

The Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.



'Thank you for being you' – Abbotsleigh commemorates National Harmony Week as we 'Journey With Joy' together

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

It is wonderful that each year at Abbotsleigh we commemorate a very important week in our national calendar – Harmony Week. 'Harmony Week is the celebration that recognises our diversity and brings together Australians from all different backgrounds. It's about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.' ([Harmony Week - Everyone belongs](#)) This message is SO important in 2026.

I am very grateful to every member of the Senior School SRC, so capably led by our SRC Prefects, Alicia Ho and Eleanor Zhu, for the superb assembly they organised in the Senior School on Tuesday, and for what promises to be an outstanding celebration of our diverse cultures in the forthcoming Harmony Week Festival next Friday.

In the words of Alicia Ho, we were 'honoured to welcome Mrs Christine Wan' as our assembly guest speaker. 'Mrs Wan is a multi-award-winning entrepreneur, speaker, coach and author who inspires people to find their voice and speak with confidence.' She is also the well-known Abbotsleigh mother of Isabella (2021), Emily (2025) and Evangeline, who is currently in Year 4.

'Mrs Wan's story is one of resilience and courage. Immigrating to Australia from Vietnam as a young child,

her difficult and vulnerable experience has shaped her understanding of identity, belonging and strength. Her 2025 poetry collection, "Letting Go", reflects on that journey, inviting her readers to consider the lasting impact of displacement, the power of healing and the strength of the human spirit.' We are very grateful indeed that Mrs Wan has donated two copies of her collection to the Betty Archdale Library. Thank you, Mrs Wan.

By asking each girl to turn to the girl next to her and say the very powerful words of gratitude and belonging – 'Thank you for being you', Mrs Wan's message to our girls – to appreciate one another, was very impactful. Equally impactful was Mrs Wan's message – to be kind – always.

I warmly invite you to read our Deputy Headmistress, Mrs Victoria Rennie's excellent article that highlights the special moments of our assembly, including Mrs Wan reading her evocative poem, 'Federation House 1980 – for 20 years', and Kayley Yip of Year 8 reading her poignant poem, 'Tong Jyun'. Kayley's beautiful poem follows Mrs Rennie's article.



Harmony Day 2026 at Abbotsleigh

Mrs Victoria Rennie
Deputy Headmistress

Harmony Day is always a special moment in our school year when we pause to celebrate the mix of cultures, stories and experiences that make the Abbotsleigh community the rich tapestry that it is. Harmony Day reminds us that belonging isn't just for one day; it's something we create together through kindness, empathy and the simple act of listening to one another.

This year's Harmony Day assembly captured that message perfectly. We were delighted to welcome parent and published poet Mrs Christine Wan, who began her talk by sharing her poem 'Federation House 1980 – for 20 Years'. Through her words, she invited us into the layered memories of place and identity.

Christine then joined Prefect Rachael Pearce 'on the couch' for a heartfelt conversation about her family's journey from Vietnam to Australia and her parents' difficult decision to leave home, as well as her own experience joining them as a young child years later. Christine spoke with honesty and warmth about the resilience of her parents, the challenges of beginning again and the gratitude she feels for the life they built here.

Christine also shared her reflections on the meaning of culture. She said that, for her, culture isn't necessarily tied to race but is instead a way of life that we shape through the values and relationships we build around us. It was a poignant reminder that culture is something we live and create every day, often in the quiet choices we make and the communities we nurture. What struck many of us was her gentle reminder not to take our everyday blessings for granted: the joy of friends, the comfort of family, our freedoms and even the simple gift of food on the table. She encouraged us to practise kindness, to look up from our busy days and to say to the people around us, 'thank you for being you'.

At our assembly, we were also proud to hear Year 8 student Kayley Yip read her poem 'Tong Jyun'. Her powerful, thoughtful piece explored themes of home, memory, leaving Hong Kong and belonging, themes which echo the very heart of Harmony Day.

In our current climate, Christine's and Kayley's messages feel especially important. Harmony, kindness and gratitude are not abstract ideas, they are choices we make every day. And, as we look around at the life we share in Australia, it's a good moment to appreciate all we have and the wonderful Abbotsleigh community we create together.

Thank you to our SRC Prefects, Alicia Ho and Eleanor Zhu, for organising such a moving assembly and to Rachael Pearce for her thought-provoking questions.

Tong Jyun
Kayley Yip (Year 8)

It's just a white porcelain bowl.
Round, glossy, and smooth.
It's Tong Jyun.
Soft and sticky spheres,
with oozing black sesame centres,
floating in sweet ginger soup,
like full moons in an amber sky.

But here's the thing:
Sometimes the smallest things
carry the heaviest memories.

Back in Hong Kong,
it meant
Winter solstice.

The calm simmer of sweet soup.
The soft plop as the Tong Jyun slid onto the bowl
– it's a quiet rhythm in the kitchen,
A subtle invitation for reunion, happiness and warmth.

The soft slurping around the table,
The laughter and the porcelain clinking,
my brother always asking:
'just one more'.
Warmth.
Even when it was cold outside.

Then we moved
– to Australia.
A slower clock, a softer edge.

Evenings open, streets quiet and wide.
Just frozen Tong Jyun from the Asian grocer.
Memories that feel out of place.

But here's the thing.
When I bite into one,
soft but resilient,
the roasted black sesame melting in my mouth,
suddenly,
I am not so far.

Every bite
is a way of saying:
I remember
I belong
I am who I am.

So if you tasted something
And remembered everything
– your language, your people,
your old street, your old self,
then you know;

Sometimes the smallest things
hold your world.



Chaplain

Harmony

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

We can hear harmony when musicians keep time with one another, balancing tone and volume, blending each instrument to create a unified, multi-layered sound. Though different individuals, a harmonic dance group moves in sync, aware of spacing and supporting each other. Last week, Year 11s experienced the joy of Dragon Boat racing, trying to sync their oar strokes as a team.

Similarly, the Apostle Paul encouraged the Christian community in Colossae (and by extension those of Christian faith now) to live in harmony with one another. In Colossians 3:14, Paul writes that love is the virtue that 'binds everything together in perfect unity.'

Harmony is not just about working together efficiently or having exactly the same position; it is about choosing Christ like attitudes, including respect, kindness, patience, forgiveness and humility. These virtues then shape our interactions with others. When we listen well, honouring one another's differences, we use our gifts for the good of the whole community.



Mindful of Harmony Week, may we seek to practise these daily as we follow the example of Jesus.

Colossians 3:12-14

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

Parent Wellbeing Hive - parent wellbeing resources	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	Click here to visit
ART NORTH exhibition	Saturday 7 to Saturday 28 March	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Last day of Term 1	Wednesday 1 April	
Boarder travel day	Thursday 2 April	

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Cinema Under the Stars	Saturday 21 March 5-8 pm	Junior School campus
JS Parent Teacher interviews	Monday 23 to Friday 27 March	Junior School campus
Year 6 Halogen Young Leaders day	Tuesday 24 March	
Years 5 and 6 ySafe digital wellbeing education	Wednesday 25 March 8.30-9.30 am	
Year 3 ySafe digital wellbeing education	Wednesday 25 March 9.45-10.45 am	
Year 4 ySafe digital wellbeing education	Wednesday 25 March 11.15 am-12.15 pm	
Years 4 to 6 Easter Service	Tuesday 31 March 8.30-9.30 am	Senior School Chapel
K- 3 Easter Service	Tuesday 31 March 9.30-10.30 am	Senior School Chapel
Years 3 and 5 URStrong online parent info session	Tuesday 31 March 6-7.30 pm	Click here

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday sport	Saturday 21 and Saturday 28 March	Click here for times and venues
Year 11 assessment week	Monday 23 to Friday 27 March	
Year 10 vaccinations	Monday 23 March 8.20 am-1.30 pm	GLC
Years 9 and 10 Science and Engineering Challenge	Tuesday 24 March	SOPAC, Homebush
CIS Swimming and Diving Carnival	Wednesday 25 March	SOPAC, Homebush
Year 7 Parent Teacher interviews	Wednesday 25 March 3.30-8.30 pm	Online
Year 12 Geography fieldtrip	Wednesday 25 to Friday 27 March	Southern NSW
Harmony Day Festival	Friday 27 March 12.45-2.10 pm	Top Oval
Model United Nations conference	Saturday 28 March 8 am-5 pm	Senior School Library / iHub
Year 7 camp	Monday 30 March to Wednesday 1 April	CRU Lake Macquarie
Years 11 and 12 Engineering Studies excursion	Monday 30 March	University of Sydney
Year 10 Drama excursion	Tuesday 31 March 11 am-2.15 pm	Ensemble Theatre, Sydney
Women in Global Relations breakfast	Wednesday 1 April 7-8.15 am	Senior School Cafeteria

