

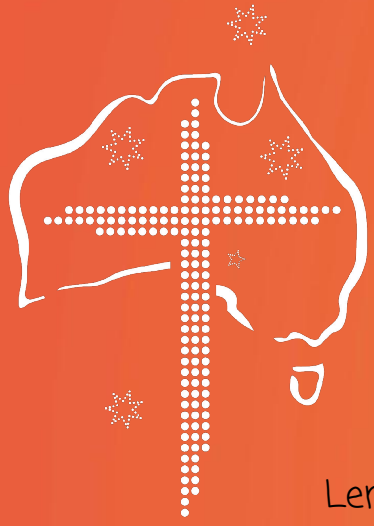


Catholic Education
CELEBRATING 200 YEARS
Faith in the future



**Alumni from each decade of
St Patrick's Port Fairy,
sharing their memories and experiences
of Catholic education and how they are still involved with St
Patrick's today.**





Catholic Education
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Parent of John, Gail, Pam, Ken & Elise.
Great Grandmother of
Lenny (Year 5), James (Year 2) & Poppy Sproal.



1930s alumni

Val Sproal (Leishman)

I have fond memories of St Patrick's and especially some of the nuns who taught me. Sr. Mary Rose was a delight, so sweet. She was an extremely good teacher, played football with the boys and was responsible for Colin, my brother, becoming a solicitor. Sr. Mary Rose once taught 3 grades, (6, 7 and 8) all in one room as another Nun was away. I remember that she managed this beautifully. I can recall she encouraged outdoor activities also.

The school consisted of 4 classrooms and I loved maths and composition, (essays). We always said Grace before and after meals. Before we left for home each day we would say a Hail Mary. I enjoyed playing basketball and I loved beating the State school!

A parting quote from Val-
"Children today are far more advanced than we ever were!"



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Parent of Peter, Shane, Patrick, Mary Anne,
Marguerite, Helen & Mark
Grandmother of Jenna (2017) & Heidi Winnen (2020)
Jason (2003), Damien (2004) & Rochelle Winnen (2008)
Kristopher (2000) & Jamie Winnen (2003)
Amanda (1999) & Stephanie Winnen (2002)

Winnen



1940s alumni

Anne Winnen (Gall)

In the 1940s the Nuns ran St Patrick's and there were two grades in each classroom. School began with a morning prayer followed by a hymn. After lunch each day we would say the rosary. In those days St Patrick's went up to 7th and 8th grade. I can recall the old school having a fireplace. School finished at 4pm and all the kids would play marbles out the front of the convent. The nuns would come out an hour later and we were told to go home.

At 13, I played the organ at St Patrick's church for the choir and I continued to do so for the next 20 years, playing for weddings and other special occasions. After the floods in 1946, when I was 14 I left school at St Anne's but shortly after Sr. Rose invited me to St Patrick's to help teach the Preps in the old music room. Over the next 6 months I assisted by teaching the preps counting before I got a job.

Winnen House (Red) at St Patrick's is named after the Winnen family who have been heavily involved with the life of St Patrick's Primary School and Parish, through their actions and deeds, for many years.





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Parent of Rachel, Monique, Anna-Lee & Blair.

Sister of Jim, Barbara, Bruce, Antonia.

Grandmother of Oscar (2017), Grace (2019) & Harry Pollock (Year 6)

Grandmother Dusty (Year 5), Lulubelle (Year 2), Beau, Duke & Tully Robertson.

Kerrie, back left



1950s alumni

Kerrie Robertson (Leishman)

These memories began 66 years ago. At four years of age I started school in a big, old, dark, cold room. After a few months I was moved into Grade One, another big, dark room.

At morning playtime we had to drink a bottle of milk which was delivered each day. There was no consideration given to the fact of whether you liked milk or indeed, if you were allergic!

One day the Inspector of Catholic schools arrived... a scary man. He would visit each room and ask questions. One particular day he asked me to stand and recite 'The Hail Holy Queen'. I promptly froze and couldn't remember the prayer. I felt embarrassed and humiliated. Goodness me, that is something I will never forget!

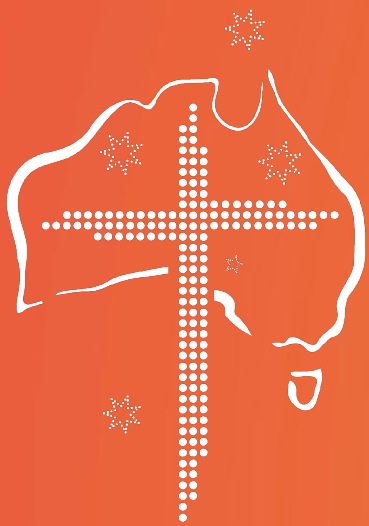
In Grade 3 I started piano lessons. We didn't have a piano at home, so every morning I walked to the convent to practice in a tiny room with just a piano. Sr Bonaventure used to walk up and down the corridor listening from outside. I always knew she was there because there was no hiding the sound of the rattle of those long beads they wore!

Occasionally, she would come in to correct my mistakes

Interesting enough, our family walked home for a cooked lunch every day. I remember there was always a race between my older brother and I to see who could get home first.

How lucky we were at St Patrick's!





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Teacher at St Patrick's, Port Fairy
Daughter of Kevin Coffey.
Sister of Terry & Brian.
Great Aunt to Harry (2018), Lottie (2020)
& Archie Cameron (Year 4)



1960s alumni

Jen Coffey (1963-1969)

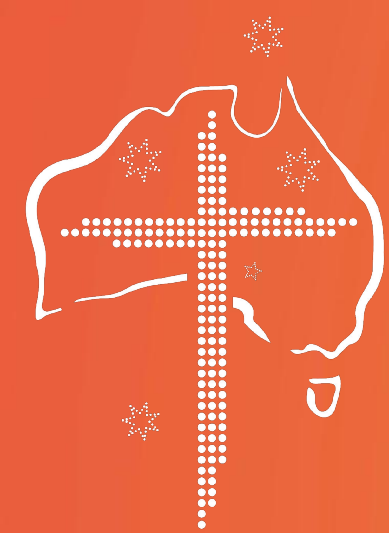
I have many memories of St Patrick's that began as a student in 1963 and continue to this day as a classroom teacher. When I attended as a student, the first year of schooling was called 'Bubs'. I was taught by the Good Samaritan sisters and the school only existed of one main corridor of buildings which are the current 1/2 classrooms. The Priest would come and visit the classrooms weekly and all students would walk up to the church for Mass regularly to celebrate all major Saints.

If you lived on a farm you caught the bus to school and at the end of the school day students like myself walked up to the State school to get on the bus home. Also, we had to bring a packed lunch each day, unlike the students who lived in Port Fairy who went home for lunch.

As a teacher, I began my career at St Patrick's in 1972 and 42 years later I am still a classroom teacher, teaching 3 days a week. Over the years I have taught all year levels except Foundation/Prep. Some of the changes I've seen over the years at St Patrick's include the convent being moved to its current site to enable the hall to be built, the introduction of technology beginning in the late 90s and the extensive renovations to all parts of the school.

In 2019, the Ballarat Diocese recognised Jen for her 40 years of service in the Catholic education system. Also that year at St Patrick's, Jen was recognised for 40 years of teaching at the school. Jen has taught two generations of some families including some of her own family members.





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Parent of Sarah (1999), Jack (2009),
Victoria (2012) & Gabrielle Hearn (2015).
Sister of John Brian & Paul.
Grandparent of Billy McCorkell (Year 1), Florence
& Jack



1970s alumni

Margaret Hearn (Finnigan) (1978-1979)

I'm a past student of St Patrick's, parent of children Sarah, Jack, Victoria & Gabrielle and now my grandson, Billy attends.

The Catholic religion has been strong in our family throughout the generations; three aunts were Good Samaritan sisters and an uncle, a Bishop. We were brought up with a strong foundation of doing the right thing or 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. St Patrick's strengthened this in my schooling and it still does in the children today.

The school's motto, 'Give Yourself to Goodness', is shown in many ways in the school community. It is great to see how this value is cherished, openly shown and practiced. Having enjoyed my schooling at St Pat's, I knew it would be a wonderful, positive and encouraging environment for our children.

St Patrick's is like an extended, caring family.
As a parent and grandparent this gives and has given me great comfort.





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Parent of Tessa (2015), Sam (2019),
Zac & Hugh Allen (Year 6)
Daughter of Christine Sheehan (1960)
Sister of Bridie West (1990)



1980s alumni

Shane Allen (Quinn) (1978-1984)

Our whole family feel very lucky to be a part of the St Patrick's family, it really is an amazing community! 12 years ago when my first child, Tessa was to begin her education, I had no hesitation in sending her to St Patrick's for a Catholic education.

Even 25 years after I had graduated, it still felt like home. My three sons have followed and we are now in our final year at St Pat's as a family. I have so many cherished memories of both my time as a student and as a parent at St Pat's.

From those freezing, cold mornings running through the paddocks to Pea Soup for swimming lessons, to the tear jerking Graduation nights but the most amazing part of St Patrick's is the staff. The way they nurture their students and the Catholic principles and morals they teach.

I will be forever grateful for their contribution to our Catholic education.





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Teacher at St Patrick's, Port Fairy.
Parent of Layla (Year 4) & Maya Frost
(Year 2)
Sister of Mark Lee (1997)



1990s alumni

Abby Lee (1993-1999)

From a student, to an LSO, then to a classroom teacher and a school parent, I am extremely grateful to have had a very close association with St Patrick's school for the majority of my life! The school offers a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing environment and has become like a second family for myself and my children.

I place a huge value on the quality of Catholic Education at St Patrick's as I know first hand that the school leaders and teachers are committed to an education that integrates and celebrates faith, learning and life.

The staff at St Pat's are dedicated to working closely together with families, to create an effective learning environment that strengthens the wellbeing and learning outcomes of all students in a safe and inclusive learning environment.

The three of us feel very fortunate to be a part of the St Patrick's community.





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Teacher at St Patrick's, Port Fairy.
Daughter of Jim Forrest (1975)
Sister of Emily (2007), Bridget (2008),
& Joseph Forrest (2011)



2000s alumni

Annie Forrest (1998-2004)

From my earliest Irish Catholic ancestors who emigrated to the South West Victorian region in the 1840s until now, Catholic education has played a huge role in my life and heritage. I've spent 24 years in Catholic educational settings beginning at St Patrick's Primary School, Emmanuel College, Australian Catholic University and finally a primary school teacher at St Mary's, Hamilton and St Patrick's, Port Fairy.

Returning to St Patrick's as a teacher, I love walking into each classroom and recalling memories of my own education in those same rooms. The current Art room used to be an ICT room, my current classroom, the Foundation room, used to be the Library and the current Library and ICT room didn't exist. It was an asphalt playing area!

I am the educator I am today because of my experiences in Catholic education. There's something about being part of a Catholic educational setting that I can't put my finger on but when you are amongst it, you are welcomed, included and guided by faith. I feel privileged to be a part of the St Patrick's community, a long standing Catholic educational setting since 1849.





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Current Year 8 student at
Emmanuel College.
Brother of Aidan (Year 6) & Olive
Dwyer.



2010s alumni

Bailey Dwyer (2013-2019)

Going to St Patrick's Primary school, I was mostly excited about the sporting opportunities that were offered to me. Whilst at St Patrick's I participated in the school football team, cricket team, basketball team as well as some athletic events and cross country. The support that came with entering these events from both students and teachers was very encouraging and supportive.

One of my best memories from St Pat's was when our football team made it through to the second round. The reason this is one of my best memories is because all my friend were part of that team and we enjoyed ourselves while playing.

The Catholic education system was something not overly familiar to me when I first started but I believe that it has taught me some lessons that I will take with me into the future and has made me a good person. I am currently in Year 8 at Emmanuel College and again enjoying the opportunities given to me from the Catholic education system.

