

# 125

Encompass

MAGAZINE OF THE SANTA SABINA COLLEGE COMMUNITY

## ANNIVERSARY EDITION



**Santa  
Sabina  
College**

*Celebrating  
125 years*  
Exceptional Education



# Encompass 2019 Contents

03	Principal's Welcome
04	Farewell Dr Maree Herrett
08	Our 125th Anniversary
10	Mass
12	Concert
14	Icons
16	Dom's Day
18	Then & Now
21	Weaving the Golden Thread
22	Community Garden
24	Merchandise
24	Stories they left behind
24	Time capsule
25	Justice Journey 125
26	Foundation
30	P&F
31	Around the Plot

ENCOMPASS No. 24 · December 2019

EDITOR Victoria Harper · DESIGNER Mathew Guy


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## CONTRIBUTORS

Marisa Black · Belinda Civitarese · Yvette Graniero · Amberley Guilly  
Victoria Harper · Julie Kadir · Maree Herrett · Patrick Lee · Irene McCowan  
Joanna Panagopoulos · Sharon Sirris · Jane Sulis · Melanie van der Meer  
Brian Walker · Tony Woods

*Encompass* is published by Santa Sabina College, 90 The Boulevard  
Strathfield NSW 2135 PHONE: +61 2 9745 7000

[ssc.nsw.edu.au](http://ssc.nsw.edu.au)

 SSCommunicate    [santasabinacollege](https://www.instagram.com/santasabinacollege)



4 FAREWELL MAREE



08 125 CELEBRATIONS



16 DOM'S DAY



18 THEN AND NOW



31 AROUND THE PLOT



## Principal's Welcome

This issue of *Encompass* is a special celebration of the extended Santa Sabina community – our people, time and spaces – and what we look like at 125 years old. We also include reports from our Foundation, our Parents and Friends' Association and our ex-students.

I thank the editorial team for putting together a review of my years as College Principal. It has been a privilege to serve a community that is like family to me.

Enjoy these stories that represent our whole community and the golden threads we have drawn together this year.

**Dr Maree Herrett**  
College Principal





# Dr Maree Herrett Farewell

## Farewell Maree, our Top Girl for the last seven years

Our visionary and innovative College Principal Dr Maree Herrett retired at the end of 2019 after a stellar career transforming Santa Sabina College into NSW's top Catholic school.

Looking back on her life and times at Santa, we pay tribute to her brilliance and stamina and document the wonderful improvements she has made.

When Dr Herrett was our Coordinator of Senior English her students not only topped the state in English Advanced, English Extension 1 and English Extension 2 but they also studied the 1982 English play *Top Girls*. Controversial, racy but above all, feminist, the choice of Caryl Churchill's play from the new HSC syllabus raised a few eyebrows at the time. Responding to the concern, Principal Sr Judy Lawson OP requested to read a copy. After doing so she endorsed Dr Herrett's choice – an edgy yet government authorised text exploring what it means to be a successful woman.

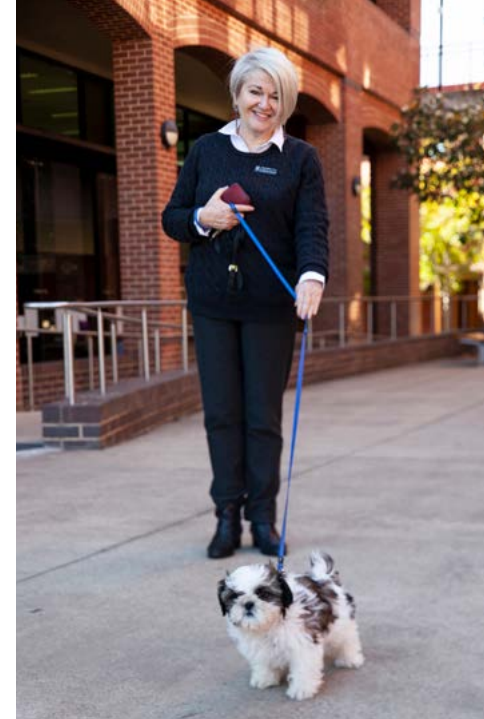
As our own Top Girl, Maree Herrett has never been one to rest with the status quo or to demur from a challenge. Her innovations in curriculum, facilities and educational experiences

are those of a fearless, feisty and unapologetic feminist who has spent a lifetime providing exceptional learning experiences for young people, not least of which was introducing them to a broad range of literature.

As Santa Sabina College Principal from 2013 to 2019 she was appointed with the brief to be an agent of change. The changes she made over seven years have been significant. As a result of her tenure the College has become an authorised International Baccalaureate World School. It has expanded to include a Prep year for four- to five-year-olds, and has been named as the top performing of all Catholic schools (including boys', girls', co-ed, systemic and independent) in the NSW HSC.

Dr Herrett has initiated and overseen a change of uniform and school colours, upgraded several academic departments especially music and sport, shone a spotlight on student academic endeavours through the return of Speech Night and the creation of Speech Day and initiated innovative and far-reaching academic partnerships with universities and industry. Her championship of the STEAM subject areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics have seen these areas of the school flourish and our programs, students and teachers adorned with state and national awards. The refurbishment of the Siena Centre including the addition of the amphitheatre and establishment of the St Catherine's Centre for the senior students are also school improvements achieved in the Herrett era.

Professional development for staff has also come into focus in the Herrett years. Each fortnight in term time all teachers have an hour of targeted professional learning and many attend or present at local and national conferences. Promotion of the annual Board Teacher's Scholarship for a teacher to undertake specific study overseas that aligns with the College's mission,



values and strategic direction is another achievement made possible during the stewardship of Dr Herrett.

A Santa girl since childhood, Dr Herrett is the third College Principal not only to have attended the College but also to have achieved the rank of head girl in her final year. She is the only Santa Principal also to have been a College parent. As a Santa student Dr Herrett was engaged, bright and sometimes naughty. She would challenge the nuns and sometimes buck the system but made lifelong friends whom she still sees today. She was known and continues to be known for diligence and drive as well as a wicked sense of humour and her Dominican passion for learning.

In the intervening years between schoolgirl and College Principal, Dr Herrett held the appointments at Santa Sabina of Coordinator of Senior English and Director of Curriculum. She also taught English at other schools where she held leadership positions including Head of Senior School at MLC Sydney.

According to her long-time friend, our Head of Professional Learning Julie Kadir, her singular characteristic is her adherence to her feminist perspective. 'She looks at everything through a feminist lens – to her it is a matter of justice'.

A model for lifelong learning, Dr Herrett was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in English, Politics and Modern History, a Graduate





Diploma of Education from the University of Sydney, an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Western Sydney and a PhD in Education from the University of Sydney with a focus on Gender Equity Policy and Practice in Australian Education. She has been an advocate for gender equality throughout her 40 year teaching career. In 2010 she was presented with the ACEL NSW Leadership Award, and admitted to the rank of Fellow of the NSW Branch of Australian Council for Educational Leaders.

As an author, her published work includes a short story, school textbooks, literary articles and academic publications. And, on top of all this, she is the mother of three and the grandmother of six. She is a role model for all women of what can be achieved with determination and passion, intellect and curiosity.

Above all, resetting the students of Santa Sabina as top girls and boys has been Dr Herrett's priority and her achievement over the last seven years. She will be missed but her exceptional legacy will remain for our benefit.

**Victoria Harper**  
Editor







# OUR 125<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

In 2019 the entire Santa community – students, families, staff, ex-students and Dominican sisters – celebrated 125 years of exceptional education at Santa Sabina College.

To commemorate our rich heritage, traditions and success a series of 125th Anniversary events, merchandise and initiatives featured across the year showcasing every campus, involving every department and association, and engaging the entire community – both past and present.

We celebrated our community spirit through four major events, beginning with our 125th Anniversary Mass on 5 February at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney, presided over by Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP. The audience at our Anniversary Concert on 14 June in the Sydney Town Hall was delighted by our exceptional musical talent and the world premières of five new commissions by leading contemporary composers. In Term 3, in August, 1500 attended a special St Dominic's Day and 400 parents, alumni, staff and sisters gathered at the spectacular Westin Hotel Sydney for our 125th anniversary Gala Dinner, raising funds for future generations of Santa girls and boys. And in November, our final major event of the Anniversary year – the Anniversary Fair – took place on our main campus in Strathfield.

Anniversary lapel pins were distributed to all students and staff and anniversary jerseys were proudly worn by those who had purchased them. A commemorative book, *Weaving the Golden Thread through 125 Stories*, was published as a significant and lasting memento of our 125 years. On Harmony Day the students and staff from youngest to oldest gathered on the oval in 125 formation – the maths behind which was calculated by Year 6, their calculations winning both the Mathematical Association of NSW Inc (MANSW) Investigating with Mathematics competition and the national Maths Talent Quest.

On St Dominic's Day the time capsule buried 25 years ago was opened and a new time capsule was buried for our 150th. Year 11 Drama students created an immersive drama experience – *The stories they left behind* – dramatising life at Santa since 1894 and the Santa Sabina Chapel was adorned with icons for the first time – of St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena, written by Australia's foremost iconographer Michael Galovic and commissioned by the College and the Dominican sisters.

For more anniversary highlights, turn also to the pages of *Around the Plot* in this issue of *Encompass*.

*Celebrating 125 years*

A GOLDEN THREAD



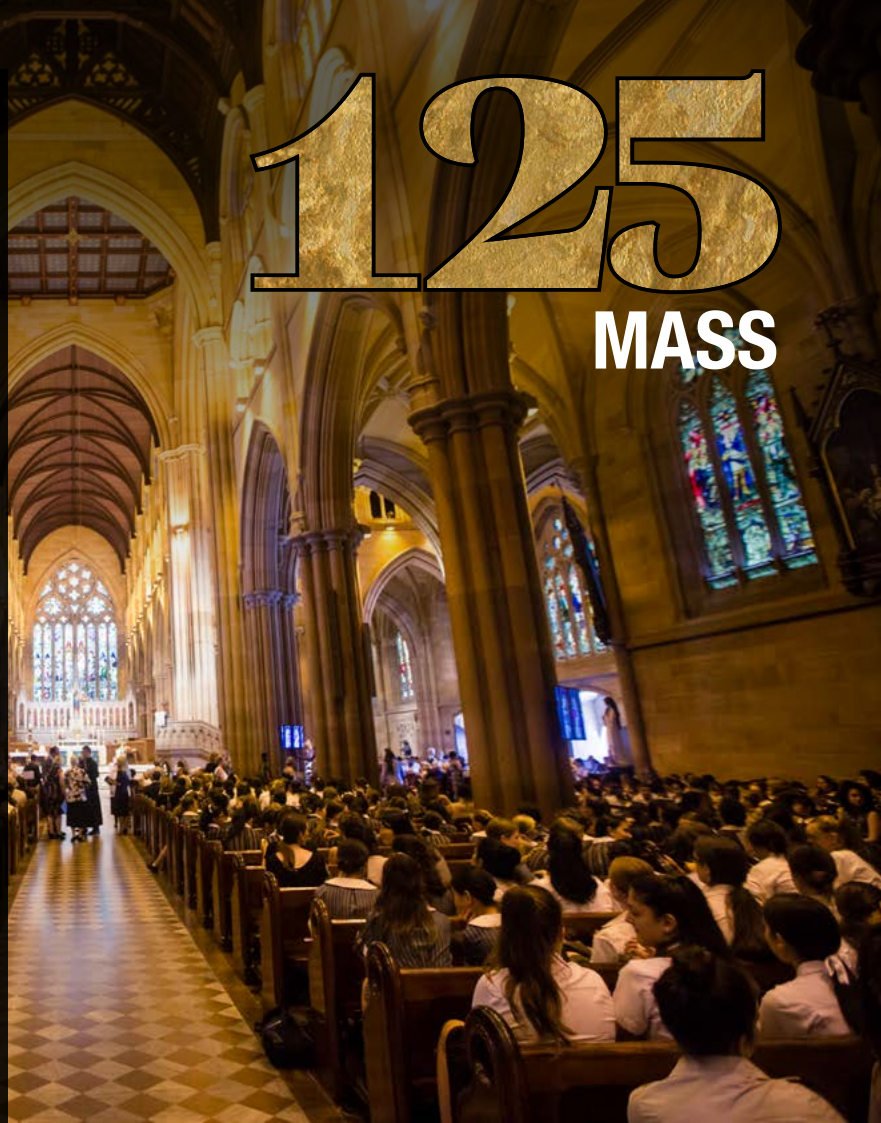
## 125 MASS

As His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher said, it was 'a very beautiful Mass' to open our 125th Anniversary year. The entire College and many members of our community gathered at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney on Tuesday 5 February to give thanks for 125 years of exceptional education begun by the Dominican sisters.

Current and former Principals of Santa Sabina College and Santa Maria del Monte gathered with the Archbishop in an historic photo below:

Sr Kath Maher OP (DM Principal 1972–1975, 1982–1987),  
Sr Mary-Clare Holland OP (Prioress from 2018 and DM Principal 1988–1996),  
Sr Doreen Ellsmore OP (DM Principal 1969, 1971), Sr Patricia Nichols OP (DM Principal 1976–1981), Sr Julianna Drobik OP (DM Head of Primary 1997–2001), Sr Rosemary Lewins OP (SSC Principal 1980–1986),  
Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP,  
Sr Diana Woods OP (SSC Principal 1965–1967, 1973), Dr Maree Herrett (SSC Principal 2013–2019), Ms Kate Clancy (SSC Principal 2008–2012), Sr Judith Lawson OP OAM (SSC Principal 1987–2007).

# 125 MASS





# 125 CONCERT

Our 125th Anniversary concert, *A Golden Thread*, at Sydney Town Hall on 14 June, was a magnificent tribute to all that Santa Sabina represents. It featured the world premières of new works commissioned especially for the occasion from five distinguished composers, performed by hundreds of students, staff and guest artists including our choirs, Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonietta and our guests from St Mary's Cathedral Choir.

The new works were:

*These Clothes* by Alice Chance

*Magnificat* by Tim Hansen

*Magna est Veritas* by Paul Jarman

*Te Deum* by Elena Kats-Chernin

*Disputatio* by Randall D Standridge

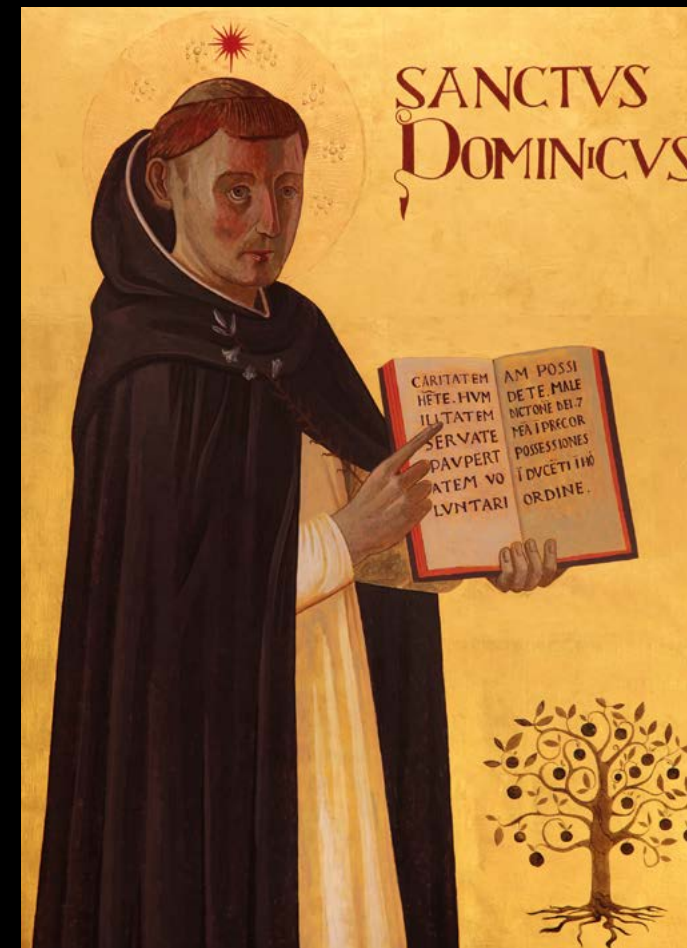
The audience was delighted with the program which also included well-known pieces by John Rutter, JS Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Carl Orff, Thoinot Arbeau, Bobby Timmons, Anton Bruckner and Camille Saint-Saëns.





SANCTA  
CATHARINA

SENENSIS



# 125

## WRITING OUR ICONS

Our two icons of St Dominic and St Catherine were commissioned as part of our 125th anniversary. Created by the accomplished iconographer, Michael Galovic, these icons are unique to Santa Sabina. The icons do not attempt to be life-like, naturalistic paintings but an interpretation that is informed by the lives of the sacred subjects. The icons do not just appeal to the eye but represent a connection to God. The very special blessing of the icons in the chapel was attended by many Dominican sisters, staff, student leaders and Mr Galovic himself.





An extra special one for our 125th anniversary!



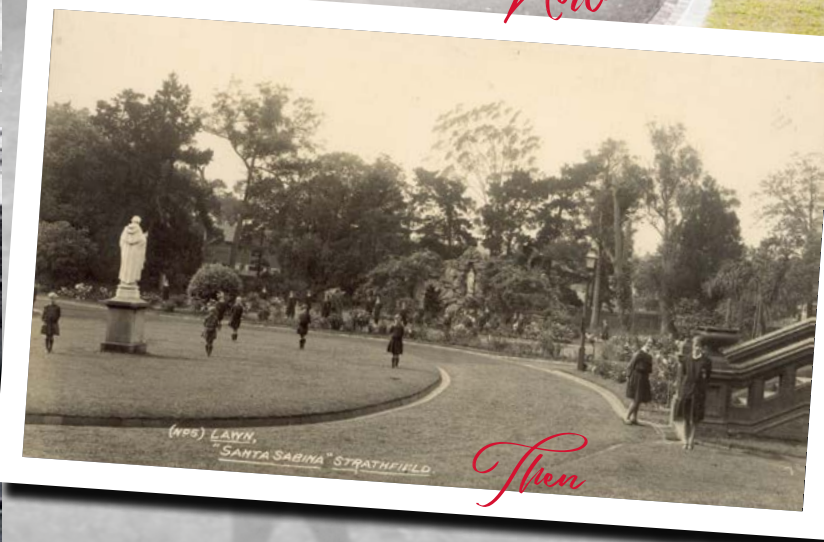
# 125

Dom's Day





# Then & Now











Limited Edition Book

## WEAVING THE GOLDEN THREAD THROUGH 125 STORIES

The 125th Anniversary of Santa Sabina College is an occasion of great celebration and deep appreciation. While the richness of our history cannot be contained within the covers of any single book, we hope you are inspired by the 125 stories you will find here. They take us on a journey from the earliest history of Santa Sabina right up to the present day. The stories contain insights into the day to day life of students and staff against the backdrop of significant historical events such as the two World Wars. The stories also reveal the impact of broader social and economic change on the Dominican sisters, staff and students. In the midst of change, however, the commitment to the pursuit

of Veritas endures. Edward Schillebeeckx, the late Dominican theologian and scholar, describes a golden thread that 'runs through the Dominican family story, from Dominic down to the present day'. Throughout our 125 journey we have used the symbol of the golden thread to draw connections across history, generations and cultures as we give thanks to God for the gift of our treasured Santa Sabina.

Dr Maree Herrett  
College Principal

\*Schillebeeckx, E., *Dominican Spirituality* (ed) Borgman, Eric, Continuum, London, 2001

**BUY YOUR COPY AT THE UNIFORM SHOP  
OR ORDER ONLINE**  
[WWW.SSC.NSW.EDU.AU/125-YEAR-BOOK](http://WWW.SSC.NSW.EDU.AU/125-YEAR-BOOK)



Artist impression of works to be completed early 2020



**CREATE LASTING RECOGNITION  
OF YOUR FAMILY AND SUPPORT  
THE INSTALLATION OF OUR  
125TH ANNIVERSARY GARDEN**

The multipurpose garden, part of Siena Centre Stage 3, completes the landscaping around the Santa Sabina College Hall. It will include a pillar naming supporters.

This is an opportunity to immortalise members of the College community on this important occasion.

*125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*  
**COMMUNITY  
GARDEN**  
**CONTRIBUTE  
ONLINE**

[WWW.SSC.NSW.EDU.AU/125GARDEN](http://WWW.SSC.NSW.EDU.AU/125GARDEN)





## STORIES THEY LEFT BEHIND

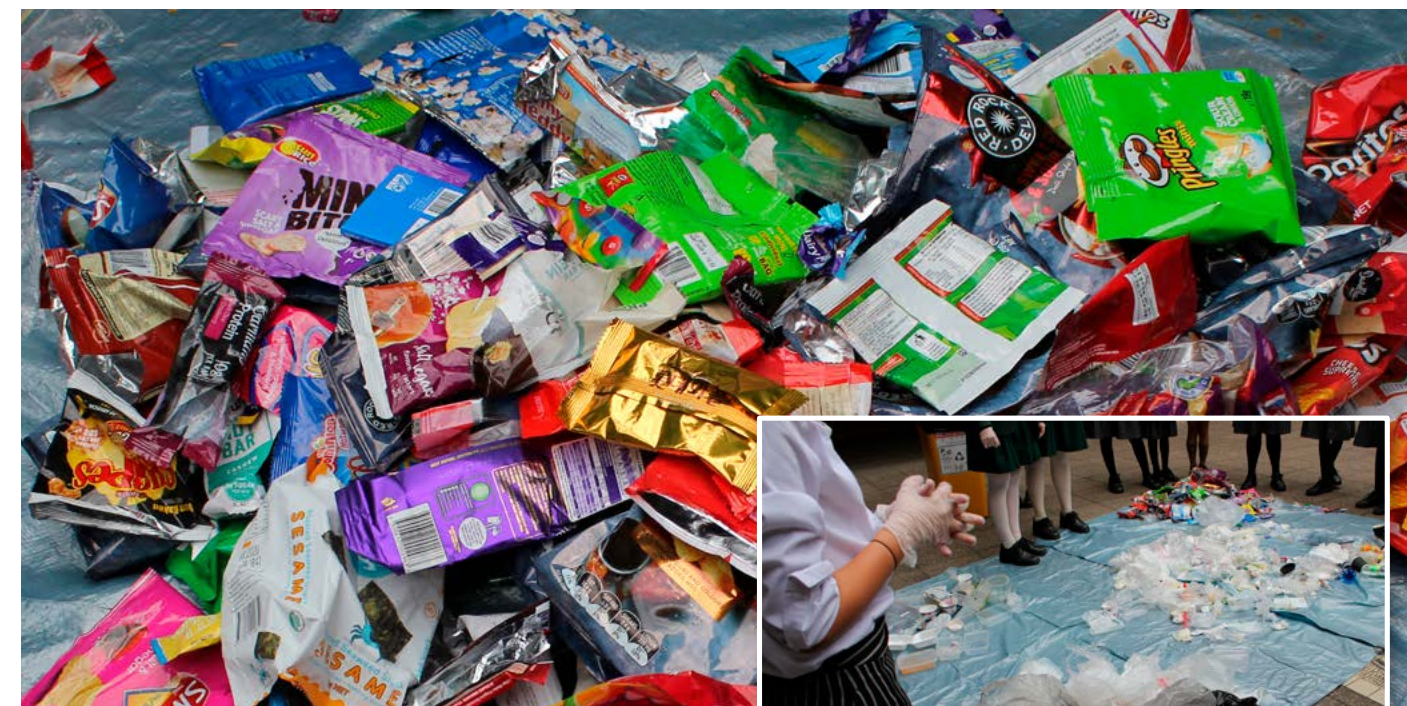
In a highlight event celebrating our 125th Anniversary, Year 11 Drama students re-created Santa Sabina of the past over two nights on 16 and 17 May 2019 – an immersive theatre performance entitled *The stories they left behind*.

Audience members became immersed in dormitory gossip in the actual bedrooms of earlier years, witnessed early discussions of our founding sisters, got crafty making crowns for St Dominic and gained a new understanding of daily life at Santa in 1894.



## TIME CAPSULE

In 1994 our Centenary was marked with the burial of a time capsule by Mrs Susan Howland's Year 9 History Class. On St Dominic's Day 2019 Mrs Howland and two of those students – Amelia McAllen (Smyth 1997) and Alice Hickey (Walsh 1997) opened it and revealed examples of student work, publications, photos, audio recordings, videos and floppy disks. We buried our new time capsule in the same position. Without giving away any surprises for our 150th Anniversary it contains mementoes of our 125th Anniversary year, and 'essential' items of interest to the school students of 2019.



## JUSTICE JOURNEY 125

In 2019 we established our Justice Journey 125 which involves staff and students on the Middle and Senior Years campus.

- Our concept and vision were to align our efforts and activism this year to one important justice issue.
- The Justice Journey 125 followed the Salamanca process, thereby allowing us to follow in the footsteps of past Dominicans.
- The Salamanca process is about praxis, where action comes out of learning.
- Our Justice Journey 125 was about reading and responding to the signs of the times and incorporating the voices of many.
- The framework uses The Catholic Social Teaching Principles.



After consulting with the students our plastic crusade emerged as our important justice issue for 2019. We have all seen photos of the massive plastic rubbish dumps, the pictures of the great pacific garbage patch and the turtles strangled by plastic. We can all take action and the world has taken action. We have seen huge cities and even countries ban single use plastic and countries have dedicated large sums of money to cleaning up our pollution. Even in Australia the simple change in habit we have all undergone in using reusable bags for our grocery shopping has reduced single use plastic bags by 80%.

At Santa Sabina the Environment Committee achieved some wonderful outcomes. The canteen transitioned from the provision of plastic straws to paper straws and plastic cutlery to bamboo cutlery. The students have been encouraging everyone to bring their own utensils, cups, cutlery and containers to school.

We installed a new soft plastics recycling bin next to the canteen. This will add to our already impressive suite of recycling including co-mingled recycling, paper and cardboard recycling, return and earn bins and compost bins. At Mary Bailey House and Del Monte, students have started to recycle plastic bottle caps that will be eventually recycled for use in making prosthetic limbs for children around the world.

In August we hosted Catholic Earthcare's eco-summit for students from around Sydney to collaborate on important environmental solutions with many other students from other Catholic schools.

**Melanie van der Meer**  
Head of Mission and Identity



■ Celebration pins, bookmarks and jerseys







FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THANK YOU

The Santa Sabina Foundation supports the College and our community through the receipt of donations that help deliver resources and opportunities for students. It does this through the management of tax deductible recipient funds that are targeted to the needs of the students and the College. I feel proud of the accomplishments we have been able to achieve this last year.

The Foundation receives funds through the receipt of Building Fund donations from parents of current students. The Scholarship Fund has received donations from current parents, past students and parents as well as the Ex-Students' Association to support scholarships and bursaries. The Library Fund has similarly received donations.

Our Annual Appeal is an opportunity for the entire Santa Sabina Community to support a particular project or fund.

For 2019 the key campaign through the Building Fund was for the refurbishment of the Large Ensemble Room (LER) adjacent to St Dominic's Plot. This space has a rich and varied history, as the staff room and originally as the College's second chapel. I am pleased to announce that the repurposing of the LER into a fit-for-purpose large music and performance space bringing back some of the heritage features as a chapel will commence with the start of the Stage 3 Siena Centre work in late 2019. This undertaking is only possible due to the generosity of our donors who contributed \$9700 to the Annual Appeal Building Fund.

Annual Appeal donations to the Scholarship Fund amounted to \$50,960 – this money will directly impact opportunities and

outcomes for a range of students on part or full scholarships. This isn't just a dollar figure – this is a life-changing gift.

We very gratefully acknowledge Maura and Hilary Wilcox and their ongoing contributions to the Arnold and Dorothy Wilcox Scholarship which provides a Santa Sabina education to a student who otherwise may not benefit from all that is on offer at the College.

I also acknowledge the \$2450 kindly donated to the Library Fund. This will go towards resources and technology for students, assisting the College to stay at the forefront of education.

Total donations received by the Building Fund amounted to \$262,345.

It was a pleasure to witness the celebrations of our 125th Anniversary – the College Dinner was a highlight where our spirit was evident along with the generosity of the community, Parents & Friends' Association and the Ex-Students' Association.

The College has a range of projects on the horizon and we warmly welcome our inaugural Development Manager, Amberley Guilly. The College community will have the opportunity to meet her at many of the College events.

Finally, my thanks for the generosity of donors who are giving for the advancement of the College for current students and future generations.

**Tony Woods**  
Santa Sabina College Foundation Chair

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■ Sr M Campion OP

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■ Miss Hilary Wilcox

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■ Santa Sabina College Ex-Students' Association

2019 Building Fund Donors

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■ Mr B D B Ferguson

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■ Mr X Li

■ Mr G Ling

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■ Mr W Xiao

■ Mr Z Xu

■ Mr C Yang

■ Mr Y Yang

■ Mr W W K Yau

■ Mr F Yoo

■ Mr J Younan

■ Mr C Yparraguirre

■ Mr J Zeng

■ Mr T Zeppleri

■ Mr K Zerafa

■ Mr P Zhang

We also thank those families who wish to remain anonymous.



Santa Sabina College carries out the inspirational mission of educating girls and young women from P-12 and boys from P-4. The purpose of the Foundation is to help the College to provide an Exceptional Education and to offer the opportunity of a Santa Sabina College education to a diverse range of students.

As an independent Catholic school, the current reality in terms of funding leaves the College in a position where the majority of fees collected are assigned to salaries while government-based recurrent funding cannot be utilised for capital expenditure. This is why the role of philanthropy from our valued community is key.

Every dollar raised through the Santa Sabina College Foundation, through the Building, Scholarship or Library Funds, directly impacts and benefits our students, their opportunities and facilities. Much of what you will see and experience at the College has been enabled by the generosity of those who have come before us, be it past students and their families, current parents or friends of the College.

My mission is to inspire those whose lives have been bettered by a Santa Sabina education to give back and ensure the best possible opportunities for future generations of students.

**Amberley Guilly** (Cummings 1994)  
Development Manager



## Introducing Amberley Guilly, Development Manager

Building opportunities through partnerships to facilitate the College's growth is the focus of our new Development Manager Amberley Guilly. In the past she was an ex-student – attending Santa from Year 7 to Year 12 (finishing in 1994). In the future, the new facilities and opportunities for students and the community may well have arisen because of her fundraising.

Holding the new full-time role of Development Manager, Mrs Guilly has stepped in to support the exceptional work of Santa's fundraising entities – the College Foundation, the P&F Association and the Ex-Students' Association. She has her sights set on major capital works coming up as well as the annual appeal and community events.

A school community is full of people ready to connect. Harnessing the energy of connections – students, parents, staff, sisters, ex-students, former parents and Board members – is clearly a strength of our vibrant new Development Manager who draws energy from being with her friends and colleagues.

Mrs Guilly comes back to us after a long career in television production where she perfected the role of bridging the creative and financial aspects of commercial programs. On *House Rules* and *Better Homes and Gardens* Mrs Guilly managed sponsorships and 'contra deals', connecting suppliers with media exposure and product promotion.

How will this experience benefit Santa Sabina College?

'The skills I honed working in television have given me the ability to find the story and examine what makes people connect to each other', she says.

'You don't just get an education at Santa you get a whole community'.

**Victoria Harper**  
Editor



## The Orange Tree Society

A bequest to Santa Sabina College is a wonderful way of expressing your gratitude to the school and securing its future. Remembering the College specifically in your will is a lasting gift; a way of expressing your affection for Santa Sabina, making a valuable contribution to its future. The Orange Tree Society has been established to honour and recognise members of our community for their generosity and foresight in making a bequest to the College. When you indicate that you are leaving a bequest to Santa Sabina College, you will become a member of The Orange Tree Society. By informing the school about your bequest, we are able to thank you in your lifetime.

If you already have a will, a codicil can be included to add the College to your list of beneficiaries.

If you are considering a bequest, or would like further information, please contact:

**Amberley Guilly** (Cummings 1994)  
Development Manager

+61 2 9745 0232 or [a.guilly@ssc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:a.guilly@ssc.nsw.edu.au)

'Someone's sitting  
in the shade today  
because someone  
planted a tree a  
long time ago'





## P&F ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Our new P&F President is a proud ex-student (Class of 1992) as well as the mother of Amelia Marsden (Year 3) and Alexander Marsden (Kindergarten 2020). Here is her first report to the Santa Sabina community:*

While my association with the school has been long, it was only two short years ago, in Term 4 2017, that I found myself returning to the school as a parent. Surprisingly, while I considered Santa Sabina to be my second home as a student, I felt isolated and lonely as a parent, unsure if we had made the right decision for our daughter and family.

Under the advice of a lovely mum I went along to a P&F meeting to see if I could find the sense of belonging and community I was longing for and had once known. It was here I was welcomed with friendship, warmth and that feeling of coming home. It was here that I came to realise that the P&F was more than just a committee which organises social events and raises funds. The P&F is the thread that helps bind us together as a community, offering us connection and possible friendships which move beyond our year groups and can be carried forward well after our children leave.

Therefore, with all this in mind, and particularly in our anniversary year, my desire is to extend the same gracious and inclusive welcome to all parents and friends at Santa Sabina and to celebrate what brings us together. I hope that together with the P&F executive and the community here at the school we can:

1. help foster more open and conscious communication
2. encourage a strengthened community
3. foster a genuine, loving connection between us as parents and friends.

I would like to thank all the outgoing P&F Executive including Allen Chu (President), Joanna Pavan (Secretary), Leisa Henness (Assistant Treasurer), Domonique Roach and Kim Dunlop (Social Coordinators DM) for all their tireless work, support and friendship they have shown our community during their service on the P&F Executive team. Their efforts and commitment have made a mark on the school and its community that will be felt for many years to come.

**Belinda Civitarese** (1992)  
President

# AROUND THE PLOT



**Santa  
Sabina  
College**

**Ex-Students'  
Association**





## EX-STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Santa Sabina Ex-Students' Association continues to flourish and raise its profile within the College. We have supported Dominican educational ventures and bursaries for male and female students of the College with Dominican family connections.

In 2018-2019 we assisted with the purchase of solar panels for the Solomon Islands sisters, donated to Zara's Place in Newcastle and to the ex-student immersions to the Solomon Islands and South Africa.

We continue to participate in college events including sponsoring the Sister Marcia Hall Memorial Award for Integrity, given to a Year 10 student, graduation gifts for Year 4 Del Monte boys and Year 12 students, St Dominic's Day celebrations and many of the special 125th Anniversary events. In addition, our ex-students volunteer as mentors to current students and we welcome the graduating Year 12s to the Association at a special picnic.

For the third consecutive year, the Association co-hosted the college dinner. It was a great honour to be so actively involved at the Westin. It was very exciting that two ex-student guests travelled from Perth to be with us – Emma Watton from the Class of 1992 and her mother-in-law, Jacqueline Watton, from the Class of 1962.

If you would like to make contact with the Ex-Students' Association please email us at [exstudents@ssc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:exstudents@ssc.nsw.edu.au).

**Sharon Sirris** (Crowe-Mai 1975)  
President



## FROM EX-STUDENT TO SUPER STAFF MEMBER!

Ex-students on staff in 2019:

### LEFT HAND SIDE

**Back row:** Lorette Quinlan (Burland 1972), Marysa White (1991), Andie Fitzgerald (Locke 1992), Olga Giuffre (Pastroudiss 1977)

**Second row LHS:** Gabrielle Naylor (2012), Marion Malouf (Cassar 1984), Natasha Kempers (1986), Amberley Guilly (Cummings 1994)

**Front:** Andrea Biddle (Hisey 2009), Monique Evans (1999), Clare Wood (McNeil 2002), Dr Maree Herrett (1971)

### RIGHT HAND SIDE

**Back row:** Ann Milicic (1988), Brittany Poynting (2010), Melanie van der Meer (Jepson 1987), Wendy Anetter (1982)

**Second row:** Melanie Stock (Halliday 1998), Marissa Lombardo (2013), Jane Sulis (Duncan 1968), Stacey Tse (2013), Catherine McGrath (1990)

**Front row:** Patrick Lee (Del Monte alumnus – Year 4 1987), Yvette Graniero (L'Estrange 1995), Kathryn McKee (Condon 1983), Sr Pauline Riley (1951)

## Generations Breakfast

As part of our 125th anniversary, we welcomed to breakfast ex-students whose children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren are on the current school roll – a celebration of our Santa family connections.







## SANTA SABINA GENERATIONS

Veritas. Truth. Nothing beats it. No complex, obscure words clunking into each other as they run around a crest. Strong, purposeful, direct and easy to interpret. Once you know its meaning, you never forget it.

I've taken this motto literally all my life, so I can proudly say the Dominicans formed me, first at my little parish school St Martha's, Strathfield, and then at Santa Sabina.

I left school to become a journalist. Veritas is the ideal dictum for a journalist to live by. Accuracy in reporting has been the key goal of every news agency I've ever worked for.

I was the third generation of my mother's family to attend Santa Sabina. My grandmother, her only sister, my mother, her two sisters, my cousins, my twin sister Cecilia and our youngest sister Deborah all attended. We all loved it.

My grandmother, Irene Priora, was the little Italian girl who was allowed to bring a tiny quaff of wine to school at lunchtime because that's what her people did. When she was at school in the late 1890s, the nuns kept cows in the back paddocks.

My mother, Jeanette McEgan, told me a story about cutting that tempting corner, walking over St Dom's Plot, only to find Sr Alphonse Marie standing there. Sister

ordered her to kneel and say a decade of the Rosary, on the spot. Many years later Sr Alphonse, my brilliant and beloved English teacher, caught me doing exactly the same thing and meted out exactly the same punishment. But even as I knelt down, I was thinking what a good story this would make – and I could see Sr Alphonse suppressing a laugh.

I started my career with the *Sydney Morning Herald*. I've worked for other news publications and agencies as well, but took time out from journalism to work for the Catholic aid and development agency Caritas Australia, where I could put my social justice values into more direct action.

When Mum died seven years ago my life changed. I sat by her bed in the weeks before. I'd always been a medical writer, searching out those stories which empower people by demystifying medicine and science. But as Mum's dying progressed, I realised that I knew nothing about this most fundamental of subjects and that our culture has lost the art of talking about it.

This means certain basic truths have been lost and as a consequence we have become disempowered and frightened. This is particularly so for the families of the dying. So I wrote my book *A Good Death: a compassionate and practical guide* to prepare for the end of life about this experience that everyone of us will have, yet which is hidden in plain sight.

I don't want to romanticise death but to want to die well is the flip side of wanting

to live well – to work towards dying in a better way is to learn to live in a better way and this is the message I want to share.

Cecilia and Deborah say they were also influenced by the Dominicans. Cecilia studied law and is now Director of Dispute Resolution at the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. In 2009 her book *Always Liza to Me*, about our sister Elizabeth, who lives with a disability, was published.

'Looking back, I see not only a collection of teachers sharing their gifts, but a collective of women who taught us how to be independent and to call on the truth,' says Cecilia.

Deborah started her career as a journalist with the ABC and is now the Communications and Marketing Manager for the eSafety Commissioner.

'Santa Sabina's support for social justice reinforced my family's own belief in compassion and action, and in going beyond your comfort zone to understand and help others who have not had the same opportunities in life,' says Deborah.

In all, we are three very proud graduates of Santa Sabina, a school which not only nurtured us, but generations of our family. And I hope the influence of my school and teachers will keep inspiring me, as my life continues.

**Margaret Rice (1976)**



**MARY GALLAGHER**  
Being one of the more outspoken members of the form. Mary is sure to become a politician because of her 'big mouth' and bubbling personality. But her real talents are to be treasured in the field of teaching.

**PAULINE WILLMOTT**  
A loyal Dominican for 11 years. Pauline was a member of the Central Australian tour and was always ready with the first aid equipment which was good practice for her future career of nursing. Central Australia was only a local stop compared with her overseas travels.

## BEST FRIENDS FOR 40+ YEARS

Mary Gallagher (1977) and Pauline Kopsa (Willmott 1977) have known each other for over 40 years. Both attended Santa Maria Del Monte (1965 – 1971) and Santa Sabina (1972 – 1977). They first met in Year 4 and have been best friends since.

At Del Monte they recall the ubiquitous bottle of (government supplied) milk every morning.

According to Mary, 'We were in Miss Banigan's Year 4 class and she was really strict.'

'I remember watching the moon landing with Pauline at school – a black and white TV which we couldn't really see and the teachers were really excited! We both had Sr Judith in Year 6 and I was able to catch up with her years later when she was Prioress of the Dominican sisters.'

In secondary years Mary and Pauline excelled academically in different academic areas so didn't have many classes together.

'However, we played tennis together and loved it,' says Mary.

'We played in some tournaments – at Santa and other schools. We've kept up the love of tennis and often play for fun when we meet up if we can.'

While both Mary and Pauline live on

opposite sides of the planet, barely a year goes by when they don't see each other. Pauline lives in Colorado, USA and has since 1982. Mary stayed in Sydney until 1991 and then moved to Canberra where she still lives. Both Pauline and Mary have two children and have been married to their respective spouses for over 30 years.

In fact, Pauline introduced Mary to her husband Scott on a trip to the USA in 1987. As one of Pauline's husband's good friends, he soon became part of the family. Whilst it looked like both girls could be living in marital bliss in the USA, Mary settled in Australia. As Scott's family and friends live near Pauline and Russell, and Pauline's parents are in Sydney – the visits back and forth are frequent!

Pauline and Mary took different career paths – nursing and teaching. Both have been very happy with their choices and are still going strong! Pauline is a midwife at Steamboat Springs Hospital in Colorado, Mary, a lecturer in Education Studies at Australian Catholic University in Canberra.

Whilst maintaining a friendship over many years has sometimes been a challenge, both Pauline and Mary ensured they wrote regular letters and sent photos (now via Skype and Messenger of course), visited each other regularly and went away on holidays together. When Pauline was married she wanted Mary to be her Matron of Honour – so Mary flew back from England where

she was working. When Pauline's first son was born in Steamboat, Mary was there.

Each year Pauline visits her parents in Sydney, so Mary and Pauline have a mini holiday somewhere not too far away. Sometimes with family, but increasingly over time as the children grew up, just the two of them. In November this year Pauline and Mary are off to Fraser Island to celebrate Pauline's 60th birthday.

Mary and Pauline have endeavoured to attend each of the Santa Sabina Class of 1977 reunions together. This happened for the 20th and 40th, while Mary also attended the 10th. Although both missed the 30th, they are determined not to miss the 50th! They enjoyed these reunions immensely. Seeing old friends and sharing memories together was a joy for both and enabled both Pauline and Mary to reconnect with people they hadn't seen for many years.

As lifelong best friends Pauline and Mary know each other really well. Inside jokes and references are part of a shared language that has built up over the decades into a deep and lasting friendship that enabled them to not see each other for 12 months and it just seems like yesterday.

As Mary says, 'We both wish for our children a similar experience and thank Santa for being instrumental in our being together for all these years.'

**Mary Gallagher (1977) and Pauline Kopsa (1977)**





## Celebrating 125 years of Santa Sabina across four generations

Standing in the middle of the Santa Sabina College courtyard, next to the statue of Saint Dominic, and turning clockwise, the school's 125 year history is clearly visible.

From a grand brick building, constructed in 1894 when the school was founded by seven Dominican Sisters and attended by seven day students, to a lecture theatre and library built in the the early 2000s, with decades in between.

But Santa Sabina's history is also visible through the families who now extend more than four generations.

Dozens of Weavers, Middletons and Mathesons have walked through the gates.

In one family line, top-down from matriarch Helen Weaver, class of 1950, is her daughter-in-law Kerry Weaver, class of 1977, her granddaughter Rachael Middleton, class of 2001, and her great-granddaughter Emmaline Middleton, class of 2024.

Elizabeth Matheson (daughter of Helen Weaver), class of 1993 and Elizabeth's daughter Annabelle Matheson, class of 2019 also carry the school torch. And it expands outwards from there.

A lot of things have changed about Santa Sabina and Strathfield over four generations, but they all agree that the ethos of the school has stayed the same, along with their passion for field hockey.

Kerry Weaver, one of five sisters to attend the school, said: 'The school is bigger but the core values are still the same.'

'The Dominican ethos was very forward thinking and gives you a really rounded education. It wasn't just about learning stuff out of a book, it was learning about life in general.'

When Mrs Weaver finished school in 1977, she said many of the girls' schools were encouraging their students to be either teachers or nurses.

'(But) the school made it clear that it wasn't your only choice. It encouraged girls to look further afield and follow their dreams ... So a lot of students were very much ahead of their time.'

Of growing up in Strathfield, she said: 'It was much smaller, there were no high rises, and everybody knew everybody,' she said.

'I'm one of nine. So there was always somebody, in the year above or below that I knew. Even now, you meet people and you know that their brother went to school with your brother or something like that.'

Mrs Weaver is still best friends with one of her school mates. They were bridesmaids at each other's weddings and godparents to each other's children.

Mrs Weaver reminisces about taking her daughter Rachael to school on the first day of Year 7.

'I remember the first time we came up the stairs ... and feeling like I was back in Year 11 going up the stairs for a prefect meeting.'

She now makes sure to attend every Grandparents Day at the school.

Her daughter Rachael Middleton, who lives in Concord, will put her four daughters and her son through Santa Sabina College.

'The school helps everyone work out who they are and what they want to be,' she said.

Mrs Middleton fondly remembers the school's outdoor education program helping her come out of her shell.

Her cousin, Year 12 student Annabelle Matheson, said: 'Before I attended, I always heard stories from mum, aunts and grandma, about just how fun the school was. I'm hoping that all my friendships here are continued.'

Like her older female relatives, she pinpointed the social justice program as a massive drawcard.

'They tell us we are the future ambassadors for the world so it lifts up our confidence, because it shows us that we can make a change in the world if we want to ... We get to see how the world is different to us and we get to see how other people live and it kind of makes you want to change.'

Santa Sabina College marked their 125th anniversary with a Mass, with further celebrations planned throughout the year.

College Principal Dr Maree Herrett said: 'This year we particularly celebrate and give thanks for the sacrifices and achievements of our founding Sisters of the Dominican Order and for all the staff and students who have passed through the gates at 90 The Boulevarde.'

**Joanna Panagopoulos**  
*Inner West Courier Daily Telegraph*  
9 April 2019



## CAREERS EXPLORATION AND NETWORKING NIGHT

Our Senior Years students were buzzing after receiving great advice at Santa Sabina's careers networking evening – Beyond Year 12 – on 7 May.

The annual event for senior students (and parents) commenced with words of wisdom from three students from the Class of 2012 – still great friends but now following diverse career pathways – in a Q&A presentation.

The students learned about tenacity, personal drive, risk taking, learning from mistakes and how it all paid off for these recent graduates.

Current students then took the opportunity to consult more than 25 ex-student mentors in one-on-one conversations about tertiary courses and career paths. Ambassadors from six universities including University of Sydney, University of NSW, University of Technology Sydney, Macquarie University, Australian Catholic University and University of Notre Dame were also kept busy all evening. The Ex-Students' Association generously provided supper.

The College is immensely grateful for the time given by our voluntary ex-student mentors and the university ambassadors. Our Year 12s and other senior students are now far less worried about their future careers.



## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MENTORS:

Maddie Bates (2016)  
Jaycee Bechara (2012)  
Lauren Biniars (2015)  
Giselle Capacchione (2012)  
Laura Cilesio (2005)  
Nicola Colagiuri (2012)  
Jessica Cusumano (2005)  
Anna Garsia (2001)  
Yvette Graniero (L'Estrange 1995)  
Bernadette Keil (2012)

Rachel McCluskey (2004)  
Fellicia Monteiro (2012)  
Celina Pereira (2014)  
Leah Pryde (Sepokas 2010)  
Pauline Russett (2014)  
Amelia Russo (2015)  
Teal Scarfone (2014)  
Rebecca Shalala (2012)  
Brooke Simmons (2009)  
Kate Springall (2010)

Clare Stewart (2002)  
Bella Sufferini (2009)  
Carla Vandenheuvel (Oliveri 1998)  
Adriana Verdino (2004)  
Tess Woods (2004)  
Anna Yat (2010)  
Judy Yoo (2009)  
Sabrina Zambetti (2013)

## AND TO OUR GUEST SPEAKERS:

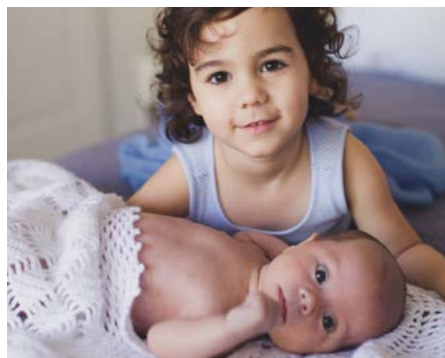
Giselle Capacchione (2012), Nicola Colagiuri (2012), Rebecca Shalala (2012)



# BIRTHS



3 December 2018  
**Madeline Maureen Ratcliffe**  
Emma Ratcliffe (Smith 2003) and David Ratcliffe, a sister for James and Abigail



11 February 2019  
**Madeleine Marie Dragicevic**  
Rebecca Dragicevic (Murphy 2002) and Mark Dragicevic, a sister for Michaela



15 April 2019  
**Benjamin Arthur Norman Ghiandai**  
Elizabeth Norman (2005) and Raphael Ghiandai, a brother for Lucas



17 May 2019  
**Nicholas William Jennings**  
Katrina Saad (2001) and Chae Jennings, a brother for Charlie and Archie



3 September 2019  
**Clara Dengis Kline**  
Jennifer Kline (1996) and Dominique Dengis



23 September 2019  
**Maisie Frances Ann Pascoe**  
Kiery Pascoe (Fisher 2001) and Brett Pascoe, a sister for Noah and Layla



26 September 2019  
**Scarlett Genevieve Laurence**  
Genevieve Mulcahy (2006) and Mark Laurence



28 September 2019  
**Audrey Jade Bulgeries**  
Gemma (Natoli 2001) and Dean Bulgeries, a sister for Georgia



1 October 2019  
**Michaela McClement**  
Kris Anne McClement (Pulanco 2005) and Cameron McClement

# MARRIAGES



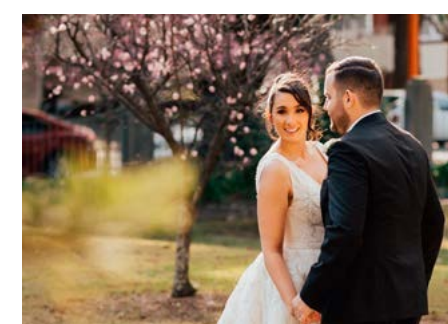
2 February 2019  
**Maree Filippello (2005) and Bray Ipek at Santa Sabina Chapel**  
Top photo: Nina Di Francesco (2001), Jessica Margiotta (2008), Maree Filippello (2005) and Aleeya Hill (2005)



10 August 2019  
**Louisa Bonserio (2011) and Preston Shehadie**



6 April 2019  
**Bridget Smith (2008) and Andrew Hall**  
The Matron of Honour was Emma Ratcliffe (Smith 2003) and the bridesmaids were Jackie Munday (2008), Ellie McNamara (2008) and Cassie Yee (2008). The mother of the bride is Jenine Smith (Duck 1977).



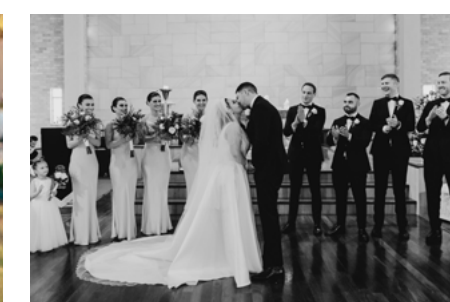
10 August 2019  
**Juliana Cipolla (2012) and Peter Tsagaroulis at Santa Sabina Chapel**  
The bridal party included (on the left) Caterina Russo (left in Year 10 - 2017), Rebecca Shalala (2012) and Domenica Barbaro (2012).



11 May 2019  
**Rebecca Naylor (2007) and Alex Dempster at Santa Sabina Chapel**  
The bridesmaids were ex-students Samantha Naylor (2018), Gabrielle Naylor (2012) and Natalie Virgona (2007).



5 October 2019  
**Jaycee Bechara (2012) and Chace Baso**



12 October 2019  
**Maryanne Restuccia (2006) and John Erdmanis at Santa Sabina Chapel**  
Ex-students in the bridal party included Isabella Zanette (2006), Adriana Ingegneri (2009) and Veronique Chidiac (2006)

## SHARE YOUR STORIES

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK ALUMNI PAGE  
[FACEBOOK.COM/SANTASABINACOLLEGEALUMNI](https://www.facebook.com/santasabinacollegealumni)

## GET MARRIED AT SANTA

CONTACT US ON  
(02) 9745 7000 OR EMAIL  
[COMMUNITYRELATIONS@SSC.NSW.EDU.AU](mailto:COMMUNITYRELATIONS@SSC.NSW.EDU.AU)



# JUBILEES 2019

We congratulate the following Dominican sisters who celebrated the anniversary of their profession during 2019

Sr Doreen Mary Ellsmore	70 Years
Sr Margaret Gannon	70 Years
Sr Shirley King	70 Years
Sr Patricia Nichols	70 Years

# DEATHS

*We Remember*

## DOMINICAN SISTERS

Sr Carmel Leavey	10 April 2019
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## EX-STUDENTS

Grace (Peggy) Conaghan (1939)	15 February 2018
Barbara (Clare) Hunt (O’Neil 1951)	December 2018
Frances Morris (1958)	13 April 2019
Viktoria (Vikki) Csoma (1989)	2 May 2019
Connie Allan (Wright 1939)	10 May 2018
Jenny Mortlock (Tobin 1955)	11 May 2018
Judith McDonald (LeFevre 1960)	15 August 2018
Virginia Fay (Rossi 1965)	19 October 2018
Colleen Phegan (Peel, Tallentire 1953)	6 November 2018
Maureen Keating (Rogers 1952)	15 January 2019
Shirley Moran (Carson 1946)	2 February 2018
Carmen Duncan (1959)	3 February 2019
Dominique Paul (2007)	March 2019
Haidee McCracken (McInerney 1951)	23 March 2019
Natalie Zerial (2001)	3 August 2019
Dr Marie Delaney	27 August 2019
Joan Nicholson (1936)	9 September 2019
Leona Krizmanic (1995)	October 2019

# REUNIONS



## 20 YEAR REUNION CLASS OF 1999

The class of 1999 celebrated its 20 year reunion in September. A very relaxed and fun atmosphere, we all reminisced about old times at school. Many friendships were renewed on the night and it was amazing to feel so connected again. It was fascinating and inspiring to hear about all the various paths the girls had taken in life and to see that although we all attended the same school, we all had such different passions and interests that we fulfilled.



## 10 YEAR REUNION CLASS OF 2009

Around 35 students from the Class of 2009 had a fantastic evening at the Oxford Tavern in Petersham. Memories, laughs and stories were shared and friendships celebrated.



## MUDGEE REUNION CLASS OF 1970

It was a very successful reunion – well organised and we had a great time together. My education at Santa prepared me well for the real world. Loved the company of the girls – coming from a rural property north of Hay, NSW, where we were lucky to see anyone our own age, although we did have a great social life during school holidays.



## GOLDEN GIRLS AND BOYS REUNION

On the last Friday of May, we celebrate our Golden Girls and Boys (those students who left Santa at least 50 years before) and responses for this year’s reunion exceeded those of recent years. This special day always begins with Mass in the Chapel and this year it was celebrated by Father Gavin Foster. As always our talented music department and College Choir accompanied the Golden Girls and Boys singing their College song.

We welcomed the Class of 1969 as our newest Golden Girls and Boys. There was also a marvellous contingent from the Class of 1959 who celebrated 60 years since they left Santa. The High Tea theme was highlighted this year by our glorious new tea cup collection – all donated by Santa Sabina staff and the table settings looked amazing. A delicious high tea and the odd glass of bubbles were enjoyed by all!

We especially thank Eileen Fisher and Meryl Waters in the Uniform Shop who had the idea of getting this collection together and who happily accepted all the donations and are lovingly looking after the tea sets. The Golden Girls and Boys Reunion is a fantastic day for remembering former times, former mischief...and sharing special stories and memories (and making new ones) with dear friends. We look forward to welcoming the Class of 1970 in 2020!

**Marisa Black**  
Alumni and Community Relations Officer







## A very Santa friendship story

### Connie and Peggy

My mum, Connie Allan (Wright 1939), was best friends with Peggy (Grace Margaret Conaghan 1939) for over 80 years.

Where did they meet? Santa Sabina! They were both boarders there and met in 1st or 2nd Form.

A friendship that started at school, lasted through the war years when they lived together and beyond – a wonderful friendship.

Peg was born in 1921 in Rockhampton and died in February last year in Yeppoon, aged 96. Mum was devastated when Peggy died and died herself just a few months later, at 97 years old. Although they spent many years living in different states they were very, very close.

They came back to Santa for the centenary celebrations in 1994. They always talked fondly of their time at boarding school and spoke of one particular nun whom they really loved (I am sorry I can't remember her name).

I hope the girls going through today manage to make lifetime friendships which really do last a lifetime, which mum and Pegs truly was.

As Peggy was from Rockhampton and Mum from Leeton it was easier for Peggy to spend the school holidays with Mum and her family. So they would go yabbing in the dams and have picnics with the Leeton gang. I got the impression that neither of them were particularly studious and they use to joke about how 'not smart' they were. But they were both very smart women!



After school and during the war years they lived together in Adams Street, South Yarra, Victoria. They dated guys from America here during the war time. Peggy joined up and was in the women's auxiliary, Mum went to work in the munitions lab where she met Dad.

Peggy went on to work for the UN in New York and they corresponded for the next few years. When Peggy returned she went home to live in Rockhampton. She wound up owning pubs, in Rocky and Yeppoon (her father was a publican) and she lived in Yeppoon most of the rest of her life.

She would always visit us either in Melbourne when we lived there and then in Sydney when we moved up and when I was 18 I went to live with her for a while!

As they got older it was harder for them to do the trip to see each other, so I made sure I took mum to Brisbane to catch up with Peggy, or went myself as often as I could.

I think the thing that showed how wonderful their friendship was, was that as Peggy lay on her bed in the hospital, a friend of hers rang mum. Sandy put the phone to Peggy's ear, and Mum told Peg how much she loved her and how much their friendship had meant to her over the years and apparently Peggy smiled. Sandy hung up the phone and Peg passed away.

Mum passed away not long after... they use to joke about how it was just the two of them left (and it seriously was at 96 and 97 years old)!

Jennie Syme

# School Holiday Camp

20-24 January 2020



**\$405**  
**Early Bird**  
**Booking**  
until 13/12/19

## Book your holiday adventure.

An exciting five-day adventure, enjoying fun activities that may include self defence, mountain biking, archery, flying fox, abseiling, foot golf, Cheffrey's kitchen challenge, art and craft. Option to sleep one night in a tent.

Experience the beauty of Tallong's natural environment, spotting wildlife and exploring Barbers Creek. Tallong is situated 2 hours drive from Sydney and 1.5 hours drive from Canberra.

**Boys and girls ages 7-14**  
**from all schools are welcome.**  
**Five day package \$435 (per child).**  
**Bring your friends!**

Bookings close 10 January 2020. Package includes cabin accommodation (four nights), all meals and equipment. Bus transport to and from Sydney is available. Day-only stays and short-stay options are available.



**tallong**  
Santa Sabina College  
Outdoor Education  
& Retreat Centre  
[ssc.nsw.edu.au/tallong](http://ssc.nsw.edu.au/tallong)

For more info email  
[tallong@ssc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:tallong@ssc.nsw.edu.au)  
or call 02 4841 0439  
137 Old Wingello Road Tallong





**Santa  
Sabina  
College**

## **2020 DATES**

### **TERM 1 2020**

FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY – JANE OF AZA RHYME TIME

TUESDAY 3 MARCH – OPEN DAY (P-12)

FRIDAY 20 MARCH – JANE OF AZA PLAYGROUP

### **TERM 2 2020**

FRIDAY 15 MAY – JANE OF AZA RHYME TIME

THURSDAY 28 MAY – DISCOVERY TOUR (6-12)

FRIDAY 29 MAY – GOLDEN GIRLS & BOYS REUNION

THURSDAY 4 JUNE – DISCOVERY TOUR (P-5)

FRIDAY 12 JUNE – JANE OF AZA PLAYGROUP

### **TERM 3 2020**

FRIDAY 31 JULY – ST DOMINIC'S DAY

FRIDAY 7 AUGUST – JANE OF AZA RHYME TIME

TUESDAY 11 AUGUST – DISCOVERY TOUR (P-5)

WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST – DISCOVERY TOUR (6-12)

FRIDAY 21 AUGUST – EX-STUDENTS' AND P&F COLLEGE DINNER

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER – JANE OF AZA PLAYGROUP

### **TERM 4 2020**

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER – JANE OF AZA RHYME TIME

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER – DISCOVERY TOUR (P-5)

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER – DISCOVERY TOUR (6-12)

FRIDAY 13 NOVEMBER – JANE OF AZA CHRISTMAS PLAYGROUP

FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER – ADVENT FESTIVAL OF READINGS AND CAROLS

WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER – COMMUNITY CAROLS

**SSC.NSW.EDU.AU**