

The Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.



Launch of the Abbotsleigh Women in Leadership Academy

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

Empowering our girls to lead as we celebrate the launch of the Abbotsleigh Women in Leadership Academy and 'Journey with Joy' in 2026

In a milestone moment in our school's history, Abbotsleigh proudly introduces the **Abbotsleigh Women in Leadership Academy** – the first of its kind in an all-girls' school.

Mrs Victoria Rennie, Deputy Headmistress

It is with absolute pride and delight that we launched our Women in Leadership Academy at Abbotsleigh this week in both the Junior and Senior Schools. In leading

this outstanding initiative, Mrs Victoria Rennie has spent the last two years working with our girls, conducting extensive research and visiting schools both in Australia and overseas to develop this superb, groundbreaking academy for our girls. I am extremely grateful to Mrs Rennie for her vision, hard work and dedication in developing what promises to be an exceptional program for all our girls, Pre K-12.

Mrs Rennie has written an excellent article that explains the philosophy and the important elements of the Abbotsleigh Women in Leadership Academy. I warmly commend Mrs Rennie's article to you.

Empowering our girls to Lead

Mrs Victoria Rennie
Deputy Headmistress

For more than 140 years, Abbotsleigh has been committed to empowering young women – encouraging them to be brave, to speak up for themselves and for others and to step confidently into leadership. This year, we are proud to take that commitment to a new level as we launch a groundbreaking initiative that will shape the future of leadership education for girls.

In a milestone moment in our school's history, Abbotsleigh proudly introduces the **Abbotsleigh Women in Leadership Academy** – the first of its kind in an all-girls' school. This Academy represents a bold and intentional investment in the courage, intellect and potential of every Abbotsleigh girl. It is designed to open doors, amplify student voice and strengthen the leadership capacity within our community and beyond.

As Mrs Krimmer noted at the beginning of the year, 2026 will be a new chapter in Abbotsleigh's history that we are writing together. The Women in Leadership Academy is a significant part of that new chapter – one that celebrates curiosity, resilience, purpose and joy.





Why a Leadership Academy?

The answer lies in the profound truth we see lived out every day at Abbotsleigh: when girls are given opportunities, skills and confidence, they lead with integrity, compassion, courage and vision. The world urgently needs that kind of leadership – leadership that reflects the depth, insight and moral strength of young women.

Our belief is unwavering: every Abbotsleigh girl is a leader. Not someday, not only when she receives a badge or title – but now. Leadership begins with character, with values, with the small decisions made every day. The Academy exists because we believe deeply in the potential within every student who walks through our gates.

The Women in Leadership Academy will offer the girls access to rich and varied opportunities designed to support their growth, broaden their experience and strengthen their capacity to lead confidently.

These include:

- **Leadership classes** designed to build core skills and deepen self-awareness
- **Mentoring programs** with inspiring leaders across business, science, law, the arts and public service
- **Opportunities to lead** within Houses, clubs, committees and service initiatives
- **Authentic, real-world leadership experiences** that encourage students to think critically and act ethically
- **Specialised Academy projects** that empower students to apply their learning in practical ways
- **Representation at external leadership forums, youth summits and conferences**

These experiences ensure that leadership learning extends well beyond the classroom. Girls will practise everyday leadership – collaboration, initiative, communication and influence – while making a meaningful impact in our school community.

As the inaugural cohort, the girls also carry a unique privilege: they will shape the traditions and direction of the Academy for future generations. Their ideas, contributions and voice will help lay the foundations for a program that will endure long into the school's future.



Insights from the couch: a conversation with the Chair of Council

To celebrate the Academy's launch, we were honoured to welcome Ms Linda Ellis, Abbotsleigh Old Girl and Chair of Council, who joined Head Prefect Laura Jones for a special edition of 'Conversations on the couch'. Ms Ellis shared her leadership journey with honesty, warmth and humour, offering invaluable wisdom to our students.

Reflecting on her time as a prefect, she emphasised that leadership is rooted in service – not prestige. Her duties were often practical and unnoticed: front gate duty, supporting girls with 'fatigue', and ensuring the school ran smoothly. These experiences taught her that true leadership is grounded in humility and a willingness to do what needs to be done.

She spoke fondly of her involvement with CRU and the leadership lessons she learned as she helped build community and foster meaningful relationships across year groups. She also recounted her editorial work on *The Weaver* – writing about glasnost and perestroika during a time of significant global change – and how that ignited her passion for geopolitics and purposeful leadership.

Ms Ellis also addressed the barriers she faced as a young woman entering male-dominated industries. Her message was powerful: the resilience built through hardship, the confidence instilled at Abbotsleigh and the belief that she could lead became vital strengths. Her encouragement to students was clear – develop strong character, understand that leaders serve others, build community and be 'courteously insubordinate': willing to question, reflect and challenge with respect.

Leadership begins today

Following Ms Ellis's inspiring conversation, the girls were reminded that leadership begins now. Every act of kindness, every moment of courage and every choice guided by values reflects leadership in action. It is about impact, not titles.

Honouring our Year 12 leaders

It was fitting that we concluded our Senior School Assembly by recognising our Year 12 students with the presentation of their white ribbons – an annual symbol of their leadership and their place as role models within our school community.



Chaplain

A journey: a new start

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

Many of us know what it feels like to begin a new journey. Early in my marriage, moving from Sydney to Melbourne felt huge; it was exciting but also heavy with many unknowns. Many families in our community have travelled even further, leaving homes, cultures and sometimes countries to begin again. These stories remind us to show empathy and welcome others who are starting out.

Abraham's story in the Bible was a new start. He left what was familiar, an old way of life, and stepped into God's promise. Through God's promise of a family and nation, Abraham and his family were blessed to be a blessing, or a light, to others. Like all of us, they struggled to live this out, yet from this family came Jesus. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we can experience God's salvation when we begin that new journey with him.

As Abraham was blessed to be a blessing, seen fully through Jesus, may we this year recognise our blessings and look for ways to be a blessing on the journeys around us.

Genesis 12:1-2

Now the Lord had said to Abram:
'Get out of your country, from your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
² I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you and make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.'

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

lines and lines and lines exhibition	Friday 30 January to Saturday 28 February	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
SchoolTV program – student wellbeing resources	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	Click here to watch

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Kindergarten eyesight testing	Monday 9 February 9 am-12 noon	
Year 6 Spit to Manly walk	Tuesday 10 February	
Kindergarten parent morning tea	Wednesday 11 February 8-9.30 am	Bundarra Lawn

Primary Swimming and Diving Carnival	Friday 13 February 8.30 am-3 pm	Senior School Aquatic Centre
Year 4 parent morning tea	Monday 16 February 8-9.30 am	Bundarra Lawn
Kindergarten eyesight testing	Monday 16 February 8-9.30 am	
ELC Lunar New Year morning tea	Tuesday 17 February 8-9.30 am	ELC
Year 3 parent morning tea	Wednesday 18 February 8-9.30 am	Bundarra Lawn
Lunar New Year parent morning tea	Thursday 19 February 8.30-10 am	Library Plaza
Year 3 Friendship Day	Friday 20 February	

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday sport	Saturday 7 and Saturday 14 February	Click here for times and venues
Year 9 Parent information night and BBQ	Monday 9 February 6-8 pm	PDCH and Marian Clarke Plaza
Senior School Diving Carnival	Wednesday 11 February 3.45-5 pm	Senior School Aquatic Centre
Year 7 Parent information night and BBQ	Thursday 12 February 6-8 pm	PDCH and Marian Clarke Plaza
House Choir competition	Friday 13 February 8.20-10.20 am	
Year 11 Science excursion	Wednesday 18 February	Australian Museum
ISDA Debating	Friday 20 February 4-9 pm	Various Senior School locations
Senior School Diving Carnival	Wednesday 11 February 3.45-5 pm	Senior School Aquatic Centre
Year 7 Parent information night and BBQ	Thursday 12 February 6-8 pm	PDCH and Marian Clarke Plaza
House Choir competition	Friday 13 February 8.20-10.20 am	