

19 February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

On Wednesday, 11th February, we celebrated the Beginning of the Year Whole School Mass. It was our first opportunity to gather as a whole college community, and we were grateful to have Father Joel Peart as our celebrant. The gospel reading (Matt 7:7-12) focused on persistent prayer and the "Golden Rule," teaching us to ask, seek, and knock with confidence, knowing God as a loving Father provides good gifts and calling us to treat others as we would have them treat us. Father Joel continued this theme in his homily, encouraging our students to always ask questions, to ask when unsure, to seek out help when needed and to call on others for support. Fr Joel reminded us that most people are good and are willing to help; we just need to ask. Later in the mass, Fr Joel blessed our new College Crest banners, which had been processed into the mass by our student college leaders.



Before the mass began, each Crest was highlighted individually. While one student House Leader processed in with their Crest banner, the other House Leader explained the important symbols, words and images on the banner that represent each House's patron and values. Each of the banners was blessed with holy water by Fr Joel, and he encouraged us to live out the values modelled by our patrons.

Each crest features the Iona Cross, reflecting our Catholic identity, and the gum leaf, honouring the First Nations stories of this Country.

The **Chisholm House Crest** is inspired by Caroline Chisholm and the value of Compassion. It includes symbols of water and the Surf Coast reflecting healing, gentleness and life-giving strength.

The **Francis House Crest** is inspired by Pope Francis and the value of Courage. It has symbols of St Mary of the Angels Catholic Parish in Geelong and of fire. They reflect bold action and the call to transform challenges into hope.

The **Mackillop House Crest** is inspired by Saint Mary MacKillop, Australia's first saint, and the value of Leadership. Its symbols are the You Yangs and the wind reflecting St. Mary MacKillop's direction, clarity and resilience.

The **Glowrey House Crest** is inspired by Mary Glowrey and the value of Excellence. Its symbols are the Otways and the sun reflecting Mary Glowrey's illumination, growth and her pursuit of knowledge and achievement.

Reflecting on symbols that call to mind our traditions and culture is an important way to keep our values at the forefront of our minds. It reminds us that we stand for goodness and justice.



On Wednesday, 18th February, Ash Wednesday Liturgies were held during the morning Community Group period. Staff and students joined together in prayer and reflection for the beginning of Lent and to make the commitment to pray, to give something up and to give to others for the 40 days of Lent. We were marked with ashes in the sign of the cross on our foreheads to remind us of the importance of living a simple life and giving to others. We have a focus on giving to Caritas Australia and to St Mary's Primary School in Uganda this Lent. Giving to others helps to open our hearts and strengthen us individually and as a community.

Dear God,

We come together to begin our journey through Lent.

Remind us to be kind, to say sorry, and to try our best to follow Jesus.

Help us to make good choices, to share with others, and to grow in love each day.

Be with us as we walk towards Easter with open hearts.

We ask this through Jesus, Your Son.

Amen.

Awards Ceremony and Student Leader Commissioning

This morning, we held our 2026 VCE and Vocational Major High Achievers Awards and 2026 Leaders Induction ceremony. We gathered together as a College Community to not only celebrate the academic achievements of our 2025 senior students, but also inducted our 2026 College Leaders. We were delighted to welcome members of our graduating class of 2025 and their special guests. This morning's assembly was a time for reflection, celebration and inspiration as we marked the achievements of last year whilst embarking on another journey of learning and growth.

Award Winners

The graduation of our first Year 12 cohort is a milestone of profound importance in the life of our school. As our inaugural group of senior students, they have shaped the identity of our emerging culture, set new standards of excellence, and modelled what it means to lead with character, determination and optimism. Their journey has been one of courage and commitment, and their achievements speak to the strong foundation they have helped build for all future graduates.

This cohort should be proud of their academic results, demonstrating not only their individual talents but also the collective strength of a group motivated to achieve their very best. Their performance across subjects, projects, and assessments reflects deep engagement, intellectual curiosity, and the willingness to embrace challenge—qualities that will continue to serve them well.

We celebrate them not only for what they have accomplished, but for the legacy they leave and the bright futures they are creating. We'd like to congratulate the following award winners.

2025 College Dux



Lachlan Meighan. With a special mention to his outstanding study score in Physics.

Proxime Accessit

Our Proxime Accessit for 2025 is Isabella Dunne, with academic excellence in Product Design and Technologies and also Outdoor and Environmental Studies, placing her in the top 2% of the state for this subject.



VCE Academic Excellence Awards

The **VCE 2025 Academic Subject Excellence** awards celebrate students who achieved outstanding study scores in particular VCE subjects, placing them in the top 9% of the state in their respective subjects.

- Leo Newby - General Mathematics (Year 10)
- Jack Pentony – General Mathematics – top 2% of state (Year 10)
- Thomas Asbell - General Mathematics (Year 11)
- Miley Dawkins - Health and Human Development (Year 11)
- Hamish Frake - Health and Human Development (Year 11)
- Aidan Heffer - Food Studies (Year 11)
- Hetty Jones - Health and Human Development (Year 11)
- Evie van Eck - Product Design and Technologies



The following students were recognised as recipients of the VCE High Achiever Awards, demonstrating excellence across all of their VCE studies.

2025 Academic Subject Excellence award, as well as VCE 2025 High Achiever Awards :

- Kezia Berends, with academic excellence in Outdoor and Environmental Studies.
- Thomas Goerke with academic excellence in Music Sound Production (VCE VET).
- Lexi Ivens - with academic excellence in Health and Human Development.
- Josephine Leonard -with academic excellence in Visual Communication.
- Stella Rose – with academic excellence in English.
- Nicola Van Der Meer – with academic excellence in Media.
- Nalani Webber – with academic excellence in English.



VCE 2025 Higher Achievers Award

- Evelyn Calvert
- Luca Fraser
- Maya Goette
- Josh O'Brien
- Ava Tadich



Our VCE Vocational Major pathway offers practical and real-world focused learning opportunities. It is rich in workplace experiences and empowers our students to grow into skilled, confident, job-ready individuals. We'd like to congratulate the following students:

VCE Vocational Major High Achiever Award to two outstanding students. We congratulate

- Charlotte Braaksma
- Ashton Hageman



Commissioning of College Leaders

Today we commissioned our 2026 College Leaders from year 12 representing the portfolios of Culture & Identity, Learning, Sport and Wellbeing. At Iona, we are shaped by our Catholic Heritage and the First Nations story of this Country. We look to Jesus for guidance and follow his example of servant leadership. As we continue to live out our motto of learning to change the world, we draw strength from our patrons to do so with compassion, leadership, excellence and courage. Today, along with their badge, the students receive a gumleaf. The gumleaf is important to First Nations peoples, symbolising strength, resilience, respect and leadership. We hope that our students will lead our community proudly, shaping their legacy with these qualities as the foundation.

Congratulations to our 2026 College Leaders:



College Leaders of Culture and Identity

- Mia Morris
- Isaac Curavic

College Leaders of Learning

- Kirby Reynolds
- Maurice Guye

College Leaders of Sport

- Layla McInnes
- Finley Cummings

College Leaders of Wellbeing

- Alice Wolter
- Tai Stewart

Student Leaders

We were also proud to celebrate our Student Leaders. This year, students have stepped forward to take on leadership roles across ten key portfolio areas that reflect the diverse and vibrant nature of our community. These portfolios play an important role in shaping our College culture and supporting their peers.

The students appointed to these positions have demonstrated initiative, commitment and a genuine desire to represent the voices of others.

We congratulate the following Student Leaders:

Culture & Identity Portfolios

- Gursagun Sidhu,
- Alexandra McIntosh
- Georgia Fisher
- Carter Dingle
- Evie McNamara
- Cassidee Koekemoer
- Abigail Hunt

Environmental Portfolio:

- Lucinda Joyce
- Billy Connor-Cabrie
- Chloe Fryer
- Lillie Taylor
- Jessie Cook

First Nations Portfolio:

- Esme de Hoog
- Louis Lloyd

Senior Fire Carriers

- Alexandra McIntosh
- Eli Williams-Treloar

Wellbeing Portfolio:

- Emma Barry
- Lillian Peplow
- Finley Wright
- Marlee Sammut
- Julia Jordan
- Owen Davies
- Stevie Bett
- Hetvi Arya
- Bodhi Perera

Inclusivity Portfolio:

- Colbey Woerner
- Allec Slater
- Jimmy Benne
- Elliot Dickinson

Health & PE Portfolio

- Amy Litaze
- Alyssa Bromley
- Finn Lees
- Jed McKenzie
- Lincoln Gray
- Archer Connolly
- Elsie Orgill
- Matilda Lomas
- Isabel Howes

House Sport Leaders

Chisholm:

- Jemma Coupar
- Mia Peselj
- Jordan Penrice
- Charlotte Brereton
- Archie Law
- Jaz McInnes
- Cooper Ford
- Leo Reynolds

Francis

- Sophie Nolan
- Kai Stephens
- Hudson O'Leary
- Teagan van der Vliet
- Emily Howes
- Eden Hayward
- Emily Hunt
- Miller Young

Glowrey

- Max Fisher
- Alby Arto
- Lily McCrohan
- Ruby Mensch
- Zack Waterson
- Capri Hargreaves
- Grace Primus
- Will McCrohan

MacKillop

- Miley Dawkins
- Felix Abbott
- Leni Hepburn
- Jai McGillivray
- Devi Berends
- Tilly Moreton
- Macy Sgambaro
- Abby Collins

Learning Portfolio:

- Joel Prince
- Hetty Jones
- Harrison Aisbett
- Joshua McMahon
- Briony Peplow
- Jack Pentony
- Anna Henderson
- Mila Crosby
- Lily Mitchell
- Zoe Edwards
- Arabella Ward
- Esther Petrovski

Arts & Technology Portfolio

- Zander Zurawel
- Sabine Chappell
- Nora Murray
- Stella Basham
- Violet Cross

Performing Arts Portfolio

- Tobie Stanley
- Lila Tadich
- Joseph Goodwin
- Angus Bartrop
- Magalena Jones
- Amelia Senftleben
- Zoe Gullo
- Isabella Dennis
- Lilly Palmer
- Ashley Rea

A huge congratulations to all our 2026 leaders.

Wellbeing for Learning – Focus on Gratitude

In our Wellbeing for Learning curriculum, students will explore the theme of Gratitude. At Iona, gratitude is explicitly taught across all year levels, and our weekly Pulse wellbeing check-ins provide opportunities for students to put gratitude into action by actively noticing and acknowledging the positive aspects of their day-to-day life. This week's Wellbeing deep dive is on 'Gratitude', which sits within the domain of Positive Emotions and invites students to reflect on the good things, big and small, that enrich their lives.

What Is Gratitude?

Gratitude is the practice of being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen in our lives. Sometimes it appears as a momentary feeling, like appreciating when someone holds the door open for you. At other times, it becomes a broader mindset: regularly noticing the meaningful people, experiences, and opportunities that shape our wellbeing. Although gratitude comes more naturally to some than others and each of us expresses it differently, the research is detailed: gratitude is a skill that can be cultivated. Choosing to be grateful shifts our attention to what we *do* have, rather than what we lack. When we practise gratitude, emotions such as resentment, envy, or disappointment have less space to take hold.

People who regularly express gratitude tend to experience greater life satisfaction, form stronger emotional connections with others, and contribute more positively to their communities.

Growing Gratitude in Young People

Gratitude can be nurtured through small, everyday habits. As parents and carers, we can support this growth by:

- Modelling gratitude - thanking others, being present, and noticing the positives in daily life.
- Encouraging reflection - helping children think about the good things that happened each day.
- Connecting with what matters - supporting them to appreciate the people and experiences that bring meaning and joy.
- Expressing thanks - prompting them to acknowledge acts of kindness, however small.

Through these practices, gratitude becomes not just a feeling, but a way of experiencing the world.

Try This at Home:

Encourage your young person to join you in a powerful gratitude activity:

Write a personal gratitude letter to someone who has made a positive difference in your life. Make it personal, genuine, heartfelt, and handwritten. Once completed, either mail the letter or deliver it in person. This simple act has been shown to boost wellbeing for both the writer and the recipient.

Kylie Power
Deputy Principal (Wellbeing)

Senior Cricket Team

On Thursday, the 5th of February, the Senior Boys Cricket played their first T20 match of the year against Christian College at Armstrong Creek Cricket Club. After winning the toss and electing to Bat our boys got off to a great start with both openers, Luca Schulz and Joe Petty, putting on a 90-run partnership and both retiring at 50. The innings was finished off with some good hitting from Hudson O'leary, making 28, which got the team to a very competitive score of 160 from our 20 overs.

Christian College were under a lot of pressure early, losing multiple early wickets thanks to some quality pace bowling from Kai Horribin and Oli Harper, before Hudson O'leary and Dylan Litaize took 3 wickets each in the middle overs to steer Iona to victory.

Year 12 and Sibling Photos 2026

Year 12 Cohort Photo and Sibling Photos will be taken on Friday, 27 February 2026. If you would like your children to be photographed together, please follow these simple steps.

1. Grab your phone and go to <https://arphotos.typeform.com/to/dKNPbIDB>
2. Enter the name and community group of the eldest sibling
3. Enter the names and community group/s of all other siblings to be included in the photo

Year 7 Applications & Tour and Information Sessions – Reminder

Sibling Application

A reminder that families with a sibling currently attending Iona College must submit an enrolment application for **Year 7 2027** to be considered for placement. Applications close **Friday 8 May 2026**. If you have already applied, no further action is required.

Applications [can be made online via the following link](#).

ENROL ONLINE NOW

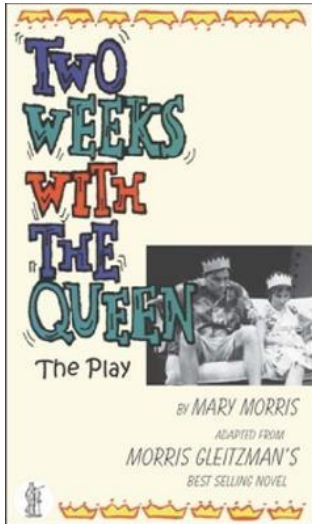


We are also pleased to share the dates for our upcoming Tour and Information Sessions:

- 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](#).

2026 Iona College Play Audition Callout - Two Weeks With The Queen



It is with much excitement that we launch our inaugural 2026 Iona College Play: *Two Weeks With The Queen*.

This Australian classic is a hilarious and heartwarming adventure set in 1980s London, where one determined boy hatches a bold plan to break into Buckingham Palace to save his brother. *Two Weeks with the Queen* is packed with eccentric characters, big laughs, and powerful moments. This is your chance to be part of an unforgettable story full of courage, chaos and heart!

If you are interested, please take note of the UPDATED audition days: Wednesday 4th March, Wednesday 11th March and possible call backs Wednesday 18th March (all from 3.15 - 5 pm). Click on this link to register your audition time: [2026 Iona College Play Two Weeks With The Queen Audition Signups](#). An audition pack will then be emailed to you.

Rehearsals will occur on Wednesdays throughout Term 2 and 3, with the final performances staged at Platform Arts in Geelong in Term 3, Week 7.

There will be many opportunities for involvement, not only for those wishing to perform on stage, but also for students interested in technical, creative and backstage roles. There will be a callout for those interested in these crucial roles in Term 2.

Whether you've performed for years or never stepped on stage, auditions are open to one and all. This is the start of something special for the Performing Arts at Iona College: don't just watch it happen, be a part of this exciting opportunity!

We can't wait to see what you've got.

Ms K. (Producer), Mr Mawson (Director) and Ms Dunstan (Artistic Director)

Iona Pathways Press



This week's edition of the Careers and Pathways team's Pathways press is [available via the following link.](#)

Term 1 Formal Uniform Days



Term 1 2026 Dates to Remember

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.

Date	Event
Thursday 18 December - Tuesday 20 January	Iona College Admin Office Closed for Christmas Break
Wednesday 21 January	Iona College Admin Office Opens
Thursday 29 January	Term 1 Commences for Year 7, Year 12 and All New Students to the College (Formal Uniform for Year 7s and all New Students to Iona)
Friday 30 January	Years 8-11 Commence
Tuesday 10 February	School Photo Day (Formal Uniform)
Tuesday 10 February	Yr 11 & 12 VCE Parent Information Evening (6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Iona College Stadium)
Wednesday 11 February	Whole School Mass (Formal Uniform)
Tuesday 17 February	Year 7 Parent/Carer Welcome Evening (6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Iona College Stadium)
Thursday 19 February	Whole School Assembly - 2025 VCE & VOC Major High Achievers Awards and 2026 Leaders Induction (Formal Uniform)
Wednesday 25 February	Year 7 Maths Parent/Carer Information Night (6:00 pm - 7:00 pm)
Friday 27 February	Year 12 Group Photo (Formal Uniform for Year 12s)
Friday 27 February	School Photo Catch-Up Day and Sibling Photography Formal uniform required for all students being photographed.
Monday 2 March	Swimming Carnival
Monday 9 March	Labour Day Public Holiday
Tuesday 10 March	Units 3 and 4 Student Progress Meeting (On-site)
Wednesday 11 March	Teen Mental Health Matters Webinar with Dr Sarah Barker (Online)
Wednesday 11 March	Summer Soiree (6:00 pm - 7:30 pm, Iona College Stadium)
Monday 16 March	Open Day - Tour and Information Session (4:15 - 5:45)
Tuesday 17 March	Open Day - Tour and Information Session (11:00 - 12:30)
Wednesday 18 March	Open Day - Tour and Information Session (9:00 - 10:30)
Wednesday 18 March	Open Day - Tour and Information Session (4:15 - 5:45)
Thursday 19 March	Open Day - Tour and Information Session (9:00 - 10:30)
Thursday 19 March	Student Progress Meetings (Onsite)
Friday 20 March	Staff Professional Development Student Free Day
Tuesday 24 March	Student Progress Meeting (Online)
Thursday 2 April	Term 1 Concludes (2:05 pm)
Monday 20 April	Staff Professional Development Student Free Day
Monday 20 April	Practice GAT (all VCE and VCE VM unit 3/4 students or similar)
Tuesday 21 April	Term 2 Commences

Thanks for your support.

Damian, Kylie and Melissa