

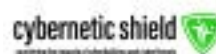
Lights Out

Vol. 19 | Issue 1 | April 2026

Protecting the art
of living in community

Transition,
Homesickness,
and Wellbeing:
*Understanding the
developmental challenges of
entering Boarding School*

Bush to Boarding -
*Bridging the Distance, a
boarding school transition
program for rural students*



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ON THE COVER

Girls from Biala Hostel enjoying some free time

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How Do We Improve the Retention of Boarding Staff and Reduce Turnover?

Boarding is a profession built on relationships. At its heart are the dedicated people who give their time, energy and care to create environments where young people feel safe, supported and able to thrive. Yet across Australia and Aotearoa, one of the most consistent challenges raised by Principals and Heads of Boarding is the same: staff turnover.

Retention is not simply a workforce issue, it is a quality of care issue. Stability within a boarding house allows for stronger relationships, better pastoral care, and a more cohesive culture for both students and staff. When staff turnover is high, the ripple effects are felt quickly: increased workload for remaining staff, disruption for boarders who rely on consistent adult support, and a continual cycle of recruitment and training - and then only if you can find someone interested!

If we are serious about strengthening boarding, we must also be serious about strengthening the conditions that allow boarding professionals to remain, grow, and thrive in their roles.

Recognising Boarding as a Profession

One of the most important shifts we can make is recognising boarding as a profession in its own right. For many years, boarding roles have been seen as an extension of teaching or as transitional positions rather than long-term careers.

However, the skills required to work in boarding are significant. Staff manage complex pastoral care, support young people through critical developmental stages, respond to wellbeing concerns,

oversee risk and safety, and foster community within a residential environment. These responsibilities require training, judgement, emotional intelligence and resilience.

When boarding is recognised as a professional pathway with clear standards, structured development and opportunities for progression, staff are far more likely to see their role as a meaningful long-term career rather than a temporary position.

Supporting Professional Development

Professional growth plays a critical role in retention. Staff who feel they are learning, developing and gaining new skills are more likely to remain engaged in their roles.

This is why structured professional development is so important. Whether it is foundational training such as Duty of Care courses, specialised learning in wellbeing and safeguarding, or leadership development opportunities, ongoing training helps staff build confidence and competence in their work.

Equally important is creating pathways for advancement. Emerging leaders within boarding houses should be able to see a future for themselves in the profession. Leadership programs, mentoring opportunities, and exposure to broader boarding networks can help individuals develop the skills needed to step into senior roles.

When people feel invested in and supported to grow, they are far more likely to stay.

Building Strong Boarding Teams

Retention is rarely about a single factor. More often, it comes down to the environment people work within each day.

Healthy boarding teams are built on trust, collaboration and shared purpose. Staff need to feel part of a team where their contributions are valued and where they can rely on one another for support. Clear communication, regular check-ins, and opportunities for staff to reflect together on their work all contribute to a stronger culture.

Equally important is ensuring that staff have space to recharge. Boarding roles

can be demanding, particularly during busy school terms. Leaders must remain mindful of workloads and rosters, ensuring that staff have adequate time to rest and maintain balance in their lives.

A boarding house that cares for its staff ultimately becomes a place where people want to stay.

Mentoring and Community

One of the greatest strengths of the boarding sector is the willingness of professionals to support one another. Many of the most valuable insights shared across the sector come not from formal training but from conversations with colleagues who understand the unique nature of boarding life.

Mentoring programs can be particularly powerful for new staff entering the profession. Having an experienced colleague to guide them through the challenges of their first year can make a significant difference to their confidence and sense of belonging.

Beyond individual schools, professional networks also play an important role. Opportunities to connect with peers from other boarding houses through conferences, workshops and forums help staff realise they are part of a broader community. These connections often provide reassurance, shared ideas and renewed motivation.

Valuing the Work

Retention is also about recognition. Boarding staff give extraordinary amounts of themselves to the young people in their care. Much of this work happens quietly; late-night conversations with homesick boarders, early mornings preparing students for the day ahead, or the countless small moments of encouragement that help young people grow in confidence.

Acknowledging this work matters.

Schools that actively celebrate the contributions of their boarding staff both within their own communities and across the wider sector send a powerful message that this work is valued and respected.

Recognition can take many forms: professional accreditation, awards, opportunities to present at conferences, or simply ensuring that boarding staff are

included in broader school conversations and decision-making.

When people feel seen and appreciated, their sense of purpose deepens.

Leadership Matters

Finally, strong leadership remains one of the most significant influences on staff retention.

Heads of Boarding set the tone for the entire boarding environment. Leaders who prioritise staff wellbeing, create supportive cultures and invest in their teams, often see greater stability within their boarding houses.

Leadership in boarding requires balancing operational demands with genuine care for the people doing the work. It involves listening, encouraging professional growth, and ensuring that staff feel supported through both challenges and successes.

Great boarding leaders understand that when staff flourish, boarders flourish too.

Looking Ahead

Improving retention in boarding will not come from a single initiative. It requires a collective commitment across the sector to elevate the profession, invest in people and create environments where staff feel valued and supported.

The future of boarding depends on the people who choose to dedicate themselves to this work. By recognising their contributions, strengthening professional pathways and nurturing strong communities, we can ensure that boarding remains not only a place where young people grow, but also a profession where passionate individuals choose to stay.

When we support the people who care for our boarders, we strengthen the very heart of boarding itself. ■



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Association

How to be Wildly Unproductive

In 4 Simple Steps

So, You Want to Be Unproductive.

Really, really unproductive.

The kind of unproductive where you're always "busy," but can't point to a single thing of value you've actually achieved.

Excellent career choice. After all, who doesn't want to look stressed, run off their feet, and yet somehow have nothing meaningful to show for it?

I've wasted more hours than I care to admit on email and distraction - so trust me when I say: I can destroy your productivity with just one tool... email.

Here's a step-by-step formula for how to sabotage your focus and effectiveness in four simple moves:

1) USE NOTIFICATIONS FOR EVERYTHING

Make sure you get a notification for every single email.

When a message comes in, let it trigger a sound, a desktop alert, and a buzz on your watch or phone.

Heck, if you can find a smart fridge to ping, even better!

The beauty of this strategy is that you don't need to do anything - email is already programmed to overwhelm you with alerts out of the box.

But don't stop there.

Keep factory settings for all your apps - Teams, Slack, social media, WhatsApp,

games, lifestyle apps - everything.

And to really seal the deal, enable badges and vibrations.

Fill your day with pings and buzzes. It's the best way to stay unfocused, reactive, and show others you're really, really important.

2) KEEP EMAIL OPEN ALL THE TIME ON A SECOND SCREEN

This one's brilliant.

Set up a second screen. If possible, invest in three. That way you can always see your emails and instant messages in real time.

Keep email on the right, Teams or Slack on the left, and a spreadsheet or Word doc in the middle to make it look like you're doing actual work.

The trick is to glance sideways every few minutes to check what's new.

And keep dozens of tabs open.

It looks productive - but it's not.

This multiple-screen setup guarantees dopamine spikes and cortisol surges while you practice constant context switching. Perfect training for the truly unproductive worker.

3) LET YOUR INBOX SET YOUR PRIORITIES

This is a pro move.

When you arrive at work, grab a coffee, open your laptop, and immediately open your inbox.

Immediacy is the secret.

Don't think. Don't plan. Just let your inbox dictate your day.

That way, you're guided by whatever urgent (or not-so-urgent) message lands first.

Chip away at small emails and chat messages before tackling anything important.

Meetings will nicely fill in the gaps, and of course, check your inbox as soon as they're over.

Once you master this, you'll never run out of things to do. There will always be another email - it's a foolproof way to look busy while achieving little.

4) BUILD A HYPER-COMPLEX FILING SYSTEM

This one takes patience, but it's worth it.

Start with a single folder - say "Board Meetings."

Then, whenever an email arrives that doesn't fit, create a new folder.

Every week, add more folders. Then sub-folders. Then sub-sub folders.

Before long, you'll have a complex



labyrinth of folders.

To add extra flair, colour-code everything and sprinkle in flags. Complexity is king.

Finally, when the system becomes too messy to manage, abandon it. Let thousands of emails pile up in your inbox alongside your maze of folders.

The result? An illusion of organisation that keeps you unfocused, reactive, and (to others) looking extremely important.

Clearly Ridiculous!

Of course, this is absurd. Please don't do any of it.

If you do, that's exactly why I created Email Ninja® - Australia's #1 inbox zero course to help you reclaim your inbox and your focus.

Here's the truth: if you simply do the opposite of the steps above, you'll already be moving towards a healthier, calmer, more productive work life.

And if you want practical help, sign up for my free Email Ninja® mini-course, designed to actually help you tame your inbox.

That said, if unproductivity is your goal, it's not complicated.

Just:

- Turn up to work.
- Open your inbox immediately.
- Keep it open all day on a second screen.
- Follow alerts as they come in.
- Build an over-engineered folder system.

And whatever you do...
Never, ever make space.

Good luck. ■

AUTHOR:

Daniel Sih
Spacemakers

Blog link: <https://www.spacemakers.au/blog/the-secret-to-looking-important>

Experiential Learning: *Expanding Horizons for Today's Boarders*

For boarding schools across Australia and New Zealand, the question is no longer whether experiential learning matters. It is how to embed it meaningfully and sustainably into the fabric of a school program. As students navigate an increasingly complex world, experiences beyond the classroom are becoming essential to shaping confident, resilient and globally minded young people.

One of the most compelling ways to understand the impact of experiential learning is through the lens of a real school's journey. At its heart, experiential learning is not a program or a box to be ticked. It is a mindset, a culture, and a strategic commitment to developing the whole child.

A CASE STUDY: WHEN LEARNING LEAPS OFF THE PAGE

Consider the experience of a girls'

boarding school that embarked on an immersive cultural and sports tour to Fiji in recent years. The school's goal was simple: to push students beyond their comfort zones and deepen their understanding of what it means to be a global citizen.

Before departure, participating students undertook a series of workshops on intercultural communication, ethical travel, and personal leadership. Many began the journey feeling unsure. Some had never left Australia, others had never travelled without their families, and most had yet

to experience a situation where they were required to think critically in the moment.

But as the tour unfolded, transformation became visible.

Students navigated bustling villages, collaborated with local youth on sustainability projects, and engaged in conversations that challenged their assumptions about privilege, opportunity, and community. They learned to problem solve when logistics shifted unexpectedly. They learned empathy as they listened to stories vastly different from their own, and they learned confidence as they realised they were capable of adapting, connecting, and contributing in unfamiliar environments.

Upon returning home, teachers reported noticeable shifts: students demonstrated more initiative in class discussions, displayed stronger interpersonal skills in the boarding house, and showed increased motivation to take on leadership roles.

The experience had not only introduced them to another culture. It had created a catalyst for personal growth.

WHY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MATTERS FOR BOARDERS

Boarding students live in a unique environment. They learn, grow, and navigate adolescence within a community that becomes their second family. This setting already creates independence and resilience, but experiential learning amplifies these traits by providing real world contexts in which to apply them.



A thoughtfully crafted experiential tour supports:

1. Confidence and Self Efficacy

Students are placed in authentic scenarios where their decisions carry weight. They learn to trust themselves and each other.

2. Global Awareness and Cultural Intelligence

Exposure to different cultures and communities gives students the tools to understand the complexities of our interconnected world. This awareness is essential not only for future study and work but also for becoming thoughtful, compassionate adults.

3. Leadership Through Action

Experiential learning requires students to step up, whether by leading a group activity, solving a challenge, or engaging with community partners abroad.

4. Deepened Sense of Purpose

Students often return from experiences with clearer personal values and a stronger understanding of how they might contribute to the world.

5. Strengthened Wellbeing

Being immersed in new environments encourages flexibility, curiosity, and connection, all protective factors for young people's mental health.

For boarding schools striving to create graduates who are adaptable, empathetic, and capable of navigating ambiguity, experiential learning is not optional. It is indispensable.

THE FUTURE: PARTNERSHIPS THAT ELEVATE POSSIBILITY

As the sector continues to evolve, so too must the opportunities we provide our students. Strategic partnerships can play a pivotal role in ensuring that experiential learning remains innovative, safe, and impactful.

Like our partnership with ABSA, in further exciting news, Student Horizons have



recently announced that beginning 1 January 2026 through 31 December 2031, we have been recognised as the Exclusive Preferred Educational Travel Strategic Partner to the International Coalition of Girls Schools (ICGS) for Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia.

This collaboration reinforces our commitment to designing itineraries that are not simply trips but carefully crafted educational experiences aligned with the values of schools, families, and the broader community.

A CALL TO ACTION

As educators, leaders, and staff in boarding environments, we have a responsibility to prepare students not just for assessments but for life. Experiential learning provides a powerful avenue for doing just that. When students step beyond familiar boundaries, whether across borders or simply into a new challenge, they discover their capacity to lead, to empathise, and to grow.

The world they will enter after school demands courage, curiosity, and global competence. Through thoughtfully developed experiential programs and meaningful partnerships, we can ensure that every boarding student has the opportunity to realise their full potential. ■

Student Horizons.

If you are interested in chatting more about any upcoming tours at your school, please reach out:

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Protecting the art of *living in community*

I confess. My boarding experience turned me into a domestic dyslexic!

There were many benefits of an English boarding school experience in the 1960s, however, I did not see my mum cook much, or my dad tinker with the car – which means that I am now a culinary delinquent, and the owners of garages in my precinct are all now buying expensive holiday homes.

The contemporary boarding experience, particularly in Australian schools, does a somewhat better job at teaching life skills. However, what my boarding experience at King's School Rochester DID give me, was a far better capacity to live with others, to cope with characters that were different, and to get along with those who were somewhat mottled in their pleasantness.

This capacity to get on with others is an increasingly endangered art.

It has been suggested that the current generation of teenagers is one that has been shaped by enforced isolation, social disruption, and an avatar existence. COVID-19 forced our students into smaller, more private worlds. Bedrooms became classrooms. Interaction was mediated through screens. Peer relationships were maintained through platforms rather than proximity.

The 2023 OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills found that post-pandemic students had fewer social and emotional skills than pre-pandemic students.

This has not been helped by our adolescents drowning in digital immersion. The Australian Council of State School Organisations, 2024, reported that teenagers were spending 4-6 hours a day on

social media. When one adds screen use in class, entertainment, and gaming, then a lot of our teens are being raised not by parents, and not even by schools – but by the digital world.

Georgina Mitchell, writing in *The Australian* (15 May 2025 “The secret life of our ‘screenagers’”) observed that Australian adolescents averaged around 49 hours per week on digital devices. A 2025 gaming and device dependency study by Macquarie University suggested that secondary school students were averaging a staggering nine hours a day on their screens.

UNICEF links this high online engagement not only to reduced offline interaction, but to increased loneliness, and rising anxiety among adolescents. (2023-24 OECD Wellbeing Report.)

These worrying figures make the boarding experience all the more valuable. Living in community exposes a student to a shared existence which, if handled well by boarding staff, increases tolerance and resilience. Too many students expect others to adapt continually to their sensitivities. A well-run boarding school will teach that: “No-one is an island, entire of itself.” John Donne (adapted.)

Boarding can platform a shared living experience that teaches the heliocentric heresy that we must sometimes revolve around others, rather than expecting them to revolve around us. Sharing, reciprocity, taking turns, coping with unpreferred rhythms, dealing with diversity, and recognising that friendships need to be earned and maintained, are just some of the skills that can be advanced in the boarding environment.

Neglected interpersonal muscles can be



strengthened so that a boarder learns to regulate their emotions, tolerate inconvenience, and adopt the social graces necessary to live in groups larger than one.

In short, a boarding house offers the gift of friction. It exposes a student to noise, misunderstandings and personality clashes, and to the invaluable lesson that not every irritation is an injustice, not every disagreement is harmful, and not every difference is an aberration.

For this reason, the heady march towards individual study-bedrooms for junior students in boarding houses, the free and unfettered use of phones and screens, and common rooms characterised by ranks of chairs oriented to a large screen, might need to be revisited.

Boarding schools lose much of their magic if the social experience offered is much the same as it is in far too many homes – which is a bedroom existence with a sign on the door saying, “No entry unless you’re Chris Hemsworth.”

In our rush to ensure that our boarding houses provide a “home away from home,”

we must not neuter the social value of the boarding experience.

Yes - there must be warmth, safety, and the delicious apple pie that a good home might provide, but there must also be chairs that are not aimed at a screen, times when phones are not allowed, and community experiences that require a student to emerge from their individual rooms. Gathering places need to be designed to promote conversation, giggles, whispers, and laughter. Events need to be arranged to promote teamwork, friendship, and tolerance. Individual freedoms need to be limited so that corporate good can be protected and the rough edges of entitlement smoothed.

Some capacity to customise and to individualise within a boarding house is very important. Students need privacy, they need “me” time, and they need to be able to withdraw from the jungle which is the common-room. Furthermore, different temperaments must be accommodated – both the introvert as well as the extrovert.

However, the individual customisation of the boarding experience, promoted

on many school websites, may negate the growth of the very skills a boarding house is in a unique position to provide – the growth of social and emotional skills so vital to our capacity to flourish.

Therefore, a careful audit of whether a boarding school has got the balance right might be useful. Kings Rochester in the 1960s was a good experience, but it could have been better. I still don’t know a camshaft from a piston rod, but I learnt the social skills necessary to lead schools for three decades, and a family for five decades – and for that, I’m forever grateful. ■



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The Digital Childhood: *Supporting Young People in a 24 Hour Online World*



Every person has 24 hours in a day. Yet in modern life, those hours often feel increasingly crowded. Homework, meetings, sports and chores can make the days feel full. In spare moments, many of us reach for screens, where a quick scroll can easily turn into lost time.

This is true for adults and young people alike.

Technology provides incredible benefits: instant communication, on-demand entertainment, information

at our fingertips and global connection. At the same time, it introduces new challenges such as managing screen time, online safety and maintaining a healthy balance between digital and offline life.

Importantly, young people are not just using technology. They are growing up inside a digital culture that operates 24 hours a day. Social interactions, identity development, friendships, conflict, humour and status increasingly play out online. For many young people, being offline can mean missing out on conversations, trends and relationships that move quickly through group chats, gaming platforms and social media.

How past generations spent their 24 hours

Older generations grew up with less sophisticated technology that changed gradually over time. Daily life involved fewer connected devices and more activities taking place offline.

Technology evolved slowly, giving society and developing brains more time to adapt.

How today's young people spend their 24 hours

Today's young people have grown up with technology that evolves rapidly, often faster than their developing brains can adapt.

Childhood and adolescence are critical periods for brain development, with the brain strengthening attention, emotional regulation, decision-making and social skills. Excessive or unbalanced screen use can influence how these systems develop and contribute to mental health challenges.

The Australian 24 Hour Movement Guidelines recommend no more than two hours of recreational screen time per day for school-aged children and teens, excluding

time spent on schoolwork. However, research suggests many young people average more than three hours of recreational screen use each day.

For many teenagers, this time is not passive consumption but social participation. Friendships, humour, disagreements and reputations often unfold in digital spaces that adults rarely see. Understanding this culture is essential if we want to support them effectively.

The dark side of screens

Excessive screen use can affect brain reward systems, attention, concentration, memory, learning, problem solving, social skills and sleep.

Online spaces can also expose young people to risks such as cyberbullying, grooming, sextortion, deep fakes, exploitation, radicalisation and inappropriate content. Young people are particularly vulnerable to these harms because of their desire for connection and inclusion.

Online environments can amplify risk. Algorithms promote emotionally charged content, anonymity can reduce accountability, and social pressures such as likes, views and followers can intensify conflict or humiliation. What might once have been a private mistake can quickly become public, permanent and widely shared.

Research in Australia shows that a significant proportion of young people experience some form of online harm during adolescence, yet many do not seek support from adults when it occurs.

The consequences can be serious, including low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, academic disengagement, sleep disruption and self-harm.

Why many young people do not report online harm

Many young people do not tell adults when something goes wrong online. Fear of judgement, consequences or not being believed can prevent them from seeking help.

Some worry their phone will be taken away or their access to friends restricted if they speak up. Others fear they will be blamed, particularly in situations involving images, relationships or private conversations.

There can also be a generational gap in understanding online spaces. Young people may believe adults will not understand the platforms, the social dynamics or the significance of what has happened. When previous disclosures are met with panic, anger or punishment, it can reinforce the belief that staying silent is safer.

As a result, harmful situations can continue for longer than they should, with young people trying to manage complex problems on their own.

Supporting young people online

To protect young people, adults often focus on rules and restrictions around screen use. While these can be helpful, they are not enough on their own. Communication, boundaries and education are equally important.

- **Communication:** Safe, judgement-free spaces foster trust, honesty, problem-solving, and resilience.
- **Boundaries:** Collaborative agreements, like device-free dinners, help establish balance.
- **Education:** Teaching digital literacy - understanding privacy settings, recognising misinformation, thinking before posting, blocking/reporting harmful behaviour - equips young people with practical skills to navigate online safely.

Just as importantly, adults need to create environments where young people feel safe asking for help. Responding calmly, focusing on solutions rather than blame and recognising that mistakes are part of growing up can make a significant difference.

As adults, we play a crucial role in supporting young people both online and offline by acknowledging the benefits and risks of technology, staying curious and modelling positive behaviour.

We're here to help

In the busyness of modern life, supporting young people online can feel overwhelming.

When incidents occur, schools and families often need calm guidance and practical support.

Cybernetic Shield helps take the pressure off. We provide support 24/7 to school staff, students and parents when an online incident occurs, ensuring safety, reassurance and clear next steps during what can often be a stressful situation.

By combining education, psychological support and incident response, Cybernetic Shield helps young people navigate the online world safely while supporting schools and families when challenges arise.

Supporting young people in a digital world is a shared responsibility. With the right knowledge, support and conversations, it is possible to help them build healthier and safer relationships with technology. ■



Dr Rebecca Sims is the Executive Director of Mindshield Matters, the online psychology and counselling practice of Cybernetic Shield specialising in the support and wellbeing of students and staff impacted by online trauma.

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Beyond the Gates: *Building Community in Boarding's Centenary Year*

In 2023, Wesley College celebrated its Centenary - a milestone that invited reflection on our past and inspiration for our future. Now, several years on, I reflect again on an initiative in the centenary year that exemplified the commitment and community focus of our staff.

Founded on the banks of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) in the Methodist tradition, Wesley began with just 36 students, 18 of whom were boarders. As the story goes, those first boarders arrived the night before school began, constructed their own beds, and skipped over holes in the floorboards before settling in. Boarding was, from the very beginning, at the heart of Wesley.

A hundred years later, that spirit of resilience and community remains strong. But in our Centenary year, we wanted to flip the script. Instead of waiting for families to come to us, we decided to go to them.

Enter the **Boarders Bash** - a new initiative designed to take Wesley Boarding on

the road. Over the Term 1 Exeat break, our boarding staff hitched up camper trailers, caravans, Britz vans and swags, and headed into the Wheatbelt to visit three key boarding communities: Narrogin, Bruce Rock, and Cadoux. These towns were chosen not only because they're home to a strong contingent of current boarders, but also to coincide with a local community festival in Bruce Rock.

The concept was simple: create a mobile celebration that allowed families to come and go as needed, while giving us the chance to connect in their backyard. On the Friday morning of the Exeat weekend, families departed Perth and rendezvoused at the Wandering Hotel for a bite to eat before completing the final leg

of day one together. Our first destination was hosted by a local boarding family who generously lent us their home - and in return, Wesley Boarding catered the evening meal.

With families gathered from across the district, the weather turned on a magnificent night. Stories were shared, laughter echoed across the paddocks, and the sense of community was palpable. The next morning, bacon and eggs were cooked on the local community BBQ trailer, fuelling everyone for the next stage of the journey.

From Narrogin to Bruce Rock, the convoy wove through the heart of the Western Australian Wheatbelt. At the end of a long, hot summer, not much was green - but the salmon gums lining the country highways surrounded the driver, to partially quote a famous Australian band. Lunch was held at the newly renovated Ardath Pub, now once again a focal hub of the local community. It was a fitting stop - the district of our Captain of Boarding in the Centenary year.



Our second night tied in with the culmination of a summer music festival in Bruce Rock. Staying at the local caravan park, cooling off in the adjoining pool, letting the kids scream down the water slide - it was a great chance for the families of boarding to connect. Our travelling group wasn't just senior staff; it was a full representation of the people who make boarding happen: supervisors who walk the halls, all Year Coordinators from the leadership team, the Head of Boarding, the school Reverend, and nurses from the Health Centre. There was a mixture of kids and dogs from the families as they joined in on the Bash.

After a night of music and community celebration, it was time to head to our final destination: Cadoux. Lunch at the Ettamogah Pub in Cunderdin broke the journey, and just before sunset, the troupe arrived at the Cadoux Recreation Centre. While Cadoux isn't a large town, the whole community turned out to share a meal with us. In true WA country style, everyone pitched in - cooking a lamb on the spit, with potato bake and salads to match. It was another great night of connecting not just with our boarding families, but with the broader communities that support them.

On the final morning, it would have been easy to head straight back to Perth and rest before the Boarding House reopened later that afternoon. But we squeezed in one last visit - stopping off at a family farm to be proudly shown around "home." That evening, after lights out, a staff member quietly reflected: "After visiting



a boarder on their farm today, it was the first time the Year 7 boy had opened up and chatted with me."

That moment said it all.

I'm incredibly proud of our boarding staff for sacrificing their long weekend. Everyone knows that the first Exeat is a much-anticipated break after the start of a new year. To give up the opportunity to unwind separately showed a deep commitment to building community and making connections. As we prepared to finish Term One of our Centenary year, calls were already being made to make the Boarders Bash an annual event.

Boarding is a partnership. It begins in the Boarding House, but it must extend far beyond it - into the towns, farms, and homes that shape our students. By

showing up, listening, and celebrating together, we honour the full story of their journey. And in doing so, we strengthen the heart of boarding itself. ■

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Onboarding a new Head of Boarding...

and your community too!

It is the nature of our profession at this time that in the short to midterm most boarding schools will be looking to appoint and induct a new Head (Director) of Boarding. Across Australia this term, many boarding schools are not just getting beds made and rosters sorted; they are welcoming new Heads and Directors of Boarding into the heart of their communities. These appointments are never just a change of name on an organisational chart. They mark an inflection point for the culture of the house – its tone, safety, spirituality and the daily ‘home like’ experience of each boarder while away from their homes and families.

Why this role really matters

In any school, leadership transitions matter. In boarding, everything is intensified because the community lives together 24 hours, seven days a week. Much of the life of a boarding community occurs after sunset when young people are challenged by the constant intimacy of living together, often emotionally depleted from the school day. There is a natural increase of anxiety for families who are not with their young people each day. A Head of Boarding carries responsibility for the pastoral care, routines and relationships of students who live onsite for most of the year. Position descriptions may speak about strategic leadership, pastoral care, administration and management, but beneath this language is a simple yet profound reality: the Head of Boarding sets the tone of everything. As we know from experience, when the boss sneezes, the whole organisation catches a cold.

This is why the Head of Boarding role is fundamentally about leadership, not just management. When a Head of Boarding is

visible in the corridors, in the dining room and at evening study, they become a steady point of reference for young people living far from home. When a Head of Boarding picks up the phone to a parent rather than send an email or just decline an electronic leave application, they become a cherished anchor of trust for that family.

Onboarding the leader – and everyone else

At the beginning of every appointment, schools pour energy into helping a new Head of Boarding start well: tours, handovers, policies, keys, logins, rosters, incident registers. All this matters. The risk is that the appointment remains an internal process, understood by only a few, rather than a moment owned by the whole boarding community.

Work on leadership transitions in schools consistently underlines the same point: how a community experiences the first months of a new leader has a disproportionate impact on trust, clarity and

long-term effectiveness. When communication is clear and connected to the school’s existing mission, change tends to build confidence. When it is patchy or absent, the same change can quietly undermine it. New leaders rarely falter because they lack ability; they falter because no one has helped the community make sense of their early decisions and behaviours.

Onboarding the boarding community

In faith and values based boarding contexts in particular, this is not only a procedural concern; it is a matter of stewardship and communion. School governors and executives have a responsibility to help staff, students and families understand why a particular appointment has been made and what the new Head of Boarding has been asked to focus on in the early weeks.

If that story is not told, other stories are constructed to fill the gap: ‘they don’t get us’, ‘bull in a China shop’, ‘thinks they know it all’. Without context, clear decisions around safety, expectations or sleep routines can be misread as personality quirks or power plays, rather than deliberate choices in service of the mission.

When onboarding a new Head or Director of Boarding, it helps to be explicit and public about four simple questions:

What are the gifts, experience and qualifications that made this person the right fit for our boarding community at this moment?

How do those gifts serve the mission and strategic direction of our school and boarding program?

What space, responsibility and authority have they been asked to step into especially around student wellbeing, staff culture and partnership with families?

What concrete signs of progress is school leadership looking for in the first term and the first year – and how will the community be kept informed?

These are not merely executive talking points. They are tools for forming the community. When staff, parents and boarders can see the connection between the leader's story and the school's story, they are far more likely to lean into the change than brace against it.

The boarding house: a community of formation

Stannies boys will tell you: we aren't running a prison nor are we running a daycare. The best boarding does not feel like a hotel; it feels like an intentional community of formation. In such a house, boarding is more than a bed and breakfast service that 'houses students' when they aren't in the day school. It becomes

a setting for education in the fullest sense, where community living, in loco parentis caregiving and time away from home are woven into a coherent formation program.

A Head of Boarding, properly supported and clearly introduced, is the chief curator of this culture. Their leadership is seen not only in strategic plans, but in the ordinary rhythms of wake-up and lights-out, mealtimes and study, weekends in and weekends out. Leadership in boarding sits right alongside students' daily lives; it shapes how they experience safety, belonging and hope.

For those entrusted with appointing and supporting Heads and Directors of Boarding, every new appointment should land as a clear signal, not background noise. It is a deliberate move by the school community that is to be shared and celebrated. ■

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Strengthening Risk Management in Australian Schools: *Insights for Educational Leaders*

For leaders in the Australian education sector, including boarding school principals, housemasters, and business administrators, maintaining a robust culture of safety and compliance is a foundational priority. To better understand the current landscape, GRC Solutions recently investigated the state of risk management across Australian schools.

The findings provide a valuable benchmark for schools looking to enhance their governance frameworks and ensure that risk management is a living part of their daily operations.

The Survey Landscape

The investigation involved a comprehensive survey of 25 questions focused on current risk management arrangements. The 54 respondents primarily represented secondary schools or institutions providing both primary and secondary education. The sample reflected a balanced 50:50 split between capital cities and regional towns, with 90% of participating schools being either faith-based or independent.

Governance and Strategic Risk Management

A positive observation from the survey is that most schools have a clearly defined and documented Risk Management Framework. Furthermore, risk management is widely recognised as an essential component of and integrated into the decision-making process.

However, several areas for growth were identified:

- **Dedicated Leadership:** Despite the complexity of secondary and boarding environments, 23% of schools in the sample currently operate without a dedicated Risk and Compliance Manager or an outsourced risk function. Appointing a specific lead for these functions is an effective way to oversee both strategic and operational planning.
- **Risk Appetite Statements:** While frameworks exist, there is significant room to develop more effective Risk Appetite Statements. Many schools currently lack documented statements that translate risk appetite into clear tolerance levels for specific risks.
- **Maturity through Indicators:** The development of Key Risk Indicators (KRIs) is an area that can further strengthen a school's risk maturity. Implementing KRIs helps the governing body understand risk exposure and pinpoint specific areas of concern.

Operational Excellence: From Camps to Incursions

Australian schools traditionally manage high-risk activities, such as school camps and excursions, with a high degree of diligence. These complex events often receive the rigorous risk assessments they require.

The survey suggests schools can now apply that same rigour to lower-risk events, such as school incursions. By including greater detail in all risk assessments, schools can more effectively demonstrate the active management of their environments. Additionally, there is an opportunity to enhance how schools test the design and operating effectiveness of their existing controls. Coordinated testing ensures that the measures put in place are operating exactly as intended.

Empowering Staff and Building Culture

The "human element" of risk management remains one of the most important factors in a school's success. To this extent, schools need to continue to focus on:

- **Clarity of Roles:** The data indicates that roles and responsibilities are not always clearly delineated, leading to lower awareness among staff, particularly teaching staff, regarding their specific risk responsibilities. Using tools like a RACI matrix and documenting duties in position descriptions can provide much-needed clarity.
- **Professional Development:** Currently, at least 50% of respondents indicated that risk training is either ad hoc or minimal. There is a clear opportunity to move toward a model where risk training is planned, coordinated, and embedded into ongoing professional development. GRC Solutions provide a range of risk and compliance eLearning courses, as outlined below, for you to upskill and raise your team's awareness of legal and regulatory aspects relating to your school.
- **Community Trust:** Proactive communication with parents and caregivers

about how the school manages risk is a vital practice. This transparency fosters trust and cultivates a positive, shared risk management culture across the entire school community.

The survey findings also highlight the importance of schools undertaking an independent evaluation of their risk frameworks every three to five years, with the frequency tailored to the complexity of each school.

Next Steps and Full Report

GRC Solutions is committed to supporting the education sector in navigating these complexities. While these findings offer a high-level summary, a comprehensive report featuring a full overview of findings and detailed recommendations will be published in April 2026.

To ensure you receive your copy of the full report as soon as it is released, please email marketing@grc-solutions.com to be added to the distribution list. ■

If you would like to discuss the specific compliance or risk management needs of your school or boarding facility, we invite you to reach out to our team at contactus@grc-solutions.com. Our experts across Australia are ready to help you strengthen your school's governance and safety protocols.

Tailored courses for Education and Schools include:

- Child Protection
- Cybersecurity
- Fraud Awareness
- Practical Health and Safety
- Privacy
- Schools Camps and Excursions
- Work Health and Safety
- Workplace Behaviour

Also:

- Emotional Intelligence
- ESG (Environment, Society and Governance)
- Incident Reporting for Everyone
- Managing and Leveraging Stress
- Psychosocial Hazards
- Risk Fundamentals for Everyone
- Unconscious Bias
- Using AI
- Workplace Aggression



Distance Raises the Bar *for Boarding School Communications*

Distance is built into the DNA of the boarding experience. It's a big reason students thrive, but it also raises expectations for communications. If families can't rely on regular campus visits, or when information is hard to find, the distance feels even greater as silence and uncertainty fill the gap.

It's a layer of complexity for some 21K boarders across Australia, including the more than 15K rural boarders and 1,640 international boarders. That mix is a reminder that many families manage school life from far away, and whether that's across a state or just an hour's drive, any uncertainty about school logistics or communications makes the silence grow louder.

Parent Expectations Have Shifted

The job of supporting students on campus and supporting families off-campus has changed in recent years. Families

still want warmth, trust, and a sense of connection, but they also want a level of access that meets their expectations.

In an Australian Parents Council Parent Sentiment Survey, 70% of parents said they wanted time available outside school hours to talk with teachers. For boarding families, "outside school hours" often becomes the only shared window to connect, and in-person problem-solving is harder to come by.

That pressure rarely starts with a single, major issue, though. When a family wants to confirm a travel detail, they're

trying to understand weekend routines or double-checking a policy they remember from last term, the stakes are raised.

At the same time, schools can't be expected to monitor an inbox 24/7, and boarding staff shouldn't have to choose between responsiveness and burnout. So the goal becomes simpler: give families dependable ways to get answers, and a straightforward route to the right person when a conversation is needed.

Your Website Does Double Duty

Independent Schools Queensland's recent findings show that 92% of parents visited school websites when making school decisions, and when parents were asked to name their top three most influential sources, "school website" ranked in the top five.

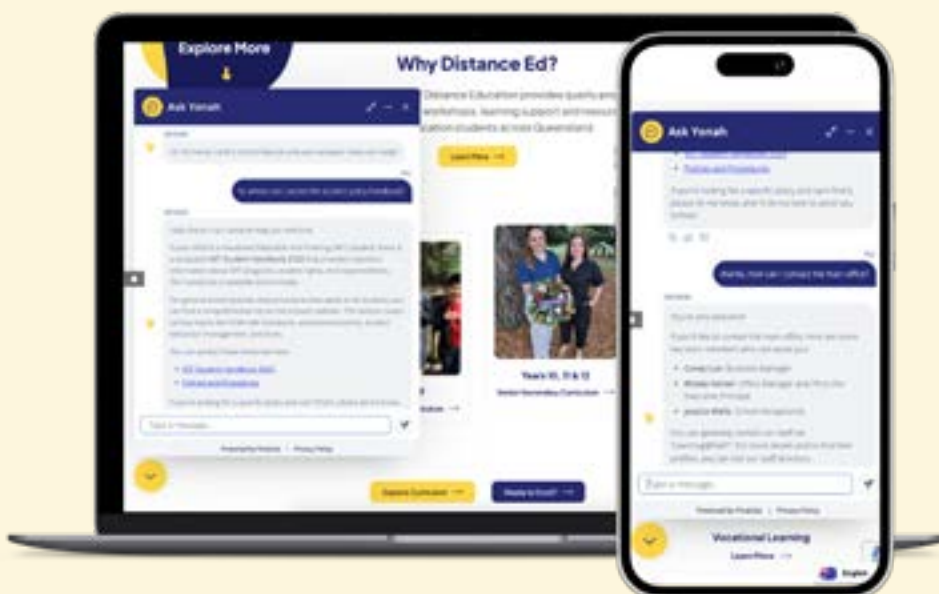
For boarding families, the people aspect matters even more: 70% of parents of boarding students rated meeting the boarding master/mistress as "extremely important," a strong signal that families want fast access to information and a personal, human touch.

Queensland boarding parents spoke up about what matters most, like:

- Being kept informed
- Getting responses
- Access to teachers when concerns come up

This is when the website becomes the source of truth, but where do the answers live?

More international boarding schools are adding an AI chatbot to their websites to be that reference point for families. Using the school's publicly available information,





it's a 24/7 resource for term dates, weekend permissions, policies, who-to-contact lists, and more, even when staff aren't available.

Schools like Faith Christian School of Distance Education are using Finalsite's AI-powered chatbot, Ask AI, and leveraging its ability to hold conversations in 45+ languages, using their own branding and tone to match the school's colors, logo, and brand voice.

Plus, with insight into the questions users are asking day and night, schools can better understand what information families need and how to improve their website's content and user experience.

Close the Distance

Distance is part of boarding, but it doesn't have to create gaps in communication. Help families feel closer to campus by giving them quick access to school-approved information and the right people,

even when school is asleep.

- **Fast answers across time zones** - Families can ask about directories, schedules, or key dates and get pointed to the right page, form, or calendar item in seconds.
- **One dependable home base for boarding life** - The chatbot can answer parents' questions about school life and all the essentials, so families always know where to start, even months after enrolment.
- **Quick access to the right contact, without the guesswork** - When a question needs follow-up, the chatbot can route families to the right person or team (boarding, wellbeing, health centre, academics) and help them choose the best channel.
- **Better support for multilingual households** - For international families, it can help them find translated resources or understand key pages, reducing the risk of missing details.
- **Stronger responsiveness without staff burnout** - By handling the repeat

"where do I find..." questions, the chatbot helps with the email overload and protects staff time for the conversations that need extra care and context.

Distance will always be part of boarding, and that's a good thing. It gives students room to grow, helps them build independence, and opens opportunities they wouldn't find elsewhere.

Families trust the experience when answers are easy to find, and the right people are easy to reach. That's the bar, and your website can help you meet it, even when home is far away. ■



Beyond Routine:

How a Night at Cape Otway Strengthened Bonds and Built Young Leaders

For many young boarders, the routine of daily life offers structure, belonging, and predictability. Meals at set times, study sessions, APS sport commitments, shared common rooms, and the familiar rhythm of school days form the backbone of their experience in Mackie House (Boys Boarding House). Yet, as many understand, meaningful relationships and authentic leadership skills are rarely formed solely within the boundaries of routine. They emerge when young people are invited into spaces where expectations shift and experiences feel new and shared. Our Mackie Year Seven and Eight Camp at our Cape Otway Campus is a deliberate effort to create this kind of space.



The intention behind the camp was simple but powerful: remove boys from their regular environment, place them in an experiential setting, and watch relationships grow as routines fall away. The Year Seven and Eight Mackie students travelled along The Great Ocean Road, continuing on to The Geelong College Cape Otway Campus, an environment with natural beauty and cultural significance. After arriving and setting up cabins, we gathered to acknowledge the Indigenous history and custodianship of the land.

Without the usual pressures of schedules, homework, or the larger boarding cohort, boys settled quickly into the camp environment. Wildlife around the site became a highlight straight away. Koalas in the surrounding gums and wallabies near the campus gave both international and local boarders a memorable introduction to Cape Otway.

Free time in the afternoon was simple but effective. Small groups played cricket, football, and soccer and boys moved freely between activities.

Dinner that evening was a BBQ cooked by the boys. They coordinated the setup, handled the cooking, and even organised the table setting and wash up. This wasn't about producing a perfect meal; it was about responsibility and teamwork. Boys divided up jobs, checked in with each other, and worked towards a shared outcome.

But the real heart of the camp, the moment everything clicked into place, came after

dinner with the Leadership and 'Mackie Man' session. We gathered in front of the fire for a session designed especially for boys at this early stage in their boarding and adolescent journey.

The session was intentional and explored themes of challenge, growth, vulnerability, and personal responsibility. Boys discussed what leadership looks like, not in theory, but in the everyday reality of living in Mackie. They were encouraged to think about the emotions that have arisen so far this year and when they push themselves, when they fail, and when they succeed. For many, this was the first time they had spoken openly in front of their boarding peers about their goals, challenges or their fears.

A highlight of the evening involved each boy writing a "letter to their future self". This simple activity encouraged them to imagine who they hoped to become, both as boarders and as young men. These letters will be returned to them in their final year of their Mackie journey, providing a tangible moment of self-recognition and growth.

This session worked precisely because it unfolded outside the boundaries of normal routine. But in Cape Otway, wrapped in the openness of the outdoors and the absence of day-to-day expectations, they leaned into vulnerability. Conversations became more genuine. Reflection became deeper. Staff were able to engage in dialogue with boarders in ways that simply don't happen between dinner and study on a normal weeknight.

The next day we walked a section of the Great Ocean Walk, Cape Otway Lighthouse



towards Crayfish Bay. The boys moved steadily along the track, helping each other when needed and keeping a good pace. We finished the day with fish and chips in Apollo Bay and an easy afternoon of fishing, nothing complicated, just time spent together.

Why spaces like these matter

The Mackie Year Seven and Eight Camp highlighted something essential about boarding: community is strengthened not only through structure, but through the intentional breaking of structure. When boys are given time to explore relationships without the pressures of routine, they show kindness, leadership, and humour in ways that surprise even those who know them well.

For young adolescents, particularly those living away from home, these experiences are foundational. They learn who they are within the group. They discover how to support others. They find mentors in staff and peers alike. They understand that leadership is not a badge reserved for the confident or outspoken, but a daily practice built through reflection and empathy.

The Cape Otway camp wasn't long. It wasn't far away. But it was meaningful. It offered a chance for Year Seven and Eight Mackie boys to step outside the familiar and, in doing so, strengthen the boarding community they return to. ■

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What you need to know about *Queensland's Child Safe Standards*



Across Australia, boarding schools play a unique and important role in education. For many students - particularly those from regional, rural and remote communities - boarding provides access to opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable. But boarding environments also carry additional responsibilities. When young people live away from home, schools assume a deeper duty of care that extends beyond the classroom and into every aspect of daily life.

In Queensland, a new legislative framework is strengthening those responsibilities. Under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024, organisations that work with children must implement Child Safe Standards, which are designed to prioritise the safety of children in everyday culture, policies and practices. The reforms began rolling out

in October 2025, with schools and school boarding facilities required to comply.

Importantly, this strengthens our voluntary quality assurance framework for boarding schools to deliver a legal requirement. While many organisations have already adopted child safe practices, the Standards now create a statewide

framework requiring organisations to demonstrate how they create environments that protect children from harm.

The Standards form part of Queensland's broader Child Safe Organisations system and apply to around 40,000 organisations that provide services or facilities for children and young people. For boarding schools, the reforms reinforce an important principle: children's safety must be embedded in organisations' cultures, not confined to policies or compliance processes.

A whole-of-organisation approach

The 10 Child Safe Standards set clear expectations for how organisations create safe environments for children. They address leadership and culture, child participation, family engagement, staff suitability, complaints processes, training, and safe environments.

For boarding schools, this whole-of-organisation approach is important. Boarding environments involve extended supervision, residential living arrangements and close interactions between staff and students. Ensuring safety requires attention not only in classrooms, but also in dormitories, recreational areas, transport arrangements and online spaces.

One of the central standards focuses on leadership and culture, requiring school boards and executive teams to actively prioritise children's safety. Another emphasises empowering children and young people, ensuring students are heard and supported to raise concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

Creating safe boarding environments

Several of the Standards are particularly relevant for residential school settings. The requirement to maintain safe physical and online environments means organisations must design and manage spaces in ways that minimise the risk of harm.

For boarding schools, this may involve reviewing supervision arrangements, room allocation practices, visibility in common areas, and how technology and online communication are managed.

The Standards also require organisations to ensure staff and volunteers are suitable and well supported, including through recruitment and employment history checks, supervision and training. In boarding contexts, this means ensuring staff understand their responsibilities in residential environments and have the skills to recognise and respond to potential risks.

Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme, commencing 1 July 2026, will

further strengthen child safeguards. The scheme requires certain organisations, including schools, to report and investigate allegations that an employee or volunteer has engaged in misconduct involving a child.

Cultural safety

When implementing the Standards, organisations are required to create environments that uphold the right to cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This is known in the law as the Universal Principle, and it means making children feel welcome, safe, valued, included and respected. This is particularly important for boarding schools with students from regional and remote communities who may be living far from their home and culture.

From compliance to culture

While the Child Safe Standards introduce new legal obligations, their purpose is not simply regulatory compliance. Instead, they aim to support lasting cultural

change within organisations that work with children.

For boarding schools, creating a strong child-safe culture is fundamental. Policies and procedures matter, but the real measure of success is whether students feel safe, respected and able to speak up. By embedding the Standards into governance, training and student engagement, boarding schools can strengthen trust with students, families and communities – and help ensure every child in their care is supported to thrive.

For more information and resources about Queensland's Child Safe Standards or the Reportable Conduct Scheme, visit qfcc.qld.gov.au/childsafes ■

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Purpose in Practice:

What Tim Diamond Taught us About Meaningful Leadership

When Tim Diamond speaks about purpose, he does not approach it as an abstract idea or an inspiring slogan. He speaks about it as something lived, something shaped by real experiences, real communities, and real responsibility. Boarding leaders and student leaders recently gathered at Wesley College, Glen Waverly for our first Victorian ABSA Boarding Event for 2026. We were given a look inside that purpose, framed through Tim's work with the Cotton On Foundation and shaped by his time in Uganda.

For many, this was the first time hearing directly from the person who has guided a global education initiative that has raised over \$200 million and created thousands of learning opportunities for young people. Yet what caught people offguard was not the scale of the work, it was the simplicity and clarity with which Tim explained the "why" behind it.

Tim described his first trip to Uganda with a level of honesty. He spoke about stepping into schools that lacked even the most basic facilities such as classrooms with dirt floors, limited furniture, overcrowded spaces and resources stretched thin. He shared photos that captured daily realities that, in Australia, would be unthinkable. The images made the contrast unavoidable, what we see as

standard such as electricity, desks, safe classrooms, learning materials, are luxuries in many Ugandan schools.

For him, this wasn't a moment of pity; it was a moment of clarity.

He told students that when he visited Uganda, he was struck not by what communities lacked, but by how deeply they valued learning. Children walked long distances to school. Teachers worked with determination despite limited resources. Parents supported education even when they had little to give. The will to learn was unmistakable.

What moved Tim wasn't hardship, it was humanity. And that moment, he said, shaped his purpose.

Tim outlined the Cotton On Foundation's Model as a clear, disciplined framework built around four pillars:

Amazing Product - Items like totes and bottles must be genuinely useful; strong products underpin sustainable impact.

Take Action - Change begins with deliberate steps.

Make an Impact - Actions must translate into meaningful outcomes for students and communities.

Proof - The Foundation measures everything. Real impact must be visible, accountable, and longterm.

These pillars sit beneath a simple guiding idea: Action = Impact, a reminder that intention is never enough; only action creates change.

The simplicity of the model is deliberate. Tim believes complexity can become





an excuse. If the goal is education, then everything must point towards delivering it, clearly, efficiently, and with accountability.

Students listened closely as Tim explained how Uganda reshaped his understanding of purpose. In Australia, he said, education is something we expect with safe classrooms, trained teachers, resources, support systems, facilities. All of these are assumed to be part of the learning experience.

But in Uganda, he learned that when education is not guaranteed, its value becomes unmistakable.

Tim shared his personal Model of Purpose 'Find Your Why'

- **Passion** - what energises you
- **Wellbeing (Mind & Body)** - what sustains you
- **What the world needs** - what you can contribute to it

He stressed that purpose is not found in a single defining moment. It grows from witnessing something that matters and then choosing to respond with consistency.

For Tim, Uganda gave purpose shape. It gave purpose urgency. And it gave purpose direction. What stood out most in Tim's message was his rejection of short-term, symbolic gestures. Uganda did not need visitors. It needed partners.

He told students plainly:

"Real impact happens when you show up, stay present, and commit for the long haul."

That is why the Foundation's projects build entire education systems, not single buildings. They focus on teacher development, curriculum support, infrastructure, community governance and ongoing



UGANDA SCHOOL

resourcing. The work doesn't end when a ribbon is cut.

For boarding leaders, Tim's message landed with particular relevance. Boarding communities are built not on single events, but on the steady rhythm of shared routines, reliable support and the countless small interactions that shape how students feel in their home away from home. Tim's purpose model, finding what energises you, understanding what sustains you, and recognising what the community around you needs, mirrors the exact mindset required in a boarding house. Just as the Foundation commits to longterm investment in Ugandan schools, boarding leaders create impact through daily consistency: checking in on younger students, modelling calm during busy weeks, welcoming others into the group, and setting the standard even when no one is watching. His reminder that "real impact happens when you show up and stay present" speaks directly to the heart of boarding leadership, a role defined not by position, but by presence.

The strength of Tim Diamond's message lies in its honesty. He didn't try to inspire. He simply told the truth about purpose: it requires clarity, commitment, and a willingness to act.

For both students and staff, the takeaway was clear:

- Purpose begins with noticing what matters.
- It grows when you choose to respond.
- And it becomes real when you commit for the long term.

Tim and Cotton On Foundations work in Uganda is a testament to that. And for everyone in the room, it was a reminder that leadership, wherever it takes place, is at its best when it is lived with intention and grounded in purpose. ■

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Navigating the New Frontier: *Supporting Your Boarding Communities in an Era of Change*

The landscape of boarding education across Australia and New Zealand is undergoing a profound transformation. As leaders and educators within the Australian Boarding Schools sector, you are no longer simply managing residential facilities; you are navigating a complex intersection of rapid technological advancement, shifting workforce dynamics, and a heightened focus on the holistic wellbeing of staff and students.

While these challenges are significant, they also present an opportunity to evolve. To thrive in this “new normal,” boarding schools must look beyond traditional professional development and embrace expert-led strategies that build resilience, foster innovation, and ensure long-term sustainability.

The Human Element: Addressing Burnout and Wellbeing

Perhaps the most pressing issue facing your sector in 2026 is the wellbeing of your people. Recent data highlights that Australian teachers report stress levels significantly higher than the national workforce average. In a boarding environment, where the boundaries between professional and personal life are inherently blurred, the risk of burnout is magnified.

The “always-on” nature of residential care requires a unique set of skills—not just for students, but for the staff supporting them. There appears to be a critical need for:

- **Staff Resilience:** Moving from reactive stress management to proactive wellbeing cultures.

- **Student Mental Health:** Addressing the complexities of adolescent development in a digital-first world.
- **Work/Life Integration:** Finding sustainable models for residential staff that allow for rest and rejuvenation without compromising student care.

The Digital Shift: AI, Technology, and Ethical Frontiers

Beyond the pastoral care office, the classroom and dorm common rooms are being reshaped by technology. With over 80% of students now utilizing generative AI tools, the conversation has shifted from if we should use technology to how we use it responsibly.

Boarding schools are uniquely positioned to lead this charge. Because you live and breathe the same environment as your students, you have the chance to model ethical AI usage and prepare them for a future of work that values “power skills” – emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making – over routine tasks. Understanding how digital twins and data-informed wellbeing can assist in pastoral care is no longer a

futuristic concept; it is a current necessity for modern boarding leadership.

The Business of Boarding: Brand, Marketing, and Sustainability

While you are mission-driven, there is the “business” of education. In a competitive market where families are increasingly discerning about value, the strength of a school’s brand is vital. Success in 2026 requires a strategic focus on:

- **Enrolment Attraction:** Articulating a clear value proposition that resonates with modern families.
- **Digital Branding:** Leveraging technology to tell the unique story of your boarding house.
- **Operational Excellence:** Using corporate insights to streamline the business side of school life, ensuring resources are directed where they matter most: the students.

Corporate Speakers Australia: Your Trusted Partner in Transformation

Recognising these multifaceted challenges is the first step; addressing them effectively requires a partner who understands both the corporate and educational worlds. Corporate Speakers Australia (CSA) is proud to be that partner for ABSA member schools.

We represent a curated bureau of professional speakers and facilitators specifically chosen for their ability to engage with the education sector. Whether you are planning a professional development day for staff, a student engagement workshop, or



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a motivational keynote for a graduation event, we provide the expertise needed to move the needle.

How We Support Your School

Our speakers aren't just experts; they are storytellers and change-makers who specialize in:

- **Wellbeing & Resilience:** Specialists who provide practical tools for staff to combat burnout and for students to build emotional strength.
- **Future-Ready Literacy:** AI futurists and technology experts who demystify digital twins and provide frameworks for ethical AI usage in the classroom and beyond.
- **Business Growth:** Seasoned business leaders who work with your executive teams on branding, marketing, and enrollment strategies to ensure your school remains the first choice for families.

A Positive Path Forward

Despite the weight of these issues, the outlook for boarding schools in Australia and New Zealand is bright. Your schools remain the heart of community, providing stability and world-class education to students from all walks of life. By partnering with Corporate Speakers Australia, you gain access to the voices that will inspire your staff, empower your students, and secure your school's future.

We pride ourselves on our easy, professional service. We work closely with you to understand your specific school culture, creating a curated shortlist of talent that fits your goals and budget. ■

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“There is a big difference between a speaker and the right speaker. At Corporate Speakers Australia, we don't just provide a name; we provide a solution tailored to your school's unique environment.”



The Soundtrack of Boarding

It is 7:58 pm on a Thursday night in Boondall. The air is still. From the top of the Learning Centre, the airport lights flicker in the distance, indifferent to the high-stakes silence in the top-floor classrooms. In this space, 320 boys are, theoretically, studying without a skerrick of distraction.

But the silence is brittle.

A jittery Year Nine makes the first move. The rhythmic zip of a pencil case, the thud of a laptop lid closing thirty seconds too early: leadership, after all, is found in small actions. His companions follow suit. Before the supervisor can even check their watch, the quiet confinement of study is abandoned for something much more “boy-sterous.”

At 8:00 pm sharp, the floodgates open. Nine rooms’ worth of captives are released in a stampede of feet on concrete stairs. This cacophony moves like a wave toward the boarding village, momentarily splintering into four houses as boys race to their rooms for a singular, essential item:

the blazer. It’s a chaotic uniform of spiffy blue and white stripes thrown over sweat-stained work shirts and footy shorts as they converge on the centre of the Village.

One boy steps onto the platform. The crowd erupts, then vanishes into a vacuum of silence with a single hand gesture. From chaos to order. The Year 12 Prefect speaks, a momentary calm before the “real” sound of boarding begins.

“Nudgee, are you ready? Ready!” “Yes, we are ready! Ready!”

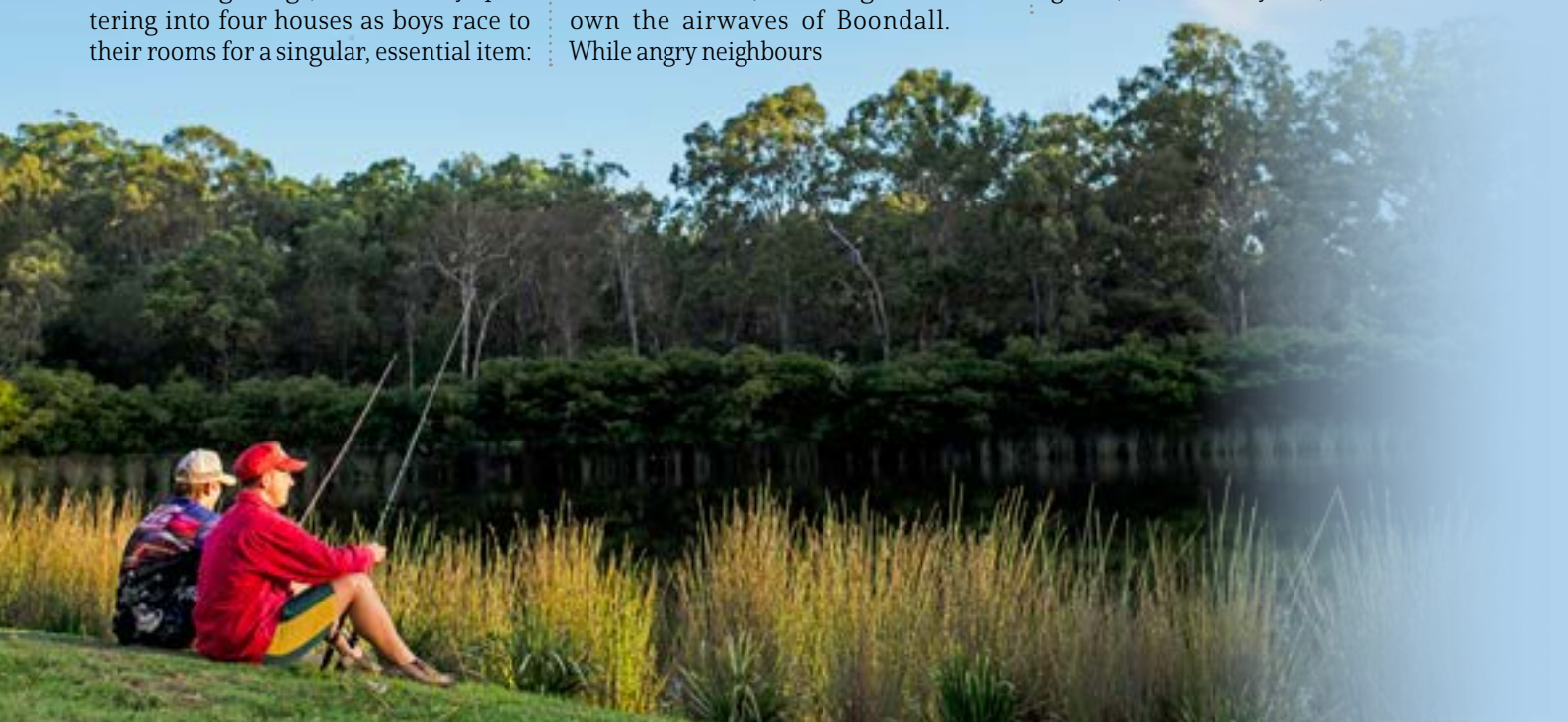
For ten minutes, the Nudgee boarders own the airwaves of Boondall. While angry neighbours

take to their keyboards to complain on the community Facebook page, 320 boys, backed by the ghosts of 10,000 brothers who came before them, roar into the night. Then, as quickly as it began, it’s over. The war cry fades, replaced by the frantic crinkle of two-minute noodle packets and the clink of spoons in Milo mugs before bed.

“Rock Around the Clock” is the anthem, the headliner of our community. But the true discography of Nudgee Boarding is found in the smaller, B-side tracks; the sounds that aren’t for the neighbours, but for us.

The Tracklist

It’s a soundtrack made of a thousand disparate notes. It’s the tense, rhythmic clack of pool balls connecting in the common room during a game that is far more competitive than it has any right to be. It’s the unabashed, booming acoustics of the showers, where a student’s surprisingly good (or hilariously bad) taste in music





echoes off the tiles, turning a Saturday morning shower into a concert that rivals Coldplay at Suncorp Stadium.

Sometimes, the soundtrack is purely functional. Old boys of Cotter House tell me they always knew I was approaching because of the distinct click of my right knee, a biological early warning system that saved many a boy from being caught doing the wrong thing.

There are moments of levity that remind you exactly who lives here: the unfortunate, booming flatulence that shatters the silence of a corridor after lights out, followed by the inevitable, contagious ripple of muffled laughter. Boys...

But there are softer, heavier tracks, too. It's the muffled whimpering of a younger student in the dark, the sharp sting of homesickness finally catching up to him, and the low, murmuring comfort of a staff member or peer stepping in to bridge the gap between home and here.

We find our voice in both the sacred and the silly. On Sunday nights, the Chapel fills with the solemn, beautiful harmony of "Ancient Words," where the same voices that growl war cries on Thursday become a singular force of faith. Contrast that with the out-of-tune mayhem of Singing

Practice in Tierney Auditorium, where reverence is swapped for a rowdy rendition of Natasha Bedingfield's "Unwritten." Between the pitchy vocals and the uncouth, uncoordinated dance moves, it's a loud reminder that we never take ourselves too seriously.

Above all, the most vital sound in the village is the constant, underlying hum of laughter. It's the sharp bark of a joke cracked around the kitchen bench and the tired giggles in the hallways after a long day.

These sounds are the heartbeat of our community. They are loud, they are occasionally messy, and they are sometimes heartbreakingly quiet. Combined, these tracks define who we are: a Boarding Family that doesn't just share a roof, but shares a pulse. This pulse keeps the heart of Boondall beating year after year... whether the neighbours like it or not. ■

AUTHOR:
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Dean of Boarding
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Bush to Boarding - Bridging the Distance, *a boarding school transition program for rural students.*



For rural families, the journey to boarding school starts long before a student steps onto campus. It begins around the kitchen table, during distance education lessons, in conversations about opportunity and sacrifice, and in the quiet worry that comes with knowing home and school will soon be far apart.

At Dolly's Dream, we have the privilege of walking alongside rural families during this transition. Over recent years, the message has been clear: while boarding schools work incredibly hard to support new students, many rural families feel they need additional support before they have to say goodbye.

This insight led to the development of Bush to Boarding – Bridging the Distance, a boarding school transition program designed specifically for rural students and their parents, particularly those who have completed primary school through Schools of the Air.

Meeting the needs of rural families

Dolly's Dream was founded in memory of Dolly Everett, with a mission to build a kinder and safer world for young people. Central to this mission is listening to the experiences of young people, families, and schools, and responding with practical, evidence-based support.

In our work with rural families transitioning to boarding school, we repeatedly heard that the emotional side of

this transition was often underestimated. While academic readiness was frequently discussed and logistics carefully planned, social and emotional readiness was often felt left to chance.

This gap is reflected in research on the transition to secondary school, which links this period to increased anxiety, emotional distress, and social challenges, particularly for students managing multiple changes at once, such as leaving home and adjusting to the boarding environment (Lester et al., 2013; Waters et al., 2014). Research focused on rural and boarding contexts further highlights that when students are not adequately supported during separation from family, emotional distress, such as homesickness, can intensify (Waters et al., 2014; Mander & Lester, 2017).

Bush to Boarding – Bridging the Distance was developed to address this gap by strengthening students' social and emotional readiness before boarding begins, while also supporting parents through their own emotional adjustment.

Research shows that early, proactive strategies are more effective than reactive interventions, particularly in supporting

anxiety, adjustment, and wellbeing (Lester et al., 2013). Research also indicates that when parents' wellbeing is supported, they are better able to respond to their child's emotional needs, maintain secure attachment, and reinforce coping skills during periods of separation and transition (Waters et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2017).

Working with families and schools

In developing the Bush to Boarding – Bridging the Distance program, Dolly's Dream undertook consultation with rural families, distance education schools and boarding schools across Australia. Hearing lived experience perspectives added an authentic frame to the literature and provided the foundation for developing a meaningful and relevant program.

Through this consultation, we heard that:

- The majority of parents did not feel their child was prepared for boarding, with social and emotional readiness among their top concerns.
- Many parents were concerned their child lacked skills to manage worries, know where to get support, and the confidence to seek help.
- Parents themselves experienced emotional distress during the transition and were concerned about parenting from a distance.
- Parents reported lower confidence when it came to emotionally supporting their child, knowing how to talk about help-seeking, and responding to difficulties such as bullying.
- Homesickness was identified by boarding schools as the most significant challenge during the transition period.

- While boarding schools offer comprehensive transition programs, social and emotional learning and parenting support were not universally offered, nor were specific transition supports for rural students.

With these insights, the development of Bush to Boarding aimed to complement the exceptional work already being done by boarding schools, while addressing the unique needs of rural families.

Program Pilot 2026

Bush to Boarding – Bridging the Distance will be piloted in 2026 with select schools, offering students and parents access to the program from Term Three of Year Six and continuing through students’ first semester of boarding in 2027.

The program includes:

- Four social and emotional wellbeing workbooks designed specifically for rural students and those with distance education backgrounds.
- Access to a Dolly’s Dream moderated online forum, where parent alongside their child can ask questions about workbook content, access additional resources such as quizzes and videos, and engage in anonymous, moderated discussions.

Through these components, students learn to:

- Recognise and manage difficult emotions, including the many ways homesickness can present.
- Build positive psychology skills, such as gratitude, a growth mindset, and reframing unhelpful thinking.
- Develop healthy relationship

skills, including empathy, conflict resolution, problem solving, boundary-setting, online safety, and kindness.

- Strengthen help-seeking behaviours and life skills such as organisation, prioritisation, and goal setting.

Together, these components aim to enhance factors that are protective against homesickness distress, such as emotional competencies, a strong sense of self, agency, and a sense of belonging.

The program draws on frameworks including CASEL’s Social and Emotional Learning framework, the Grotberg Resilience Framework, positive psychology, and emotional literacy theory.

To further support student learning, parents and home tutors will receive access to an online program grounded in emotion-focused and positive parenting practices. This program runs alongside the student workbooks and is designed to reinforce student learning, support parent wellbeing, and strengthen evidence-based parenting skills that enhance parent-child attachment, another key protective factor against homesickness distress.

Conclusion

Dolly’s Dream is delighted to be working alongside the incredible work of boarding schools in preparing rural students and their families for this exciting and enriching journey.

By reaching students before they arrive, we hope to help:

- Reduce the intensity of homesickness
- Strengthen emotional regulation and help-seeking
- Support smoother social adjustment
- Equip parents to partner confidently with schools

We look forward to sharing outcomes and learnings from the pilot, and more details about accessing the program in 2027 and beyond. For more information about Dolly’s Dream and our programs, please visit www.dollysdream.org.au ■

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13 DOLLY
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The Third Workforce:

Bridging the 2026 Personalisation Gap

The Polycrisis of Modern Leadership

For the modern Australian Principal or Head of Boarding, “volatility” is no longer a buzzword, it is the baseline. We are navigating a polycrisis: a high-stakes convergence of an acute teacher shortage, suffocating administrative weight, and a fundamental shift in parental expectations for personalised care.

The data confirms what you feel in the hallways every day. In 2024, 45% of Australian principals triggered “Red Flag” health alerts, and more than half faced harassment. As we approach the 2026 academic year, the traditional staffing model has hit its capacity cliff.

However, a leading cohort of over 40 Australian schools has moved beyond survival mode. They are reclaiming their staff’s time and wellbeing by integrating a “Third Workforce” - a dedicated, external layer of Tier 2 intervention support that bridges the gap between classroom instruction and boarding house supervision.

Defining the Three Workforces

To understand the solution, we must look at how a school’s human capital is structured:

1. **The First Workforce:** Your Classroom Teachers. The primary educators delivering the core curriculum.
2. **The Second Workforce:** Your Internal Support Staff. The TAs, wellbeing officers, and boarding house staff who manage the day-to-day environment.
3. **The Third Workforce:** External, High-Impact Partners. These are on-site,

professionally managed specialists who provide the intensive, supplementary intervention that parents are seeking, without adding administrative burden to the first or second workforces.

The Pressure Point: The Personalisation Gap

At the heart of school volatility is the “Personalisation Gap.” Today’s parents have transitioned into “edu-consumers,” expecting bespoke academic support that the First Workforce, already battling a 58.1% shortage rate, simply cannot provide while managing a full classroom.

Currently, 50% to 60% of families seek external tutoring. When this happens off-site, it is unregulated, disconnected from the school’s pedagogy, and adds a “transport tax” to already busy working families. For boarding schools, this creates an even deeper fracture, as students struggle to access high-quality support during prep hours, often leaving the Second Workforce (residential staff) overwhelmed by academic queries they are not always equipped to handle.

The Solution: A Third Workforce on Campus

A Team Tuition’s Good To Great Program acts as this strategic Third Workforce. By bringing elite academic support directly onto the school grounds, we provide a structured solution that is parent-funded and school-aligned.

- **On-Site, Zero Budget:** We utilise existing school infrastructure to deliver premium support, requiring no financial investment from the school’s core budget.
- **Protecting the First Workforce:** Our Academic Personal Trainers (APTs) reinforce teacher efforts, ensuring tutoring aligns with classroom goals rather than undermining them.
- **Compliance and Safety:** Unlike the “shadow” tutoring market, ATeam APTs are heavily vetted, professionally managed, and operate within the school’s Child-Safe ecosystem.

Beyond the “A Grade”: Building Independent Learners

The objective of the Third Workforce extends beyond simple grade improvement. The focus is on metacognition and self-regulation, which involves teaching students how to learn.

When a student understands their own learning profile, they become an “Independent Learner.” This has a direct, positive impact on teacher workload, as an independent student requires less crisis management and fewer individual interventions during class time. ATeam’s methodology has seen a 95% increase in student motivation and an 86% increase in confidence across our participating families.



Social Proof: Lessons from 40+ Schools

The shift toward a Third Workforce is already well underway across Australia's most prestigious and progressive institutions, including:

- **Elite/GPS and Independent:** The King's School, Townsville Grammar, Toowoomba Grammar, John Paul College, Emmanuel College, and A.B. Paterson College.
- **Specialist Boarding:** Our partnership with the Australian Boarding Schools Association (ABSA) has revolutionised the "Prep supervision" challenge, providing expert tutoring during boarding hours while relieving residential staff of academic coaching burdens.
- **State and Specialist:** Benowa State High School, Brisbane South State Secondary College, and various Indigenous 'Closing-the-Gap' initiatives.

The Zero Cost Operational Model

The most compelling aspect of this partnership is the transparency pact. The school provides the space; the parents provide the funding; and A Team Tuition provides the APTs, the results, the insurance, the school compliance, and the management.

This transforms academic support from a logistical headache into a premium marketing asset. Schools can confidently tell prospective families: "We offer on-campus Academic Personal Training to ensure your child never falls behind."

A Strategic Path Forward

The Personalisation Gap and teacher burnout do not have to be the defining features of school leadership in 2026. By integrating a Third Workforce, schools can support their staff, satisfy their parents, and elevate student results without touching a single cent of their core budget.

Ready to reclaim your time and support your staff? Let's build your 2026 implementation plan today. ■

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After lights out, *the risks don't sleep either*

Psychosocial hazards in boarding: what WHS law now requires of your school

There's tension running through the boarding house. It's 10pm on a Tuesday night and a Year 10 boarder is homesick and tearful. In the Year 12 dorm two boys are arguing. Then an alarm sounds – a fire door on the ground floor has been propped open – has someone slipped out? The house manager – the only one on duty tonight – doesn't know which way to turn. It's only Tuesday.

Role overload, emotional demands, isolation, blurred work-life boundaries. Just part of the job, right?

Under Australian WHS law, psychosocial pressures are now your school's legal responsibility to identify, assess and control.

The law has moved. Have you?

Psychosocial hazards - excessive workload, poor role clarity, workplace conflict, harassment, vicarious trauma - are now formally embedded in Australia's WHS framework. NSW introduced the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 in August 2025, applying the full hierarchy of controls to psychosocial risks. Victoria introduced the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025, with stronger enforcement pathways.

These obligations carry the same legal weight as a fall risk or a chemical hazard. And for boarding schools, the exposure is acute.

Boarding staff don't clock off at 5 pm. They often live where they work, provide

emotional support to distressed young people night after night, and boundaries between their professional and personal lives can be blurred. The psychosocial risk profile of a house manager or residential supervisor is unlike almost any other role in education.

WHAT 480 BUSINESS LEADERS TOLD US

Citation HR · Beyond Mental Health webinar · March 2026

1 in 3	respondents aren't confident they meet their WHS obligations for psychosocial hazards.
90%	have no formal processes for identifying psychosocial risks - most wait for a complaint.
8%	only 8% feel very confident their managers can recognise and respond to psychosocial risks.

The EAP misconception

When boarding schools talk about staff wellbeing, the conversation often lands on the Employee Assistance Program. EAP access is important - but it's not compliance. An EAP is a reactive, individual-level support. Australian WHS law requires something different: a proactive, systems-level approach.

That means identifying the hazards, assessing the risks, and implementing controls - with elimination and redesign coming before individual support services. In practice, that might mean reviewing duty rosters so that staff aren't

managing complex student welfare situations alone for extended periods or building clearer protocols for how emotionally demanding disclosures - self-harm, family breakdown, mental health crises - are handled and debriefed.

Reactive is a risk, not a strategy

A complaint-driven approach means you're always behind the risk - acting after harm rather than preventing it. And without documented processes, it becomes difficult to demonstrate your school took its duty of care seriously.

In boarding, this is particularly relevant. Staff may not raise concerns because they feel distress is 'part of the job', or don't want to be seen as struggling. Cultural norms - resilience, self-reliance, putting students first - can suppress reporting. A formal risk assessment creates a structural mechanism that doesn't depend on individuals speaking up.

The capability gap closest to home

In a recent poll from our Beyond Mental Health webinar, only 8% of those surveyed felt very confident their managers could recognise and respond to psychosocial risks. While this data reflects the broader business community, the pattern is consistent with what we hear from schools. In boarding, this gap is particularly significant. House leaders and residential supervisors are typically appointed for their values and rapport with young people - rather than formal training in recognising staff distress.

Building that capability is not a soft-skill investment - it's one of the most effective risk controls available. A boarding house

leader who can spot early warning signs in their team, and who knows how to respond, changes outcomes in a way a policy document can't.

Where to start in a boarding context

- **Conduct a psychosocial risk assessment specific to boarding.** Generic workplace templates won't capture the unique hazards of residential education - the blurred work-life boundary, on-call responsibilities, emotional labour, and after-hours demands. Document the hazards, the controls you have, and where the gaps are.
- **Reframe your EAP.** It belongs in your toolkit as a tertiary measure, not the headline. Work through higher-order controls first: roster design, handover protocols, peer supervision, and debriefing structures.
- **Train your boarding house leaders.** Practical, scenario-based training that builds real capability in recognising

and responding to staff psychosocial risk - not a one-hour awareness session.

- **Review your WHS policies.** If your policies were written more than two years ago, they likely don't reflect current obligations in your state.
- **Seek specialist advice before something goes wrong.** Proactive support costs a fraction of reactive support - and in boarding, where staff often live on site and turnover carries real operational cost, the case for prevention is even stronger.

Boarding schools are already experts in duty of care for students. The next step is applying that same rigour to the staff who make it possible. The good news: the compliance gap is closeable, and it starts with the right systems and the right support.

Citation Group is proud to partner with ABSA as its Workplace Relations Partner, providing member schools with expert HR and workplace safety advice. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ali King is a Work Health and Safety expert at Citation Group, with a focus on psychosocial safety and WHS compliance. She regularly provides advice on managing workplace risks, promoting mental health, and ensuring compliance with WHS and psychosocial regulations across Australian workplaces.



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EXPLORE THE SCIENCE OF AMBITION

Give to Gain: Boarders Celebrate *International Women's Day*

To mark International Women's Day, our boarders took part in a self-defence class focused on practical skills and personal awareness. The session gave students hands-on experience with techniques designed to help them respond safely and assertively in real situations. It was an opportunity to challenge themselves physically while considering how to stay alert and act decisively.

This year's IWD theme, Give to Gain, encouraged students to reflect on how sharing support and knowledge benefits everyone. Recognising International Women's Day in an all-girls boarding school is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements, resilience, and potential of young women. Learning these techniques equips young people with practical strategies and the confidence to respond safely in challenging situations. Beyond the physical skills, it also reinforces the value of supporting one another.

The session introduced strategies such as breaking free from holds, creating space, reacting quickly if threatened, getting out of chokeholds, falling safely when pushed,

and adopting stances to resist being pulled off balance. The instructor guided them through each move and emphasised correct execution and safe practice.

Stella (Year 9) "I enjoyed the self defence class, it was an interesting and fun way to spend my Sunday morning. We were taught very useful skills in a short time and I tried hard to make the most of it and inspire other boarders to get involved."

Ana (Year 11) said "We all walked back to the boarding house feeling a lot more capable and definitely more prepared to look out for ourselves and each other."

Even though boarders live together, the class offered a different kind of challenge. Some students had previous martial arts

experience, while others were trying this type of training for the first time. Practising side by side, everyone could test what they could do, learn from one another, and provide support in a focused, practical setting. It allowed them to step outside their comfort zones, try something unfamiliar, and discover what they were capable of under guidance. The shared experience created a sense of achievement and showed how working alongside others, regardless of experience level, makes skills easier to grasp and the experience more meaningful.

The session was so valuable that we will be returning for more later in the year. Boarders will have the opportunity to practise techniques further, refine what they have learned, and continue supporting each other as they explore what they are capable of. The class gave them space to reflect on their own abilities while recognising the impact of encouragement and collaboration. ■

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4 Goal Failures

As many of you know, I've got a bit of a thing about goals. Ideally you would have plans for both your personal life and your work life. What do you want to learn about, what do you want to achieve, what do you like doing, etc.

THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF GOAL FAILURE:

1 - No goals

Most people haven't even thought about what they want to do with their lives. At work they ask the boss "what's next?" (or customers tell them what's next) and at home they recover from work! Wouldn't it be good if YOU were driving the train? If you went to your boss and said "I'd like to learn more about X" or "I'd like to get more involved with Y". The worst that will happen is that they'll say "no, I can't get you that at the moment". Worth a try! And if you don't have goals for yourself you run the risk of drifting through your work and your life, maybe ending up in a place where you don't want to be.

2 - Goals not big enough

If you aim for the sun then you'll probably at least hit the moon. If you aim for the end of your garden then you probably will get there, but so what! Many people are limited by their own vision of what they can do. Only lack of imagination or maybe fear of failure stops them aiming higher. Why not try it? All you can lose from aiming high is disappointment in your own mind, but as long as you get

farther than you would have, then is that failure?

3 - Goals not clear enough

Many people have vague ideas of wanting to travel more, or to have less stress, or to get fit, or to be good at something, but these are all too vague. Your subconscious needs to have something to latch onto, and it has to do this in pictures. Your objectives have to be clear enough to see as a picture.

4 - Not allocating enough time to them once you've got them.

How sad it would be to fall at the final fence! Though even if you don't do much at all they will probably still mostly happen since once you've written them down your subconscious will be on the case,

quietly always there in the background. But if you can consciously allocate a bit of time each day or week to planning and working towards the things that you want to achieve then you have to be more likely to get there.

So: write some things down today!! ■

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Beyond Graduation:

Supporting Students as They Navigate What Comes Next

The Transition Beyond School

For many young people, the moment school ends is both exciting and uncertain. After years of structured learning, students suddenly face a wide range of choices about what comes next - university, vocational education, employment, gap year experiences or study overseas. While opportunities are abundant, the decision-making process can quickly become overwhelming.

Boarding schools play a unique role in preparing students for this transition. Living away from home encourages young people to develop independence, resilience and strong peer relationships - qualities that become invaluable as they begin navigating life beyond school. For many students from regional and remote communities, boarding schools also provide access to educational opportunities that may not otherwise be available close to home.

Within boarding environments, young people benefit not only from academic support but also from the mentorship of educators, house staff and peers who help guide them through important stages of

personal development. By the time students reach their senior years, many are already learning to make decisions, manage responsibilities, and think about their long-term goals.

These experiences often mean that boarders approach their post-school journey with a strong sense of self-reliance and curiosity about the opportunities ahead.

A Changing Pathways Landscape

Research into boarding environments suggests that living within a structured community can positively support students' personal development. Boarding students often develop strong self-management skills, adaptability and confidence through the daily routines and shared experiences of residential school life.

At the same time, the landscape of post-school pathways is evolving rapidly. Today's students are exploring a broader range of options than previous generations.

Alongside traditional university pathways, many are considering vocational

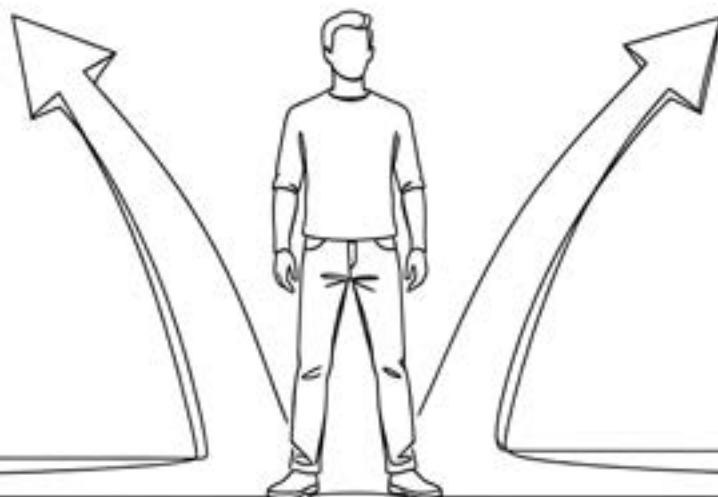
education and training (VET), internships, gap year experiences or opportunities to study internationally in destinations such as Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

For international students studying at Australian boarding schools, planning these pathways can involve additional considerations. Visa requirements, course eligibility, and long-term career planning can add layers of complexity for students and their families as they explore future opportunities.

We are also seeing growing interest from families overseas - particularly in markets such as India - where Australian and New Zealand boarding schools are increasingly being considered as part of a broader international education pathway.

Supporting Informed Decisions

Recent research from Jobs and Skills Australia highlights the importance of strong guidance during this transition period. The International Students Pathways and Outcomes Study found that



many international graduates working in Australia are employed below their skill level or outside their field of study. These findings reinforce the value of helping students explore study and career pathways earlier and with the right support.

At Eduget Global, we work alongside schools, International Student Coordinators, Careers Advisors and families to facilitate conversations about post-school pathways and help students navigate their next steps with greater clarity. These discussions are designed to complement the guidance already provided within schools and help students better understand the range of pathways available to them.

In some cases, these conversations also extend to helping schools connect with families exploring Australian and New Zealand boarding opportunities from overseas.

The Eduget Global Pathways Program provides free advisory consultations for students and families and works in collaboration with schools across Australia to support informed decision-making

during the transition from school to further study or employment. Some schools also invite these conversations to take place through small group sessions or webinars for senior students exploring their next steps.

Many of the students we work with are also involved in initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, where they develop resilience, leadership and independence - qualities that naturally complement the process of planning their future beyond school.

Looking Ahead

As schools continue to support students through the final years of their education, collaboration between educators, families and guidance providers can play an important role in helping young people feel confident about what comes next.

Boarding schools in particular are well positioned to support these conversations. The close-knit nature of boarding communities allows educators, mentors,

and students to engage in meaningful discussions about future aspirations and opportunities.

For many school leavers, the question is no longer simply "What should I study?" but rather "What kind of future do I want to build?"

Helping students explore that question with clarity, curiosity, and confidence may be one of the most valuable forms of support we can offer as they take their next steps beyond school. ■

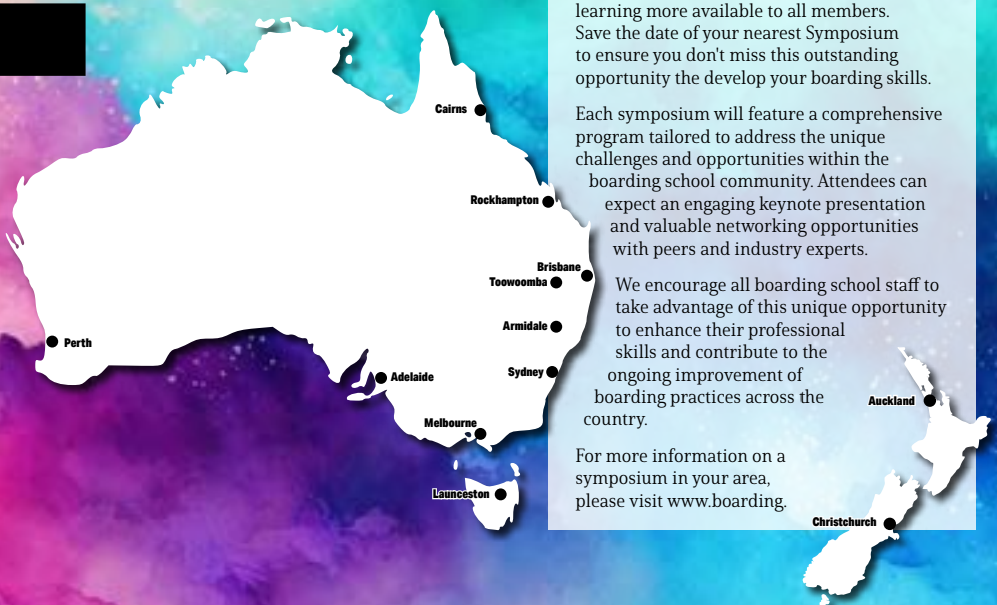


2026 Regional SYMPOSIUM

We are back and coming to you!

Save the date

- 4 August - **Brisbane**
- 5 August - **Toowoomba**
- 7 August - **Sydney**
- 14 August - **Cairns**
- 18 August - **Melbourne**
- 19 August - **Adelaide**
- 21 August - **Perth**
- 1 September - **Rockhampton**
- 3 September - **Armidale**
- 10 September - **Launceston**
- 15 September - **Auckland**
- 17 September - **Christchurch**



The ABSA Regional Symposium series is designed to make boarding professional learning more available to all members. Save the date of your nearest Symposium to ensure you don't miss this outstanding opportunity to develop your boarding skills.

Each symposium will feature a comprehensive program tailored to address the unique challenges and opportunities within the boarding school community. Attendees can expect an engaging keynote presentation and valuable networking opportunities with peers and industry experts.

We encourage all boarding school staff to take advantage of this unique opportunity to enhance their professional skills and contribute to the ongoing improvement of boarding practices across the country.

For more information on a symposium in your area, please visit www.boarding.org.

Map is a representation only NOT TO SCALE

Transition, Homesickness, and Wellbeing:

Understanding the developmental challenges of entering Boarding School

What does the boarding literature say?

The nature of settling into boarding school involves relocation and environmental change (Downs, 2001) which can disrupt the self-world relationship of a child (Fisher et al., 1986). Research in this field has shown that the social, emotional and academic

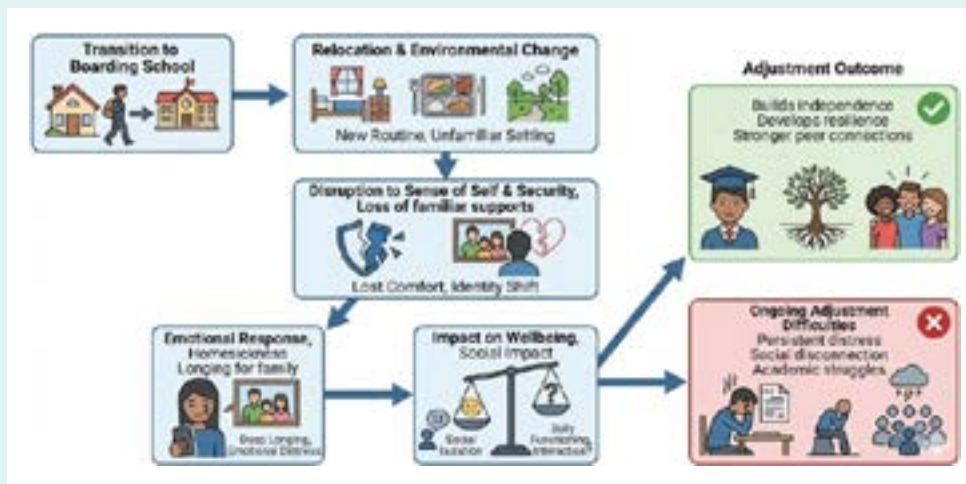
wellbeing of boarding students is directly impacted by the process of transition (Bramston, 2007; Petriwskyi, 2010). During this process and their progression through boarding, homesickness remains the most impeding factor (Cree, 2010; Downs, 2001; Fisher et al., 1986; Hawkes, 2010; Reynolds, 1994) on the development of a sense of belonging during the early days. This relates to the paradigm of attachment as a “powerful predictor of a child’s later social and emotional outcome” (Benoit, 2004, p.542) to belonging within a home-away-from-home.

Transition into boarding

Boarding students experience transition into a new environment that is physically distant to their home (Hadwen, 2014). Often moving from a rural or international to an urban environment

(Bramston et al., 2007), they will now engage with new fellow students and have limited or no possibilities to be involved in the activities and social relationships of their communities at home. These authors highlight that, during their early days in the boarding house, boarders are potentially vulnerable through a variety of factors and likely to face predominantly academic challenges with numerous implications for their social-emotional wellbeing and engagement with school. Other researchers point to challenges related to adjustment to new friends, rules, regulations and academic subjects (Fisher et al., 1984), the loss of security provided by the wider family (Sharp, 2001), and geographical mobility (Downs, 2001). Further, Urban (2007) and Mander et al. (2019) state that new boarders may experience a sense of alienation, apprehension and resentment to which Whyte et al. (2008) add uncertainty, rejection and discord within organisational climate. It is interesting that Cree (2000) alleges that new boarders have a strong tendency to adopt the prevailing dominant boarders’ culture in the dormitory. Boarding students will need to adapt and strengthen their place identity through forming new friendships (Pfeiffer et al., 2016; Thurber et al., 1998; White, 2004). Homesickness and its possible association with adjustment or anxiety disorder in response to a traumatic event such as transitioning into an education in situ, may be observed as early





as the first two weeks in the boarding house and may finish after six months (Hadwen, 2014). Adding to this, Fisher et al. (1986) assert that vulnerability factors are neither age nor gender-related, nor do boarders, who suffer from *maladie du pays*, diverge in personal meaning from day students. However, it is of note that younger boarders in Stage Two and Three (Anderson, 2005) are particularly vulnerable to inferiority and ecological change which includes transitioning to living and learning away from the security of their family home. Furthermore, for Indigenous students, boarding school “can create dissonance, frustration and culture shock as well as the opportunity for growth and development” (Macdonald et al., 2018, p.204).

Homesickness

Homesickness remains an ordinary and often unavoidable reality of boarding (White, 2004) as indicated in the findings of several secondary boarding studies (e.g., Hadwen, 2014; Downs, 2001; Fisher et al., 1986; Hawkes, 2010; Mander, 2012; Reynolds, 1994). In support of the notion of a “homesickness disposition”, Thurber et al. (2010) draw attention to three themes: child characteristics, circumstances of separation and the quality of the novel environment. They assert that prevalence, intensity and progression of homesickness is almost as strong with girls as with boys. These authors also place emphasis on the relationship between negative emotions and insecure attachment in highlighting that less experienced and insecurely attached children are more at risk, especially when the circumstances of the separation are coercive or enforced. As a result of limited previous experience, low perceived control and insecure

personal attitudes, Thurber et al. (1998, 2010) further outline that homesickness will predict negative emotions expressed through externalised behaviour such as aggression, attention and thought problems as well as delinquency. Supplementing this, Ginns et al. (2014b) and Mander et al. (2017) stress that this simultaneous experience may pose a constant challenge to a child with higher emotional symptoms of anxiety, stress, confusion and identity in comparison to day-students. In her position as a clinical nurse, Downs (2001) concluded that such depressive symptoms refer to emotional reactions and anxiety asserting that “overall normal levels of depressive symptomatology, positive self-concept and functional ways of coping were indicative of adjustment rather than turmoil” (p.iv). Lastly, according to Trimmingham-Jack (2003), homesick boarders may also adopt diverse perceptions of their teachers and staff looking after them in the boarding house.

The effect of homesickness on transition into boarding

In their empirical studies on risk factors of homesickness, Thurber et al. (1998, 2010) found that homesickness was not only about missing family and friends but missing different things at home and thus, not just people. In this vein, homesickness is seen as distinctive from relocation effects such as school phobia, translocation syndrome and separation anxiety but based on some of its symptoms, has been associated with adjustment disorder (Fisher et al., 1984). Regarded as a useful framework to identify formation with either short or lasting effects possibly leading to emotional disconnections (Hadwen, 2014), homesickness has a profound impact on the wellbeing of

boarding students especially during the process of transition into boarding. In the many studies on this maladaptive factor on transition, residential education has been identified as a substantial and discontinuous developmental change where homesickness is related to psychological wellbeing, pointing to ‘adjustment disorder or turmoil’ rather than depression (Brewin et al., 1989; Downs, 2001; Mason, 1997; McCarthy, 2013; Shu et al., 2010; Reynolds, 1994). Interestingly, wellbeing in this context reads as an integrative developmental approach. In support of the notion of a ‘homesickness disposition’, Thurber et al. (2010) draw attention to the three themes: child characteristics, circumstances of separation and the quality of the novel environment. They assert that prevalence, intensity and progression of homesickness is almost as strong with girls as with boys also placing emphasis on the relationship between negative emotions and insecure attachment in highlighting that less experienced and insecurely attached children are more at risk, especially when the circumstances of the separation are coercive or enforced. This may, for example, manifest itself in reportable problems expressed by boarders such as shock of removal and feelings of loss from family, lack of freedom as well as enforced conformity to school routines (Mander, 2012; Trimmingham-Jack, 2003). Moreover, cognitive failures, concentration difficulties, lack of work ethic and drop in quality of work have also been associated with homesickness (Brewin et al., 1989) and further outcomes of homesickness are described as internalised behaviour such as anxiety, withdrawal, absent-mindedness, non-traumatic ailments and somatic complaints often amplified by negative emotions.

Discussion

It is suggested that coping with homesickness is the most influential strategy for a successful transition into boarding (Downs, 2001; Hawkes, 2010; Mander, 2012; Reynolds, 1994). Hereby, Downs (2001) specified coping as multidimensional: either problem or emotion-focused with emphasis on physical recreation to which Hadwen (2014) adds that positive self-perception supports positive crisis resolution through choice of productive coping strategies. In this context, Mander et al. (2015), support the vital role of schools in shaping the social-emotional, physical and moral progress of students and found that the status of a boarder indicates their social-emotional wellbeing. Bobongie (2017) supports these notions in her research on transitional challenges into boarding experienced by Indigenous female students where she stresses the importance of a 'strong connection' and 'necessity to meet diversity' by acknowledging differing cultures and traditions in the boarding house which is also supported by Mander (2012). This resonates with Franck et al.'s (2020) findings on the strategies that assisted in enhancing the wellbeing of Indigenous boarding students including collaborative planning and feedback.

Furthermore, in their study on the importance of emotional intelligence during transition from primary to secondary school, Qualter et al. (2007) highlight school-based intervention programs (e.g., peer mentoring, Keep Cool@School) as effective in countering the negative effects of transition mentioned above. The context of learning often coincides with and reflects the new learning environment providing space and time for adjustment (Fabian et al., 2007) in which case Petriwskyi (2010) advocates for a positive perception of diverse learners at different levels when taking into account the synchronicity of both inclusion and the initial transition process. Lastly, according to Anderson (2005), interactions entail frameworks of policies, availability of resources, capacity of and modelling by staff as well as rapport among stakeholders. ■

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The Forgetting Curve

There's a thing called the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve which says that:

Within **an hour** you've forgotten half of what you've been told.

Within a **day two thirds** has gone.

Within a **month 80%** has gone and there's **only 20% left**.

Scary!

The ramifications for presentations are therefore:

1. **Decide on one clear message** and hammer away at that. If they just remember one thing, what do you want it to be? Design your whole talk around that message.
2. **If you can have a refresher straight afterwards and then again a week later then the retention is much better**, and with two or three refreshers it nearly all goes into the long term memory. These could be done by talk part 2, a follow-up email, or in the case of training, by the line manager getting involved and having a meeting with the person straight away to ask "What did you learn? What will you do differently?" and then a few weeks later "How have you been getting on with your list of planned changes?" Line managers are really important in getting training to work and to be good value for money! Even just three refreshers bring the long term retention up from 20% to 80% - a huge improvement!
3. **Taking notes** is a way of immediately doubling the number of times your brain sees the message, and then if you go through the notes afterwards

and condense them, that's your first refresher

4. **Another way to get a repeat in a fun way is to get whoever has been on a course to tell their colleagues all about it.** And of course this means that the others get a (sort of) course for free; and the person on the course has to pay extra attention because they know that later they will have to regurgitate it. The above apply to people giving talks or training sessions, people who are paying for training sessions / sending their people on training sessions or to talks, and to those who attend talks and training and want to gain as much from it.
5. **Finally, if you're delivering a talk and**

you want it to be remembered, there's the excellent old chestnut which says that activities are much better than just being talked at – "If I am told it I forget, if I see it I remember, if I do it I understand"... ■

Onwards and upwards!

AUTHOR

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Nothing quite prepares you for Housemastering... *but this might(?) help*

People who embark on married life seldom realise what they are letting themselves in for, and they discover the implications of their commitment as they go along. So it is (perhaps...) with Housemastering.

I had been in boarding for eight years, across three schools (interstate and international), before commencing as a Housemaster. I felt informed and well-equipped, but here are ten things that I wish I knew or (if I already knew) I wish I had more front-of-mind before I started in a Boarding Housemaster role:

1. Housemastering works on a currency of trust, not just competence. You may, for the first two years, be the most competent, dependable and fresh-thinking professional, but the job will still be doubly as hard as the third and fourth years. Inviting routine and documented appraisals

- of your performance that are optimistic, collaborative and informed by evidence empowers you and your line manager to respond effectively to complaints, anticipate potential problems and safeguard against vexations rumours - but, no matter how good you are, it takes time.

2. Routines - our shared set of practices to promote learning, health and successful community-living (wake-up time, room inspection time, mealtimes, study time etc.) - are everything in boarding; they minimise confusion, reduce uncertainty and direct a boarder's activity along known paths to success. However, you have to consistently

3. Routine moments of joy - treats like gelato, pizzas, Up&Gos, hot dogs, KFC, karaoke, go-karting (etc.) that are deployed roughly once a fortnight, sometimes spontaneous but mostly earned through goal setting - help generate momentum and a collective optimism about the weeks ahead.
4. Language (written and verbal) is one way to articulate values and expectations, and it can be done subtly: when correcting a boarder's behaviour, for instance, language that is conditional (i.e. 'What might be...?') and curious (i.e. 'I wonder if...') will invite the student to acknowledge his responsibility to serve the community and promote staff's compassion (discouraging rushed judgement). However, the less you can talk 'at' the boarders, the better; hence, the physical environment is vital to communicating values and messages, even when the boarders are not there. Visible signs of anti-social behaviour (a broken desk, cushions askew) promote further disorder. A well-made bed, on the other hand, promotes self-control and self-respect. A banquet table promotes hospitality and a collaborative study environment. Artwork, cultural artifacts, sporting shields, a piano, a world map, coffee table books - together, these promote a celebration of diverse interests.



5. Boarders today have far more immediate lines of communication with parents than boarders of just eight years ago. In this context, open and prompt lines of communication between parents and Housemaster is key, and you should encourage families to interpret texts and phone calls like, 'I hate VA' as 'VA is setting expectations/boundaries that I do not understand yet or that conflict with my personal desires or that I am struggling to meet.' You are not always going to be popular, but it remains vitally important you connect with home.
6. Clarkson's Farm is good enough for small talk, but you have to work hard to learn the complexities of primary industries like cropping and live-stock, and visit boarders' properties to appreciate how accomplished, independent, mature and resilient young people and their families can be on the land.
7. You can't fix everything straight away (and trying to can often make it worse). In matters of harassment or inconsiderate behaviour, for instance, upholding the agency of the victim is key, and these sorts of sentences are useful: 'Here are five options of ways forward; these are the two I recommend, but I won't take any action here without your permission.'
8. Honouring the heritage and character of a boarding school while also updating its processes and culture to ensure it is far safer and kinder is walking a tightrope. Partnering with Year 11s and 12s to lead the house while also not endorsing the stories and hierarchical ways of thinking that their parents and grandparents have shared (often with great mirth) around the dining table is also walking a tightrope. With lots of conversations and appealing to reason, you should be able to get your seniors to adopt a philosophy of leadership that is underpinned by filial respect (not fear) and best summed up by Mary Wollstonecraft: 'It is in your interest to obey me till you can judge for yourself; and the Almighty Father of all has implanted an affection in me to serve as a guard to you whilst your reason is unfolding; but when your mind arrives at maturity, you must only obey me, or rather respect my opinions, so far as they coincide with the light that is breaking in your own mind.'



9. You and your staff 'doing life' on campus - chatting with friends, reading the newspaper, going for a swim or a hike, playing the 'floor is lava' with your kids, practising your putting game, cooking, watching a film - is incredibly powerful in validating for boarders a healthy balance of work, recreation and free time. It is too easy to give boys a distorted impression of life when all they may see is staff sitting at a desk or talking at a whiteboard.
10. Housemastering gives weight to F. Scott Fitzgerald's assertion that 'first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function'. As boarding staff, we are often invited to unite opposing elements within our person - the

advocate and the judge, the listener and the loudest voice, the comforter and the task-master, the mentor and the 'beat cop'. E.M. Foster expresses this pithily in his epigraph for Howard's End: 'Only connect' - which is also an invitation to value each person and each personal relationship as unique. How do you know when it is helpful to accommodate for a young person's normal ebbs and flows in mood and effort, and when leniency will compromise that person's growth? 'Only connect.' ■

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Emotions and Financial Decision-Making:

An important lesson for boarders



Financial decisions are rarely made through logic alone. Emotions play a powerful role in shaping how people spend, save, give, and invest money. For teenagers living in boarding schools, this emotional influence can be particularly strong. They are learning independence, managing allowances, responding to peer expectations, and making daily spending choices away from direct parental oversight. Understanding how emotions affect financial decisions is therefore an essential component of financial literacy. By recognising emotional triggers, boarders can learn to pause, think critically, and make more balanced choices.

Below are five key emotions that commonly influence financial behaviour. Each emotion has both positive and negative potential depending on how it is managed.

1. EXCITEMENT

Excitement is often linked to spending decisions. When students feel excited about new technology, fashionable clothing, or social activities, they may feel

motivated to use their money to participate in those experiences. In a positive sense, excitement can encourage students to set goals and save for something meaningful, such as a sports item or a trip during school holidays.

On the negative side, excitement can lead to impulsive spending. A boarder who sees friends purchasing the latest phone or gaming device may feel a rush of enthusiasm and spend money without considering long-term consequences. In this situation, the emotional high of the moment overrides rational thinking, resulting in regret later when funds are depleted.

2. ENVY

Envy is closely connected to social environments, particularly in boarding schools where students live and socialise

together daily. In a positive context, envy can sometimes inspire motivation. For example, a student who admires a peer who carefully saves money may decide to adopt similar habits and start building their own savings.

More often, however, envy can push students toward unhealthy financial behaviour. A boarder might feel pressure to match the spending habits of peers who appear to have more financial resources. This could result in unnecessary purchases simply to maintain social standing. Over time, envy-driven spending can lead to poor budgeting and financial stress.

3. PRIDE

Pride can be a highly constructive financial emotion. When students feel proud of managing their money well, they are more likely to continue practising responsible habits. For instance, a boarder who successfully saves money for a significant purchase may feel a strong sense of achievement. This pride reinforces discipline and strengthens confidence in financial decision-making.

However, pride can also become problematic if it turns into stubbornness or overconfidence. A student who believes they already understand money management may ignore helpful advice from parents, teachers, or financial education programmes. In this case, pride prevents learning and may lead to mistakes that could have been avoided through guidance.

4. ANXIETY

Anxiety about money is increasingly common among young people who are aware of rising living costs and uncertain economic conditions. In a positive sense, moderate anxiety can encourage careful planning. A boarder who worries about future university expenses may begin developing saving habits early and pay closer attention to spending patterns.

Yet anxiety can also create avoidance behaviour. Some students respond to financial stress by ignoring the subject altogether, refusing to check their bank balance or think about budgeting. This avoidance can worsen financial problems because decisions are made without awareness or planning.

Fear can be a powerful financial motivator.

5. FEAR

Fear can be a powerful financial motivator. In a positive sense, fear helps people recognise financial risks and encourages cautious decision-making. A boarder who fears running out of money before the end of term, for example, may decide to budget their allowance carefully. This type of constructive fear promotes responsible planning and encourages saving for unexpected needs.

However, fear can also have negative consequences. Excessive fear may cause a student to avoid financial learning altogether because they feel overwhelmed or intimidated by money matters. For example, a boarder who worries about making mistakes might refuse to manage their own bank account and rely entirely on parents instead. In such cases, fear limits independence and prevents the development of essential financial skills.



UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

For boarders, recognising the link between emotions and money is particularly important because they are navigating financial independence within a highly social environment. Daily interactions with peers, access to shops or online purchases, and the relative freedom of boarding life can intensify emotional influences on spending.

Financial literacy education should therefore include discussions about emotional

awareness. When students understand that feelings such as excitement, envy, or anxiety are normal responses, they are better equipped to pause before acting on them. Self-education courses followed by group discussions provide an ideal environment for this learning. Students can reflect privately on their own behaviours and then share insights in supportive conversations.

Parents and boarding staff also play a role by reinforcing the message that emotions are part of financial decision-making, but they do not need to control it. Encouraging students to reflect before spending, set personal financial goals, and discuss financial choices openly can help them build resilience.

Money decisions are rarely purely rational. Fear, excitement, envy, pride, and anxiety all influence how young people manage their finances. Each emotion can produce both positive and negative outcomes depending on how it is understood and managed. For boarders learning to live independently, recognising these emotional influences is a crucial step in developing sound financial judgement. By integrating emotional awareness into financial literacy education, boarding schools can help students become thoughtful, confident decision-makers who understand not only how money works, but also how their own emotions shape the choices they make. ■

Free Download: Teenfinca e-zine
<https://courses.thewealthacademy.com.au/pages/free-downloads>

Each emotion can produce both positive and negative outcomes depending on how it is understood and managed.

AUTHOR:

Ken Swan,
Founder
The Wealth Academy

Welcome: New Principals



Dr Paul Walton
Principal
Gippsland Grammar School
Sale, VIC

GIPPSLAND GRAMMAR SCHOOL - VIC

Dr Paul Walton joined at the start of Term 4 in 2025 as the ninth Principal of Gippsland Grammar. With over 20 years of senior leadership experience across the UK, Europe, US and the Middle East, he brings with him a wealth of expertise and a proven track record of fostering academic excellence, nurturing student wellbeing, and building strong, connected school communities.

He is a qualified school inspector, working for two worldwide accreditation bodies and has been a Principal of schools in Bahrain, Slovenia and Malaysia. In 2021, he led the British International School of Ljubljana, Slovenia to an 'Outstanding' overall rating and the highest rating of 'Outstanding in every category' in the British Schools Overseas inspection visit. He was recognised last year in the category of International School Leader of the Year 2024, by the Pearson International School Teacher Awards.

Dr Walton is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, the Institute of Leadership and the Chartered College of Teaching, and is passionate about developing staff and inspiring students to reach their full potential.

His leadership style is highly relational, visible, and grounded in care. Known for his ability to inspire confidence, build high-performing teams, and create environments where students feel known, supported, and encouraged to achieve their best, Paul combines strategic vision with a generous and authentic approach to leadership. ■



Kyle Thompson
Principal
Ipswich Girls' Grammar School
Ipswich, QLD

IPSWICH GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL - QLD

Kyle Thompson is the thirteenth Principal of Ipswich Girls' Grammar School including Ipswich Junior Grammar School, bringing more than 25 years of experience in leading schools through strategic growth, cultural renewal, and academic success. He is recognised for a relational leadership style that combines clear expectations with a deep commitment to student wellbeing, staff development, and strong community partnerships.

Kyle's vision for the School is centred on empowering students through purposeful, personalised learning. As Principal, he is guiding the School

through a forward-looking strategy that honours its Grammar heritage while expanding opportunities that enable every student to forge a path of their own making. His leadership reflects a commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and ensuring each girl and boy can pursue a truly limitless future. ■



David Ferguson
Deputy Principal - International and Accommodation Operations
John Paul College
Brisbane, QLD

JOHN PAUL COLLEGE - QLD

John Paul College congratulates David Ferguson on his appointment as Deputy Principal – International and Accommodation Operations. In his role, David oversees one of Australia's largest school-based international student programs, supporting more than 250 students across boarding, homestay and day-student pathways. His leadership plays a vital role in fostering a vibrant, inclusive and globally connected learning community.

Having served the College for a decade, David provides strategic oversight of international operations and contributes to advancing John Paul International College's curriculum licensing

initiatives. His work ensures that the College's international programs remain innovative, sustainable and responsive to the evolving needs of students and global partners.

David's career spans schools, universities and language education settings in Australia and internationally. With postgraduate qualifications in both education and business, he combines strong pedagogical expertise with strategic and operational leadership, championing high-quality international education experiences that support outstanding student outcomes. ■

Welcome: New Principals



Patrick Gale
Headmaster
King's College
Auckland, NZ

KING'S COLLEGE – NZ

The Board of Governors is delighted to announce the appointment of Patrick Gale as the new Headmaster of King's College, effective January 2026. Patrick joins King's following a distinguished eight-year tenure as Principal of Rangitoto College, New Zealand's largest secondary school.

Selected after an extensive international search, Patrick stood out for his visionary leadership and deep commitment to academic rigour. At Rangitoto, he managed a community of over 4100 students and 365 staff, consistently improving

academic results while overseeing major infrastructural redevelopments. His influence extends nationwide; as Chair of the NCEA Professional Advisory Group, he plays a pivotal role in shaping New Zealand's national assessment policies.

Beyond his impressive resume, which includes a Master of Educational Leadership and leadership experience at Kaipara and Rosmini Colleges, Patrick is known for his visibility and approachability and looks forward to the opportunity that working in a boarding environment brings. ■



Craig Hardman
Rector
Lindisfarne College
Hastings, New Zealand

LINDISFARNE COLLEGE – NZ

Craig Hardman commenced as Rector of Lindisfarne College at the beginning of 2026, bringing with him extensive leadership experience in boys' education and a strong understanding of both day and boarding school communities.

Prior to his appointment, Craig served as Associate Headmaster (School Operations) at St Paul's Collegiate School in Hamilton. During his time there he held a number of senior leadership roles including Acting Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral), and Boarding Housemaster. Across more than 16 years in school leadership, he developed a reputation for values-based leadership, clear communication, and a strong commitment to the wellbeing and development of young people.

Craig's leadership experience spans curriculum development, pastoral care, boarding, and staff

development. He is passionate about fostering environments where young people are supported to grow in character, confidence, and capability.

His professional development includes the ISNZ Aspiring Principals Programme, governance training with the Institute of Directors and PwC, and study visits to leading schools across New Zealand and Australia.

Craig is honoured to lead Lindisfarne College and is committed to building on the school's proud traditions while continuing to strengthen its focus on character, academic excellence, and service. He is particularly passionate about the role strong relationships play in supporting young men to thrive both at school and beyond. ■



Dr Peter Miller
Headmaster
Shore School
Sydney, NSW

SHORE SCHOOL – NSW

For more than a century, families from the bush, regions and coast have entrusted Shore with their sons' education. Generations of boarders have found not only a school in North Sydney, but a place of belonging.

That legacy is now led by Dr Peter Miller, Shore's 10th Headmaster. For country families considering the right environment for their son, his story carries particular relevance.

Dr Miller's connection to Shore began in 1989, when he joined as the founding Housemaster of Burns House. He later served as an Assistant Boarding Housemaster, spending years alongside Boarding students and gaining a deep understanding of what boys need to adjust, feel known and thrive away from home.

With more than thirty years of school leadership in Australia and the United Kingdom, including

most recently as Principal of The Geelong College, Dr Miller brings calm authority and a genuine warmth for young people. His view is clear: boys flourish when they are truly understood.

At Shore, that translates into strong pastoral care, structured routines, dedicated Housemasters and open communication with families. High academic expectations sit alongside character development, Christian values and a rich co-curricular life.

For regional families, Dr Miller's message resonates: connection and belonging shape boys for life, long after they leave the school gates. ■

Welcome: New Principals



Rob Corboy
Executive Principal of
St Brendan's College, Yeppoon
& St Teresa's College, Abergowrie,
QLD

ST BRENDAN'S COLLEGE & ST TERESA'S COLLEGE - QLD

This year, Rob commenced his new role as Executive Principal of St Brendan's College, Yeppoon, and St Teresa's College, Abergowrie.

St Brendan's College is approaching 1,100 students as an all-boys boarding school in Central Queensland and has a strong and proud boarding tradition, with 278 current boarders. The College is renowned not only for the breadth of its educational opportunities, but also for its impressive sporting and co-curricular reputation. It is widely recognised as a nursery for NRL talent, producing more State of Origin players than any other Queensland school. St Brendan's is also famous for its world-class rodeo riders and is the only school in Australia with its own dedicated rodeo ring.

Rob served as Principal of St Brendan's College for eight years prior to stepping into the Executive Principal role.

Previously, Rob was Principal of St Teresa's College, Abergowrie, for four years. St Teresa's is an all-boys First Nations boarding school in North Queensland, established in 1933. Governance

and ownership transitioned at the beginning of this year, and in the months leading up to this transition, enrolments doubled to 140 students, with projections to reach 200 students by 2027. The College continues to be a beacon of educational opportunity for some of the furthest-flung students of our great state.

Rob brings 39 years of teaching experience to his role, four years in Victoria and 35 years in Queensland, including 35 years in boarding education and 35 years working alongside First Nations students and families. He holds a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Educational Leadership.

We look forward to Rob's continued leadership and his ongoing commitment to excellence across both boarding schools. ■



Sila Pati
Principal
St Teresa's College
Abergowrie, QLD

ST TERESA'S COLLEGE - QLD

Sila Pati is an experienced and highly respected educational leader with over 30 years of service across state, Catholic and independent schooling sectors in Queensland and the Northern Territory. He began his career with Education Queensland at Bremer State High School (1994), followed by Woodridge State High School (1995) and Browns Plains State High School (1996–2007). From 2008–2010, he served at Thuringowa State High School as Year 9 Coordinator and Panel Member for Ancient History, demonstrating strong curriculum leadership and pastoral oversight.

In 2010, Sila transitioned to the independent sector in the Northern Territory at Tiwi College, where he served as Head of Learning, Assistant Principal and Acting Principal until 2021. This period strengthened his expertise in remote and Indigenous education, particularly within boarding contexts. Across four different boarding schools throughout his career, Sila has consistently created environments that are safe, structured and engaging, with a strong emphasis on student wellbeing, cultural identity and high expectations.

He returned briefly to Education Queensland at Glenden State School (P-12) (Oct–Dec 2021) before

being appointed Acting Principal at Mount St Bernard College in 2022. From January 2023 to July 2025, he served as Head of Campus at Holy Spirit College, later becoming Acting Principal (July–December 2025) and now Campus Principal (2026–2030) at St Teresa's College under Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA).

A New Zealand-born Australian of Samoan heritage, Sila communicates effectively with people from all walks of life. He holds Boarding Residential Accreditation (ABSA), is an Accredited Boarding Practitioner – Level 3 (2024), and completed a Certificate IV in Community Services (Student Residential Care) in 2025. Deeply grounded in culture, he undertook the Samoan tattoo initiation (2002) and became a Samoan Chief in 2009, reflecting his enduring commitment to service, leadership and community. ■

Welcome: New Principals



Emma Lowry
Principal
The Glennie School
Toowoomba, QLD

THE GLENNIE SCHOOL - QLD

The Glennie School recently marked a historic milestone with the official commissioning of Mrs Emma Lowry as its 15th Principal. In a grand service officiated by the Archbishop of Southern Queensland, The Most Reverend Jeremy Greaves, over 750 members of the Glennie community gathered to celebrate this new chapter in the school's 118-year legacy.

Mrs Lowry is a familiar and respected face within the Glennie family, having served as Deputy Principal and Acting Principal before her official appointment. Known for her integrity and vision, she steps into the role with a deep commitment to the school's "All She Can Be" philosophy.

"It is a privilege to lead The Glennie School, and an absolute joy to play a role in shaping the lives of

our girls and young women," Mrs Lowry shared.

With a focus on student agency, collaboration, and inclusive growth, Mrs Lowry's leadership ensures that Glennie remains a vibrant, supportive home for our regional day and boarding students alike. ■



Connor Barrett
Principal
Townsville Grammar School
Townsville, QLD

TOWNSVILLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL - QLD

TGS are pleased to announce that Mr Connor Barrett has been appointed Principal of Townsville Grammar School for 2026.

Connor has been an integral part of the School community since 2019, as Head of School (North Ward) and, since 2020, as Deputy Principal. Throughout this time, he has earned the respect and trust of students, staff and families through his steady leadership, deep commitment to education, and genuine care for our community. Connor is well known to the wider boarding community

having led boarding programs at Canberra Grammar School and The Kings School, Parramatta. ■



Angee Robertson
Principal
Waikato Diocesan School for Girls
NZ

WAIKATO DIOCESAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS - NZ

Angee Robertson is an experienced educator and transformational leader with over 20 years in New Zealand schools, including 15 in senior and middle leadership roles across both the Independent and State sectors. She has led curriculum innovation, academic strategy, and student achievement, while championing culturally responsive practices and holistic student wellbeing.

Angee is recognized for her curriculum and leadership contributions, including a NEiTA nomination (National Excellence in Teaching Award) in 2012 and the prestigious Woolf Fisher Fellowship in 2014. She has also headed a Gifted and Talented program that was recognised by ERO, at the time as the best in New Zealand.

With extensive experience in multiple subjects, across multiple curriculum frameworks including

Cambridge, International Baccalaureate, and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, she has designed and implemented programs that foster critical thinking, engagement, and student success.

Believing in nurturing confident, resilient, and resourceful young people, Angee fosters inclusive, future-focused learning environments, mentors staff, and supports students across both day and boarding contexts. Passionate about holistic education, she champions sport, arts, co-curricular, and cultural initiatives to ensure students thrive academically, socially, and personally. ■

Welcome: New Principals



Lee MacMaster
Principal
Xavier College
Harvey Bay, QLD

XAVIER COLLEGE - QLD

Lee MacMaster is the Principal of Xavier College, bringing extensive leadership experience from senior roles across leading Catholic and independent schools in New South Wales and Queensland. Lee served as Director of Teaching and Learning at St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, where he was also actively involved in the College's boarding program. His commitment to the formation and wellbeing of boarding students also extended to his leadership at St Gregory's College, Campbelltown — another strong boarding community — where he later served as Principal, further strengthening his experience in residential education and pastoral care.

Lee has also served as Assistant Director in the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools, Principal

of St Andrew's Catholic College, Redlynch, and Xavier Catholic College, Ballina. Across these roles, he has been recognised for fostering strong school cultures centred on academic excellence, student wellbeing, and the development of young people as compassionate and capable leaders.

Lee's leadership emphasises high-quality teaching and learning, the professional growth of staff, and strong partnerships with families, ensuring that every student is known, supported, and challenged to flourish. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Nick Power
Assistant Director of Boarding
Anglican Church Grammar School
Brisbane, QLD

ANGLICAN CHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL - QLD

Nick's career in education has been shaped by a deep commitment to boys' learning and the unique opportunities provided by a boarding environment. His leadership journey began at St Peter's Cambridge, where he served as Deputy Principal following impactful roles as Head of Physical Education and House Director in boys' boarding. These positions established a strong foundation in pastoral care and leadership, reinforcing his belief in the transformative impact a well-supported residential environment has on young men.

He later moved to Hamilton Boys' High School, serving as Deputy Headmaster of Operations. In this role, he further refined his understanding of how structure, culture, and systems directly contribute to student success.

This experience perfectly places Nick for success in his new role as Assistant Director of Boarding at Churchie, as he draws on these extensive experiences to support Mike Symons and the boarding team shape a community where boys feel supported, challenged, and inspired. His focus

is on fostering a high-functioning residential environment built on punctuality, respect, and personal pride. His ultimate goal is to grow the boarding community with students from wonderful, community-based families, supported by a staff team that is powerful in its professional execution, clever in its educational and pastoral approach and kind in its focus on the boys' well-being.

A valued member of the boarding team, Nick believes it is his privilege to lead an environment that nurtures character, independence, and the lifelong connections that define the Churchie experience. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Sean Toohey
Head of Boarding
Avalon College
Geelong, VIC

AVALON COLLEGE – VIC

Avalon College is delighted to welcome Mr Sean Toohey to our team as Head of Boarding. Sean commenced in January and brings with him many years of diverse experience with young people.

Sean holds a Diploma of Education and Bachelor of Social Work together with various accreditations and certificates.

Sean worked in Boarding at Assumption College in Victoria for many years and also at Snowy Mountains Grammar School and Columba Catholic College in far North Queensland. Sean has been involved in child protection roles and is passionate about the wellbeing and health of young people.

Sean enjoys a healthy lifestyle engaging in sports

and has a passion for surfing.

Sean says that he is excited to continue his boarding journey at Avalon College. He feels that Avalon College is the “right fit” and a natural progression for him. Sean also feels privileged to have been mentored by experienced and passionate leaders in all of his previous schools.

He believes, while his formative working life was in social service, his professional growth has occurred in boarding schools.

Sean hopes to pass on his knowledge and experience to his new colleagues thereby meeting the best interest of those in his care and honouring those that have assisted and mentored him. ■



Sarah Lysewycz
Director of Boarding
Canberra Girls Grammar School
Canberra, ACT

CANBERRA GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL – ACT

Meet Sarah, the Director of Boarding at Canberra Girls Grammar School (CGGS).

Sarah Lysewycz oversees the complete CGGS boarding experience, managing the many facets of communal living in a learning setting.

With over two decades of educational leadership, Sarah brings a calm, relational and deeply purposeful approach to life in the CGGS Boarding House. Her work is guided by the belief that the quality of our surroundings and our daily rituals are important forms of learning in themselves, shaping interactions whilst providing clarity and consistency.

Sarah sees boarding as a living expression of the School’s century-old heritage, a community built on respect and care. As both a parent and an educator, Sarah holds a deep respect for the trust families place in her team. She leads a 24-hour

community with warmth, ensuring that each student feels known, supported and encouraged to grow in confidence and develop their self-efficacy.

In Canberra’s dynamic setting, where local, national and global perspectives meet, Sarah and her team nurture a house culture defined by integrity and steadiness. Under her guidance, boarding is not simply residence but preparation for the world, a disciplined, compassionate community where young women learn to live with purpose, resilience and grace, and where they are supported to strive, personally and academically, to live and learn their possible. ■



Adonia Hedges
Head of Girls' Boarding
Columba Catholic College
Charters Towers, QLD

COLUMBA CATHOLIC COLLEGE – QLD

Adonia Hedges is a proud Charters Towers local, a committed Catholic, and a married mother of two. She is recognised for her compassionate and approachable nature, along with her strong commitment to working with young people.

With seven years of service at Columba Catholic College, Adonia has contributed across a range of roles including School Officer, Laboratory Technician, and Casual Boarding Supervisor. She has recently accepted the role of Head of Girls Boarding, a position she has embraced with dedication and enthusiasm.

Adonia views boarding as a privilege, offering a unique opportunity to provide a structured and supportive environment that enables students to grow academically, socially, and spiritually. Guided by faith, she is committed to excellence, personal development, and service to others within the boarding community. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Rose Newcombe
Head of Boarding
Firbank Grammar School
Brighton, VIC

FIRBANK GRAMMAR SCHOOL - VIC

We welcomed Rose Newcombe as our new Head of Boarding at Firbank Grammar School in Term 2 of 2025. With over 23 years of experience in education, Rose has led boarding communities across both the UK and Australia, bringing a wealth of knowledge and passion for nurturing young people in a structured, inclusive, and supportive environment.

In addition to boarding, Rose has a passion of outdoor education having led the Duke of Edinburgh Award Program at Woldingham School along with other extracurricular roles including the development and management of the boarding program for the school. With this experience and love for the outdoors she has been excited join

the extensive Experiential Education Program at Firbank.

Rose believes in the power of boarding to foster confidence, independence, and lifelong friendships, while also celebrating the role of extracurriculars in shaping well-rounded individuals. We look forward to the positive impact Rose will continue to bring to our boarding community. ■



Kimberley Jones
Head of Boarding
Frensham
Mittagong, NSW

FRENSHAM - NSW

Kimberley Jones brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to student wellbeing to her role as Head of Boarding at Frensham. Now in her fourth year at the School, she continues to serve concurrently as Head of Kennedy House and as a Mathematics teacher, contributing to student life both academically and within the boarding community.

With more than 30 years of teaching and boarding experience, Kimberley has worked in a range of respected independent schools, shaping strong, supportive environments for young people. Before joining Frensham, she served as Head of Girls' Boarding at The Scots School Albury, where she led programs that fostered connection, resilience and personal growth. Other experiences include Year 12 Co-ordinator/Careers Advisor at Kinross Wolaroi School and Head of Galloway House at Scots All Saints, Bathurst, positions that further

strengthened her leadership in pastoral care and her understanding of the uniqueness of boarding life.

Kimberley is deeply passionate about the wellbeing and development of every student. She is committed to building communities where girls feel known, valued and supported, and where consistency, kindness and high expectations work hand-in-hand. At Frensham, she continues to champion a culture that encourages independence, respect and authentic connection, ensuring that each boarder has the structure and encouragement needed to thrive. ■



Tom Ziebell
Director of Boarding
Haileybury Rendall School
Darwin, NT

HAILEYBURY RENDALL SCHOOL - NT

Tom has joined Haileybury Rendall School in 2026 having previously worked in schools across Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. He has held a range of education and leadership roles and has developed a strong understanding of the diverse ways in which young people grow and learn.

He was attracted to a career in education due to his passion for working with young people to create the next generation of leaders who will shape our future.

Tom's work so far has taken him from remote communities to coastal campuses and he brings

with him a deep appreciation for the value of learning through experience and challenge.

Most recently, Tom developed and led the Carey Zero program at Carey Grammar in Melbourne. This experiential learning initiative focused on adventure and enhancing community connection and personal development.

He has a long history of working in the outdoors and believes that shared experiences, travel and adventure play a key role in shaping the character and resilience of young people. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Rhiannen Andersen
Head of Boarding
John Paul College
Brisbane, QLD

JOHN PAUL COLLEGE - QLD

Mrs Rhiannen Andersen steps into the role of Head of Boarding with more than a decade of dedicated service to the John Paul College community. Since joining JPC in 2011, Rhiannen has been a highly valued leader, known for her deep commitment to student wellbeing, her strong relational approach and clear focus on excellence in the student experience.

An experienced educator, Rhiannen has served as a Senior Teacher of Technology and Innovation and an Exemplary Teacher in Design Technologies and has also contributed as a Hospitality and Business VET Trainer and Assessor. She later strengthened her leadership as Deputy Director of Administration, enhancing operational expertise.

With a rich understanding of the College's culture and values, Rhiannen brings both continuity and vision to the Fenton Village Boarding community. She is passionate about fostering an environment that feels like a genuine home away from home, a place where students feel safe, supported and empowered

to grow in confidence and independence.

Rhiannen believes boarding offers a unique opportunity to shape resilient, compassionate and capable young people within a connected and caring community. "Boarding is such a special part of College life," she shares. "It ignites my ambition to create an environment where every student feels known, valued and inspired to pursue their personal best."

Her strong focus on family engagement, pastoral care and operational excellence aligns closely with the College's values of Mutual Respect, Integrity, Compassion and Excellence. Rhiannen is excited to lead Boarding into its next chapter, strengthening community connections and ensuring an exceptional experience for every boarder from around the globe at John Paul College. ■



Adam Shaw
Head of Boarding
Knox Grammar School
Sydney, NSW

KNOX GRAMMAR SCHOOL - NSW

Knox Grammar School is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Adam Shaw as the new Head of Boarding. Adam first joined Knox in 2014 and has been a dedicated member of the Senior School community, previously serving as Head of Stage 6 Boarding and Director of Student Development, alongside his work as a PDHPE teacher. His extensive experience within the boarding environment has shaped a warm, relational and student focused approach to care and wellbeing.

Adam and his family, his wife Amanda and their two boys Beauden and Lennox, are excited to rejoin the Knox boarding community. Having

lived and worked within the boarding setting before, the Shaw family is looking forward to once again being part of a vibrant residential community built on connection, support and a strong sense of belonging.

Adam is deeply committed to fostering an environment where boarders feel at home, supported and encouraged to grow in character and confidence. He looks forward to leading the boarding program into its next chapter and continuing to strengthen the experience for students, families and staff. ■



Calum Ball
Head of Hawkes Boarding
Launceston Church Grammar School
Launceston, TAS.

LAUNCESTON CHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL - TAS

Calum Ball has been appointed Head of Hawkes Boarding at Launceston Church Grammar School. Calum commenced duties in mid-January 2026. Calum brings a deep and personal connection to boarding, having grown up in residential and boarding settings in Brisbane and Canberra as well experienced boarding life both as a student and as a staff member at The Southport School (TSS). Calum is excited for the change in geography and the outdoors and adventure that Tasmania has to offer on its doorstep. He practised law for three years before transitioning into education, currently completing a Master of Teaching (Secondary Education). Emphasising

calm professionalism and high standards of student engagement, Calum is deeply committed to fostering a respectful, structured, and supportive boarding environment. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Theresa Moss
Director of Boarding
Methodist Ladies' College
Perth, WA

METHODIST LADIES' COLLEGE - WA

Introducing Theresa Moss, Director of Boarding at Methodist Ladies' College.

Methodist Ladies' College is delighted to welcome Theresa Moss as the new Director of Boarding. With a deep commitment to pastoral care, relationship building, and the holistic development of young people, Theresa brings warmth, vision, and a calm, steady presence to the heart of the Boarding community.

Originally from Germany, Theresa has built a diverse career across education, boarding, wellbeing, and youth development. Before joining MLC, she worked in various roles within independent schools and residential communities, where she developed a reputation for developing strong teams, strengthening culture, and ensuring every student feels seen, heard, and supported. Her

approach is grounded in empathy, consistency, and the belief that boarding should feel like both a home and a launchpad.

Theresa is passionate about creating routines and rituals that help students settle, thrive, and develop a sense of belonging. She can often be found in the boarding house in the evenings, connecting with girls during wind down time, celebrating their daily "wins," and ensuring each student feels safe and valued. Her focus for 2026 is strengthening student voice, embedding cultural safety, and deepening connections between families, staff, and the wider school community.

Theresa is honoured to lead MLC Boarding and is excited to continue building a vibrant, inclusive, and nurturing environment where every girl can flourish. ■



Jurie Wessels
Director of Boarding
Peninsula International School
Australia
Malaysia

PENINSULA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AUSTRALIA - Malaysia

Peninsula International School Australia is pleased to introduce Mr. Jurie Wessels as the Director of Boarding. Originally from South Africa, Jurie brings eight years of experience in international education, having worked in Thailand and China before joining the Peninsula International School community in Malaysia.

Jurie holds a Bachelor's degree in Teaching and has taught English, Health, and Physical Education. Throughout his career, he has developed a strong interest in student wellbeing and pastoral care where meaningful relationships and mentorship play an important role in student development.

While new to the role of Director of Boarding, Jurie is passionate about creating a supportive and structured boarding environment where students feel safe, valued, and encouraged to grow in confidence and independence. He believes boarding offers a unique opportunity to build character, resilience, and a strong sense of community.

Jurie looks forward to working closely with students, staff, and families to foster a positive and enriching boarding experience. ■



Sam Jenner
Head of Boarding
St Brigid's College
Lesmurdie, WA

ST BRIGID'S COLLEGE - WA

St Brigid's College Lesmurdie is delighted to welcome Sam Jenner as the new Head of Boarding in 2026. With nearly 25 years of dedicated service in boarding education, Sam brings a depth of experience, compassion, and a commitment to providing exceptional care for regional and remote students.

Sam joins St Brigid's after a long and distinguished career at Edmund Rice College, Bindoon, where she served in a variety of boarding leadership roles. Throughout her career, she has been driven by a clear purpose: to ensure young people—particularly those who cannot complete their schooling in their hometowns—are supported to thrive in a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment.

At the heart of Sam's philosophy is the belief that a boarding house should feel like "a fun, caring, home away from home." She is passionate about empowering students to reach their potential while fostering strong relationships between boarding

staff, families, and the wider school community.

Over many years, Sam has travelled extensively across Western Australia to maintain strong connections with families and better understand the communities her students come from. Her journeys have taken her throughout the Pilbara and Kimberley regions, where she has built enduring relationships and gained invaluable insights into the lives of the young people she serves. One of her favourite places is Beagle Bay in the state's far north—a community she describes as warm, welcoming, and deeply memorable.

St Brigid's College is thrilled to welcome Sam to the leadership team and looks forward to the positive impact her experience, energy, and passion for boarding will bring to the College and its students. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Rachel Rapsey
Head of Boarding
St Pauls College
Walla Walla, NSW

ST PAULS COLLEGE - NSW

Rachel Rapsey leads the boarding community at St Paul's College, Walla Walla as Head of Boarding, bringing a strong commitment to student wellbeing, pastoral care and the holistic development of young people within a regional boarding environment.

Rachel holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Psychology) and brings a broad professional background across both the education and health sectors. Her experience working with children and adolescents in pastoral, residential and support roles has equipped her with a strong understanding of the social, emotional and developmental needs of young people.

As Head of Boarding, Rachel is passionate about fostering a safe, supportive and inclusive

boarding environment where students feel valued and encouraged to grow. She believes boarding offers a unique opportunity for young people to develop independence, resilience and meaningful connections while being supported by a caring community.

Rachel believes that boarding "provides a unique space for young people to develop confidence, character and lifelong friendships while being guided by a community that genuinely cares about their wellbeing and individual success."

Together with the boarding team, she looks forward to continuing to build programs and opportunities that enrich the boarding experience and strengthen the vibrant community at St Paul's College. ■



Tim Sedgwick
Director of Boarding
St Peters Lutheran College
QLD

ST PETERS LUTHERAN COLLEGE - QLD

St Peters Lutheran College is delighted to announce the appointment of Tim Sedgwick as our new Director of Boarding.

Tim joins St Peters with extensive experience in boarding and pastoral care, underpinned by a strong background in boys' education within Australian independent schools. He has previously held senior leadership positions, including Assistant Director of Boarding and Head of Residence, where he focused on building safe, supportive and well-structured boarding communities in close partnership with families.

In addition to his boarding leadership, Tim has been a significant contributor to wider school life through his involvement in cocurricular programs. A committed advocate for holistic education, he has held key roles in sport—most

notably as Head of Rugby and in senior coaching positions—and has supported student leadership initiatives, camps and major school events.

Tim looks forward to getting to know the St Peters community and contributing positively to the culture of the College. He is committed to fostering environments where students can feel supported, grow in confidence and thrive in all aspects of their learning and wellbeing.

We warmly welcome Tim to St Peters Lutheran College. ■



Trent Gorrie
Director of Boarding
St Teresa's College
Abergowrie, QLD

ST TERESA'S COLLEGE - QLD

We are excited to introduce Trent Gorrie as a new member of the St Teresa's College leadership team. Trent brings extensive experience in boarding school leadership, having served as Head of Boarding and Deputy Head of Campus at several schools across Australia.

With a strong commitment to student wellbeing, pastoral care, and creating safe, supportive residential environments, Trent is passionate about helping students thrive both academically and personally. His background includes developing structured boarding programs, mentoring staff and students, and fostering positive, culturally respectful communities where

every student feels valued and supported.

Trent has also worked in the elite sporting environment, including with the NRL, Parramatta Eels, and holds a Diploma of Youth Work, bringing a wealth of practical experience and formal training to his role.

We look forward to the energy, expertise, and leadership Trent will bring to our boarding community and are confident he will play a key role in supporting our students and families as part of the St Teresa's College family. ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



James Peters
Director of Boarding
The King's School
Sydney, NSW

THE KING'S SCHOOL - NSW

Mr James Peters has been appointed Director of Boarding at The King's School. James and his family joined the King's community in 2018 when he was appointed Head of Biblical Studies. Since then, he has been deeply involved in the boarding program, serving four years as a Boarding Housemaster and most recently as Acting Director of Boarding in 2025.

With nearly 20 years' experience in education, James has held a range of leadership and pastoral roles, including Year Co-ordinator, Head of Faculty and School Chaplain, and is an experienced HSC teacher. Through his work in the classroom, across co-curricular life and within the residential community, his leadership demonstrates a deep

commitment to the academic, character and personal formation of young people. James holds a Bachelor of Arts (English Literature), a Diploma of Education and a Master of Divinity, and is currently completing a Master of Business Administration, bringing together theological insight and organisational acumen in his approach to boarding and educational leadership.

He looks forward to working closely with boys, staff, and families to ensure boarding at King's remains a character-defining experience for every student. ■



Leigh Holtsbaum
Acting Dean of Boarding
The Southport School
Southport, QLD

THE SOUTHPORT SCHOOL - QLD

Mr. Leigh Holtsbaum, our 2026 Acting Dean of Boarding.

Leigh joined The Southport School as a teacher in 2014 after serving as the Head of Year 9 at Coomera Anglican College. With over 17 years of teaching experience, Leigh holds a bachelor's degree in Science with a Major in Marine Biology and a postgraduate diploma of Teaching. His wife, Melissa, a Registered Nurse, and their three children, Piper, Paeton and Fynn are also part of The Southport School Boarding community.

Leigh has a long history in pastoral care and with over 10 years Boarding experience. After starting his Boarding experience in the Year 7 Boarding House in 2016, Leigh become a Senior Head of House in 2018 and has been the Acting Director of Boarding since 2024.

Leigh is a Southport Old Boy having completed all his schooling at TSS where he developed a passion for Rugby and has been a dedicated coach at The Southport School since 2008.

Leigh's other passion is fishing and has created a Boarders Fishing Club which teaches the boys skills and techniques whilst promoting wellbeing and mindfulness for the Southport boys.

Leigh is excited to continue building on the culture of The Southport School Boarding and creating a safe environment and promoting a holistic Boarding experience for the boys. ■



Kyle Langman
Director of Boarding
Toowoomba Anglican School
Toowoomba, QLD

TOOWOOMBA ANGLICAN SCHOOL - QLD

Toowoomba Anglican School was delighted to welcome Mr Kyle Langman as the new Director of Boarding at the beginning of Term Four 2025.

Kyle brings vast amounts of energy and experience to TAS' four boarding houses after having previously worked at Rockhampton Grammar School, as well as Cothill House in Oxford and Maritzburg College in South Africa.

Since arriving at TAS, Kyle along with his family, have fully immersed themselves into the TAS community and have enjoyed experiencing the wide variety of opportunities the school has to offer.

Building a strong culture within TAS' boarding

environment has been a top priority for Kyle since his appointment, highlighted by the several new programs he has implemented, including regular weekend retreats, dedicated study sessions and series of industry lectures.

"At TAS, boarding is more than an accommodation house – it's a home where young people are known, valued, and inspired to grow," Mr Langman said.

"Service is a core principal at TAS, and I am looking forward to helping to guide our boarders in their service to not just our TAS community, but our community more broadly." ■

Welcome: New Heads of Boarding



Richard Freeman
Head of Boarding
Townsville Grammar School
Townsville, QLD

TOWNSVILLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL - QLD

Mr Richard Freeman has been appointed Head of Boarding at Townsville Grammar School, following three years as Head of Boys' Boarding and Assistant Head of Boarding within the School's residential program.

Richard brings extensive experience across boarding and sports coaching contexts in New South Wales, New Zealand and the UK. With a professional background encompassing residential supervision, pastoral leadership, and operational management, Rich has developed a deep understanding of the School's boarding culture, values and traditions, and has played a key role in strengthening pastoral care structures and cultural expectations within our community.

During his tenure at Townsville Grammar School, Rich has led initiatives focused on improving student wellbeing, continuity of care and safety, while also modernising boarding routines, staff structures and operational systems. He has demonstrated commitment to aligning the boarding program to national boarding standards, safeguarding practices and risk management, and dedicated to tailoring the boarding program to best fit the needs of our diverse students, families and staff.

Rich is excited to lead Townsville Grammar School Boarding into its next chapter, honouring its proud boarding heritage while continuing to evolve with purpose, care and professionalism. ■



From the Chair *Megan Krimmer*

Boarding: Helping our Boarders be the Best Versions of Themselves

Welcome to 2026! I hope the year has begun well for you, your boarders, and for your boarder families.

Living and working in boarding schools is such a uniquely rich and wonderful experience; it also can be incredibly challenging, and I am always in awe of all of our boarding professionals: in the most varied of circumstances across Australia, New Zealand and in Asia, you give so much of yourselves to ensure that the young people in your care have the best possible boarding experiences. Thank you all for your very hard work.

As you are aware, ABSA is here to provide support to all member schools, and one of the major ways in which this is given is through the provision of very high quality and accessible professional learning. I am absolutely delighted that in the period from December to March, ABSA's on-line courses, face-to-face workshops and conferences have been so heavily subscribed. The Taking the Reins Conference in March was especially successful.

High quality PL such as that provided by ABSA helps us develop into the best professionals that we can be. Despite being time poor, as everyone in boarding is, I encourage you to take up every opportunity available to keep learning. This not only benefits you as a professional, it also helps other professionals as you collaborate together, and, as you apply your learning, it enriches the lives of your students, helping them to become the best possible versions of themselves - every day.

It is an absolute privilege to be Chair of ABSA and to work with our new board to ensure that ABSA fulfills its stated mission to 'promote the interests of boarding schools in Australasia by enhancing the well-being of boarders, facilitating the professional development of staff and advancing best practice among schools.' Fundamental to this is reviewing and subsequently updating ABSA's Strategic Plan.

Having reviewed the 2022-2025 Plan in the light of ensuring that ABSA continues to provide the great services for which it is renowned, and that it remains a strong, sustainable, robust and relevant organisation, the Board has decided to retain the pillars: Engagement, Learning, Influence, Practice and Growth as they provided an excellent framework for the current Strategic Plan. We have worked, and will continue to work, on the other elements of the Plan, and the new plan should be finalised by August this year.

Another important area of work for ABSA is to ensure that the Boarding Standard (Standards Australia) is updated. To that end, Richard Stokes, CEO of ABSA, has been appointed Chair of the group assigned by Standards Australia to facilitate this. The first draft of the updated Standard is due by 31 May this year.

Despite the uncertain times in which we are living as a result of the current global situation, I hope that you are able to take time out from your demanding roles over the Easter break. I wish everyone in boarding a safe and happy Easter. ■

AUTHOR:

Megan Krimmer
Chairperson
Australian Boarding
Schools Association

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