

21 March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Last Friday, during Catholic Education Week, Sienna, Blaire, Max and Nora were welcomed at St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne, for the Mass of St Patrick.



In his Homily, Archbishop Peter spoke about the Cathedral being a symbol of the local Church as it is a place to gather for worship. He also spoke of the Cathedral as a symbol of the bonds of unity and peace with the Church across the whole world. Likening the Church to a mother and a home, the Archbishop had the 2000 who had gathered considering the role of mothers who teach, heal, and bring families together, but who also “send us out” into the world with an invitation to come back, just like Jesus did. Jesus welcomed the disciples into his home, then he sent them out in pairs to walk together and invite others into the Kingdom of God, which was his house. Archbishop Peter spoke of St Paul and St Barnabas who were called in and sent out in early Christian times, then he spoke of Ireland's St Patrick, who the Cathedral is named after, as he too followed the command of God to go out and invite the Irish into the kingdom of God.

Of significance to our Iona community and of great interest to our four students, was the Archbishop's mention of our Iona House patrons, Saint Mary MacKillop, Sr Mary Glowrey and Caroline Chisholm,

“all three who worshipped here, all three who went out from here, all three, and others, a myriad of others, who have come into the household of God and then gone out to welcome and invite others... We are called to be like those saints. In fact, we are called to be saints, to be the ones today who go out and bring others into the Kingdom of God, into God's household to bring them home. So welcome home and know that you are also being sent as friends and companions of Jesus Christ to go to others, to welcome them home.”

Following Mass, it was wonderful to hear our students chat about the beautiful Cathedral, the music, the impressive pipe organ, and the variety of school uniforms and banners. They were quite amazed that three of our House patrons, Saint Mary MacKillop, Sr Mary Glowrey and Caroline Chisholm, all worshiped at the Cathedral and from there went out to do good works for others. Our students were proud to be involved in such a special occasion.

Families may [enjoy viewing the livestream recording](#) of this Catholic Education Week celebration. The Archbishop's Homily, which directly connects to our College story, can be found at the 38:50 –45:00 minute mark.



2024 Tour and Information Sessions



This week we welcomed over 1,800 visitors to explore Iona as a potential secondary school destination for their young person. Tonight is our final Tour and Information Session for 2024. We have loved showcasing Iona to our community, and we have been particularly appreciative and proud of our students who confidently led tour groups. Congratulations to each and every one of you.

We'd also like to give a special thank you to all the Iona staff who contributed to making this week a success. We had many comments on how friendly our staff and students were and for that we are immensely proud! A special vote of thanks goes to our College Registrar, Di Makings, Head of Student Leadership, Sam Wood, Grounds, Administrative Staff, IT staff along with the staff who supported the tour groups over the course of this week. We would also like to acknowledge the Open Day Committee for their efforts in showcasing our college.

National Close the Gap Day



Today is National Close the Gap Day. This campaign raises awareness of the need to advocate for better outcomes and meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The report for 2024, '*Voyage to Voice, Treaty, Truth and Beyond*', asks Australians to do more to ensure recognition, rights, justice and equity for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples in the areas of health, poverty, education and employment.

The statistics in these areas are quite alarming and minimal if any positive change has happened over the last few years. It is important that all Australians continue to work towards better outcomes for First Nations people. To learn more about this campaign, please take a minute to explore <https://closethegap.org.au/>

Student Progress Meeting

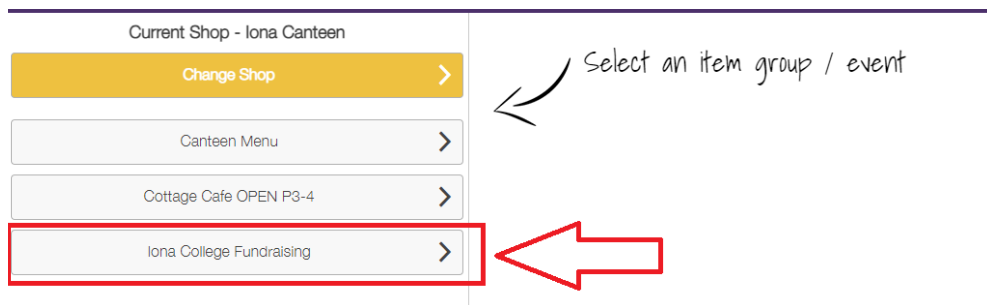


Bookings for the Student Progress Meetings, scheduled for Tuesday 26th of March, are now open. To assist you in the booking process, we've created a convenient [how-to guide with step-by-step instructions](#). Please take a moment to review the guide to book your Student Progress Meetings.

Easter Raffle

Please remember to send in final donations of Easter eggs by next Monday. Raffle books and money need to be returned by next Wednesday morning. Thanks to all those who have so generously donated to date and who have already returned raffle tickets.

We remind students and parents that monetary contributions can also be made through our online canteen. Simply jump onto the [Online Canteen](#), navigate to the Iona College Fundraising tab and select the amount you would like to donate.



Raffle Volunteer Helpers



We are still looking for parent/carer helpers to make up our prize hampers on Monday 25th March from 9 to 10.30 am. Please note, all volunteers must have a valid Working With Children's Check. If you are available, please [click on the following link to register online](#).

Finally, if you have any small baskets/boxes suitable for hampers, please send them into Reception.

Casual Clothes Day



A reminder that students can wear casual clothes on Monday in exchange for a gold coin. Money raised will go to St Mary's, Uganda. We encourage students to wear comfortable clothing that enables learning to take place. Please keep in mind that HPE classes will still be taking place on this day. Due to our sunsmart approach, students are asked not to wear singlets or midriff tops and to wear closed-toed shoes. As part of our OHS requirements, all students are required to tie their hair up and refrain from wearing any jewellery.

Paddle out' Against Seismic Blasting

Catholic Social Teaching guides us to 'Care for our Common Home' and to stand in solidarity with others to protect it. The leader of the Catholic Church and our College patron, Pope Francis, is a strong advocate for earth care, and in his letter, Laudato Si', he urges humans to tread carefully on our precious earth, reducing consumption of the earth's resources and minimising human impact. In support of Pope Francis, Catholic Religious Australia recently expressed concern about a lack of legislation to safeguard First Nations' cultural heritage in marine areas. Environmental threats are not just of concern to people of faith; members of our local community are concerned about the methods being used to search for oil and gas supply along our Victorian coastline in Gunditjmara sacred lands and Sea Country. Seismic blasting uses compressed air guns to release underwater sound waves and record echoes off the geological formations below the seabed, which has a devastating effect on ecosystems and kills marine life, including whales and turtles, which are of high cultural and ecological importance.

As an environmental issue of local significance, we invite families to become further informed via <https://www.ocean.org.au/>. A 'Paddle Out' event will take place at Cosy Corner, Torquay, this Saturday the March 23rd to show support for the cause. It is a family friendly event, attracting international attention. Bookings are available [via the following link](#).

Final Day of Term One

We will conclude the term with an Assembly during period 4 (commencing 12.05 pm) which will include a Holy Week Reflection and the drawing of the Easter raffle. This event will be livestreamed to families with the link to be emailed earlier on that day. On this particular occasion, students may choose to wear their formal or sports uniform. The day will conclude at 2.05 pm.

LifeChanger Program



We are thrilled to announce the successful completion of our LifeChanger program, an enriching journey that has undoubtedly left a lasting impact on our students' lives. Over the course of six interactive workshops, our participants delved deep into the Awaken the Hero Program, focusing on the Five Pillars Pathway of Health, Skills, Self, Purpose, and Tribe. These sessions, facilitated by the amazing LifeChanger experts, were designed to cultivate essential social, emotional, and resilience skills among our students.

Throughout the program, students explored key themes such as physical and mental health, mindfulness, goal setting, problem-solving, gratitude, self-awareness, resilience and connection.

Each workshop provided a safe and supportive environment for students to reflect, learn and grow. As we celebrate the conclusion of this transformative journey, we extend our gratitude to our dedicated facilitators and commend our students for their commitment to personal development. The LifeChanger program has not only equipped our students with valuable skills but has also empowered them to embrace their inner heroes as they navigate life's challenges with courage and resilience.

Parent Partnership at Iona... Exploring Healthy Masculinities



At Iona, we believe in the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive community where every individual feels valued and empowered to be their authentic selves. One of the key pillars to achieving this vision is our deliberate intention to partner with our parents/carers. Together, we can create a positive environment where our students can thrive emotionally, socially and academically.

Last week we had the privilege of hosting our *Unpacking the Man Box* parent evening. This event aimed to delve into the concept of the 'man box' and explore the dangers associated with stereotypes surrounding masculinity. In the Australian context, these discussions are more important than ever as we seek to challenge outdated notions of what it means to be a man and to promote healthier relationships and behaviours for our young people.

The 'man box' refers to the rigid set of expectations and stereotypes that society often imposes on men, influencing how they should behave, express emotions and interact with others. These narrow definitions of masculinity can have a detrimental effect on individuals, leading to feelings of isolation, pressure to conform and ultimately can lead to poor mental health outcomes.

The evening was facilitated by Drew Hanger and Alex from Jesuit Social Services and was the culmination of an 18-month partnership with the Healthy Masculinities project. During the evening, insightful discussion was held about breaking free from the constraints of the 'man box' and embracing a more expansive and inclusive definition of masculinity. Parents and guardians engaged in conversations about the importance of encouraging emotional expression, promoting respectful relationships and challenging harmful gender norms both at home and in the wider community.

The success of this evening, underscores the significance of open and honest dialogue between parents/carers, educators and students about issues related to gender, identity and respect. By working together, we can create an environment where young men feel supported and empowered to navigate the complexities of masculinity in a healthy and authentic way. The parent feedback was extremely positive, so much so that we are thinking of repeating the evening for those parents who were unable to attend. If we get 50 parents we will reschedule another session, [please register your interest in attending this session by clicking on the following link.](#)

Following the feedback from parents we are expanding the student workshops to all year levels. Tuesday, Mrs Flint and the Year 10s participated in thought-provoking sessions with Drew and Alex. We will roll out further workshops later in the year.

As we continue our journey as a lead respectful relationships school, we recognised the importance of building a culture of respect and inclusivity. We are grateful for the ongoing partnership and support of Drew and his team at Jesuit Social Services. Their ground breaking research and programs are really making a difference. [Please click here to see more about the latest research.](#)

Ashley Mills, Jesse Sutton and Mel Collier will continue this important work at the College and we look forward to seeing what their work will unveil. Together we can make a difference in the lives of our student's and build young people who wish to make a difference in the world.

Ms Kylie Power
Deputy Principal - Wellbeing

VCE VM Update – Term 1

Our VCE VM students have had a wonderful whirlwind of a term to start the year as they begin navigating their Senior Years Program. They are to be commended for their ability to adjust to a new schedule that places more responsibility on organisation and initiative than ever before.

This term has seen students prepare and transition to their Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) every Friday as well as commencing their various VET studies around Geelong (and beyond).

In between our regular classes and days we have also had the chance to:

- Visit Velisha Farms in Werribee for an immersion in the vegetable/produce industry.
- Attend the Victorian Careers Expo at the showgrounds in Flemington. This gave students the chance to meet and speak with 100's of employers and training agencies, attend seminars and discover new jobs of the future.
- Get our hands dirty during Numeracy as we work to develop the new cottage garden.
- Experience an escape room at the Mystery Rooms in Geelong. This will help set the platform for our own escape room project in PDS during Term 2.

With one term almost complete, our students are starting to see their future pathways being integrated into the weekly routines. It is an exciting space to work in and I look forward to our VM students continuing their journeys in Term 2.

Matt Horsted
Applied Learning Coordinator (VCE Vocational Major)

Neurodiversity Celebration Week (18 - 24th March)

Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. It aims to transform how neurodivergent individuals are perceived and supported by providing schools, and organisations, the opportunity to recognise the many talents and advantages of being neurodivergent, while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual.

This week at Iona, we:

1. Hosted Gavin from Divergent Thinkers to speak at Diversity Club. He spoke about Neurodiversity to students and staff.



2. Are facilitating a Neurodiversity Professional Development workshop for our amazing Learning Support Officers.
3. Provided professional reading opportunities and resources for staff.

4. Had a dedicated display in our Resource Centre, to help raise the profile of the week, and foster increased awareness. We have also purchased 80 new diversity related books, which illuminate neurodivergent perspectives, and celebrate neurodiversity, which are now available for staff and students to loan.



We look forward to continuing to provide awareness and educative opportunities, to foster an understanding of Neurodiversity within our school community and are committed to doing this year-round.

Mrs Hailey Haynes
Head of NCCD

Volunteer Gratitude



A big thank you to two of our amazing volunteers – Dianne Fitzgerald and Robin McGuire, wonderful grandmothers to some of our students who volunteer their time in the canteen each week. We are so thankful for you and the many other volunteers who help in our canteen.

Santa Casa Taize Prayer

You are invited to join Santa Casa, Queencliff for Taizé Prayer to start Holy Week, details as follows:

Santa Casa, Queenscliff at 2.30 – 3.30 pm, followed by afternoon tea

Dates:

- Sunday 19 May 2024
- Saturday 31 August 2024
- Saturday 5 October 2024
- Saturday 14th December 2024

For catering and seating purposes RSVP by emailing santacasa@ismapng.org.au

Art Department News

Here's an update from the Year 11 VCD class: our students are diving into creativity, experimenting with copic markers, watercolors, pastels, and mixing mediums with paints. Stay tuned for their vibrant creations!



Iona Meet the Team



The graphic features the Iona College Geelong logo in the top left corner. Below it, the text 'IONA MEET THE TEAM' is displayed in large, bold, white letters on a blue rectangular background. Underneath, 'BECK BARRY' is written in blue, and 'Head of Careers Education/Teacher' is in a yellow rounded rectangle. A quote in yellow text reads: "Enjoy your teenage years surrounded by your mates. Laugh lots and take advantage of the opportunities offered to you". On the right side, there is a circular portrait of Beck Barry, a woman with blonde hair wearing a colorful patterned shirt.

Meet Beck Barry, our Head of Careers Education as well as English Teacher, who loves helping young people with their career paths and realise they can succeed in whatever they aspire to do. For Beck, the most rewarding aspect of her role is building meaningful relationships with her students and supporting them on their journey.

Outside of work, Beck enjoys spending time with her family, including her husband and two children, Frankie and Xavier. They adore their cavoodle, Pablo, and enjoy outdoor activities like camping and road trips. They recently returned from a road trip around Australia, where the kids learned to surf and snorkel, and they absolutely loved the experience. Beck is a Cats supporter and loves Crowded House. Her favourite series is Homeland. In her spare time, Beck enjoys reading, going to the beach, and staying active at the gym.

Beck's words of wisdom for the student body are: "Enjoy your teenage years surrounded by your mates. Laugh lots and take advantage of the opportunities offered to you. Make gratitude a daily practice."

Welcome to the team Beck, it's been brilliant to see the work you are doing in the careers space!

Dates to Remember in 2024

Date	Event
Wednesday 31 January	Year 7 and New Year 8-11 Students Commence
Wednesday 31 January	Year 7 & New Year 8-11 Students Smoking Ceremony - No Formal Uniform Required
Thursday 1 February	Year 8-11 Students Start
Thursday 1 February	Whole School Assembly - No Formal Uniform Required
Tuesday 6 February	Beginning of School Mass - Formal Uniform
Thursday 8 February	School Photo Day - Formal Uniform
Tuesday 13 February	School Photo Catch Up Day
Wednesday 14 February	Ash Wednesday Whole School Assembly - Formal Uniform
Wednesday 14 February	Year 8, 9 & 10 'In-Person' Parent Community Group Welcome Evening - 5:15 pm - 7 pm
Thursday 15 February	Year 7 & 11 'In-Person' Parent Community Group Welcome Evening - 5:15 pm - 7 pm
Wednesday 28 February	Swimming Carnival - Kardinia Aquatic Centre
Monday 4 March	Year 7 -11 'In-Person' Parent Session - Man Box with Drew Hanger, Resource Centre 6 - 7:30 pm
Monday 11 March	Labour Day Public Holiday
Thursday 14 March	Summer Soiree
Wednesday 20 March	Student Progress Meetings
Friday 22 March	Student Free Day - Professional Development
Monday 25 March	Lunchtime Concert
Tuesday 26 March	Eltham High School Concert Band Visit
Tuesday 26 March	Student Progress Meetings
Wednesday 27 March	Athletics Carnival - Landy Field
Thursday 28 March	Last Day of Term - 2:05 pm
Tuesday 16 April	Term 2 Begins

2024 Parent Engagement Survey

By now you should have received an email with a link to our Parent and Carer Community Engagement Survey for 2024. Please take a moment to [complete this survey](#)! Your feedback will help us better understand your interests and skills, as well as how we can better serve you through programs, events and communications. Your input is invaluable and we thank you for being part of the Iona College community!



End of Term

A reminder that Term 1 concludes next Thursday at 2.05 pm. Regular bus (and country bus connections) services are brought forward an hour to accommodate the early finish to the term. Please note that the College Office will close at 3.30 pm on this day. The Office will be open during the term break from Tuesday 2 April to Friday 5 April. The office will be closed during the second week of the holidays.

A reminder that Term 2 for students officially commences on Tuesday 16 April with Monday (15/4) being a staff professional development day.

Finally, a reminder that tomorrow (Friday 22 March) is a staff professional development day.

Thanks for your support,

Damian, Kylie and Melissa