

The Shuttle

Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.

Public Speaking – A 'Journey With Joy'

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

It is said that public speaking is the one thing that many people fear the most; in fact, the research indicates that at least 77% of the population suffers from *glossophobia* (public speaking anxiety). Yet, speaking in public is an essential skill, and for girls, it is especially important that they develop the skill of speaking in public confidently and in a manner that is compelling, interesting and authoritative.

As such, I am delighted that our girls, from the youngest in Transition to the oldest in Year 12, have so many opportunities to develop their public speaking skills. For many, the journey taken to develop this important skill is not easy and does not necessarily fill them with 'joy'. Yet, I am so proud of the way they engage in critical thinking, prepare so well and practise so hard, and I am especially



impressed with the way so many really do become very good at public speaking. They certainly gain such a sense of achievement when they master this skill.

This week, we held our annual Senior College Public Speaking finals – and in true Abbotsleigh style, our finalists were superb. The girls delivered prepared and impromptu speeches that not only contained great depth but were also topical and engaging with just the right element of humour. I am sure you will all join me in sincerely congratulating the winner of our Public Speaking Competition, Zhujin Zhang (Year 12), and our runners-up, Zoe Sun (Year 10) and Stacy Foxcroft (Year 11). The girls' superb speeches are found below. I warmly commend each speech to you.



Sephora Kids

Zoe Sun, Year 10

Every morning and night, I go through my skincare routine so properly that it's almost religious. And I've realised something – if I don't do it from start to finish twice a day, I start feeling like I'm failing to take care of myself.

This makes me wonder: why do I feel like I need to use all these products just to feel okay?

Now, we call these things personal care products, because they're meant to improve our skin health, clean our faces and so on. But somewhere along the way, social media has branded **consumption** as wellness and healing, convincing people that buying more things is the same as looking after themselves.

This has put pressure on us to constantly consume more. And that is why I felt like my current lip balm was not enough, and why I had to use all those products.

This pressure also comes in so many forms. For example, girls are pushed toward skincare, makeup, and looking effortlessly perfect.

Meanwhile, boys are often targeted with fitness culture and trends like 'looksmaxxing', which encourages them to constantly upgrade their appearance too, through products and 'fixes', to better improve themselves. We see TikTok shopping filled with things we are told we need.

So, here's my question – why does self-care come with a price tag and a checkout button?

Well, big corporations and influencers profit by selling the idea that consumption equals self-care, and we as a society have also adopted that mentality. But why is this such a big issue?

Because it targets a vulnerable audience: teenagers and young children, who are still developing their self-image. We all want to fit in, and influencers and brands take advantage of that by selling confidence and belonging to a young, impressionable audience, disguising it as 'treating yourself with the things you need'. And when this becomes a requirement to feel acceptable, it stops being real self-care.

A great example is what the media calls 'Sephora Kids', who are girls as young as 12 using high-end cosmetic products intended for adults, due to constant advertising.

What's worse is that trends keep on rising, dying off and rising again. This unending cycle perpetuates the attitude that the items we already own will never be enough.

The government ban on social media for under-16s is unable to fix this either, because this widespread mindset present in older siblings, advertisements and peer pressure cannot be easily removed.

These consumption habits are also extremely costly. By keeping up with the trend and using \$40 of Afterpay every few weeks, this kind of shopping turns into a habit that leads to long-term financial stress.

And finally, this hurts our environment in so many ways. Fast production drains our natural resources. Waste from products accumulates in landfills. 54,000 tonnes of all microplastic pollution comes from personal care products.

I haven't even started on the plastic packaging! The least we can do is make sure that our self-care doesn't come at the expense of our beautiful planet's environment.

So, what can we do instead?

Real self-care, the type that doesn't cost hundreds of dollars, harm nature or diminish our confidence, can be easily done at home.

It looks like eating well, sleeping well, exercising, journalling, having hobbies and spending time with our family and friends. These things directly improve our mental and physical health, making us happier, healthier and more well rested.

So, before we buy something, we ought to ask ourselves, how much do I really want this? It's time to take a step back and reconsider.

For example, we can give ourselves a 48-hour rule to wait before purchasing, to avoid impulse buying. We can use things we already own for a good while before we need a new one. We can stop watching, liking and following the videos that pressure people to keep up with short-lived trends.

These are everyone's responsibility. They sound like small choices, but those are what matter. If we all change our mindset, then algorithms will respond to what we watch, companies will respond to what we buy and influencers will respond to what gets attention online.

In this way, we can change what we view as normal, and most importantly, we can remember that we deserve better than an algorithm telling us how to take care of ourselves.



Sport for life

Stacy Foxcroft, Year 11

What am I doing? Why didn't I quit last week and how am I going to survive another two hours of gruelling exercise? These are all thoughts that run through my head as I step into the 'dojo', often returning with bruises and battle scars and definitely with my face looking like a tomato. I have to admit something – for me, sports can be really challenging – yet at the same time, I can't imagine my life without them.

Many studies have been published about the benefits of sport. From preventing cancer to cardiovascular disease, sport has been shown to have major benefits. But sports are not only useful for staying healthy; they are so much more. Yet many young Australians seem to be thinking it's less and less worthwhile.

So why are so many young people dropping out of sport?

To understand this, I decided to dig deeper. I found that, along with social and cultural pressures, one of the main reasons was to 'focus on academics'. Maybe it's all the hours we have spent watching movies where the arrogant, less-than-genius jocks are portrayed as the 'sporty ones', not the smart ones, implying that those are mutually exclusive.

On the surface, it makes sense, less time spent on sport equals more time studying, right? However, as I saw in my life, this was not the case. My extra time was mostly spent scrolling and when it wasn't, my studying was less focused and effective.

Sports, particularly team sports, are instrumental in learning how to work with others and bear responsibility – and to be honest, they are also just a lot of fun.

Another concern, especially among young women, is that young people fear judgment or bullying in sport. Although this is a huge issue, it's also an opportunity to change the culture around sport and make an impact.

Now, take for example the iconic Cathy Freeman, the first Indigenous person to win an individual international gold medal – her performance helped to unify the country, as Australia came together to cheer for their champion!

But, in order to get there, she overcame struggles with poverty, and she tells the story of how, as a kid, she would watch white Australians receive trophies instead of her, even though she beat them.

Yet because of her victory, sport in Australia will never be the same.

For everyday girls like me, sport also has a host of benefits for mental health. The Women's Sports Foundation in the UK found that women and girls who play sport have higher levels of confidence and self-esteem, lower levels of depression and generally a more positive body image.

But sport isn't just useful to our own personal growth, it can create a sense of connection and unity.

One time, I experienced how sports have brought connection, even in simple and mundane circumstances, is when I was younger. My brother and I were in a very poor neighbourhood, called a township. We began watching a group of kids similar in age to us playing

soccer, but with an empty Milo tin instead of a ball. We didn't speak the language or even know their names, but we did share two things: our humanity and a joint enjoyment of soccer. Eventually, they looked at us, kicked the tin to my brother and, without saying a word, he kicked it back. Soon we were encompassed in the game, celebrating our goals with smiles on our faces – all of this with kids we would never have spoken to without that Milo tin.

Now you may be thinking this is great and all, but I'm not an Olympic athlete, and I'm certainly not the next Paige Bueckers or Cathy Freeman. But I am going to assure you, I am definitely not either. Yet sport has provided me with opportunities I would not have had – from learning to be a role model and coaching netball for younger girls, to meeting people so different from me we wouldn't normally have met, and letting me step into leadership positions.

So, if like me, the next time your alarm rings at 6 am and sport is the last thing you want to do, think about what it means, for not only you as an individual but for your community, your country and the world as a whole.

I'd like to conclude with a quote from Nelson Mandela, who said:

'Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. *It speaks to youth in a language they understand.*'



The architecture of medical misogyny

Zhujin Zhang Year 12

Before I begin, I want you to picture a scene:

A woman sits in an emergency room, cold sweat on her skin, pain creeping up her neck.
She feels lightheaded. Fatigued. Something isn't right.

She tells the doctor she needs help.
But she isn't rushed in.
She's told it might just be anxiety, maybe stress.
So, she waits.
As doctors rush past, her breathing grows shallow.

The nausea worsens.
She isn't overreacting.
She isn't anxious.

She is having a heart attack, one that doesn't match the textbook symptoms doctors were trained to recognise.
And that textbook? It was written on men.

And this is a reflection of medical misogyny in our status quo. It is the systemic gender biases in healthcare that dismisses and minimises a woman's pain. And reportedly, two out of every three women have felt this.

When a woman enters a healthcare clinic, her physical suffering is routinely misdiagnosed as psychological fragility due to being stereotyped as more 'emotional' and unreliable reporters of their own pain. For example, in cardiac care, where doctors were trained to recognise heart attacks based on male presentations – chest pain radiating down the left arm, sudden and dramatic – forming the historical 'standard' presentation in medical training, women experience different symptoms, including nausea, jaw pain and fatigue – signs that are often dismissed as stress.

In many illnesses, extending beyond just cardiac conditions but also to autoimmune disorders and chronic pain, women are often denied treatment and sent home with a script for anxiety medication, since what they are feeling is often attributed to being an emotional response, rather than a biological reality.



This is the result of a medical system built on male physiology as the default standard, where male bodies are used as the standard reference in medical textbooks and examples of typical patients. This has resulted in a weaker understanding of how illnesses impact women differently, establishing gaps in diagnoses, treatments and health outcomes. For example, women were excluded from clinical trials until the FDA's reversal of its exclusionary policy in 1993, which finally catalysed a global shift towards enrolling female participants. Due to the lack of women in clinical trials, dosing was calibrated based on the 'average' male metabolism. Thus, many medications, even now, still fail to account for sex-based differences in drug absorption and distribution within the body, contributing to significantly higher rates of adverse drug reactions in women and worsening their health outcomes.

Now, let us return to the waiting room. Let's assume that this woman is effectively diagnosed – she is successfully treated and she lives.

Yet, the truth is that although medical misogyny may begin inside hospitals, textbooks or even medical training, its implications extend to affect our daily lives, outside of a doctor's office.

Even now, society is conditioned to view women's pains, exhaustion and physical limitations as 'normal'. This dismissal forces us to constantly self-advocate and

downplay our discomfort, simply to conform to public places such as school or work. Colleagues dismiss a woman's severe fatigue as 'stress' or 'hormones', while families tell her to push through debilitating menstrual pain. Women themselves internalise this disbelief, feeling that their pains are not valid, waiting up to years before they seek help. Ultimately, when the very institutions meant to protect human health systematically doubt half the human population, society listens, and society learns to doubt us too, forcing us to navigate a world that actively ignores our physical reality.

At the end of the day, medicine is built to protect us. But the premise of protection firstly requires you to be seen.

When a woman enters a clinic or an emergency room, her pain shouldn't require a debate, her symptoms shouldn't need a negotiation. We don't need women to tolerate more pain, but instead, we need a healthcare system that is willing to listen to what she says.

Now, when we think back to the woman still in the waiting room, she isn't just a single person. Instead, she represents the broader experience of every woman interacting with the healthcare system.

She could be someone you know,
Or maybe one day,
She could be you.

Chaplain



A journey, not a finish line

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

Weekend runs have become increasingly popular, whether to support charities or to pursue personal goals. We also set our own goals, whether it's working towards a degree or qualification or even creating something meaningful, like a handmade gift for someone special. As we head towards the end of Semester 1, for many, the goal is looking ahead to the holidays.

The Christian life, however, is not about reaching a perfect endpoint where everything is complete and polished. Instead, it is a continual journey of growth, learning and ongoing transformation. In Philippians, the Apostle Paul reminds us that even with all his credentials, he had not 'arrived' as being like Jesus but was still pressing on. Each step forward, no matter how small, is part of God's work in us. Faith is less about perfection and more about direction by continuing to move towards Christ, even when the path feels slow or uncertain.

This perspective reshapes how we see both success and struggle. When life feels difficult, when mistakes happen, they are not the end of the story but part of the process of growth. And the good news of Jesus is that He meets us in the midst of this journey. He is not only waiting at the end, when we have changed and grown; rather, God sent Jesus while we were still far from Him, so that through Him we can be rescued and brought near. As a community, we can encourage one another to keep going, to take the next step and trust that God is at work at every stage of the journey, even when we cannot yet see the finish line.

Philippians 3:12-14

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

Parent Wellbeing Hive – parent wellbeing resources	Available to all parents on the Parent Portal	Click here to visit
Pacific Highway pedestrian overpass overnight closure	Tuesday 28 April to Friday 31 July 9 pm-5 am	15 temporary overnight closures to complete work on pedestrian overpass
Young Curators exhibition	Thursday 4 to Saturday 13 June	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Years 6-12 Prefect Festival	Friday 19 June 12.40-2 pm	Senior School Top Oval
Polarising exhibition	Wednesday 24 June to Saturday 11 July	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Women in STEAM Breakfast	Wednesday 24 June 7-8.15 am	Senior School Library Seminar Rooms
Last day of Term 2	Thursday 25 June	
First day of Term 3, all students	Tuesday 21 July	

JUNIOR SCHOOL

JS Production dress rehearsal and photos	Saturday 13 June 2-5 pm	Everett Hall
Year 4 Judith Krause session	Monday 15 June Sessions during morning periods	Year 4 classrooms
Junior School Production matinee	Wednesday 17 June 12.45-1.45 pm	Everett Hall
Junior School Production	Thursday 18 and Friday 19 June 7-8 pm	Everett Hall
Infants Athletics Carnival	Friday 19 June	JS Campus
Year 6 Fundraiser	Tuesday 23 June 12.30-2 pm	JS Campus

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday sport	Saturday 13 June	Click here for times and venues
Art Space/Left2Write Art and Literary Fair	Monday 15 to Wednesday 17 June 1.15-2.10 pm	iHub
House Football	Monday 15 June 1.20-2.10 pm	Synthetic and Top Oval
Celebration Concert	Monday 15 June 7-9 pm	PDCH
Year 7 Geography field trip	Tuesday 16 June	Bondi Beach
Year 7 History excursion	Tuesday 16 June	Chau Chak Wing Museum
IGSA Archdale Debating round 5	Tuesday 16 June 4-8 pm	Various locations
House Football	Wednesday 17 June 1.20-2.10 pm	Synthetic and Top Oval
Year 11 Geography field trip	Monday 22 to Wednesday 24 June	NSW Mid North Coast
Year 12 Latin study day excursion	Tuesday 23 June	Barker College
Y9 Elective Music Schubertiade	Wednesday 24 June 9.40-11 am	PDCH
Year 11 2027 subject selection parent info night	Thursday 24 June 6.30-8.30 pm	Assembly Hall
Boarder travel day	Friday 26 June	

