



## WINMALEE HIGH SCHOOL

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### Term 4 Week 6 Communication – Thursday 20 November 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Warami.

Four weeks until the school holidays and the school calendar is packed. PASS students returned from Surf Camp this week, Peer Support training is in full swing and this group of peer leaders are exceptional. Teachers are busy writing reports after the assessment period where students can breathe a sigh of relief. I'm attending the Blue Mountains AECG awards tonight with Ms Woods and a number of our students are receiving awards.

As one of our many High Potential and Gifted Education (HPGE) activities at WHS Ms Hume organised a Maths event for some of our students as well as students from neighbouring schools. Read the full details below. Here is the [link](#) to our HPGE page on the school website where we list the many HPGE activities offered (scroll down to the bottom of the page).

Our dedicated P&C have an update in this edition and we are grateful for their fundraising efforts, feedback and giving up their time to participate in a number of staffing merit selection panels this term.



Congratulations to our new **Year 9 Peer Support** leaders who completed their training on Friday! We look forward to them assisting Year 7 2026 and they will be great role models for the cohort.

Please see our [Facebook page](#) for more Peer Support training photos.

## PBL Focus: Positive Choices & Finishing the Year Strong

As we head into the final weeks of the school year, it's common for students to feel tired, distracted, and less motivated. To support all learners in finishing the year well, our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) focus for the remainder of the term is

- ★ Be Respectful
- ★ Be Responsible
- ★ Finish the year strong

We encourage families to help reinforce these expectations at home by chatting with your child about:

- Following reasonable instructions
- Using positive, respectful language
- Attending school and giving things a go
- Taking responsibility for their choices

We appreciate your partnership in helping students remain focused and positive as we approach the end of the year. Together, we can support every student to finish strongly, feel proud of their achievements, and maintain a positive learning environment for all.



The next issue of 'Stems and Stories' by Year 11 student **Jenna Bryant** is attached to this Newsletter.

Read on to find out about Mr Boidin's favourite plant!

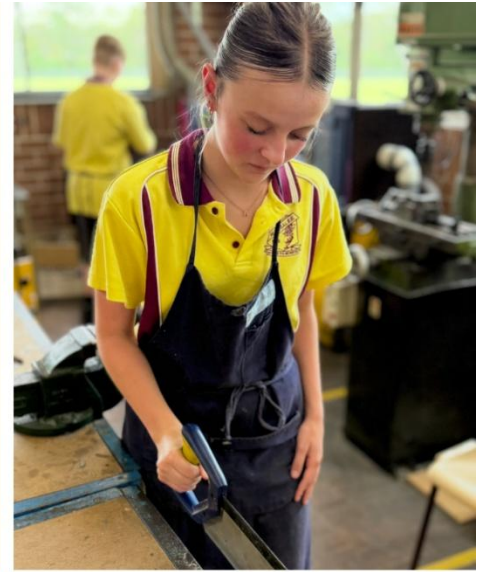
See our [Facebook page](#) for more great photos of **Surf Camp 2025**.

Thank you to Mrs Daniels for all her hard work organising this trip to Wollongong and to a fantastic group of students for their effort and behaviour.





This term Mrs Chapman's 7TEC6 class are in the Metal workshop learning new skills as they construct wind chimes. The 'tuning' process has been very noisy but fun as they tried to find the 'sweet spot' for their chimes. Watch this space for photos of the finished product.



Congratulations to **Okani Vaionmunga (Year 10)** who was selected to be part of a Sydney Pasifika basketball team to represent Polynesian Basketball at the 'United Global Games' in Manila next week. He travels to the Philippines on Monday for eight days - four days of competition and four touring around the capital city.





On Tuesday students participated in a **HPGE (High Potential and Gifted Education)** interschool activity called 'The Number Games' hosted at Springwood High School.

Students from Years 9 and 10 competed in a series of engaging challenges including quick-response relay questions, problem solving tasks, outside trigonometry activity, online number problems and mathematical puzzles.

Students showed their good mathematical skills along with the ability to work together as a team to overcome the different challenges posed to them.

Student teams included **Livia Borg, Sam Drysdale, Erin Durie, Annise Hawkins and Jack Sherriff (Year 9)** and **Nathan Broadhead, Aurora Edwards, Georgia Holdsworth, Joel Machin, & Toby Roediger (Year 10)**.





This week we received a message and photo from the **WIRES Blue Mountains** Avian Coordinator.

This is an Eastern Spinebill chick in one of Winmalee High School's Crochet Club nests!

The chick weighs 10g and is half the size of a thumb and has to be fed every 20 minutes! The Crochet Club's smallest nest is a perfect size 🥰🥰.

### Winmalee High School P&C update November 2025

The Winmalee High School P&C Association held its 2025 AGM on Wednesday 12 November.

Office bearer elections were held, and the following positions were confirmed for the upcoming year:

President: Rebecca Clark, Vice President: Dean Goddard, Treasurer: Rebecca McHardy, Secretary: Belinda Sell.

The Principal, Ms Facas, thanked the P&C for their work in supporting our school community. Contributions from parents and carers via the P&C over recent years have led to the purchase of a combi oven for our food technology kitchen, outdoor shade coverings, a new projector for the assembly hall, as well as awards for student achievement and leadership at our annual presentation evening. The P&C also takes on an important advocacy role for our school, including advocating for funding support for the new kiln that has now been supplied by the state government. For 2026, the school has been asked to provide a wishlist, which will be considered by the P&C.

The 2025 treasurer, Alan Magner, noted that parent contributions for this year are approximately 30% lower than those received in 2024. If you would still like to make a voluntary contribution, it's not too late.

Anyone who is interested in joining the P&C can contact [info@winmaleehighschoolpnc.au](mailto:info@winmaleehighschoolpnc.au)

Meetings are held via Zoom on the second Wednesday of every month during school term at 6.30pm. New members are always welcome. Please email the P&C at the above address if you wish to receive a meeting invite.



Don't miss our annual **CAPA Showcase** on Thursday, December 4!

Join us at 6.00pm for an evening of drama, music, band and vocal group performances from our incredibly talented CAPA students. ✨



#### 🎓 **WHS Alumni Spotlight: Gemma McNabb (Dunn) (Class of 2012)**

We're thrilled to share the stories of our former students with the school and wider community, highlighting their experiences at WHS and the diverse journeys they've taken since graduating.

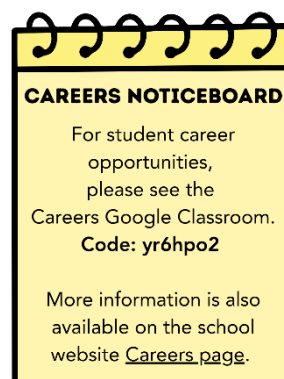
This week **Gemma McNabb (Dunn)** shares her reflections on her time at Winmalee High and where life has taken her since.

Check out Gemma's Q&A at the end of the Newsletter and stay tuned as we continue celebrating the amazing paths our alumni are forging!

We would love to hear from as many former students as possible across a wide range of years and pathways for our Alumni Spotlight feature. Former students can go to [WHS Alumni Q & A](#) to fill out the form and share their experiences with us.

Best wishes,

Winmalee High School



# WHS ALUMNI Q&A



## WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING FROM WHS?

Since finishing high school in 2012, I've followed a pretty exciting and diverse career path—mostly centred around marketing, events, and sport. I've worked with national sporting bodies, the Commonwealth Games, and one of the oldest companies in the world, doing everything from running large-scale events to growing brand presence and managing team logistics. I even started my own marketing studio along the way. Most recently, I've taken on a key role with Walkinshaw Andretti United in the Supercars Championship, coordinating team operations and race logistics at the highest level.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORIES FROM YOUR TIME AT WHS?

Some of my favourite memories from WHS include playing sport, the unforgettable Year 11 sailing trip, and the incredible support I received while competing for Australia overseas. The school always made me feel backed and understood, even when I was juggling travel and study. Above all, it's the sense of community that stands out.

## HOW DID YOUR TIME AT WHS INFLUENCE OR HELP YOU DISCOVER YOUR PASSIONS AND INTERESTS?

WHS played a big part in helping me discover my passions. I was lucky to have incredible teachers who became mentors—some of the best guidance I've ever received. The supportive environment and variety of opportunities gave me the confidence to explore leadership, creativity, and sport, all of which have shaped the career I've built today.

## WHAT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WERE YOU INVOLVED IN AT SCHOOL?

Anything I could get my hands on, honestly.

## DO YOU HAVE A BUSINESS INSTAGRAM OR WEBSITE THAT YOU WOULD BE HAPPY FOR US TO SHARE?

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/gemmamcnabb>

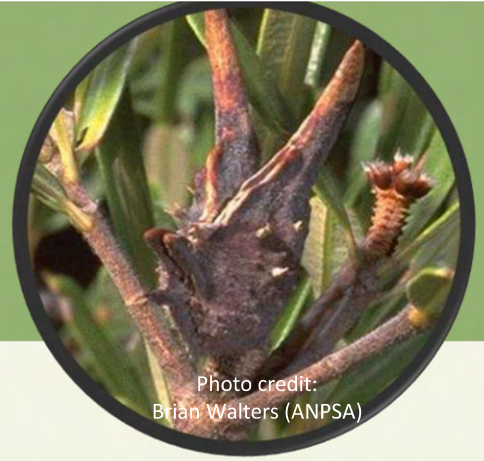
## WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES OUR SCHOOL SPECIAL?

What makes WHS special is its willingness to work with you as an individual, not just follow a cookie-cutter approach. Let's be honest—not everything in high school is smooth sailing—but when you reach out, the school genuinely gives its all to support you. That kind of personalised care and flexibility really sets it apart.



# Stems & Stories

By Jenna Bryant



## THE PLANT – THE MOUNTAIN DEVIL

This month's pick is the Mountain Devil (*Lambertia formosa*), a hardy shrub recognisable by its unique tubular red flowers that bloom through spring and summer. Each flower sits within a ring of pointed, woody bracts that harden into the plant's famous "devil-horned" seed pods, giving the species its unforgettable name.

First Nations peoples recognised the plant's sweet nectar as a natural treat. Later, European settlers crafted the horned seed pods into small decorative dolls.

## CLASSIFICATION

Scientific name: *Lambertia formosa*

Common name: The Mountain Devil

Family: *Proteaceae*

Origin: NSW, Australia

Conditions: Mostly sunny, well-drained soil

Size : Up to 2 meters tall

## THE PERSON – MR. BOLDIN



Mr. Boidin has worked with our school's support unit for the past three years and has a keen passion for adventure, especially spotting his favourite plant along the journey.

*"Each spring and summer, their bright red flowers bloom right as the Australian Bass season starts, just when I'm walking the sandstone gorges and bush tracks down to the Grose River to fish. Their horned seed pods are one of my favourite things to spot hidden in the foliage (even if the sharp leaves leave a few battle scars!). In many ways, its resilience reflects a bit of my own character, and with a name like "Mountain Devil," it feels especially fitting for someone born and raised in the Blue Mountains. The photo shows me with a small Mountain Devil I bought for my daughter's 4th birthday."*

## LAMBERTIA TRIVIA

Mountain Devils are **fire survivors**. After bushfires the plant releases large number of seeds, helping the species regenerate quickly.

Because they grow on steep sandstone slopes, their root systems help **reduce erosion** by holding the thin layer of soil in place.

As a member of the *Proteaceae* family, *Lambertia* is **related to banksias, waratahs, grevilleas**, and even the iconic macadamia nut.

## GROW IT YOURSELF

In our area, plant the Mountain Devil in early autumn or spring in a full sun and well-drained, sandy soil.

Avoid overwatering as the plant gets established. This is important as Mountain Devils prefer drier soils and can struggle if the roots stay too damp.

Finally, if you give this devil space and minimal disturbance it will reward you with bright red flowers and tough, horned seed pods year after year.



Stems & Stories is about getting to know the Winmalee High family through their favourite plants. It is put together by Year 12 Biology student Jenna Bryant.

Photo credit: Brian Walters (ANPSA)