

Braving the waves

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Head Prefect 2018-2019

It's really wonderful to be back. Abbotsleigh holds a very special place in my heart, and it truly is an honour to be here tonight. *I literally flew halfway around the world* to get here to celebrate you, because I know how special this moment is.

This year you have spent a lot of time exploring the value and practice of resilience, in your theme of braving the waves and learning to weather all kinds of storms. It's a theme I hope you take deeply to heart, because resilience is a skill you will find invaluable to deal with the uncertainties and storms in life that you will face.

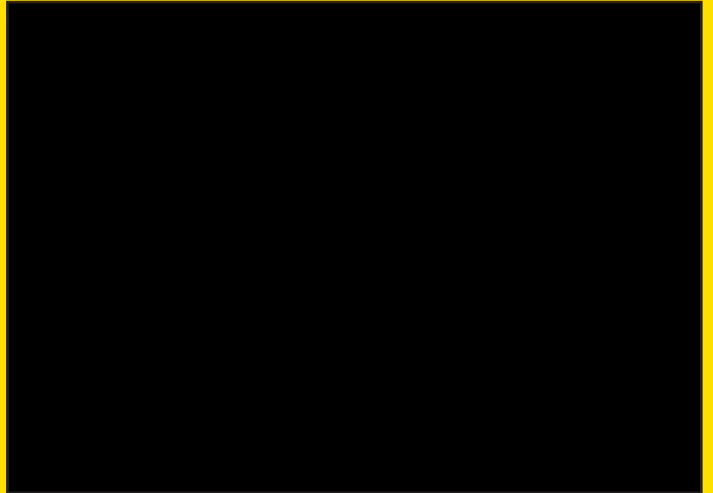
Five years ago, just 12 weeks after sitting in this very room, I was sitting in my car outside the Junior School when a tree branch weighing about 250-300 kg fell on my car. I felt a dull pain in my neck and tingles shooting down my arm, immediately knew it was a spinal injury and that I shouldn't move (just a note of gratitude to the Year 12 PDHPE curriculum and Mr Winslow for that piece of wisdom). There are many miracles in what led to me standing here today, and I want to give credit to all the strangers who rushed to my assistance, the paramedics, ... Hamish and Mel who both held my head and hand for over an hour while the firemen worked to free me from the car, and the doctors.

I then went into spinal surgery, two months in a neck brace, months of rehabilitation, and after eight months I was able to run my first full training on a netball court again. I also want to deeply thank the School for the support they gave me, I remember through the fog of morphine lying in ICU seeing Mrs Krimmer and Mrs Rennie walk in with what I remember to be a smiley face balloon (the details might have been lost with the morphine). And the countless teachers who came and visited or supported from afar. It was in this moment that I realised that resilience is not just about my individual ability to endure a storm, but it is rooted in and strengthened in community.

There's much more to the story, but for the purpose/context of tonight, you can't always predict the tree falling on you, but you can choose how you respond when it does. For you, it may not be a physical tree, but there will be storms and you will have to choose how to respond.

This accident was just one of the storms I had to weather. At the same time, I was facing a breakdown within my family and the Covid pandemic which were big mental and emotional storms to navigate alongside the physical rehabilitation of my body. If I can promise you anything about the next five years of your life and beyond, it is that resilience is a choice. And it is a hard one.

Developing resilience happens through a series of decisions that you make every day, both big and small,



some easy, some very challenging. You don't always get them right, but as with any muscle, you can strengthen it over time and with intentional effort. Time itself doesn't heal, what you're doing with that time is what matters for the seed of resilience to grow.

I truly believe that we are shaped in our moments of challenge and adversity. It is in these moments of weakness that our character and our true strength are shaped. Challenges will come. That's a given. And we can either become victims in them, or we can choose to grow through them. It is not easy. And you will make mistakes. *But how you choose to respond lays the foundation for who you are becoming in your future.* You don't need to have every step planned out, but it is about making the next decision to move forward.

Some challenges are unexpected and occur like a tree falling out of nowhere. Other challenges in life are expected and come with natural cycles of transition. The season you are currently in is a season of transition, and there are natural challenges that come with that. You are about to be uprooted from the structures of the school you have grown within over the past 13 years. Whether you loved school or didn't, the transition can bring uncertainty. For me I felt that uncertainty every time someone asked me, 'What do you want to do next year?' and I couldn't give a clear answer. Some of you may have very clear ideas of what you want to do, and some of you may have no idea what the next step looks like. For me, all I knew was that I wanted to help people and that I was interested in human rights. Incredibly vague, I know. But looking back it was actually all I needed to take the next steps in my journey. And sometimes the connections only become clear in hindsight.

Tonight, I want to take the question that you probably have been asked 100 times, 'What do you want to do next year?' and I want to reframe it. Instead, I ask you, 'Who do you want to be?' Whether you know your next steps or not, I challenge you to sit with this question over the coming weeks. Who do you want to be?

Who do you want to be 5, 10, 20 years down the track? When you get to 80 years old and you look back at your life, who do you want to be described as? And in complete honesty, a lot of that will come from how you weathered storms in your life.

It is a question that I still use to direct my vision and steps in life, despite not always knowing exactly what it looks like. Since finishing school, I have now finished my degree in international relations where I completed an honours thesis examining trafficking in persons in relation to conflict. Alongside my studies I have had incredible work opportunities, including an internship with the UK charity Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust and, as well, an internship in Vienna with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as part of their trafficking in persons research unit.

And now I find myself at another transition point, where this question has been imperative for me. While there are many career opportunities and avenues I could go down, what I centre myself on is *Who am I?*

I am a valued and loved child of God, called to love Him and reflect that love in how I love people unWyr (e)-10 ()TJ

Chaplain

Time for...

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and Head of Christian Studies

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes wrote a passage that is quite well known. It was also used in the '60s by the group The Byrds with a song called 'Turn! Turn! Turn!' The passage and the lyrics focus on how, there is a time for everything and a season for all different activities under the heavens.

Hopefully, the past two weeks have been a time of refreshment or rest for our community, with the break from routines and the Labour Day long weekend. There was the time to turn our clocks forward with daylight saving starting and we have moved more into the season of spring. There were also times with family and friends, seeing the world near and far, times of being busy and times of just being.

Term 4 is a time of many different events and daily activities in our calendars, and things speed along. Our shops weirdly have both Halloween and Christmas times in our sights, but let's not try to rush things too quickly. At the end of the passage, the writer of Ecclesiastes writes, 'God has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.' (Ecc 3:11) May Term 4 be a time where we can see how God is making things beautiful in their time. May we also be mindful of the time that we all have and use it wisely, in service and love to others, as Jesus demonstrated to us.

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

A Sense of Colour exhibition	Saturday 5 October to 2 November	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Old Girls vs Current Girls Debate	Tuesday 22 October 6-8 pm	PDCH and via Zoom
AOGU meeting	Wednesday 23 October 7.30-9 pm	Council Room, Senior School
APR meeting	Thursday 31 October 8.30-10 am	Auditorium, Junior School

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Year 2 sport training	Saturday 19 October 8-9.30 am	Junior School
IPSHA Saturday sport	Saturday 19 October 8 am-12 noon	See Parent app for team sheets and venues
Year 3-6 IPSHA artistic gymnastics training	Saturday 19 October 1-5 pm	Senior School Gymnasium
Year 6 basketball and cricket training	Monday 21 October 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
Transition and ELC 4-5 room ACEE excursion	Tuesday 22 October 8.30 am-2 pm	Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education
Years 4-6 World Vision chapel with parents	Tuesday 22 October 8.30-9 am	Everett Hall
K, 2 and 3 World Vision chapel with parents	Tuesday 22 October 9.10-9.40 am	Everett Hall
Year 1 Light Up Lives Solar Light Day	Tuesday 22 October 9 am-12.30 pm	Knox Preparatory School
Year 3-6 IPSHA Hot Shots tennis training	Tuesday 22 October 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School Tennis Courts
Year 6 AbbKart construction day	Wednesday 23 October 8.30 am-12.50 pm	
Years 1-5 Gateways Navigate incursion	Wednesday 23 October 8.30 am-3 pm	Annexe West Room
Year 5 basketball and cricket training	Wednesday 23 October 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School

Years 3-6 IPSHA tennis training	Wednesday 23 October 3.45-4.45 pm	Senior School Tennis Courts
Years 3 and 4 basketball and cricket training	Thursday 24 October 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
Year 3 Wellbeing Day	Friday 25 October 8.30 am-3 pm	Year 3 Classrooms
Transition Group 1 excursion to Hammond Care	Friday 25 October 11-11.45 am	Hammond Care
Kindergarten and Year 1 football (soccer)	Friday 25 October 8.30 am-Senior School	181 6fBTO 0ingob9 Td(T)-CG -Gymna2ium0 -1.2 Td(3)20 (-)-20 (2)1

6G Judith Krause session 1	Wednesday 30 October 10.50 am-12.20 pm	6G Classroom
Year 5 basketball and cricket training	Wednesday 30 October 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
Years 3-6 IPSHA tennis training	Wednesday 30 October 3.45-4.45 pm	Senior School Tennis Courts
IPSHA Gymnastics Carnival	Thursday 31 October 8 am-3 pm	Sydney Gymnastics and Aquatic Centre, Rooty Hill
Year 2 Gibberagong excursion	Thursday 31 October 8.30 am-2.30 pm	Gibberagong, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park
Kindergarten play session	Thursday 31 October 9.30 am-12.30 pm	Kindergarten Classrooms
1G instrument testing	Thursday 31 October 9.45-10.30 am	Upper Music Room
Transition play session	Thursday 31 October 10 am-12 noon	Transition Classroom
10 instrument testing	Thursday 31 October 10.50-11.35 am	Upper Music Room
Year 1 Celebration of Learning	Thursday 31 October 2-2.30 pm	Year 1 Classrooms
Years 3 and 4 basketball and cricket training	Thursday 31 October 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
Year 1 and 2 Northside Gifted and Talented Workshop	Friday 1 November 9 am-2.30 pm	Library Annexe East
Kindergarten play session	Friday 1 November 9.30-12.30 pm	Kindergarten Classrooms
Transition play session	Friday 1 November 10 am-12 noon	Transition Classroom
Year 6 Hope in a Suitcase Session 3	Friday 1 November 11.20-11.50 am	Year 6 Classrooms
Kindergarten and Year 1 football (soccer)	Friday 1 November 3-4 pm	Junior School
IPSHA tennis training	Friday 1 November 3.30-4.45 pm	Senior School Tennis Courts
Year 2 sport training	Saturday 2 November 8-9.30 am	Junior School
IPSHA Saturday sport	Saturday 2 November 8 am-12 noon	See Parent app for team sheets and venues

SENIOR SCHOOL

Saturday sport	Saturday 19 October 8 am-12 noon	Click here for times and venues
Lunchtime Futures – Gadigal @ USYD	Monday 21 October 1.20-2.10 pm	
House Handball Round 1	Wednesday 23 October 1.20-2 pm	Marian Clarke Plaza/Chapel Walk

House Badminton Round 1	Wednesday 23 October 1.20-2.10 pm	
NAIDOC mufti day	Friday 25 October	
Yalari fundraiser barbecue	Friday 25 October 1.20-2.10 pm	_____

