



HEATHERWOOD  
SCHOOL

# Heatherwood News

November 2025

370-380 Springvale Rd DONVALE VIC 3111

P: 03 98428319

[www.heatherwood.vic.edu.au](http://www.heatherwood.vic.edu.au)

[heatherwood.sch@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:heatherwood.sch@education.vic.gov.au)

## Principal's Message

Paul Hills

I was looking back to see what was happening this time last year and noted in the newsletter, to see what changes had occurred. It had been 12 months since our new student toilets were opened, and we were about to take possession of our new building.

We expected work to begin on replacing the horticulture shed, and I thanked the community for its patience and understanding over what seemed to be a long period of time that our building program seemed to be taking.

Well, some things don't seem to change. Work on our horticulture shed continues as does construction work on our specialist wing. Change takes time and can happen in stages.

Our students will begin to think about what's going to happen to them next year. Some with mixed feelings of graduating (excitement and anxiousness), others of a new teacher and new programs.

The effect of change impacts differently on everyone. It may be a time when students and families need support. Please take the time to listen to each member of our community, let them share their concerns openly, and where appropriate reassurance can be offered, so that everyone can embrace the future with confidence.



## Important Dates

2025

**Thursday 4th December:** Year 12 Formal

**Tuesday 9th December:** Year 12 Graduation Night

**Tuesday 9th December:** Statewide Transition Day

**Thursday 11th December:** Last Day For Year 12 Graduate Students.

**Tuesday 16th December:** Last Day For Trade Kitchen.

**Friday 19th December:** Last Day Of Term 4. **Students will be dismissed one hour earlier at 1:45**

2026

**Tuesday 27th January:** Curriculum Day. **Students do not attend school on this day.**

**Wednesday 28th January:** Curriculum Day. **Students do not attend school on this day.**

**Thursday 29th January:** Start Of Term 1, 2026. **Students return to school.**

## Assistant Principal's Message

Lesley Foster  
Director of Happiness



### Leadership, Celebration, and Looking Ahead

A highlight of the term has been the inspiring speeches delivered by our aspiring school captains. The whole school participated in voting, and we are proud to announce our four newly appointed captains: Nau Kim (Captain), Hannah Tesselaar (Captain), Oliver Bendle (Vice Captain), and Emily Harding (Vice Captain). They will lead by example with the Heatherwood values at the heart of everything they do.

To celebrate the end of the year, all classes are enjoying excursions to acknowledge and thank our students and families. These excursions are a wonderful way to celebrate achievements and our students' growth over 2025. The responsibility and confidence our students have developed throughout the year is evident. The contribution from families, the community and staff working together enables students to make amazing progress.

As we look forward to 2026, we remain committed to nurturing leadership, independence, and success for every student. Congratulations to all on a fantastic year.



## Assistant Principal's Message

Braham Morris



It's been fantastic to see everyone here in Term 4 with such great energy and enthusiasm for the final stretch of the year. Our senior students started the term with an exciting experience at the Portsea Camp — a wonderful opportunity for teamwork, leadership, and reflection. Thank you to all the staff that went on camp and to Jo and Loren who stepped in for me when I was unable to attend.

This term, Michael and members of the Wellbeing Team have set up a lunchtime Social Skills support group for select students. The aim of this program is to provide a safe space for these students to develop their social and communication skills. This is a trial program that we are looking to expand in 2026 if it is successful.

A quick reminder to all students to ensure they are wearing the correct school uniform each day. Wearing our uniform with pride helps maintain our strong sense of community and school spirit. Please also note that facial piercings other than in the ear are not acceptable (please refer to the school diary for the Dress Code).

Let's make this a positive and productive term for everyone!



## Heatherwood School Council Report

Annie Basel

Vice President Heatherwood School Council

As the end of year fast approaches and the festive season springs into action, there are many families facing the end of an era with their child's secondary education. Change is also on the horizon for year 7-11 students as classes move, teachers change and subject schedules are rearranged. What was normal for this year will be completely different for next year. These changes will bring growth, even though it can be overwhelming and scary. Don't be afraid to seek support as you are not alone with these feelings.

"Life doesn't get better by chance, it gets better by change" Jim Rohn

My son Ali, who is 18, completes his time at Heatherwood on December 11th. Graduating students will be treated to a formal and graduation ceremony that will etch memories that will last a lifetime. There is much excitement with these special events.

I can't believe it was over 4 years ago that the school leaver parents in school council were talking about post school options. I recall the anxiety and concern for my son's future. We had no idea what he would be doing and school had been the one constant since 2013. I'm now that parent, and I can assure you it's been a wild but rewarding ride. The staff at Heatherwood have helped Ali develop the many skills that will support him with post school life. His numeracy and literacy skills have all significantly improved and this has helped him with confidence navigating this big unpredictable world. The social aspects of the curriculum and school life have been vital, as this was an area that has been incredibly challenging for Ali.

He, along with his fellow classmates, has been through many extra challenges such as lockdowns during COVID, staff shortages, building delays and who can forget the two building fires. This cohort of students has shown incredible resilience that will impact them for the rest of their lives. Year 12 parents and carers should be so proud of their young adults. I know I am one proud mum, only just managing to hold it together as I type this report.

Parents, please try and be as involved in your child's education as you can. It's not just academics: it's preparing for post school life. Along with having NDIS support and a network of other people on a similar journey, our young people can have an incredible future. It might be a different journey to what you envisaged but they will evolve into amazing adults with endless possibilities .

May this time of impending change be as smooth as possible with many positive outcomes.



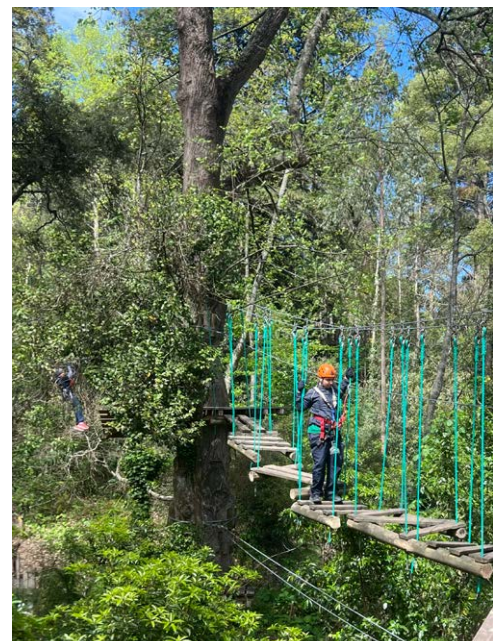


## Treetops Challenge in Belgrave

Lee O'Sullivan

Outdoor Education Teacher

October has welcomed some warmer weather and some new challenges for our Year 9 students. Outdoor Ed classes ventured to the High Ropes course at Treetops Challenge in Belgrave. With students jumping (literally!) at the opportunity to climb amongst the trees, grasping, swinging, and ziplining between obstacles, while being harnessed within a safe and controlled environment, resilience has developed significantly for those students who took on the range of skill-testing courses!





## Puffing Billy

Lee O'Sullivan

Outdoor Education Teacher

Year 7 students experienced something new & historically relevant for the outer-Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, climbing aboard the 1900's steam-powered locomotive "Puffing Billy", Australia's oldest & best-preserved heritage steam railway, which navigates its way through lush fern gullies, rolling hillsides and across incredible bridges in open air carriages. Our students arrived at Emerald Lake for lunch before partaking in an adventurous walk around the stunning lakeside nature reserve.





## Police visit

Deb Weinmann

Protective Behaviours Teacher

In November, our Junior students participated in a police-led presentation about staying safe in the community. Students engaged in an open discussion about personal safety, including what to do if someone asks for their belongings. They also learned, in an age-appropriate way, about the meanings of robbery and assault and how to recognise when an offence may have occurred.

Students had the opportunity to explore the different equipment police officers carry and understand how each item is used. The session also covered when to call 000, helping students learn what to do in an emergency.



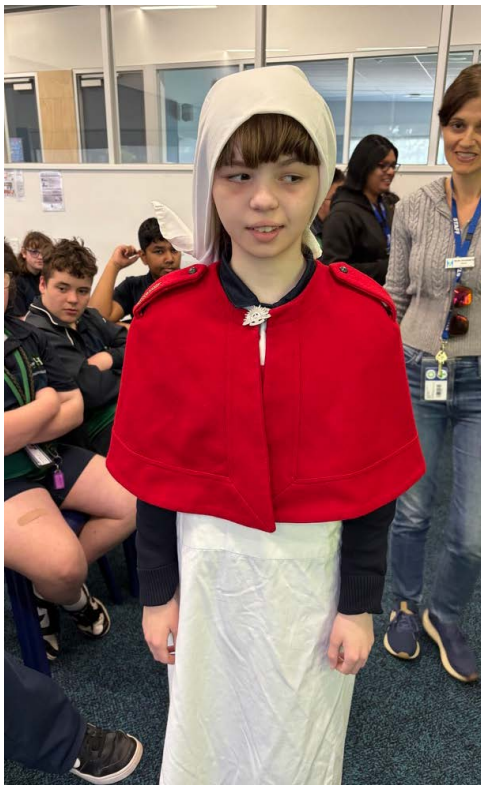


## Shrine Incursion

Lenisha Kasie

Humanities Coordinator

On Tuesday, 21st October, Heatherwood welcomed Carolyn Argent from the Shrine of Remembrance, who presented an engaging incursion for the students. Carolyn shared a range of fascinating photos and facts about various wars, capturing the students' attention throughout the session. It was wonderful to see them asking thoughtful questions and showing genuine interest in the war artefacts. The highlight of the session came when students had the opportunity to try on authentic wartime costumes, including army coats, slouch hats, metal helmets, and nurses' uniforms. It was an educational and highly interactive experience that the students thoroughly enjoyed.









## Remembrance Day

Lenisha Kasie

Humanities Coordinator

On Tuesday, 11th November at 11am, the staff and students gathered in the school gym for a special Remembrance Day Service.

The service began with the mounting of the Catafalque Party under the guidance and supervision of Ewan Wheeler. The students, dressed in military uniforms, and carrying the Australian and Remembrance flags, marched orderly into the gym and carried out their roles in a very distinguished manner. Samson Sahele managed the PA system and the music.

Braham Morris, the service director, welcomed all staff and students. The Acknowledgement of Country was read by House Captain, Stevie Lee Taylor.

The school captains and vice school captains participated in the service. Blake Shadbolt spoke about why we commemorate Remembrance Day. Jasmine Silcox gave us information about the unknown soldier. Peter Piosicki then told us about The Ode. This was followed by the presentation of the Ode done by Oscar Payne. Phoebe Edwards and Jade Soll Francis spoke about the significance of the poppy and rosemary.

Katherine Walsh, Year 9 teacher, recited and translated a beautiful poem in French. It was all about a French soldier who was longing for home but never had the chance to do so because he was killed in battle. It was a touching moment in the ceremony.

Staff and students laid the poppies and posters at the foot of the cross in memory of the many fallen servicemen and women.

The service was brought to a close by the sounding of the Last Post, followed by a one-minute silence, The Rouse, and the singing of the Australian National Anthem.

The Catafalque Party then dismounted to the sounds of Amazing Grace. The rest of the school followed in a quiet, respectful and dignified manner.

It was a wonderful way to participate in the commemoration of a significant day in the Australian calendar and around the world.





## Mt Dandenong Bushwalk

Lee O'Sullivan

Outdoor Education Teacher

Our Year 9 students took part in a bushwalk to some of Mount Dandenong's pinnacle locations - Alfred Nichols Gardens and Burkes Lookout. These students thoroughly enjoyed this excursion, exploring some of the historically relevant, picturesque sights. A physically challenging walk, the students navigated the gravel trails with smiles on their faces and made the most of the less than desirable weather we encountered!





## Zoo Excursion

Tania Benevento

Teacher

Our Outdoor Education excursion to the zoo was a great success. Five staff and eighteen students from J1 and J2 set off on a beautiful, sunny day which was perfect for exploring. The zoo was busy with visitors and other school groups, but our students were wonderful: excited, cooperative and patient as they waited at each enclosure.

Bella the seal was an instant favourite, the lemurs kept everyone entertained, and the giraffes, especially baby Noodle, captivated the students with their gentle movements. The reptile house sparked plenty of curiosity and a few squeals. Throughout the day, students asked thoughtful questions, shared observations and showed genuine enthusiasm.

After so much walking and exploring, the bus ride home was quiet, with many students happily worn out from the adventure. They returned home tired but content after a big day.





## Trade Kitchen

Sharon deWacht

The Trade Kitchen students have decorated some gingerbread biscuits and prepared a grazing platter for the Statewide Vision Resource Centre as a thank you for their support of the Trade Kitchen throughout the year. The senior students have continued to suggest ideas for meals and special events. We will miss the year 12s when they graduate and wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

Thank you to the Horticulture students led by staff David and Emily for the harvest of beetroots, carrots and broccoli that we were able to use in our salads. We love being able to pick fresh herbs, lemons and produce from the vegetable gardens to use in our meals.





## Ali's Corner

### Boulanee

#### **Leek-filled pastries.**

Makes approximately 15

When Ali brought this recipe to school and prepared it for the staff lunches, it instantly became a favourite. Staff raved about the flavors, and many asked him for the recipe afterward. What started as a simple way for Ali to share a piece of his heritage soon turned into one of the most talked-about meals in the kitchen.

- 450g sifted white plain flour (or half white, half chapati)
- 225ml water
- 450g gandana or leeks (trimmed weight), washed and finely chopped
- 3 tsp salt
- ½ tsp red pepper
- 1 tbs vegetable oil, plus extra for frying

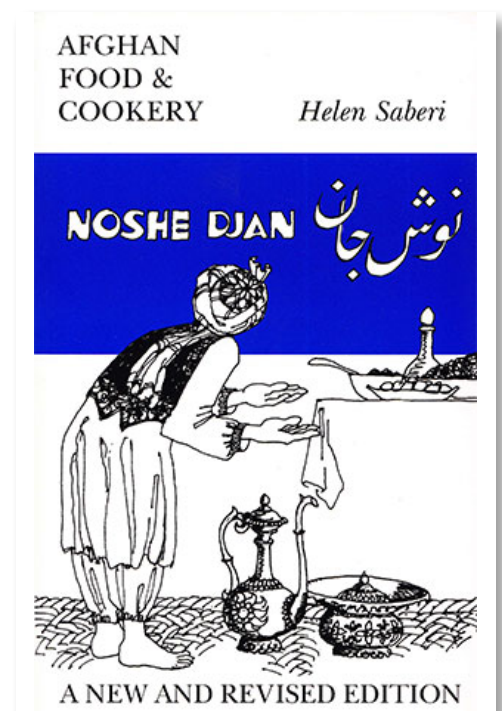
Put the flour and 1 teaspoon of salt into a mixing bowl. Add slowly as much water as required and mix to form a stiff dough. Place the dough on to a clean work surface and knead for about 5-10 minutes until the dough is elastic, smooth and shiny. Form the dough into a ball, cover with a damp cloth and set aside for at least half an hour.

Squeeze out as much water as possible from the leeks (or gandana) and put into a colander. Add 1-2 teaspoons of salt and half a teaspoon of red pepper. Mix and knead by hand until the leeks begin to soften and then add 1 tablespoon of oil. Mix again before setting aside.

Divide the dough into 3 or 4 balls. Roll out each ball as thinly as possible on a lightly floured surface (the thickness should be no more than 1.5 mm - if the dough is too thick boulanee will be tough). Take a round cutter of 13-15 cm (a pan lid or tin lid can be used), and cut out as many rounds as possible. The number of boulanee will depend on how thinly the dough is rolled out and the size of cutter used. On half of each round, spread about 2-3 tablespoons of the drained leeks. Moisten the edges of the dough, fold over, and seal shut. The boulanee should be spread out on a lightly floured surface until ready to fry. Do not place one boulanee on top of another as they will stick together.

When all the boulanee are made and you are ready to serve them, heat enough vegetable oil in a frying pan and shallow fry one or two boulanee at a time, browning on both sides. Keep warm until all are finished.

Serve at once.



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## School Wide Positive Behaviours Support

Sharon Koupparis

Learning Specialist - SWPBS | Disability Inclusion | Transition | Enrolments

During term 4, our SWPBS topic is Respect. This has been broken down into 4 sub-areas that include: 'Self-respect, Respect for our World and the Environment, the Rights and Feelings of Others and Diversity and Inclusion.' There are weekly targeted lessons to explicitly teach and reinforce these concepts in the classroom, out in the playground and in off-campus programs. We have a slide on TV displays around the school with examples of how students can show respect for one another, which is pictured below, to help remind students of school expectations.



## SWPBS - Term 4 - Be Respectful



**Welcome to Term 4! Our focus for the rest of the year will be on Respect. How**

**can we be respectful?**

**Listen**

**Speak up  
for  
yourself  
and  
others**

**Apologise**

**Be kind**

**Be on  
time**

**Respect  
Boundaries**

**Be  
polite**

**Always  
be  
honest**





## Social Media Minimum Age Coming 10 December



## How to support your child under 16 with the new social media age restrictions

From **10 December 2025**, the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 will require social media platforms to:

- prevent children and young people under 16 from having a social media account
- deactivate or freeze existing accounts held by people under 16.

Delaying access to social media protects the health and wellbeing of young people and gives them extra time to build real world connections and digital literacy skills.

The responsibility will be on the social media platforms, not parents, carers, children or schools, to implement these new restrictions.

Most popular social media platforms will be age restricted. These include **Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Reddit and YouTube.**

Messaging services and online games, as well as apps and platforms that support health and education, can still be used.

## How to help under 16s prepare for the change

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting their children to be safe online.

To help get under 16s ready for the social media minimum age requirements, you can go to the [eSafety website](#) to learn more about the social media age restrictions and find [tips on how to talk about social media age restrictions with young people](#).





## Free Public Transport

From 1 January 2026, people aged under 18 can travel free on all Victorian public transport services using a new youth myki card. This includes trams, trains, buses and coach services.

To access free travel, they must tap the myki card on and off each time they travel. For areas that do not use myki cards, they must show their myki card to travel free.

More information about the youth myki card will be available later in Term 4, 2025 – refer to the myki types webpage on the Transport Victoria website.

For more information about other travel options to school, and support for eligible students, refer to the Travelling to school webpage on the Victorian Government website.



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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=30091812>





**What to do after High School?**

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- **COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING** •  
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**ndis**

**Understanding the NDIS Webinar Series**  
**'Overview of changes to NDIS legislation'**  
This webinar is for participants, families, carers and kin.

We want to tell you about changes to the NDIS. This webinar will help you understand:

- **What is new**
- **What has changed**
- **What will change soon**

We will cover a variety of topics in this session including the most up to date information on support needs assessments, the new way of planning, funding periods, impairment information and other legislative reforms.

Following the presentation, you will have an opportunity to ask our speaker questions.

This session is offered over multiple dates to allow flexibility for attendees. Each session will cover the same content. Please only register for the date you wish to attend. Sessions will be delivered via video-conference using Microsoft Teams. Registrations will close one business day prior to the session. One business day prior to the session, login details (including the MS Teams link) will be sent via email from [events@ndis.gov.au](mailto:events@ndis.gov.au) to the email address you provide at registration (this email may filter to your junk mail).

**Where:** Virtual information session delivered via Microsoft Teams

**Date & Time:**

Thursday, 4 December 2025 (1:00pm - 2:00pm AEDT)

Wednesday, 10 December 2025 (11:00am - 12:00pm AEDT)

**Register here:**

[Understanding the NDIS: Overview of Changes to NDIS for Participants, families and carers](#)

**Additional information:** Accessibility is important to us and we'll always do our best to support accessibility needs. If you have accessibility requirements, please let us know when you register. Please note, service providers can require up to five (5) business days' notice for bookings.



ndis.gov.au



## COMBINED ARTWORK EXHIBITION



HEATHERWOOD  
SCHOOL



**Friday 28th November 2025 – 4pm to 6pm**

**Mitcham Community House, 19 Brunswick Road, Mitcham**

***Come along and view  
our students' wonderful work!***

*teaching*

*connecting*

*supporting*

### A Good Life

A virtual hub for families of  
young people with disability



online  
HUB

ACD  
Advocating  
children  
with disability

We are excited to officially launch [A Good Life virtual hub!](#)

A Good Life includes webinar recordings that focus on life after school for young people with disability, and are full of practical ideas and real-life insights:

- **Supported Decision Making:** tips on how to support your young person to make decisions about their future
- **Wills and Estate Planning:** guidance on planning for your child's long-term financial security.
- **Microboards:** how to build a strong team of support around your young person
- **Post-school:** parents talk about what's next. Hear directly from parents who share the pathways and options that helped create fulfilling, meaningful days for their children beyond school.

So, if you missed the webinars in August, or if you want to listen to them again, check out our new virtual hub today.





## School Office

### Student Sign In And Out

Students who are picked up **before 2:45pm** must be signed out by an adult at the office.

Students picked up at **2:45pm onward** will be supervised at the back gate until they are collected.

**Students must be picked up no later than 3:00pm.**

Please remind students to check for cars when walking through the car park.



Just a  
Friendly  
Reminder

### Parents & Carers

- Please ensure your students' clothes are clearly labelled with their full name.
- Remind your young person **not** to share food with other students, due to health and safety reasons.

### 2025 Yearbook

The 2025 Yearbook will **only** be ordered for your student if the \$25.00 charge has been paid in full.

NB: Full payment is required **before** November. Reserve your copy now!

### Second Hand Uniform

The school is always seeking to source good quality **second hand** uniform items. If you have garments to donate, the school will graciously accept them. Thank you!

### Playground Supervision

Parents/Carers are reminded that **playground supervision** is provided from 8:45am on school days until the last contract bus departs after school and that no formal supervision of the playground occurs outside those hours.



### CROWN & QUINCES Buses

If at any time your young person is not travelling on the bus to school **or** home from school you must do each of the following:

1. Inform **the school** on 9842 8319 **OR** write a note in your young person's diary.
2. Inform the **bus company**  
**CROWN 9845 1455**  
**QUINCES 8506 2700**



BOTH THE SCHOOL AND THE BUS COMPANY NEED TO KNOW OF ANY CHANGES THAT OCCUR.