

ST. MARY MACKILLOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Staying Connected No. 16, 28th October, 2025

Hi Everyone,

It has been a big couple of weeks here at our wonderful school.

Year 6 Sydney Experience

Last week, many of our Year 6 boys and girls, accompanied by a number of staff, travelled to Sydney for our annual *Year 6 Sydney Experience*. Since 2008, this experience has evolved—from Canberra, then Canberra and Sydney, and now solely Sydney—and has become something of a *rite of passage* for our students. It's a special and memorable way for them to conclude their primary schooling.

The focus of this trip is our time at **Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney**. Here, the children take part in engaging lessons about Mary MacKillop, visit the museum that brings her story to life, spend quiet moments in prayer at her tomb, and celebrate Mass with Monsignor Portelli in **St Joseph's Chapel**, where Mary is buried.

A personal mission of mine has always been to *make Mary known* to the children. Many of the children have been part of our school community for all seven years of their primary education. They know Mary MacKillop's story well—her faith, courage, and kindness—and they can speak about her with detail and confidence. This fact fills me with great pride.

During our trip to Sydney, we stayed at Anderley Lodge, located within the peaceful grounds of Mary MacKillop Place. Alongside this spiritual experience, our group also enjoyed many of Sydney's iconic sights. We travelled by ferry across Sydney Harbour, explored the Opera House precinct and Circular Quay, played Volleyball at Manly Beach, and completed the breathtaking coastal walk from Bronte to Bondi before sharing fish and chips together on Bondi Beach. A highlight for many was an evening of pizza and bowling at Chatswood Bowls.

The conduct of our Year 6 students was exemplary throughout the trip. They represented our school with maturity, respect, and kindness — qualities that reflect the very spirit of Mary MacKillop herself. Whether during Mass, at the museum, or simply walking through the busy streets of Sydney, the children showed great manners, curiosity, and gratitude.

I extend my deepest thanks to the staff who travelled with the group. Their commitment, care, and professionalism ensured that the children were well supported and that every aspect of the experience ran smoothly. I sincerely appreciate their generosity in giving up their own personal time away from their families, to ensure the children have this wonderful experience. It takes a great deal of planning, responsibility, and heart to make such an excursion possible, and I am deeply grateful for their efforts.

I also thank Monsignor Portelli for joining us. Monsignor travels up to Sydney each year and celebrates Mass for us. His pastoral leadership and Care for our children and staff is truly appreciated.

The Year 6 Sydney Experience is more than just a school trip – it's a celebration of learning, faith, and friendship. It allows our students to pause, reflect, and prepare for the next stage of their journey. As Mary MacKillop herself reminded us, *"Never see a need without doing something about it."* I hope our students carry her spirit of service and compassion with them to secondary school and beyond. It was a truly positive and memorable experience for all—one filled with friendship, faith, and fun, marking a fitting conclusion to the children's primary school journey.

Year 5 Surf Camp – Lorne 2025

This week, many of our Year 5 children are being supported by a number of generous staff on our annual *Surf Camp* in Lorne. During this experience, students learn important **water safety skills** that are directly applicable to ocean environments. They also develop teamwork, resilience, and confidence as they challenge themselves in new settings.

We look forward to sharing a full report on their adventures in the next edition of *Staying Connected*.

May Mary MacKillop's words inspire us all;

"We must teach more by example than by word."

A lovely fit for both camps – showing how staff and students model care, respect, and community through shared experience.

"There where you are, you will find God."

Beautifully relevant to our camps – discovering God's presence in nature, friendship, and moments of joy.

"Let us be grateful for the past, hopeful for the future, and attentive to the present."

Perfect to capture the spirit of reflection, celebration, and gratitude at the end of the school journey.

Warm regards,
Anthony McCluskey



Principal

PLEASE REMEMBER:

NEXT MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER and NEXT TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER the school is closed for the Melbourne Cup Weekend.

2026

We are busy planning for 2026. We need to know of any families Prep-Year 5 who will be leaving us as of the end of this school year.

If you are leaving us, please send an email to the office; office@mmkeilordowns.catholic.edu.au notifying us. Thank you for your support.

PRINCIPAL AWARD



IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE

Monday 3 November
School Closure Day

Tuesday 4 November
Melbourne Cup Public Holiday

Monday 10 November to Wednesday 12 November
Year 4 Camp to Mt Evelyn

Thursday 4 December
Christmas Carols @ 6:30pm on the Oval

Friday 5 December
School Closure Vision for Instruction: Mathematics

Monday 8 December
School Closure: Planning for 2026

Friday 12 December
Final Day for Year 6 children
Year 6 Guard of Honour @ 12:45pm-1:00pm
Year 6 Graduation @ 7:00pm -8:00pm

Tuesday 16 December
Final Day for classes for Years Prep-Five.
School concludes for the year at 1;00pm.

SRC Report

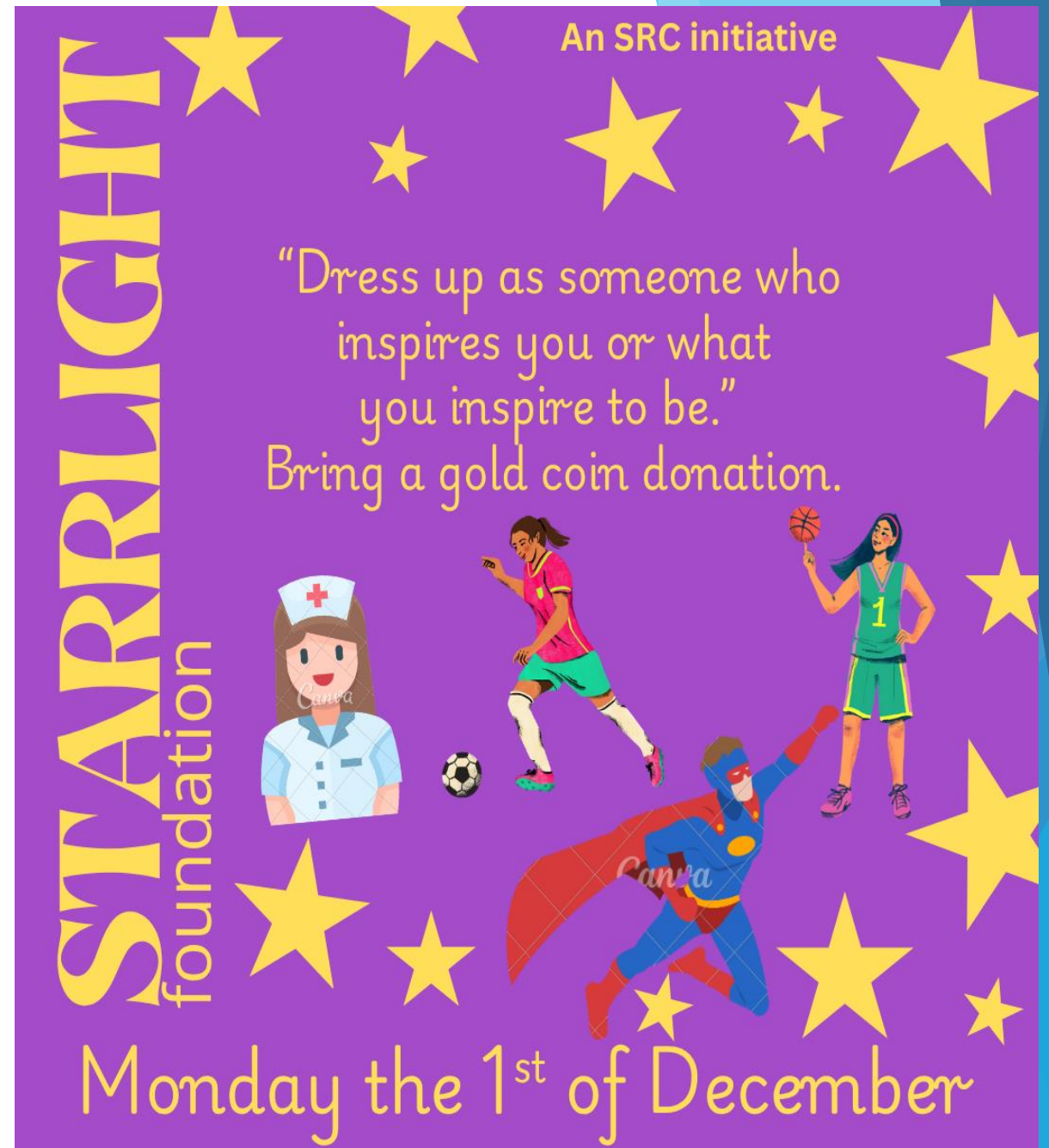
On the 27th of October, the SRC met to discuss all the great things happening around our school.

Students shared that they especially love going on camps. The Grade 4, 5, and 6 students were particularly excited, as they have either just been on camp or are getting ready to go on their own adventures!

Some of the highlights from the Grade 6 camp included the amazing accommodation at Mary Mackillop Place and all the beautiful beaches we visited. During our three-day trip to Sydney, we explored the Mary Mackillop Museum and gift shop, and we ended Day 2 with some fun mini golf and bowling.

Everyone at St Mary Mackillop School is looking forward to the **Mary Mackillop play**, which is planned for the **10th of December** (pending confirmation).

We're also excited about our upcoming **fundraiser for the Starlight Foundation on the 1st of December**. Students are encouraged to bring a gold coin donation to support sick children in need. For this special day, we'll be **dressing up as someone who inspires us** – this could be a sports player, a doctor, or even one of your parents!



REMINDERS

- The basketball court is used as a carpark in the morning and afternoon. The safety of our children is of utmost importance and therefore I ask that you take extra care when driving in the carpark areas. The speed limit is **5km per hour** and there is to be no double parking at all. Please only park in the designated parking spots and do not park on the **artificial turf or in pedestrian walk ways**. Thank you for taking the safety of our children seriously.
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- From time to time our children forget to bring their lunch to school or a lunch order is ordered for the wrong day and we ask parents to bring in the missing lunch. In order to continue with our healthy eating expectations we ask that parents **do not bring in take away food** such as McDonalds, KFC etc. If you do need to purchase lunch for your child we ask that you purchase things such as sushi, sandwiches or wraps.
 - The School opens at 8.30am and children can enter the classroom at 8.50am. **Please do not drop children off prior to 8.30am.** If you need to bring your child to school before 8.30am please book them into the before school hours program.
 - St Mary MacKillop is a 'Smoke Free Zone' and smoking on the school grounds is not permitted. According to the law, 'The Tobacco Act 1987 bans smoking or vaping on school premises or within 4 metres of any pedestrian access point to school premises.'
Please do not smoke or vape on the school grounds.

- If your child needs to bring a mobile phone to school it must be handed into the teacher in the morning where it will be stored in a secured location and returned to them in the afternoon. Please refer to the Mobile phone policy on the school website.
- As there is no supervision on the playground area and the oval area in the morning, these areas are out of bounds and children are not to play on the playground or the oval before school.
- The front drive through area between the Church and the School operates as a drive through zone only before school.
- Due to a few near misses, those who wish to park and bring their child into class must **use the back car park area.** There is now no parental parking in bays outside the front of the Church.

2025 Term Dates

**Term 4: 6 October - 16 December 2025
(Year 6 finish Friday 12 December)**

PLAYGROUND USE BEFORE SCHOOL – REMINDER

Please note that all of the Junior and Senior Adventure Playgrounds are **not to be used before school**.



This is the Junior Adventure playground.
It is only for use by students from Prep to Year 2.



The climbing frames can be used by all students.

This is the Senior Adventure Playground.
It is only for students in Years 3 – 6.



Parents are required to actively watch their children when using the equipment after school.

A Frightful Disco
Grades 3-6 \$10 entry fee

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October 2025

ST ALBANS COMMUNITY CENTRE
33 Princess St, St Albans

Start At
6:00PM
8:00PM

Hot & Cold Food available for purchase
Doors close at 6:30pm

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bluelight_brimbankmelton