

# The Shuttle



Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.

## Now more than ever – Reconciliation 2024

Mrs Megan Krimmer  
Headmistress

As is our custom each year at Abbotsleigh, our girls across the whole school reflected on Reconciliation and what it means to all of us. I am very proud of all of our girls and the deep respect, understanding and empathy they consistently demonstrate when examining this important issue.

Our poignant Senior School Reconciliation assembly, organised by Mrs Shane Hamilton and the girls, was absolutely superb. During the assembly, the girls had the great privilege of being treated to outstanding dances



performed by our First Nations students and to hear from Ms Emma Griggs, a proud Wiradjuri woman whose inspirational story of incredible courage and perseverance is the epitome of our student leaders' theme – 'Brave the Waves'.

Mrs Victoria Rennie, Deputy Headmistress and Head of Senior School, has written an excellent article about the assembly. This is followed by Emma Grigg's powerful story; both are unmissable and I commend them to you.

### Reconciliation assembly 2024

Mrs Victoria Rennie  
Deputy Headmistress and Head of Senior School

This week, in our Senior School assembly, we recognised Reconciliation Week, a significant week in Australia and indeed at Abbotsleigh. In acknowledging that truth-telling is essential for meaningful reconciliation, this year we were privileged to have Ms Emma Griggs, proud Wiradjuri woman, as our guest speaker. Emma is a former student of Tranby, an Aboriginal owned and run community college in Glebe. Emma now teaches at Tranby and had an inspiring story to tell of the role of education in her life and in those whom she mentors.

Emma, who bravely shared her personal story, exemplified the transformative power of storytelling and education in reconciliation. Through words, we learned that truth-telling bridges gaps, fosters empathy and builds bridges between communities. She also explained this year's Reconciliation Week theme extremely well.



**"Now More Than Ever" is a reminder to all of us that, no matter what, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will – and must – continue.**

**Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."**



During the assembly some of our talented First Nations girls, led by Yalari Captain Chloe Nichols, performed two captivating dances. The first was a welcome dance sung by Jo Clancy in the Dharug and then Wiradjuri language. This dance acknowledged the ancestors and let Country know we were there. The second dance 'Head, Heart, Country', choreographed by Jo Clancy with music by Amy Flannery, reminded us of our obligation to care for Country, to care for ourselves and to care for our community.

I would like to thank Mrs Shane Hamilton for organising this special assembly and the huge amount

of work and preparation of all the girls involved. We especially thank the girls for their time preparing their dances, speeches and most importantly for sharing culture and knowledge with the broader school community.

Below I share Emma's powerful story which I know will inspire you, as it did the Senior School girls and staff. Indeed, 'Now more than ever' we must continue walking together with determination to ensure a future where respect, understanding and change prevail.

## Ms Emma Griggs – A story of perseverance, courage and reconciliation

"Just as my people before me have pursued reconciliation, I share my personal journey of reconciliation with you today.

I want to share with you the importance of staying strong, seeking support, the importance of picking yourself up when you are down and never letting go of your dreams. The importance of family and community. The importance of education, and where it has led me to today.

What an honour it is to be here for your Reconciliation Week assembly. Thank you for having me. As Chloe mentioned, my name is Emma and I am a very proud Wiradjuri woman.

My family descends from a tiny little town called Sofala on the Turon River of central western NSW. My lineage can be traced back four generations to my great uncle John (also known as Jack) who was taken from his mother immediately after he was born. He was part of the Stolen Generation.

His mother, Emma Sadlers, was an Aboriginal woman. His father was not and it's our understanding that their relationship was nonconsensual. There are no birth or death records for Emma as we believe she was born 'on Country'. The only time she appears in any formal documentation was on Great Uncle John's birth papers.

From this point onwards the impact of transgenerational trauma and the stolen generations has been very real for our family. The emotional impact and lack of connection to family and community led to some tumultuous times for my grandparents and parents – further impacting me. I lived in and out of foster care in my teens. I had left school and was sleeping rough by the age of 14. Shifting between homelessness, youth and women's refuges for many years, life was pretty tough.



By the time I was 21 I had managed to connect back with my family. I had not seen my parents and my older brother and sister for more than six years.

I had to rebuild all my connections to Country, community and family. I also did not have an education beyond Year 9 and did not have any vocational (or workplace skills) to offer. All I knew was how to survive!

I was determined to reconcile my past!

I was very fortunate to land an administration traineeship with the NSW Police Force. I was terrified. I had very poor communication skills, I had no sense of dress, let alone anything nice to wear. I felt like a very small fish in an extremely large pond. I was very fortunate to be paired up with a mentor – she was a very senior police officer, an Inspector – and she was so kind, patient, compassionate, caring and protective of me. I undertook a 'secretarial course.' (These days it's called a Certificate II in Business Administration.)

I gave it everything I had. It was so hard to come back to study after such a long time. I was now an adult and I was studying with teenagers who had just left school with a Higher School Certificate. It was so challenging. I needed to learn to read and write all over again.

There were many times I wanted to give up, but I knew that without education my choices would be limited. I was determined to not be another statistic. It took me two years to complete the course (twice as long as anyone else) but I finished it. As a single mum with a little baby, working full time, I was so proud of myself.

I got promoted and stayed with the Police Force for seven years, finishing up as an Investigator's Assistant.

I wanted to try my hands at something else and took a role in a different government agency. Unfortunately, this was a terrible experience. I was abused and bullied by other staff because of my Aboriginality. I was excluded, people made jokes about me, and I was publicly mocked. Can you believe that this was less than 15 years ago? This severely affected my mental health and I had to move on.

I applied for another government job, this time at NSW Ambulance. My manager was the Assistant Commissioner. I was his Executive Assistant. I loved this job! My manager supported me to pursue further education, and over the next five years, while I worked full time, I undertook a Diploma in Counselling, a Certificate IV in Mental Health, and Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs. I'd finally got back on my feet – and doors were opening – doors that I had only ever dreamed of!

My career in NSW Health progressed significantly over the next 10 years as I became the Administration Manager of the Mental Health Unit, overseeing a team of 12 staff, and later becoming the Aboriginal Workforce Development Manager. It was here that I saw the inadequacies of access to health care for Aboriginal people and the very small number of Aboriginal doctors, nurses and other staff in our hospital facilities. Based on my own personal experience, I knew this was because there was a lack of education, mentoring and support in this space.

I wanted this to change. I wanted to be a part of that change.

So, I decided to do a Diploma in Applied Aboriginal Studies. I was seeking a stronger connection to my roots and understanding of the past atrocities. It was during my time studying at Tranby College on Gadigal Land in Glebe that I had an 'ah-ha' moment. My teacher was a very well respected elder, Uncle Dion Barnett, and he was AMAZING – the impact he had on my life, no words can describe.

By undertaking this study, understanding the history of my people, it connected me even deeper to my culture, ceremonial and artistic practice. I wanted to be just like Uncle Dion – sharing my stories, inspiring others to connect with their culture and to pursue their goals.



So what did I do? I decided to become a teacher. Early last year in 2023 I received my qualification and have been teaching ever since. I teach Community Services at TAFE and I teach a Diploma in Applied Aboriginal Studies at Tranby, and I absolutely love it. It fills my soul with so much joy.

I started up my own business and I run programs for community, focusing on mentoring and empowerment. I would also like to teach Aboriginal Cultural Arts in the future.

So why am I telling you all this?

This is about Reconciliation.

This is my personal journey of Reconciliation as an Aboriginal woman!

This is about National Reconciliation Week!



Every year the Reconciliation Committee decides on a new theme to continue the conversations and learnings towards reconciliation. This year the theme is, 'Now more than ever'.

'Now more than ever' is a reminder to all of us that no matter what, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will – and must – continue.

Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I would like to leave you all with a quote from the former US President Barack Obama, "Keep exploring. Keep dreaming. Keep asking why. Don't settle for what you already know. Never stop believing in the power of your ideas, your imagination, your hard work to change the world."





# Chaplain

## Reconciliation

Rev Sarah Hobba  
*Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies*

As National Reconciliation Week drew to a close this week, the theme of ‘Now more than ever’ spoke of truth-telling and perseverance in our Senior School assembly with guest speaker Emma Griggs from Tranby. Now more than ever, there is a need for reconciliation and healing in our world, and especially with our First Nations peoples.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has written these words on reconciliation, “The word ‘reconcile’ literally means to bring together – or heal – that which was broken. This healing is much more than the absence of conflict... Reconciliation is about seeking to transform relationships that have become damaged or destructive into relationships of trust that

bring new life. The journey towards this is not easy. It requires humility, time and patience.”

Reconciliation with God and each other is at the heart of the Christian message. First Corinthians speaks of how God in his graciousness and mercy has reconciled us through Jesus. When in faith we accept that, in turn, we become Christ’s ambassadors of reconciliation. Now more than ever, we should be trying to bring justice and wholeness, when there is brokenness and trauma, just as God has brought them to us.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

**1 Corinthians 5:18-19**

# Upcoming events

## WHOLE SCHOOL

<b>Knox Abbotsleigh Print Exchange exhibition</b>	Thursday 30 May to Wednesday 12 June	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
<b>King's Birthday public holiday</b>	Monday 10 June	
<b>Abbotsleigh Band Festival (JS and SS)</b>	Thursday 13 June 5.30-7 pm	PDCH

## JUNIOR SCHOOL

<b>No IPSHA sport (Long weekend)</b>	Saturday 8 June	
<b>ELC and Transition visit to the ACEE</b>	Tuesday 11 June 8.30 am-2 pm	Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education (ACEE)

<b>Years 1-6 New Parent Report Information Evening</b>	Tuesday 11 June 7-8 pm	Auditorium
<b>Year 4 Maritime Museum excursion</b>	Wednesday 12 June 8.30 am-2.45 pm	Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour
<b>Year 5 Chinese Garden excursion</b>	Wednesday 12 June 8.30 am-3 pm	Chinese Garden of Friendship, Darling Harbour
<b>Year 5 netball and minkey training</b>	Wednesday 12 June 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
<b>Primary athletics trials</b>	Thursday 13 June 9.15 am-3 pm	Junior and Senior School
<b>Years 3 and 4 netball and minkey training</b>	Thursday 13 June 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
<b>Transition Cinderella Kindness Day</b>	Friday 14 June 8.30 am-2.45 pm	Transition Classrooms
<b>Year 5 Micro:bit Fair</b>	Friday 14 June 9-10 am	Bundarra Court
<b>Year 6 Fundraiser prep time</b>	Friday 14 June 11.20-11.50 am	Year 6 Classrooms
<b>JS Production rehearsal</b>	Friday 14 June 3.30-5.30 pm	Everett Hall
<b>ISDA Debating grand final</b>	Friday 14 June 5-8 pm	Venue TBC
<b>IPSHA Saturday Sport</b>	Saturday 15 June 8 am-12 noon	<b>See Parent app</b> for team sheets and venues
<b>JS Production tech and dress rehearsal</b>	Saturday 15 June 2-4.30 pm	Everett Hall
<b>4L Judith Krause session 1</b>	Monday 17 June 9.30-10.30 am	4L Classroom
<b>4G Judith Krause session 1</b>	Monday 17 June 10.50-11.50 am	4G Classroom
<b>4O Judith Krause session 1</b>	Monday 17 June 1.45-2.45 pm	4O Classroom
<b>Years 5 and 6 Brave the Waves Festival</b>	Monday 17 June 12.45-2 pm	Senior School, Top Oval
<b>Year 6 netball and minkey training</b>	Monday 17 June 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
<b>Transition to the ACEE</b>	Tuesday 18 June 8.30-2 pm	ACEE
<b>5D hursing home visit</b>	Tuesday 18 June 9.15-10.15 am	Hammond Care, Wahroonga
<b>Kindergarten Bravehearts Adventure Show</b>	Tuesday 18 June 10.50 am-12 noon	Auditorium
<b>Year 2 Bravehearts Adventure Show</b>	Tuesday 18 June 12-1.10 pm	Auditorium
<b>Year 4 Zookeeper session</b>	Tuesday 18 June 2-3 pm	Auditorium
<b>Kindergarten 2025 Parent Information Evening</b>	Tuesday 18 June 7-8 pm	Auditorium

<b>Years 3 and 4 Tim Harris and Nat Amoores incursion</b>	Wednesday 19 June 9-10 am	Auditorium
<b>Junior School Production matinée</b>	Wednesday 19 June 12.45-1.45 pm	Everett Hall
<b>Year 5 netball and minkey training</b>	Wednesday 19 June 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
<b>Competition chess training</b>	Thursday 20 June 12.45-1.30 pm	2G Classroom
<b>Years 3 and 4 netball and minkey training</b>	Thursday 20 June 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
<b>Junior School Production evening performance 1</b>	Thursday 20 June 7-8 pm	Everett Hall
<b>Infants Athletics Carnival</b>	Friday 21 June 8.30 am-2.45 pm	Junior School
<b>Competition chess vs Sydney Grammar</b>	Friday 21 June 3-4.30 pm	Lindfield Public School
<b>Junior School Production evening performance 2</b>	Friday 21 June 7-8 pm	Everett Hall
<b>IPSHA Saturday Sport</b>	Saturday 22 June 8 am-12 noon	<b>See Parent app</b> for team sheets and venues

## SENIOR SCHOOL

<b>No IGSA sport (Long weekend)</b>	<b>Saturday 8 June</b>	
<b>Boarders return from long weekend</b>	<b>Monday 10 June From 4 pm</b>	
<b>SS Archdale Debating Round 4</b>	<b>Tuesday 11 June 4-8 pm</b>	
<b>Year 12 German excursion to Goethe-Institut</b>	<b>Wednesday 12 June 8.20 am-3.15 pm</b>	<b>Goethe-Institut, Woollahra</b>
<b>Years 9 and 10 Science Olympiad</b>	<b>Wednesday 12 June 11.30 am-1.30 pm</b>	
<b>House Debating Round 2</b>	<b>Wednesday 12 June 1.15-2 pm</b>	
<b>Year 10 Elective Geography excursion</b>	<b>Thursday 13 June 8.20 am-3.25 pm</b>	<b>Chowder Bay</b>
<b>Year 7 Science excursion</b>	<b>Friday 14 June 8.30 am-3.25 pm</b>	<b>Taronga Zoo</b>
<b>Women in construction Session 1</b>	<b>Friday 14 June 2.10-3.25 pm</b>	<b>iHub</b>
<b>ISDA Debating</b>	<b>Friday 14 June 4-8 pm</b>	
<b>Years 7 and 8 Science Olympiad</b>	<b>Monday 17 June 8.30 am-1.30 pm</b>	
<b>Brave the Waves Festival</b>	<b>Monday 17 June 12.45-2 pm</b>	<b>Top Oval</b>
<b>Violin Studio Concert</b>	<b>Monday 17 June 5-7 pm</b>	<b>PDCH</b>
<b>Year 7 Zoo by Design STEAM Day</b>	<b>Tuesday 18 June 5-7 pm</b>	

Year 10 PTI	Tuesday 18 June 3.30-8.30 pm	via Zoom
Archdale Debating Round 5	Tuesday 18 June 4-8 pm	
Years 7-10 Mathematics Olympiad	Wednesday 19 June During class time	
Year 8 Musical incursion	Wednesday 19 June During class time	
Year 12 Study Skills session	Wednesday 19 June 12.30-1.30 pm	Assembly Hall
Year 9 Elective Geography excursion	Thursday 20 June 8 am-3.30 pm	Brooklyn
Year 8 Latin excursion	Thursday 20 June 8.15 am-1.30 pm	
Year 8 Chinese excursion	Thursday 20 June 8.20 am-12.40 pm	
Year 8 French and German excursion	Thursday 20 June 8.25 am-1.30 pm	
Years 11 and 12 Drama excursion to Stolen	Thursday 20 June 11 am-3.25 pm	Sydney Theatre Company
Boarding Expo	Friday 21 June to Sunday 23 June	Wagga Wagga
Year 9 Commerce Market Day	Friday 21 June 11 am-2.30 pm	
House Debating finals	Friday 21 June 11.15-11.55 am	
Year 8 Musical incursion	Friday 21 June 2.10-3.25 pm	
Saturday sport	Saturday 22 June 2.10-3.25 pm	Various times and venues
Boarding Community Event	Saturday 22 June 6-9.30 pm	Victoria Hotel, Wagga Wagga
Symphonic Winds and ASBOF Band Competition	Sunday 23 June	UNSW