interests have been women's health looking at Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, Incontinence and Endometriosis, and I have won quite a few international awards for my work. Currently I work remotely for Monash University on Living Guidelines for Arthritis treatment as well as teaching health sciences students (remotely) about evidence.



1



2



Dr Jodie Avery



3



4

1. Jodie at primary school at Cabra. 2. Jodie in a recent photo with her family. 3. Jodie with her family, celebrating her First Communion at the Cabra Chapel. 4. Jodie at the Santa Sabina convent, on tour with the Cabra Special Choir

**Sam Ballard '18**

Samuel Ballard, '18, undertook VET courses while still attending Cabra, and was so successful that he was a finalist in the Adelaide Training & Employment Centre Doorways 2 Construction in Schools Awards. On the day after the Cabra formal, Sam attended the awards, and went home that night as the winner! The next day he was offered an apprenticeship. Sam's mother notes the assistance of Tanya Sharkey in allowing Sam to pursue his goals.

"Ms Sharkey was amazing, assisting where possible to make this all happen!!!"

Sam continues to enjoy working as an apprentice carpenter (pictured right.)

Do you know other stories of how Cabra's VET courses led to employment? We would love to hear! Please email details to [publications@cabra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:publications@cabra.catholic.edu.au)



**Brynley Davies '17**

It is wonderful to have our old scholar tutors back in the library, helping our students after school. Brynley Davies '17 (below right) is one of the Cabra tutors who visit the library after school to assist our current students. Brynley is studying Medical Science at Flinders University and recently had this to say about tutoring.

"I'm nearing the end of my undergraduate degree and hoping to do honours next year, and I can certainly say that being a uni student is no walk in the park. That's why I find tutoring at Cabra and passing whatever knowledge and insight I've managed to ascertain to be a highlight of my week. Especially in these ever increasingly hectic times, it feels wonderful to give something back to the community - what a bonus that it happens to be so enjoyable at the same time!"



**Kilahney Murphy '17**

Old Scholar Kilahney Murphy recently visited Cabra to speak to Stage 1 Chemistry classes. Kilahney is studying Chemical Engineering at Flinders University, and provided the students with valuable insight on getting the most out of university life. Among several extra-curricular activities, Kilahney is part of the Chalker Research Lab, whose mission is to use innovative chemistry to address global challenges in sustainability and human wellbeing.

"I am currently in my third year of a Bachelor of Science (Chemistry) (honours) and Masters of Engineering (Materials).

I was definitely influenced by the chemistry faculty at Cabra to choose this course. Though as I learnt by talking to my old teachers in the staff room, this was quite a surprise as they expected me to go into music."



**Tim Keating-Hughes '11**

"I am currently working for CNW Electrical Wholesalers as a salesman and have been there for the last 5 years. My memories of Cabra have always been fond, our year level of 2011 were all super close and still see a lot of them on a regular basis.

I am in the process of getting an Old Scholars Soccer club up and running for Cabra, so that not only for myself but others keep in touch well after they graduate from Cabra. At the moment we are trying to establish 2 teams with a variety of skill levels, so anyone is welcome!

If you know anyone that you would want to play with and they didn't go to Cabra that doesn't matter, anyone can play for the club.

Now at this stage we are trying to just find interest for players, so once I know, I will have more set in stone information!

If you have ANY questions please feel free to email me on [timkeatinghughes@gmail.com](mailto:timkeatinghughes@gmail.com) or call me on 0401 185 722

I look forward to hearing from you!"

# FROM THE ARCHIVES



In 2021 we will be celebrating 135 years since our founding. Do you have any photos from Cabra from the 1990s and earlier that you would like to share? Please email any images to [publications@cabra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:publications@cabra.catholic.edu.au). We would love to receive any images and to hear your stories of the people in the photos.



1. Current Performing Arts teacher Tess O'Callaghan used to work as the Boarding House Supervisor. Here she is pictured with the Boarders of 1997.

2. Some smart-looking boys here on the small oval in about the late 1980s or early 1990s. Does anyone recognise these lads? If you do, please let us know!

3. Kathleen Slattery, who became Sr Mary Christopher when she joined the Dominican Sisters, is pictured here, middle step on left, when she was a student at Cabra in the 1940s. This doorway is now the entry to the office of our Boylan House Leaders, Mr Edmund O'Brien and Mrs Narelle Sandercock.

4. Footy on the oval in the 1980s

CABRA DOMINICAN COLLEGE'S

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**WICKED**  
THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE WITCHES OF OZ

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY  
**STEPHEN SCHWARTZ**

BOOK BY  
**WINNIE HOLZMAN**

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY GREGORY MAGUIRE

ORCHESTRATIONS BY  
WILLIAM DAVID BROHN

MUSIC ARRANGEMENTS  
ALEX LACAMOIRE & STEPHEN OREMUS

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