

12 June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week, our Year 11 students and staff had an incredible opportunity to spend a day with peers exploring the theme of 'connection'. The day's purpose was to reflect on connection to God, self, community and Country. Connection to faith was the focus of the opening liturgy, based on the story of 'The Good Samaritan'. The parable was examined in the context of both biblical times and its significance to our community at Iona. The Samaritan acted compassionately, noticing someone in trouble, taking the time to stop and help, and ensuring the man had the continuity of care he needed afterwards. The Year 11s were challenged to adopt the values of the Samaritan in their relationships with God, self, community and Country.

The students and staff then had the incredible opportunity to hear a story of a group of good Samaritans who saved the life of a local Torquay resident, Sean Purcell. Sean explained how a group of strangers, whom he refers to as his 'guardian angels', administered CPR on him for a gruelling 45 minutes to keep him alive. After having a second chance at life, Sean discussed the beauty of a life lived in gratitude. His message was inspiring, challenging all to live a life of courage and purpose.



The theme of connection was further explored in the afternoon with a session run by First Nations artist, mentor and facilitator Kiri Tawhai. Students and staff were privileged to hear Kiri's story of deep connection to Culture and Country. Kiri led the group in the creation of a large, interactive, community art project that explored each participant's connection to self, others and Country. It will be wonderful to see this work installed at the college.



Below is a prayer used during Connections Day, inspired by Pope Francis' words in his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. This challenges us all to be people of compassion and connection.

Lord Jesus,

You teach us in your parable that there are two kinds of people--
--those who bend down to help and those who look the other way.
Which kind of people will we be?

We say, "Yes, Lord, I will love you and love my neighbour."
But then we ask:

The migrant... is she my neighbour?
Those in poverty...are they my neighbours?
Victims of war across the world... are they neighbours?
One who faces racism... is he my neighbour?
Those disabled or elderly... are they my neighbours?

You remind us: *Yes. All of us neighbours.*
Show us how to love, Lord.
May we open our eyes.
May we emerge from our comfortable isolation.
May we build a world of compassion and dignity.

Lord Jesus, who was a neighbour to all,
Help us to persevere in love.
Help us restore dignity to the suffering.
Help us to build a society based not on exclusion, but on community.

Amen

A special thanks to Belinda Dezdjek, Greg Mellor, Lisa Couzens, Kristin Flynn, Tom Chalkley, the Year 11 community group teachers and all the other staff who prepared this meaningful opportunity. It was a chance for sharing, learning and building important connections within the Year 11 Iona community. Days like these are at the heart of what we do, *Learning to Change the World*.

Refugee Week 2025

Refugee Week is Australia's peak annual activity to promote greater awareness of refugees, the issues they face, and the contributions refugees make to the Australian community. The theme of [Refugee Week](#) (15-21 June) is 'Finding freedom: diversity in community'. This Refugee Week, we celebrate the inclusive communities across Australia that open their arms to those seeking refuge, providing platforms for connection and a sense of belonging.

The Geelong region is the new home of many asylum seekers and refugees who have arrived by boat after fleeing persecution in other parts of the world, and who are awaiting their determinations for refugee status, or have received temporary visas. Many people are separated from loved ones who are often still living in dangerous situations. Without permanent residency, opportunities for employment, education and training are severely limited. The reintroduction of Temporary Protection Visas for those found to be refugees means that the uncertainty and separation is extended indefinitely.

In order to address the impact of these issues, a 'drop-in centre' was established at the *Wesley Asylum Seeker Welcome Place* in July 2015 for asylum seekers and refugees with temporary visas. At Iona, we will be collecting items for the Asylum Seeker Food Bank at The Welcome Place from **16th June until 27th June**. If you are able to donate any of the [items on the following list](#), please send them in with your young person to be collected in community groups. Thank you for your support.

[Important Year 10 English and Math Exams/Assessment Schedule](#)

The upcoming Year 10 assessment schedule is taking place this Monday, the 16th of June. In Periods 1 and 2, all Year 10 students will sit either the Year 10 English Exam or the Year 10 Literacy Task.

Then, in Periods 5 and 6, all students will sit a Mathematics assessment, either the Year 10 Mathematics CORE and Pre-Methods Exam or a Year 10 Numeracy Assessment.

Please note the following venues:

- Mainstream English and Mathematics Exams will be held in the Stadium.
- Literacy and Numeracy Assessments will take place in the Resource Centre.

We encourage all students to come prepared with the appropriate equipment and to ensure they arrive promptly for each session. These assessments provide valuable insights into students' learning progress and help inform planning for future study pathways.

Those students who have Special Provisions will set their assessments in an alternate setting.

Reminder to all 2025 Unit 3 and 4 Students GAT

A reminder that the 2025 VCAA GAT takes place **this Tuesday, the 17th of June**. All students enrolled in a Unit 3 and 4 VCE and/or VCE VM subject are required to attend this external assessment. Please note that while this day is a student-free Professional Development day for other year levels, attendance at the assessment is compulsory for those completing Units 3 and 4 subjects.

Students will need to be on campus prior to 8:30 am to allow for the 9 am VCAA start time. Students are allowed to wear casual clothing on this day and will be provided with a BBQ lunch after the Part A section of the assessment.

Students are to head to the Glowrey building, A level, as soon as they arrive, to leave their bags and hand in their mobile phones. The Columba building will **NOT BE ACCESSIBLE** on the day, therefore students **MUST** have their GAT materials (calculator, dictionary, pens, etc.) with them when they arrive at school.

Kate McLaren
Head of Learning and Innovation

Push Up Challenge



Over the last two weeks, Iona College has been pushing for better by taking part in The Push Up Challenge, Australia's largest mental health fundraising initiative. The Challenge runs from June 4 to June 23 and sees participants aiming to complete 3,214 push-ups (or equivalent exercises) in honour of the 3,214 lives lost to suicide in 2023. In doing so, participants receive information daily about how to support their own mental health and also have the option of raising money to support mental health services, including Lifeline and headspace.

Our Iona community has been incredible so far, with 460 students and staff signing up. After the first week of the Challenge had already completed more than 100,000 push-ups to be the number one on the Community in all of Victoria (out of 457 who have signed up this year) and just outside the Top-10 for Australia. We have also raised almost \$3,000 in the process. As a school, we should be so proud of ourselves!

The Year 7s have been leading the way so far, with Year 7 Community Groups making up three of the top 5 teams in our school and combining to complete almost half of our overall total between them so far, while the Year 8 teams are closing the gap rapidly. Behind them, there is some competition for third between the Year 9s and 10s, who have each completed a little more than 10,000 so far, while the Staff team and the Year 11s and 12 are fighting it out to avoid the wooden spoon. Although, in fairness to the staff, there are currently more staff in Community Group teams than in the staff team.

If you want to follow along our progress, go to the Iona [Push Up Challenge profile](#) where you can keep track of the work we are doing, find out about the Challenge, learn some tips to support your mental health or potentially donate to support the cause. Students and staff, it is not too late to join! Every one that you do is one we couldn't do without you.

Dean Millard
Teacher/ Year 8 NCCD Case Manager

Wellbeing At Iona



Screen Time and Teen Wellbeing

As part of our whole school approach, which focuses on the health behaviours that shape a young person's physical and mental health, this week we're highlighting **recreational screen time**, time spent on devices for entertainment rather than learning.

The Australian guidelines recommend that teenagers limit their recreational screen time to no more than 2 hours per day. However, according to the 2022 Australian Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, **90% of 12-17-year-olds exceed these guidelines**, which can lead to a range of negative consequences. This is also concerning, as the link between screen time and lower psychological well-being has been found to be stronger in adolescents compared to younger children.

Why it matters:

Current research shows a strong link between excessive screen use and increased levels of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress in adolescents. With most teenagers in Australia exceeding the recommended **limit of 2 hours per day** of recreational screen time, this can negatively affect sleep, concentration, social interaction, and self-esteem.

The positives of reducing screen time include:

- Better mood and mental health
- Improved sleep and concentration
- More time for physical activity and hobbies
- Lower risk of cyberbullying
- Better academic outcomes

How can families help?

- Encourage screen-free times/zones (e.g. no phones at the dinner table or in bedrooms)
- Use device settings to monitor and limit usage
- Promote other activities like sport, music, walking or creative hobbies
- Model healthy screen habits as adults

Let's work together to support our young people in striking a healthier balance with screen time.

Kylie Power
Deputy Principal (Wellbeing)

Sleep Wellbeing, Weekly Grab

At Iona, we know that our knowledge about sleep will be something that will help us and those we care about throughout the rest of our lives. We have talked before about how we have three sleep systems which work together to help us sleep – the circadian rhythms system, the homeostatic system, and the arousal system. Last week, we spoke a little about the arousal system. When thinking about our arousal system, we basically have to be calm enough to sleep and associate our bed with resting.

Having a strong bedtime routine to help us get into 'wind-down mode' can be really helpful. It isn't only little children who need bedtime routines – they are helpful for all of us. Bedtime routines send a strong signal to our body that it is time to relax and get ready for sleep.

To get into wind-down mode, it is good to avoid things like social media and devices, drinking things with caffeine in them, doing vigorous exercise, worrying or getting into arguments and doing homework. When you are in wind-down mode, it is easier to notice when you are having cues of sleepiness and go to bed at a time which is good for you.

Some of our young people push past cues of sleepiness (things like losing track of what is happening in a TV program, having to read the same page of a book over and over again, head nodding or falling back, eyes rolling back in the head). We can help our young people by supporting them to be calm and quiet enough to notice their cues of sleepiness and use the cues as a sign to head to bed.

Helpful Resources

[Doze App](#) for our teenagers

[Insomnia Coach](#) for adults

[Separating out sleepiness from insomnia:](#)

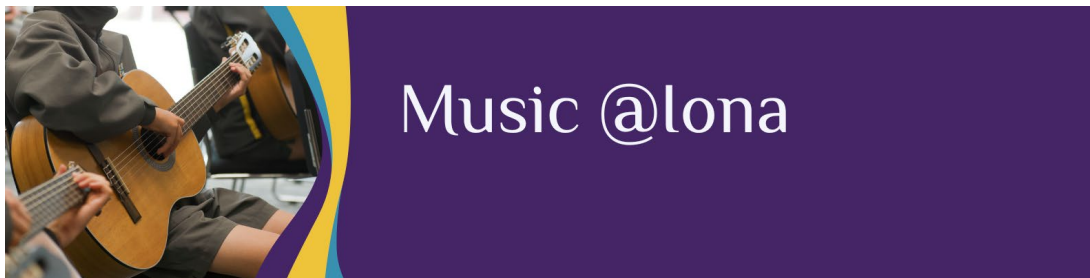
[Useful resources for young people](#)

[Cumulative sleep debt may create behaviours which look like ADHD, and may exacerbate ADHD symptoms.](#)

Happy sleeping!

Marisa Lavars
College Psychologist

Combined Band Day – Tuesday 10th June



We were very excited to have the privilege of hosting the Combined Band Day on Tuesday, 10 June. You could tell it was going to be a HUGE event as the buses arrived with so many students and equipment. Our visitors included over 200 students from St Joseph's College, Covenant College, Belmont High School, Kardinia College, Clonard College, Sacred Heart and Saint Ignatius College. Students were put through their paces on some joint repertoire by our visiting conductor from Geelong Grammar School, Ari Farrar. His enthusiasm, skill and kind manner brought out the best in all of the students for a fine performance of *Champion* and *Fiesta*!



Our thanks go to Allister Cox, our Concert Band Conductor, for leading our involvement in the day. A thank you to all of the staff from other schools for their help and support “on the ground” and a BIG thank you to all of the students involved.

Jodie Townsend
Teacher / Head of Performing Arts



THIS IS NOT JUST A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

This is also a tool to train motor control.

Playing an instrument is one of the most effective ways to develop motor control in the brain.

It strengthens motor planning, motor learning, and skill acquisition by requiring precise, coordinated movements between the hands, fingers, mouth, and even feet.

This process builds the neural pathways that allow children to master new physical tasks quickly and efficiently.

It will demand the coordination of motor & auditory processing.

When children play music, their brain must integrate movement, sound, and timing with extreme precision.

This coordination builds the foundation for language development, reading, writing, and overall cognitive function.

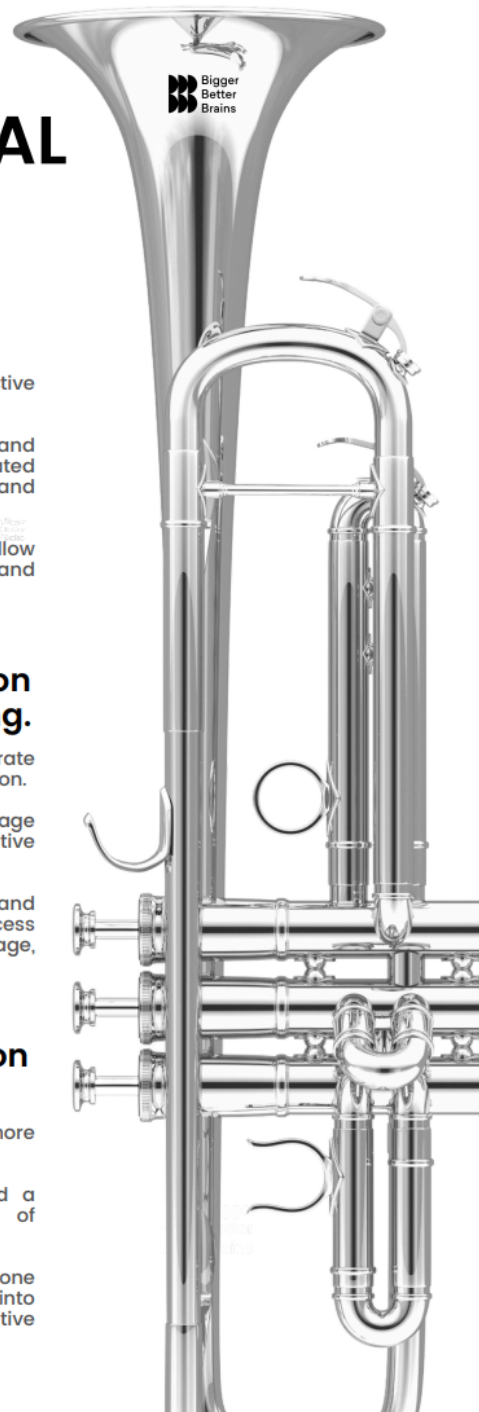
By strengthening the connections between motor and auditory processing, music helps children process spoken instructions, recognise patterns in language, and retain information more effectively.

This will help you pay attention for longer.

Students who participate in music tend to feel more engaged and connected at school.

Music brings joy, a sense of achievement, and a creative outlet that balances the demands of academic work.

When children feel motivated and confident in one area—like music—they carry that enthusiasm into their other subjects, making learning a more positive and rewarding experience.



Help Keep Our College Healthy This Winter ❄️ 🩹



Coming into winter, we're seeing a rise in colds, flu, COVID-19 and RSV in the community. With the respiratory illnesses on the rise, it's important to keep students home if they're sick. It helps stop the spread and protects classmates, staff, and especially those more vulnerable.

A few simple steps can help us all stay well:

- Keep students at home if they have symptoms like a cough, fever, sore throat or runny nose.
- Vaccinations available: flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines are available through GPs and pharmacies. It's not too late!
- Encourage good hygiene, like hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.

Let's work together to protect our school community this winter. For more info, visit health.vic.gov.au.

Kate Every
College Nurse

Iona Pathways Press

The 12th June edition of the Iona Pathways Press [can be found here](#).
In this edition, you will find information about:

- Dates to Diarise in Term 2
- Dates to Diarise in Term 3
- Melbourne Career Expo 2025
- Career as Orthotists or Prosthetists
- Experience a 'Day in the Life' at La Trobe University
- La Trobe Aspire Early Offer Program OPEN
- Accounting and Business Information Technology (Professional) at Swinburne University
- The Difference between Financial Planning, Finance, and Accounting at Deakin University
- SW Accountants and Advisors: School Leaver and Undergraduate Program 2026
- Deakin Guarantee ATAR
- Monash Information Session in Geelong
- Bond University Information Session in Geelong

- Collarts Winter holiday Workshops
- Collarts Course competitions
- Meet Melbourne Bellarine Peninsula
- Global And International Studies Degrees in Victoria in 2025
- Snapshot of The University of Sydney in 2025

Art Department News

The Year 8 Visual Art students have dived into their Linocut unit, using Angela Harding's 'Landlines' work as inspiration. The variety of work represents an exploration of students' local landscapes, all with a unique perspective. From Torquay foreshore to the Geelong Waterfront, see if you can spot a familiar place!









Term 2 2025 Dates to Remember

Date	Event
Friday 4 April	End of Term 1 (2:05 pm Finish - Formal Uniform)
Tuesday 22 April	Term 2 Starts
Wednesday 23 April - Thursday 24 April	Year 12 Retreat
Thursday 24 April	Consent Labs - Parent Webinar, Powering Parents and Carers (Online , 6 pm - 7:30 pm)
Thursday 24 April	ANZAC Day Assembly (Formal Uniform)
Friday 25 April	ANZAC Day Public Holiday
Monday 19 May	Student Free Professional Development Day Except for GAT Students
Monday 19 May	Practise GAT Exam - All Unit 3 Students
Tuesday 20 May	Careers Expo Evening (Iona Stadium, 5 pm - 8 pm)
Thursday 22 May	Parent & Carer Evening (all year levels) - How Do I Talk To My Teen About Food, Onsite (Iona Resource Centre, 6 pm - 7 pm)
Friday 23 May	Year 12 Photo (Formal Uniform) (Updated Date)
Thursday 29 May	Reconciliation Week Assembly (Formal Uniform)
Thursday 29 May	Autumn Soiree
Monday 9 June	King's Birthday Public Holiday
Tuesday 17 June	Student Free Professional Development Day Except for GAT Students
Tuesday 17 June	Unit 3 VCE & VCE VM GAT
Wednesday 18 June - Friday 20 June	Year 7 Camp (Updated Date)
Wednesday 18 June - Thursday 19 June	Year 10 Semester 1 Exams
Friday 20 June	Year 12 2026 Subject Selection Due
Saturday 28 June - Wednesday 9 July	Indonesian Study Tour
Monday 30 June - Tuesday 8 July	Central Australia Immersion
Friday 4 July	End of Term 2 (2:05 pm Finish)

If you would like to download a printable version of the schedule above, [please access it here](#). This link will be updated each week in the newsletter as new events are added to the calendar.

A reminder that next week, Tuesday, 17 June, is a student-free day for all students except for all students who are enrolled in a Unit 3 and 4 VCE and/or VCE VM subjects completing the GAT on that day.

We're looking forward to next week when our Year 7 students head off to their first Iona camp, from Wednesday 18 June to Friday 20 June. We know this will be a memorable and meaningful experience for them all.

Thanks for your support.

Damian, Kylie and Melissa