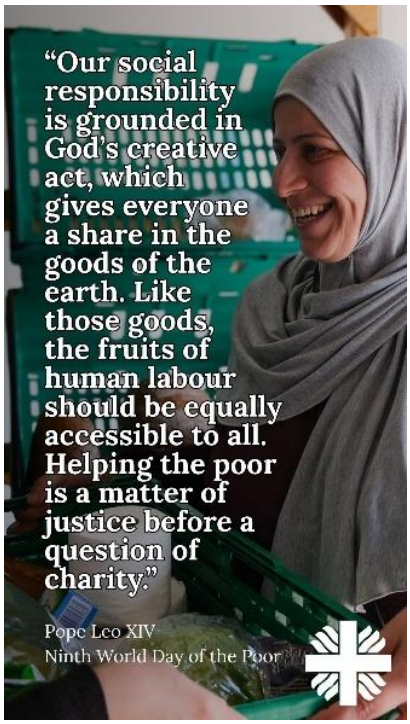
13 November 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Each year, the Church is called to listen to the cry of the poor and empower those who have been trapped in cycles of poverty. This year, World Day of the Poor falls on this Sunday, 16th November. Pope Leo has declared the theme for this year's World Day of the Poor, *You Are My Hope.*



The World Day of the Poor is an annual opportunity for people to come together, reflect on how to help those in need, and take action to end cycles of poverty. Pope Leo explains that World Day of the Poor is a time to turn need into hope and hope into action.

Reflecting on this theme, we are launching our Iona College Christmas Appeal, so we can turn hope into action. This Appeal invites our families to donate a gift card from any retail store, including supermarkets, that we will pass on to service agencies for distribution to people who are in great need. If your family is in a position to donate one card, we would be most grateful.

This year, we will support two service agencies, MacKillop Family Services and Vinnies. Iona students can bring their gift card donation to school and drop it into the box at Main Reception by Thursday, 4th December. If families have a particular preference to give to MacKillop Family Services or Vinnies, please put the card into an envelope that is marked with the preferred agency. We will ensure that gift cards are donated as per family wishes. It is fine not to nominate a recipient; we will share such cards between the agencies.

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As an alternative to the donation of a gift card, families may prefer to donate directly: MacKillop Family Services via the following link and to Vinnies via the following link.

Prayer

God of compassion and justice,
World Day of the Poor, You are our refuge and hope.
Open our hearts to hear the cry of the poor and forgotten.
Let us walk with them in love and mercy, serving with humble hands and voices of dignity. Guide us to build a world where all may live in fullness.
Strengthen us to be signs of Your Kingdom.

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Patrick Hagan Awarded Prestigious Endeavour Scholarship

We are excited to share that Mr Patrick Hagan, one of our VCE Physics, Mathematical Methods and Specialist Mathematics teachers, has been awarded the Astronaut Al Worden Endeavour Scholarship.

This prestigious program will see Patrick travel to the International Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, in July 2026 as Mission Team leader for Mission Team Australia. He will join students and teachers from around the world to explore space science, innovation, and global collaboration.

Patrick has a genuine passion and love for STEM and inspires everyone he teaches. He thoroughly deserves this recognition, and we look forward to sharing more about his journey as this exciting adventure draws near.

Patrick says, “I’m excited to represent both Iona College and Mission Team Australia at the US Space and Rocket Centre as part of the Endeavour Scholarship program. Attending Space Camp will not only be a fantastic opportunity to simulate real astronaut training but also to engage in collaborative, STEM-based experiences with global participants that will help shape the future of our programs.”

We congratulate Patrick on this remarkable achievement!

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Year 7 & 8 Passion Project Expos

Our Year 7 and 8 students are excited to showcase their creativity and hard work at this year's Passion Project Expos. Parents and carers are warmly invited to visit and see the projects students have worked on throughout the term.

- **Year 8 Expo:** Wednesday 19 November, 2:00–2:45 pm
- **Year 7 Expo:** Wednesday 26 November, 2:00–2:45 pm

Please sign in at Main Reception upon arrival. We look forward to celebrating our students' interests and achievements together.

eSafety and Social Media Age Restrictions and Your Family - Reminder

From 10 December 2025, many social media platforms won't be allowed to let Australians under 16 create or keep an account. The information on this page will help you understand why, and how you can help your under-16 through the change. You'll find answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), tools to help you work through it together, and links to helpful resources you can explore.

The eSafety site also helps Australians prevent and deal with harm caused by serious online abuse or illegal and restricted online content. Please make yourself and your young person familiar with the report abuse function.

Two important parent support guides on AI can also be found here: AI Companions Parent Tool Kit and AI Deepfakes Parent Tool Kit. Please take a moment to read up on these fast-growing AI advances.

Kylie Power
Deputy Principal (Wellbeing)

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Year 7 Applications & Tour and Information Sessions - Reminder

If you have a young person starting Year 7 in 2027, applications are now open. Families are encouraged to complete the online enrolment form before Friday, 8 May 2026.

Applications can be made online via the following link.

ENROL ONLINE NOW

We are also pleased to share the dates for our upcoming Tour and Information Sessions**:**

- Monday 16 March – 4.15 pm to 5.45 pm
- Tuesday 17 March – 11.00 am to 12.30 pm
- Wednesday 18 March – 9.00 am to 10.30 am
- Wednesday 18 March – 4.15 pm to 5.45 pm
- Thursday 19 March – 9.00 am to 10.30 am

Bookings for these sessions can be made online via the following link.

BOOK A TOUR & INFO SESSION

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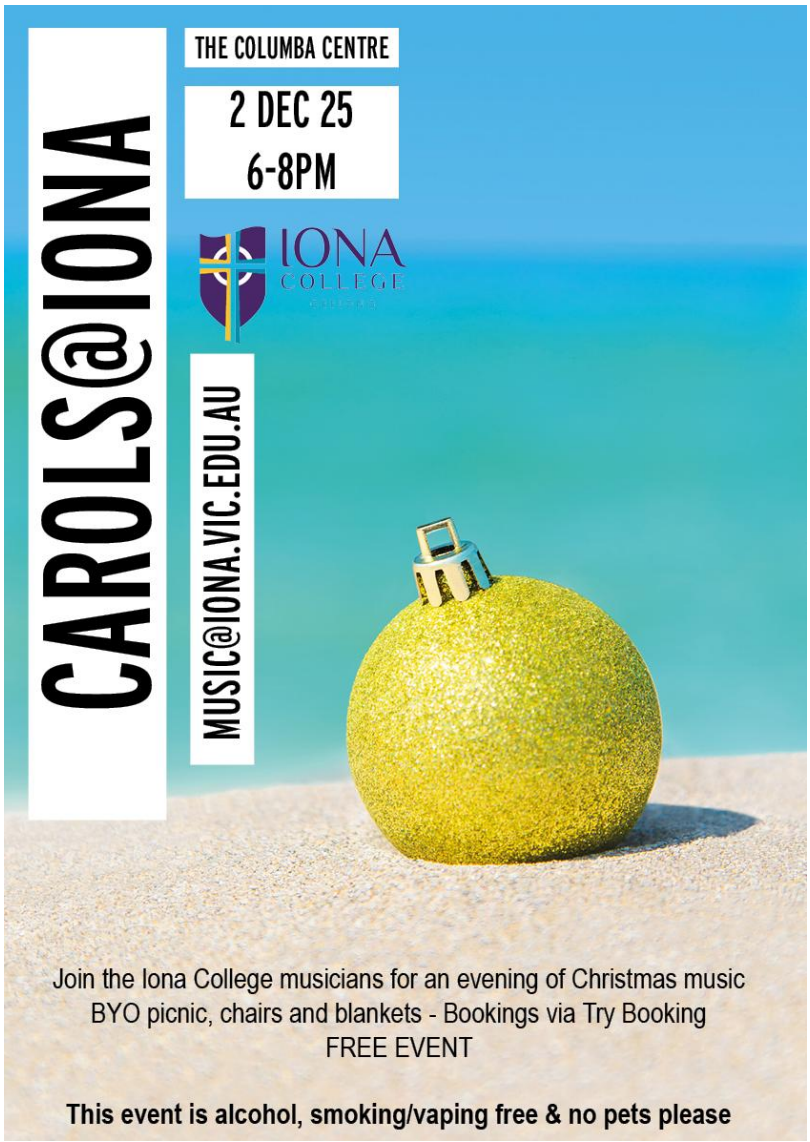
Music Department News

Carols@Iona - Reminder



A reminder to please RSVP for our upcoming Carols@Iona, which will take place on Tuesday, 2 December.

Tickets are free, but bookings are essential so we can plan for numbers.

Please register via the following link.

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Weekly Emotional Regulation Strategy

This week we're looking at the vagus nerve (a key part of your body's calm down system) and learning how to take control of the way we respond to stress through 'vagal toning' (the fancy terminology for calming the nervous system and helping your body reset when it senses threat). The vagus nerve is the longest cranial nerve in the body, running from the brainstem down through the face, chest, and abdomen. It plays a central role in the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the body's 'rest and digest' functions, slowing the heart rate, regulating breathing, aiding digestion, and calming the body after stress. Essentially, it helps maintain balance in the autonomic nervous system by counteracting the effects of the 'fight, flight, or freeze' stress response.

Gentle stimulation through eye movement can help activate the brain's calming circuit. You're doing more than just moving your eye muscles, you're engaging parts of the brainstem and cranial nerves that communicate with the vagus nerve. Additionally, when your eyes move smoothly left to right (like when you're scanning your surroundings), it signals to your brain that the environment is safe, because when we're in danger, our eyes tend to dart quickly or fixate. This sense of safety helps turn off the fight-or-flight response and encourages a parasympathetic (calming) response. This helps lower the heart rate, relax the breathing, interrupt emotional overwhelm and helps the brain and body shift from a state of threat and activation to one of calm and restoration.

This activity helps you calm down when you feel upset, worried, or overwhelmed by moving your eyes in certain ways. It helps your brain sort through big feelings and feel more balanced again.

STEPS:

1 - Sit still and relax your body.

2 - Without turning your head, **look far to the right** and hold for 30 seconds. You may feel a swallow, yawn, or sigh - signs of nervous system reset.

3 - Slowly return your gaze to centre.

4 - Now **look far to the left,** hold for 30 seconds, and return.

This technique helps **reset the automatic nervous system** by activating the vagus nerve* via the eyes.

**The vagus nerve is like a super highway that carries messages from your brain to your body and helps calm you down by slowing your heart rate and relaxing your body when you're stressed*

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools | IONA COLLEGE GEELONG

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Iona Sleep Wisdom

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Indonesian Language Learning Ambassadors (ILLA) Program Farewell

This week, we said, “Sampai jumpa” (goodbye) to Pak Hakim from the Indonesian Language Learning Ambassadors (ILLA) program. Pak Hakim has been teaching our students about the Lampungese language and script, traditional arts such as batik making, and ceremonial customs and traditions. On his final day, he brought his year 9 and 10 Indonesian classes traditional food called Martabak and shared a traditional folktale and game. Pak Hakim was presented with an Iona College Keep Cup and a few small items to show our gratitude for his teachings. Terima kasih, Pak Hakim!

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Iona Pathways Press

The 13th November edition of the Iona Pathways Press can be found here.
In this edition, you will find information about:

- Dates to Diarise in Term 4
- Reminder: VTAC 2026 Upcoming Key Dates
- C.A.S. Hawker Scholarship
- ANU Tuckwell Scholarship for 2027
- Exam Exemption Criteria for Victoria Police Applicants
- UK Gap Year Program in 2027
- Travel & Tourism Courses in Victoria in 2025
- Snapshot of Photography Studies College (PSC) in 2025

Year 12 Graduation Photos – 2025

The Graduation photos are now ready to order. Arthur Reed Photos uses an online ordering system where you can view your photos prior to ordering.

If you have already registered for photos earlier this year, you should have received an email or SMS from Arthur Reed Photos with a link to view your photos. If you have not yet registered for 2025, please contact their customer service team directly via email at customerservice@arphotos.com.au

Please note that you will need to register online with your **2025 photo code** to gain access to this year's images. All photo packages will be sent directly to your nominated address, so please ensure that you enter the correct details and nominated shipping address upon checkout.

If you require any assistance ordering your photos, please contact Arthur Reed Photos directly at customerservice@arphotos.com.au

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Art and Technology News

We warmly welcome the school community to come and celebrate the exceptional work produced by the senior years 10-12 Art, Design and Technology students. Join us on Thursday, the 27th of November, from 4:00-5:30 pm in the specialist arts wing within the Columba building on level two for the *Inspired 2025 Exhibition*. For catering purposes, please RSVP here by the 19th of November. We hope to see you there.

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Safe Crossing of Boundary Rd

Iona College staff and members of our local community remain concerned by students continuing to put their safety at risk by not crossing Boundary Rd safely at the traffic lights/pedestrian crossing at the intersection with Horseshoe Bend Rd. This is mainly concerning students coming to/from Iona College through Ashbury Estate or being dropped off by car on the southern side of Boundary Rd.

We request that parents/carers whose young ones have to cross Boundary Rd to enter the College remind them of the need to act safely and only cross Boundary Rd at the intersection lights/pedestrian crossing. College staff will also continue to raise this issue directly with students.

Iona College has been engaging with the City of Greater Geelong for some months now to provide supervised crossing staff at this intersection and at another recently constructed crossing point on Horseshoe Bend Rd to our north. We hope that this can be put in place in time for the commencement of the 2026 school year, as it will definitely assist in improving student awareness and safety.

Carl Jones
Transport Coordinator

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Term 4 2025 Dates to Remember

Date	Event
Monday 6 October	Student Free Day (Staff Professional Development)
Tuesday 7 October	Term 4 Starts
Tuesday 14 October	Year 7, 2026 Parent Information Night (Online)
Thursday 16 October	Summer Soiree
Tuesday 21 October	Whole School Assembly (Formal Uniform Required)
Tuesday 21 October	Year 12 Arts and Technology Exhibition (5 pm - 5:45 pm)
Tuesday 21 October	Year 12 Graduation Mass (6 pm, Iona Stadium)
Wednesday 22 October	Year 12 Celebration Session
Thursday 23 October	Year 12 Graduation Dinner
Wednesday 22 October - Thursday 23 October	Year 9 Camp (Group 1)
Thursday 23 October - Friday 24 October	Year 9 (Group 2)
Tuesday 28 October	VCE Unit 3 & 4 Exams Begin
Monday 3 November	Student Free Day (School Closed for Mid-Term Break)
Tuesday 4 November	Melbourne Cup Public Holiday
Monday 17 November - Friday 21 November	Year 10, 11 and Unit 2 Exams
Wednesday 19 November	Year 8 Passion Project Expo (1:30 pm - 3 pm)
Thursday 20 November	"Inspired" Art and Technology Exhibition of VCE Work
Monday 24 November	Student Free Day (Staff Professional Development)
Wednesday 26 November	Year 7 Passion Project Expo (1:30 pm - 3 pm)
Wednesday 26 November - 3 December	Ignite Program (Years 10 -12)
Tuesday 2 December	Carols@Iona (6 pm - 8 pm)
Wednesday 3 December	End of Year Mass (Formal Uniform Required)
Thursday 4 December	Term 4 Concludes (3:05 pm)
Thursday 29 January	Year 7, Year 12 and All New Students to the College Start
Friday 30 January	Years 8-11 Commence

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.

Next Wednesday, 19 November, marks the end of the examination period for our students in Year 12 and those who have been studying a Unit 3 and 4 sequence this year. Congratulations to all students who will be completing their secondary education with us. I would particularly like to acknowledge our VCE coordinator, Anthea Sholl, assistant, Kate Lee and the learning leadership team of Kate McLaren, Steve Parker and Mel Gould, who have been supporting the students as well as the requirements associated with the administration of the exams.

Thanks for your support.

Damian, Kylie and Melissa

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