THE ASHGROVAN

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FRONT COVER

The 1st XV and "Hive" singing SubTuum to the Old Boys on the Cyprian Pavilion balcony after securing MCA 2025 Undefeated Premiership on 'Super Saturday' Reunion weekend!

OLD BOYS' WEBSITE CONTINUES TO IMPROVE

The Old Boys' website at www.ashgroveoldboys.com.au just gets better and better!

We are continuing to add information but please make it one of your favourites and visit regularly to see what is happening both at the College and in the world of the Old Boys.

And just a reminder the OBA is now on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Friday 14 August 2026
Blue and Gold Vintage Lunch and Mass (10:30am)

Friday 9 October 2026
Marist Golf Day at Ashgrove Golf Club

Marist Golf Day - Principal Sponsor

RIGHTON
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"Ashgrove Old Boys host the Marist Golf Day"
Sponsors for the Golf Day welcomed.
Please contact the President, MCA OBA,
secretary@ashgroveoldboys.com.au or 0487 051 687.

Check the Old Boys website at www.ashgroveoldboys.com.au or our Facebook page for further details.

Humility, Simplicity, Modesty

OLD BOYS HUB

Please register for the Old Boys Hub so we may be able to stay in contact, update you with relevant information about your OB colleagues and forward future Ashgrovians.

oldboyshub.marash.qld.edu.au

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear fellow Old Boys,

As we move through 2026, it continues to be wonderful to see the strength of the Marist College Ashgrove community reflected in the growing participation and support across our Old Boys' events and College activities. The connection between past and present students remains one of the great strengths of Ashgrove, and this year has already provided many reminders of the lifelong friendships and shared traditions that unite us all.

One of the highlights of the year was the continued success of the Marist Rosalie Tribute Day. Approximately 40 guests attended the day, bringing together Old Boys and supporters to celebrate the proud Rosalie connection and longstanding traditions shared between our communities. Events such as these continue to strengthen the bonds between generations of Old Boys while also preserving an important part of our collective history.

Another significant event during the year was the U12 Rugby Day hosted at the College. It was fantastic to welcome visiting clubs from across the Darling Downs to Ashgrove for what proved to be a highly successful and enjoyable occasion for all involved. Beyond the rugby itself, the day provided an excellent opportunity for the College to showcase the Boarding community and highlight the opportunities available to regional families considering Marist College Ashgrove for their sons. The feedback received from visiting families and clubs was overwhelmingly positive and reinforced the important connection Ashgrove continues to maintain with regional Queensland communities.

Old Boys' Sports Day continues to go from strength to strength, bringing together former teammates, classmates and old rivals from St Laurence's College and Marist College Rosalie to celebrate the proud traditions of both 1st XV Rugby and 1st XI Football teams.

The Champagnat Trust Sports Lunch and Super Reunion Day were again standout events on the Old Boys' calendar. The Sports Lunch brought together more than 1300 supporters, including 400 Old Boys in a tremendous show of support for the Trust and its important work, while the Super Reunion Day provided an opportunity for 300 plus Old Boys from across the generations to reconnect with classmates, share stories and enjoy a great day at the College. The strong attendance at both events is a reflection of the enduring bond that Ashgrovians have with each other and with the College, and it was particularly pleasing to see so many younger and older Old Boys enjoying the occasion together.

Our Old Boys' events throughout the year have once again demonstrated the enduring passion that exists for the blue and gold. Whether attending reunions, supporting sporting fixtures, reconnecting with classmates or simply returning to walk the grounds once again, it is clear that the Ashgrove spirit remains as strong as ever.

The Old Boys' Association also continues to work closely with the College to support initiatives that strengthen engagement with alumni, students and the wider Marist community. As the College continues to evolve and grow, it is important that we continue to preserve the traditions, values and sense of community that have shaped generations of Ashgrovians.

We also encourage all Old Boys to consider moving to digital delivery of The Ashgrovian through the Old Boys' Hub. Staying connected digitally means you will receive each edition faster, more conveniently, and wherever you may be, while continuing to stay up to date with everything happening across the Ashgrove Old Boys' community. At present, some members receive both a posted copy and an emailed version of the publication. By switching to digital-only delivery, members help the Association reduce printing and postage costs, creating savings that can instead be utilised toward activities, projects and initiatives that benefit the College and the wider Old Boy community. If you have not already done so, we encourage you to register on the Hub and update your preferences to ensure you never miss an issue. Sign up via The Old Boys' Hub.

Importantly, none of this would be possible without the ongoing support of our volunteers, committee members, College staff and the many Old Boys who continue to give their time, encouragement and financial support to the Association and the College. Your contribution helps ensure that the Old Boys' network remains strong and relevant for future generations.

To our younger Old Boys, recent graduates and current students preparing to join our alumni community in the years ahead, I encourage you to remain connected and involved. The friendships, opportunities and support that come from being part of the Ashgrove Old Boys community are lifelong.

Thank you again to everyone who continues to support the Old Boys' Association and Marist College Ashgrove. I look forward to seeing many of you at future events throughout the remainder of 2026.

Sub Tuum Praesidium.

Michael O'Connor
President

FROM THE HEAD OF COLLEGE

Dear Old Boys and supporters of Marist College Ashgrove,

One of the highlights of life at Marist is to educate and celebrate with the boys the liturgical seasons in the Church's calendar year. In recent months, we have celebrated the Easter Season. This season is one of joy, hope and peace. It is rooted in faith and is the foundation of our faith. A belief in Jesus – his death, resurrection, and promise of eternal reward, something much bigger than we will ever fully understand or fathom. We listen to the stories from the Gospel and are challenged to believe. Stories post Jesus' resurrection included his appearance, recognising him in the breaking of bread and knowing him along the road to Emmaus.

Faith is a challenge. Faith is a gift. One Marist Brother I had as a spiritual director once encouraged me to reflect upon and thank the person who shared and educated me in the Catholic faith because this sharing of their faith helped form my own personal faith. My mind went straight to my kind and generous parents. I have since thanked my mother for sharing her innate faith with me. Her reply was humble and simple, "That's fine, Michael." Yet, this has made all the difference to my life.

The Easter message reminds us of the horrific death and glorious resurrection of Jesus. It invites us to consider the promise of eternal reward, while also challenging us to die each day to ourselves and give life and love to others. In contrast to many of the messages of modern secular society, we are called to look beyond our own personal wants and desires, and instead spend our energy in service of our neighbour in need. This idea of dying to ourselves each day in order to give to others is at the heart of the Christian message. It is also deeply rewarding and brings with it real emotional satisfaction.

Appropriately, the following story aired on Easter Sunday in 2025 on an ABC News Bulletin in Queensland, before spreading nationally and internationally. It went viral across ABC Brisbane, Instagram and Facebook, attracting several hundred thousand views and comments from around the world. It is the story of a generous Marist Old Boy, Colin Apelt.

Colin Apelt, 93, attended the College in 1940-1941 and 1945-1946, and now volunteers at Mt Olivett Hospital at Kangaroo Point. Colin is an Emeritus Professor and Honorary Research Consultant in the School of Civil Engineering at the University of Queensland. He was also a Rhodes Scholar in 1954, completing a Doctorate of Philosophy at Oxford University in 1957.

Colin's volunteering task is to wheel a trolley of drinks around the ward, offering an afternoon beverage to palliative care patients with their meal. It is, in essence, "A Happy Hour Companion". His orders include gin and tonic, fruit juice, Baileys, wine or whiskey. When asked about the importance of this task, Colin explained, "The conversation is more important, the drink is just an icebreaker." Regarding giving, Colin believes that "giving brings a very great reward to the giver."

Coincidentally, I first became aware of Colin's work when I visited Mt Olivett weekly with a group of senior boys from a Catholic school in Brisbane in the early 2000s. Not only was Colin very kind to these boys visiting from my school, but he also offered his time and friendship each week to those in palliative care.

Colin also had a brother, Arthur, who was in the first class here at Marist College Ashgrove. Arthur was a long-serving member of both the Marist College Ashgrove Old Boys and Parents and Friends Committees.

It seems kindness and giving run in the Apelt family.

One of the most engaging media moments earlier this year was the arrival home of the Artemis II astronauts after their historic 10-day journey to the moon and back. What followed was people's intrigue to hear from them, what they saw, what they experienced and their reflections. Like most people, I was riveted to their every word as they were confronted with media packs from around the world.

So, what did they talk about?

They, like Armstrong before them, observed the intense darkness throughout the universe. Yet in the distance was a tiny earth, full of brilliant vibrant colour suspended in the velvet black of space - the vibrant blue of the ocean and atmosphere, the white of the clouds and ice, the rich green and brown of the landmasses, the thin blue line of the atmosphere, the yellow and white nighttime colours from the glow of city lights, and the thin layers of green, orange and red light caused by airglow in the upper atmosphere. This observation they described as life. Earth is by far the most colourful object in the universe, a vivid contrast to the monochromatic moon. They saw the planet as incredibly beautiful, fragile and alive.

Further, they spoke of a profound emotional experience. They could see the earth as a single entity without political borders. The astronauts believed that the experience changed their perspective of humanity as they felt an overwhelming sense of connection, unity and love. One astronaut's response was to give thanks to God. This translated to the love they felt for their fellow crew members and their families back at home.

For me, the sharing of these astronauts in the post conference was another one of those faith-forming moments. They were unknowingly reflecting the scriptures in their media conference. God's creation of the world – a beautiful colourful world, the mystery of this tiny planet in the midst of expansive darkness and the love that binds and unites all people in the world, beyond borders, across countries, and with family. Their reflections mirror Jesus's central message to "love one another". Their reflections were extraordinarily simple yet spiritual without meaning to be. Another moment of faith.

St Marcellin Champagnat, a Catholic priest, commenced an order of Brothers to teach the poor in the southern countryside of France. He taught them basic literacy and numeracy and especially the faith. A faith in a God of love and life. As a priest, he also celebrated the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist each day – a presence connecting earth to the grandeur and incomprehensible universe created by God. This opportunity we still have today in our local parishes and celebrated regularly in the Chapel with the boys at Marist.

May each of us as Old Boys be grateful to have had a Marist education. May each of us continue to strive to grapple with the big questions of our faith. May the young men of Marist be formed as people of faith, and in turn, making the world a better place.

I wish all Old Boys a marvellous year. I look forward to greeting many Old Boys at the various functions and events throughout 2026.

Michael Newman
Head of College

MARIST COLLEGE ROSALIE TRIBUTE GAME

In a fitting tribute at the first trial of the season on Saturday, 21 March 2026, our First XV took the field at McMahon Oval in the cerise and blue of Marist College Rosalie. Rosalie's Old Boys were hosted at a function in the Cyprian Pavilion, joining us to mark a special occasion that honoured a school woven into our own beginnings.

The connection runs deep. The Marist Brothers first arrived at Rosalie in January 1929 to open their first school in Queensland — a boarding school. When the boarding house became too small, the Brothers sought a new site, and the result was the purchase and opening of Marist College Ashgrove (formerly St Mary's College, Ashgrove) in 1940 as a boarding and day school.

As an Association, we know how much history matters. We were proud to see Marist College Rosalie honoured in this way — they are certainly part of our shared tradition and the humble story of the Marist Brothers in Brisbane.

OLD BOYS SPORTS DAY - MAY 23, 2026

The Head of College Michael Newman, the MCA Old Boys' Association and the College Community were delighted to welcome back surviving members of the Ashgrove, Rosalie and St Laurence's Rugby 1st XVs from the 1956, 1966, 1976 and 1986 teams, and also the 1986 MCA Football (Soccer) 1st XI. The 1946 Ashgrove Rugby League 1st XIII were also remembered. Sadly Larry Perrett (1956), centre and captain of the 1956 MCA 1st XV and Glenn Ramsay (1986), captain of the 1986 MCA Football 1st XI passed away just some weeks prior.

These reunions coincided with the AIC home game, Marist College Ashgrove v St Laurence's College and after enjoying lunch and being presented with commemorative medallions, most stayed on to watch the exciting and high standard "Firsts' matches with Ashgrove prevailing on fulltime in a thrilling Rugby match 17-15 and Lauries 2-1 winners in the delayed Football encounter.

Some memories of those brilliant Ashgrove teams.

1946 1ST XIII RUGBY LEAGUE- MCSA UNDEFEATED PREMIERS

With eight players returning from the 1945 premiership team, the 1946 1st XIII were to be a formidable combination and secured the BRL Cup after an undefeated season.

The 1946 1st XIII: Pat Connor (Captain), Brian Sharry (Vice-Captain), Bill Roberts, Peter Brown, Chas Barbagallo, Joe Hardy, Bill Earle, Bernie Coogan, Kev Row, Chas Gullotta, Frank Hammond, Peter Whitty-Sherwin, Bob Milligan, Kevin Osborne, Remo Agostinelli, Des Mills, Tom Brannelly, John Fell, Bede Hintz. Coach Mr Arch Ferrier

1956 1ST XV- TAS UNDEFEATED PREMIERS

For the fifth year of official Rugby Union competition, Ashgrove triumphantly held the title 'Undefeated Premiers.' 8 Ashgrove players were chosen to represent The Associated Schools (TAS) v GPS.

The 1956 1st XV: Larry Perrett (Captain), Bob Laracy, Ray Mullen, Joe Chan, John O'Connor, Julius Chan, Shane O'Connor, George Doniger, Morgan Midgley, Don Kaese, Alf Madsen, Phillip Callaghan, Peter Mahoney, Bernie Knapp, Dan Currier, John Fitzgibbon, Neville Morrison, Len Remedios. Coach Br Francis McMahon

1956 TAS REPRESENTATIVES

Standing: R. Mullens, M.Midgley, Joe Chan, R. Laracy, G. Doniger, S. O'Connor, J. O'Connor

Front: Julius Chan (Kneeling)

George Doniger presenting to Henry Robinson

1966 1ST XV TAS UNDEFEATED PREMIERS

The 1966 1st XV Captain David L'Estrange and Vice-Captain Michael Flynn would become Wallabies while Bill Andrews would represent Queensland and earn an Australian XV selection. In 8 TAS competition games the 1966 1st XV scored 43 tries, recording 194 points for and 39 against.

The 1966 1st XV: David L'Estrange (Capt. Fullback), Michael Flynn (V-C. Breakaway), Peter Dux (Prop), Pat Nicholls (Centre), Trevor Towler (Hooker), Peter Costello (2nd row), Bill MacGinley (Prop), Graeme O'Neill (No 8), Keith Sayer (Breakaway), Gary Waters (2nd row), Dan Kirkman (Halfback), Bill Andrews (Flyhalf), Bernard Hannagan (Centre), Wayne Golding (Wing), Frank Saemala (Wing). Coach Br Terrence Curley.

1976 1ST XV TAS UNDEFEATED PREMIERS

The 1976 1st XV were undefeated in all three trial games (BSHS BBC and BGS) and in all 8 TAS competition matches. Brendan Moon commenced his representative career chosen as an Australian Schoolboy. Michael Devereux, David Robertson, Paul Burnett were Qld Schoolboys. The Ashgrove 1st XV scored 179 points in 8 matches and conceded only 33 points. From the QRU report of 1976. "For the third consecutive year Marist College Ashgrove won the A grade premiership and it has proved a fitting climax for their coach, the Headmaster Br Alexis (4 premierships in 6 years!)."

The 1976 1st XV: Brendan Moon (Captain, Outside Centre), Paul Burnett (Vice-Captain Front row), Stephen Hamill (Fullback), Bernard Piovesan (Wing), Stephen Gandini (Halfback/ Centre), Michael Gooch (Wing), Anthony O'Sullivan (Inside Centre), David Ford (Flyhalf), Trevor Graham (Halfback), John Heinke (No 8), Michael O'Rourke (Breakaway), Tony Hogarth (Breakaway), Shaun Sykes (2nd row), Mark Devereux (2nd row), David Robertson (Hooker), Neil Beattie (Front row), Tom McCormack (reserve 2nd row), Anthony Simpson (Breakaway). Coach Br Alexis Turton

1986 1ST XV, 3RD IN TAS (SPLC PREMIERS)

Although the third placing was disappointing, the 1986 Ashgrove 1st XV lost three games by three points or less and with a little more luck could have found themselves as Premiers. The penultimate game resulted in a 6-3 win to St Peter's in the most rugged and physically demanding match which secured a deserved premiership to SPLC. Terry Honan was chosen as a Qld Schoolboy.

The 1986 1st XV: Timothy Lucey (Captain, Backrow), John Rosanowski (Vice-Captain, Centre), Tim Sheehan (Prop), Ken Robinson (Prop), Jeremy Nolan (Hooker), Chris Kennedy (2nd row), Maurice Thompson (2nd row), Pat Manahan (Breakaway), Joe Coote (Breakaway), Terry Honan (Halfback), Langton Clarke (Fullback/ Flyhalf), Paul Bellero (Centre), Darren Holt (Centre/ Breakaway), Andrew Hefferan (Wing), David Sartor (Back), Shaun Mohr (Wing), John Murdoch (Back row), Bill Prole (Wing). Coach Br Patrick Howlett.

1986 1ST XI FOOTBALL - ISSA OPEN DIVISION

The highlight of the season was the undefeated tour of Canberra and Lismore. In 14 matches the MCA Open A team won 9, drew 2 and lost 4, scoring 50 goals and conceding 25. Highlights were the 1-1 draw with SLC and 2-0 win v JPC and 4-3 win v DLS.

The 1986 1st XI: Glenn Ramsay (Captain), Laurie Dal Santo (Vice-Captain), Michael Heath, David Allen, Andrew Brooker, Chris Condon, Byron Chan, Ross Jones, David Armenores, Marcus McInally, Michael McDonald, Chris Girling, Jason Parker (GK). Coach John Ramsay, Manager Phil Dobson.

Andrew Brooker presenting jersey to Owen Moreira.

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SUPER REUNION WEEKEND - SATURDAY JUNE 13, 2026

Another wonderful “Super Saturday” again generated incredible memories for Old Boys. The newly renovated Cyprian Pavilion catered for the hundreds of Old Boys who reminisced and enjoyed the dazzling display of running rugby, as the MCA 1st XV defeated Padua 36-5 and won an undefeated premiership and the 1st XI showcased their talents also winning against Padua 3-0 and claimed the premiership. Once again, for those who witnessed the singing of “Sub Tuum” post-match by the 1st XV and the Old Boys singing it back will retain the memory fondly for a very long time. This moment has become a genuine connection and tradition and perfectly captures the essence of the day. The milestone reunion groups (eg 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2016, etc) who attended in big numbers created an electric atmosphere and energy from the start of the day to the finish which added so much to the Term 2 sport season finale.

2006 Reunion Attendees

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CHAMPAGNAT TRUST SPORTS LUNCH - FRIDAY JUNE 12, 2026

The 22nd Annual Sports lunch was held once again at the popular new venue, The Star Hotel in the City.

Since its inauguration, the Sports lunch has raised over $2.5 million and has provided over 125 students with a Marist education. A capacity crowd of over 1,300 attended the “SOLD OUT” event and enjoyed a day filled with electrifying camaraderie and plenty of laughter which contributed to an atmosphere brimming with the Marist spirit.

The 2026 event featured an outstanding panel of guest speakers including cricket legend David Boon, rugby union’s chief executive Phil Waugh, and 2026 Winter Olympic gold medallist Cooper Woods. We were also thrilled to have Trust co-patron Matthew Hayden (1988) who welcomed our guests and Fletch and Hindy who brought their signature humour and energy to the event, keeping the audience entertained from start to finish.

Over $100,000 was raised to support the Champagnat Trust Bursary Program. Bursaries are provided to boys whose families are facing financial hardship to ensure they have an opportunity to receive a Marist education. Thanks to everyone for your support and generosity in making a significant difference in the lives of many future Marist men and making the event again truly memorable.

MARIST MILITARY HONOUR BOARD

Nearly a decade ago, the Marist College Ashgrove OBA together with the Marist College Rosalie OBA began a meaningful project to create an Honour Board commemorating Old Boys from both Colleges who served our country in the Defence Forces, especially those who saw active duty.

The project was ultimately refined to honour those Old Boys who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving on active duty. The Military Honour Board has now been completed and will hang in the MCA Chapel as a memorial to those 17 fallen soldiers.

Ashgrove and Rosalie Old Boys are invited to attend the 10.30am Vintage Old Boys' Mass which precedes the Vintage Lunch (11:30am for 12:00pm), and join us in paying tribute to our fallen Old Boys who gave so much in service to their country.

Marist College Ashgrove especially remembers the following MCA ex-students who were sadly killed in action in war:

- Max Clegg (1940): KIA in WW2, aged 19 years. Max was shot down over Belgium on February 21, 1945. At the time, Max was the youngest commissioned officer in Australia. Flying Officer Clegg was in charge of Radar on Lancasters at the time of his untimely death and is buried in Flanders, Belgium. Max Clegg was a boarder from Southport when he attended MCA in its foundation year.
- John Gerrard (1940/41): KIA in WW2, aged 20 years. John was shot down in a daylight raid on March 2, 1945 over Cologne, Germany, in which town he is buried. John was a day boy from Rainworth when he attended MCA for his Senior years and a promising rugby league forward in the 1941 MCA 1st XIII.
- Lt. Augusto Maria Xavier (1954/55): KIA in Vietnam, March 10, 1966, two months shy of his 25th birthday. Lt Augusto Xavier, United States Marine Corps, led a flight of four A-4 Skyhawks against a well placed North Vietnam regiment in a successful bomb run, but his aircraft crashed in the mountainous country. Augusto's body was never recovered.
- Lance Corporal Stjepan 'Rick' Milosevic (1989): KIA on August 29, 2012 by an insider attack in Afghanistan. Rick was a light armoured vehicle (ASLAV) crew commander. Among many honours received, Rick was awarded: Australia Active Service Medal; Afghanistan and Iraq Campaign Medals and Australian Defence Medal.

Roll of Honour in the College Chapel

XAVIER CLAN AT MCA IN THE 1950s

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1950s, the Marist Brothers reputation was such that many students were arriving from overseas including the far away island of Hong Kong for their education. The population of Hong Kong had more than doubled since the end of WW2 and in 1950, three million people of all different nationalities imaginable lived on the island and the mainland called Kowloon. The greater part of the population is of course Chinese.

Arthur Xavier was the first of the extended Xavier family from Hong Kong to attend Marist College Ashgrove in 1950 for Sub-Junior. Arthur played in the undefeated MCSA 7 stone 7 lb rugby league winning team and had a spectacular season, scoring sixty points! This team was captained by Des Connor and also contained Wilf Broad and Ray Burke. Arthur Xavier continued his runaway try scoring feats as the right wing speedster for the 1951, 8 stone joint premiership winning rugby league team. Arthur Xavier, while in Sub-Senior in 1952 played gamely for the 1st XV which won the inaugural MSSSA Rugby Union premiership. In 1952, he was also a vital member of the Open Athletics team. In 1953, Arthur played in the first competition game against Industrial High and had a field day scoring an astonishing five tries in the 23-0 win. After graduating from MCA, Arthur Xavier became an acknowledged Brisbane artist and among his famous work was the iconic "The Tower Block."

In 1951, Albert, Anthony, Arthur, John, Joseph and Manuel Xavier, all attended MCA as boarders from Hong Kong. In 1952, only Arthur continued as a boarder while Albert, Anthony, John and Manuel became day boys from Gaythorne. All made their mark- Anthony topped grade 7 Art, Manuel was merited with his grade 7 writing while John was an outstanding rugby player in the undefeated 7 stone 7 lb MSSSA competition.

Interestingly, in 1952, Joseph Ribeiro (1950-52) became the first Hong Kong boarder to graduate and matriculate from MCA. Joseph also was awarded the College Senior English and French prizes.

In 1953, Augusto Xavier who was born in Hong Kong in 1941, attended St John the Baptists Preparatory College at Eagle Heights which was also conducted by the Marist Brothers. The brothers Alexandre and the younger Emmanuel (Manuel) from Hong Kong had first attended there in 1952, and in 1953 became the respective U14 and U13 age Athletics champions. In 1953, Augusto was an outstanding student, achieving top marks in the music examinations-theory and practical. Augusto was also the recipient of a special prize as he was awarded top marks at the Eisteddfod. He also placed well in his grade 7 subjects of English, Social Studies and Spelling. With all these achievements, Augusto Xavier was announced the winner of the Character Cup.

In 1954, Augusto began his secondary education at MCA for his scholarship year. He progressed academically and also performed brilliantly in the Australian Music Examinations Board, Music Examinations, especially in the Singing Examination 1954-Third Grade- and Musical Perception-Second Grade. In Term 2, 1954 at Ashgrove Augusto Xavier was elected President of the Scholarship Debating Society and organised Speeches, Debates, Plays etc. It was then a formality that he would successfully pass the Qld Scholarship examinations.

In 1955, Eduardo Xavier (grade 4) joined his grade 7 brothers, Alex and Manuel for their last year as Hong Kong boarders at Eagle Heights. Both were selected in the A grade Rugby League team. Alex and Manuel then proceeded to Marist College Ashgrove as boarders in 1956 for their respective scholarship years. At MCA they both made their mark in the undefeated 1956 8 stone "A" rugby union team. Most of the high scores were due to the Xavier brothers. The team contained notables such as Mick Barry as halfback, Geoff Kendall, John McCaffery and Paul O'Donnell.

Augusto Xavier continued to flourish while boarding at MCA in 1955, until family circumstances would change the direction of his life.

LT AUGUSTO MARIA XAVIER USMC BY ARMANDO “PINKY” DA SILVA[1]

A Heroes Tale Retold - A decorated Macanese hero of the Vietnam War

Lt Augusto “Gussie” Xavier USMC lost his life in Vietnam in March 1966 leading a flight of four A-4 Skyhawk fighter-bombers while assisting a beleaguered US Special Forces (“Green Berets”) base camp. He was awarded the Silver Star medal for exceptional leadership and gallantry under enemy fire.

Gussie was born in Hong Kong on 26 May 1941 to “Smokey” and “Tootie” Xavier. His Dad participated in the Battle of Hong Kong in December 1941 with the Hong Kong Volunteers and was interned at a PoW camp in Sendai, Japan for the duration of the Pacific War. His son Gussie was to become a war hero in a different war.

In post-war Hong Kong Gussie lived in the Tsimshatsui neighborhood of Kowloon. To better the lot of the Xavier family Smokey and Tootie decided to emigrate to the United States. They came on the SS President Wilson[2]. Gussie’s first day in America came on 20 August 1955 at Honolulu, Hawaii. He was then 14 years old.

The Xaviers settled in San José, California where Gussie attended Bellarmine High School, a Jesuit institution. The U.S military draft was in effect, so he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps after his high school graduation. By

doing so he had the choice of the military service to serve under. Full-scale US participation in Vietnam was not yet on.

The Marine Corps saw in him a gifted natural leader. After basic boot camp training at Camp Pendleton Marine Base in southern California he went on to officer candidate school for leadership training. He chose Corps Aviation as his career specialty and took combat flight training at nearby El Toro Marine Air Station where he earned his officer's commission and his "aviator's wings".

Gussie landed with the U.S Marines at Danang, South Vietnam in 1965. The Marine Corps differed from the US Army in that it independently had its own fixed wing fighter-bombers to assist in close air-ground operations. He was assigned to the 1st Marine Air Wing at Danang and soon flew combat missions.

A Shau Valley is an upland valley near the junction of the borders of (the former) North and South Vietnam and Laos. It rests on the Cordillera Annamite, the backbone central mountain range running from south China through the Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. For centuries the upland valleys were home to various hill tribes collectively known as montaignards. Their life-styles differed from the "lowland" Vietnamese of the northern Tonkin and southern Mekong deltas and the lowland coastal plains. Thus they found in the Americans a useful ally when the North Vietnamese began to use the upland connecting trails to bring weapons and supplies to the Vietcong guerrillas in South Vietnam. A Shau Valley, about 26 miles long and about 5 miles at its widest, stood astride of these many upland trails later to be known in the singular as "The Ho Chi Minh Trail". The valley floor ranges from about 1000 to 2000 feet above sea-level. It is ringed by forested mountain peaks some topping 4000 feet. It used to be home to an old established montaignard settlement later to become a well-fortified US Special Forces base camp manned by about 20 Green Berets and about 350 montaignard irregulars. Its position camp had strategic military value for both sides.

The North Vietnamese army waited for "crachin weather" to set in to offset superior American air power. This is early springtime weather in Vietnam when cloud ceilings are lowered, light drizzle sets in, and mountain peaks are shrouded in mist.

On 9 March 1966 an already well-placed crack North Vietnamese regiment of about 2500 personnel launched a massive attack on the base camp with mortar, artillery, and heavy machine gun fire as its infantry men advanced. The battle raged on all night as US Special Forces "air commando" AC-47 fixed wing gunships and AC-123 flareships dropped illuminating flares and skin-searing, wide-area damage phosphorous bombs on the attackers. The base was in danger of being overrun. The Green Berets called on the Marine Corps for very close air support.

By dawn's early light of 10 March 1966, Lt Augusto Maria Xavier USMC, led a flight of four A-4 Skyhawks into the fray. Gussie faced a daunting mission: he had to fly his aircraft swiftly but deftly into heavy cloud banks shrouding mountain peaks, swoop down through a cloud ceiling of only 400 feet above ground, deposit his load of napalm bombs accurately on target, then bank his aircraft into the mountain mist for safety under heavy anti-aircraft fire. His aircraft may well have been hit during his successful bomb-run. Whatever the reason, his A-4 Skyhawk slammed into a hillside shrouded in mist some miles away from the threatened base camp under attack. His body was never recovered. He was two months shy of his 25th birthday.

Augusto Maria Xavier's name and his date of death are enshrined at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC, Panel 06E, Line 001. Semper Fidelis.

1. The writer taught evening extension courses in Physical Geography and the Geography of South-east Asia for the University of Hawaii from Fall 1967 to Spring 1970 at Pearl Harbor Naval Base and Schofield Army Barracks at Oahu, Hawaii.
2. This writer was also on board the SS President Wilson and often supped with the Xaviers at the ship's dining hall.

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SEMESTER 1 SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

Term 1 and Term 2 saw Marist College Ashgrove deliver strong performances across all sports played, which included Cricket, Volleyball, Australian Rules (AFL), Swimming, Football (Soccer), Rugby, Chess and Cross Country. From premiership wins to personal milestones and steady program growth, the season was not only marked by spirited competition, committed coaching and exceptional student involvement, but the first time any TAS or AIC College has won the four major land sports OUTRIGHT! Congratulations to Marist College Ashgrove after being placed first in 2026 in 1st XI Cricket, 1st XV Rugby, 1st XI Football and were aggregate winners by a decisive 10 points in Cross Country!

This feat was nearly achieved by MCA in 2009 but the College were co-premiers in 1st XV rugby with Iona and in 1979 when the College were co-premiers with BGS in 1st XI Football (ISSA).

This statistic does not underplay MCA's brilliant aquatic performance in the swimming pool where Ashgrove has closed the gap with St Peter's to less than one relay race! Fingers crossed for 2027! 2026 AIC Aggregate Points: 1. SPLC 656, MCA 636, Villanova 429.

The Old Boys' Association thanks previous Program Leader for Sport for four years, Derek Lennon, and welcomes Scott Reaper who has been the new Program Leader for Sport from Term 2. Thanks to both for their leadership across multiple sporting programs, ensuring all boys continue to benefit from the rich tradition of sport at the College.

The achievements that follow reflect the enduring strength of sport at MCA and its continuing role in shaping character and community.

TERM 1

AFL

The 2026 AIC AFL season came to a close after Round 7, capping another strong year for a growing Marist program. A total of 428 boys played the sport across Term 1, with 370 representing the College on weekends across 17 sides — a pleasing sight, as boys from a variety of sporting backgrounds came together to learn the game and add value to the program each week.

On the field, the 7Bs and the 2nd XVIII led the way, both finishing second in their respective competitions. The 1st XVIII worked manfully throughout the year, showing a great deal of improvement from a younger group of athletes, while the College finished fifth in the aggregate shield.

The season's success was made possible by the 30 coaches and team managers who gave their time so generously, developing our players into quality footballers and, more importantly, quality young men. Particular thanks go to Mr Cam Mabey, who led the AFL program this year and was a great support to the coaches on game day. Thanks, also to Charlie Cameron (2011) for his support of the team.

Preparations for the 2027 season will begin in Term 4 through the pre-season and trial phases. In the meantime, players are encouraged to stay active in the College's other sporting offerings and continue developing the coordination skills that shine in AFL.

Cricket

The 1st XI enjoyed a remarkable 2026 AIC season, finishing undefeated to claim back-to-back AIC Cricket Premierships under Head Coach Mr Michael Abbott, Assistant Coaches Mr Tom Gibson (2014) and Mr Gareth Kolkenbeck-Ruh, and Cricket Coordinator Mr Matt Millward. It was Ashgrove's first unbeaten AIC 1st XI Premiership since 2014, and the first time since 2014-15 the College had won the competition in consecutive years.
The season opened with a hard-fought 47-run win over Iona at McMahon Oval, the 1st XI recovering from a precarious 6-73 thanks to a composed 77 not out from Oliver Hayes and 55 not out from Joshua Pope, before young spinners Leo Morris (3-19) and Archer Tallon (1-18) choked the run chase. Five boys made their AIC 1st XI debut that day. Round 2 belonged to Leo Morris, whose extraordinary 8-20 bowled St Peters out for just 50 in the annual Pink Stumps clash for the McGrath Foundation, after MCA had posted 9-177.

The momentum continued with a 7-wicket win over St Patrick's, Will Easter's opening spell (3-22) helping roll them for 124 before Salem Tamer's 75 steered the chase. St Laurence's were then dismantled by spin, with Grade 9 debutant Charlie Barnett claiming a five-wicket haul (5-14). Round 5 produced one of the great AIC results: St Edmunds bowled out for just 11 — Morris taking 5-2 and captain Will Easter 4-7 — and the total chased down in nine balls for a 10-wicket win.

The premiership was sealed a week early in Round 6 with a 69-run victory away against nearest rival Villanova. Ashgrove posted 9-207, with crucial innings from Will Easter (46) and Oliver Hayes (42), before Joshua Pope (4-23) led the bowling effort to have Villa all out for 138. The unbeaten run was completed with a comprehensive 8-wicket win over Padua in the final round, Pope again starring with 5-8 and Tamer finishing 55 not out.

Captain Will Easter led the side superbly, winning every game as skipper despite losing every toss. MCA finished on 14 points, six clear of Iona, St Peters and Villanova. Leo Morris was the competition's leading wicket-taker with 20 wickets

at 4.8, while Will Easter, Oliver Hayes, Max Edye, Salem Tamer, Archer Tallon and Joshua Pope all completed back-to-back Premierships. Other MCA teams to secure AIC premierships: 3rd XI, 9B, 9C, 8B, 7B and 7C.

TERM 2

Cross Country

The 2026 Cross Country season was another outstanding year for the Marist Cross Country program, with the squad successfully defending last year's Primary and Secondary AIC Championship double. Marist claimed the Secondary title outright by a decisive 10-point margin and shared the Primary Championship with Iona College.

This achievement further strengthens the proud legacy of Cross Country at Marist, with the College now securing 9 of the past 10 AIC Championship titles, including 4 consecutive Primary Championships. The success is a testament to the dedication, determination, and team-first mindset displayed by every member of the squad throughout the season.

The commitment and hard work of our athletes was rewarded with championship victories across the Year 5, 15 Years, 16 Years, and Open divisions, demonstrating the depth and strength of the program across all age groups. A special congratulations to Fred Little, who was named the 14 Years Aged Champion following an outstanding season.

The continued success of the program would not be possible without the commitment and expertise of our coaching staff. Thank you to Matt Millward, Marcus Schrader, Tom Prole, Zac Milligan, Asher Parkin, Brendan Jansons, Brendan Saunders, Emmanuel Geu, Matt Pimm, Sasha Sofronoff, Ben Adams, and John Lambourne for their dedication and tireless efforts in coaching and supporting our athletes throughout the season.

The future continues to look bright for Cross Country at Marist, with a strong culture, dedicated coaches, and talented athletes continuing to drive the program forward.

Rugby Union

The Old Boys' Association sincerely thanks Richard Graham (1990), Director of Rugby Union at Marist College Ashgrove, for providing the 2026 Rugby report. We also thank Richard for his continued passion, leadership and expertise in guiding the rugby program. His commitment to developing young men through the values of the game ensures the proud tradition of Marist Rugby remains as strong as ever.

The 2026 Marist College Ashgrove Rugby Union season has been one of exceptional commitment, connection, and achievement. With 34 teams ranging from the youngest and newest bumblebees (the 5E's) through to the 1st XV, the program continues to provide a safe, challenging, competitive, and enjoyable environment. Our core goal of finding meaningful games for every team each weekend remains central to the program's success and identity.

Marist were crowned 2026 AIC Rugby Union aggregate champions, finishing with 83 points ahead of Iona College on 68. The 1st XV - 4th XV, 10B, 9A, 9B, all won undefeated premierships, whilst the College won seven of the twelve aggregate divisions, with all seven teams finishing their seasons undefeated. To highlight the strength within the Opens, the 1st XV - 9th XV only lost one competition game all season. This is a testament to everyone who contributes to our program.

The dedication of our coordinators and coaches to deliver an aligned and connected program is something that sets us apart. From the beginning of the Rugby Ready Program in Term 1 through to the final whistle in Term 2, the coordinators and coaches work tirelessly to provide the students with an exceptional experience.

The 1st XV again played a dynamic, high-skill, and fast-paced brand of rugby that lit up the fields each Saturday. Their highly conditioned, high-passing game style saw them score from all corners of the park, delighting crowds and setting a standard for all teams to follow. The team deserved their undefeated season with the best attack and stingiest defence records. Beyond the scoreboard, the 1st XV showed genuine pride in connecting with the College community, as demonstrated in the three massive home game days against SLC, Villanova and Padua.

Rugby at Marist is about creating experiences, friendships, and values that last well beyond the final whistle. Congratulations to everyone who carries forward a proud tradition.

Football

Hard work, resilience, skill and a little bit of luck go a long way. In the first two rounds we started strongly with a 6-2 win over Iona and a 6-1 against St Peters. Followed by two close games with a 2-1 win over St Pats and a 1-2 loss to St Laurence's, which was called off early due to lightning. However, the boys bounced back with a 1-0 win over St Edmunds and a solid 2-0 win against Villanova. Our closest competitor, St Laurence's, had strong wins throughout, however, having a 0-0 against St Edmunds in Round 2 meant we were still in striking distance coming into the last round. St Peter's hosted St Laurence's, which finished with a 0-0 draw. Our First XI found out five minutes before they ran out: a win would secure an outright premiership. Padua played a quality game and pushed the boys; however, we took our chances and came away 3-0 victors. A credit to the program, which has secured the premiership three years in a row. Congratulations to St Laurence's who finished 1st in the Aggregate with Marist a close 2nd. The following teams finished undefeated: 6th XI, 9A, 9C, 7D, 6B, 5A, 5C. A special thank you to both Blair Whitlock (First XI Head Coach) and Willem Baines (First XI Assistant Coach) who have dedicated countless hours to supporting the development of our players, fostering a positive team culture, and preparing the squad for success throughout the season.

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A 1ST XI WIN FOR THE RECORD BOOKS

Marist College Ashgrove's undefeated 2026 1st XI cricket premiership season produced many highlights, but the Round 5 victory over St Edmund's College on McMahon Oval may well be remembered as one of the most remarkable.

In what appears to have been one of the shortest completed 1st XI interschool cricket matches in College history, Ashgrove dismissed St Edmund's for just 11 runs (51 balls) before reaching the target in only nine balls.

The final score was extraordinary: Marist College Ashgrove 0/15 defeated St Edmund's College 11.

Only two St Edmund's batsmen scored runs, both making four, with one boundary struck in the innings. The remaining three runs came from sundries: one no-ball, one leg bye and one bye. Ashgrove then completed the chase without loss, bringing the match to a close in less than an hour.

Since one-innings AIC 1st XI cricket matches were introduced in 2011, results of this nature have been exceptionally rare. The performance was a fitting reflection of the 2026 side's season: disciplined, ruthless and built on pressure from the first ball.

The result also prompted Marist cricket historians to look back through the records at other famous Ashgrove bowling performances. Some of the lowest opposition totals date back to 1957, when one of the College's great 1st XI teams, featuring opening bowlers George Paff and Mick Barros and leg-spinner John McDonnell, produced two extraordinary outright victories. Against Villanova, Ashgrove declared at 4/142 before dismissing Villa for 46 and 4. Against Shorncliffe, Ashgrove made 142 before bowling St Patrick's College out for 9 and 70.

The 1964 TAS premiership side, coached by Geoff Joy, was another dominant bowling team. Captain Greg Dux finished the season with 56 wickets, including two hat-tricks. In one match against St Paul's, Ashgrove made 9/110 before dismissing St Paul's for 11 and 65, with Dux taking four wickets in consecutive balls in the first innings.

The undefeated premiership teams of 1977 and 1978 also produced memorable low-score victories. In 1977, Ashgrove made 8/151 before bowling Rosalie out for just 13. In 1978, Ashgrove defeated De La Salle after bowling them out for 15 in the first innings.

The 2026 1st XI now takes its place among those great Ashgrove cricket sides. To dismiss a fellow AIC 1st XI team for 11 and complete the chase in nine balls is a rare achievement in any era.

Congratulations to the Marist College Ashgrove 2026 1st XI on an undefeated premiership season and a victory that will be remembered for years to come.

MARIST TRACK AND FIELD - AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Competing with pride in their Queensland state uniforms, over a dozen MCA athletes produced outstanding performances against the very best junior athletes in the nation and most notably, IGS alumnus Gout Gout who turns 19 in December. Year 12 Marist College Ashgrove sprint star Isaac Ting raced against Qld team-mate Gout Gout in the U-20 100 metres and also competed in the U-20 200 metres and demonstrated his ability to match it with Australia's elite young sprinters.

Isaac Ting recorded a personal best time in his U-20 heat of 10.76 seconds and then performed well in his semifinal despite a significant headwind. Gout Gout won this semifinal and then won his second consecutive Australian U20 100m title, comfortably winning the final in 10.21 seconds.

Isaac Ting then continued his impressive form in the U-20 200 metres, placing 6th in the FINAL and recording 21.64 seconds. Former Australian national sprint representative, Brett Leavy (1982) holds the College record of 21.5 seconds set in 1982. Mark Leavy (1984) holds the 100m College record of 10.5 seconds set in 1984.

In the U17 Division, Year 10 MCA student Hayden Lockhart won the gold medal in the U17 Long Jump, achieving a distance of 6.84 metres, into a 1.8m headwind! This long jump eclipsed Kevin Rosanowski's (1989) longstanding MCA College record of 6.76 metres set in 1988!

Congratulations to all athletes and coaches for performing above their best on the national stage.

MARIST OLD BOYS' VINTAGE LUNCH AND MASS

FRIDAY 14 AUGUST, 2026

Mass 10:30am (College Chapel),
Lunch 11:30am for 12:00pm

Celebrating 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981 and 1986 milestone reunions.

Presentation of Honorary OBA Life Membership to Geoff Joy, Head of College 1965-1970.

Presentation of 2026 Arthur Apelt Memorial Service Award to John O'Hare (1972).

https://events.humanitix.com/2026-marist-vintage-lunch

Cost: $70.00

DR MARK WATERS OAM (1973)

The Old Boys Association extends its warmest congratulations to Dr Mark Waters FRACMA, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2026 Australia Day Honours for his service to medical administration. It is a fitting recognition of a distinguished career that has taken him from the boarding dormitories of Ashgrove to the most remote corners of Queensland, and we are delighted to share his story.

Mark boarded at Ashgrove — his father's work in the Queensland railways meant frequent country moves — before enrolling in medicine at the University of Queensland on a State Government Scholarship. At university he played rugby for the Med XV and worked as an anaesthetic technician at the Mater. He married Pam, also a doctor and scholarship holder, in his first year after graduation.

The scholarship directed his early career, taking the couple from Ipswich Hospital to Mt Isa, where Mark spent time with the Flying Doctor service visiting remote communities in north-west Queensland, and then to Ayr as Medical Superintendent. A period working in obstetrics at Cambridge followed, after which Mark and Pam spent some months travelling through the UK and Europe in a combi van. He later became Medical Superintendent at Gympie, and looks back on this time working in rural and remote communities as one he enjoyed immensely.

A move to Ipswich led to a degree in Medical Administration, which became his enduring career interest. Mark was the first Medical Superintendent of the new Logan Hospital, and between 1996 and 2012 held executive roles across the public and private health sectors, including West Moreton, Princess Alexandra and Royal Brisbane and Women's, as well as the Mater and Wesley Hospitals. After twelve years of marriage, Pam decided to specialise in psychiatry — a decision their friends always smile at.

Voluntary work brought some of his greatest rewards and friendships, from the Ipswich Bulls soccer club to Ipswich Grammar School and the Ipswich Hospice. Mark is also a keen cyclist, having climbed Mt Coot-tha with the same group of friends since 2000 — more slowly each year. They celebrated their thousandth ascent in 2021, and he has a plate in his collarbone from his one fall to show for it.

By his own admission "an epic fail at retiring," Mark currently serves on the South West Hospital and Health Service Board at Roma, revisiting the towns of his railway childhood, and coaches doctors stepping into executive roles. He remains grateful for what Ashgrove gave him, and for the good fortune of being born in this wonderful country.

JOHN CONNOLLY AM (1969)

The Old Boys Association extends its congratulations to John "Knuckles" Connolly, who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2026 Australia Day Honours List for significant service to rugby union as a coach and mentor. It is fitting recognition for one of the game's most respected figures.

John attended Ashgrove as a dayboy from Enoggera (1959–65) and then as a boarder from Nambour (1966–69). As he has joked, he came to school mainly to eat lunch and play rugby, cricket, tennis and shot put — excelling at sport if not in the classroom. His younger brother Shane (1972) balanced the family ledger as College Vice-Captain, Dux of Year 12 Gold and winner of the Character Cup.

His coaching career was decorated. Over 12 years as Queensland Reds coach (1989–2000) he guided the side to a Super Six title and two Super 10 trophies, before coaching the Wallabies at the 2007 Rugby World Cup in France. His achievements abroad included a French premiership with Stade Français in 1999–2000. In 2025 he was inducted into the Queensland Rugby Union Hall of Fame.

In August 2021, a freak fall left John a quadriplegic. Now living with full-time care, he has turned his energy toward helping others with similar injuries, especially those without the support he enjoys. His remarkable life is the subject of the 2025 biography Bare Knuckles, with a glowing foreword from John Eales (1987). It is a raw, moving and often funny portrait of a man who proves it is better to be interesting than perfect.

GEOFF JOY OAM RECOGNISED IN KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The Old Boys' Association warmly congratulates Geoff Joy OAM on his recognition in the King's Birthday Honours.

Geoff has made a lasting contribution to the Marist community over many years and this award is a fitting acknowledgement of his service and dedication.

Geoff will also be presented with Honorary Life Membership of the OBA at the upcoming Vintage Lunch on August 14 at the College. This special recognition comes as Geoff prepares to celebrate his 90th birthday on 24 June, 2026.

Congratulations Geoff on this well-deserved honour.

MOON'S NEW PHASE

Brendan Moon (1976) has announced his retirement as the inaugural Co-ordinator General of the National Emergency Management Agency. Brendan took on the role in 2022 following the merging of Emergency Management Australia and the National Recovery and Resilience Agency. Prior to his NEMA appointment the Marist College Ashgrove old boy spent a decade with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority including six years as CEO leading the state's recovery from major natural disasters including Cyclone Debbie.

The former Wallaby winger was capped 35 times for Australia and 100 for Queensland, plus multiple appearances for Australia at the Hong Kong 7s and was inducted into the Queensland Rugby Hall of Fame in 2025. Beyond rugby, Brendan Moon was recognised with an Australian Sports Medal (2000) and appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (2022).

The OBA again congratulates Brendan on an extraordinary career in both rugby and public service.

CRAIG ROGERS (1994) - LEADER IN LAW!

Queensland's legal leaders are making their mark on the national stage with an increased number of Brisbane based lawyers recorded in this year's Best Lawyers in Australia list.

Craig Rogers (1994) was recognised across 10 fields and received a special law award.

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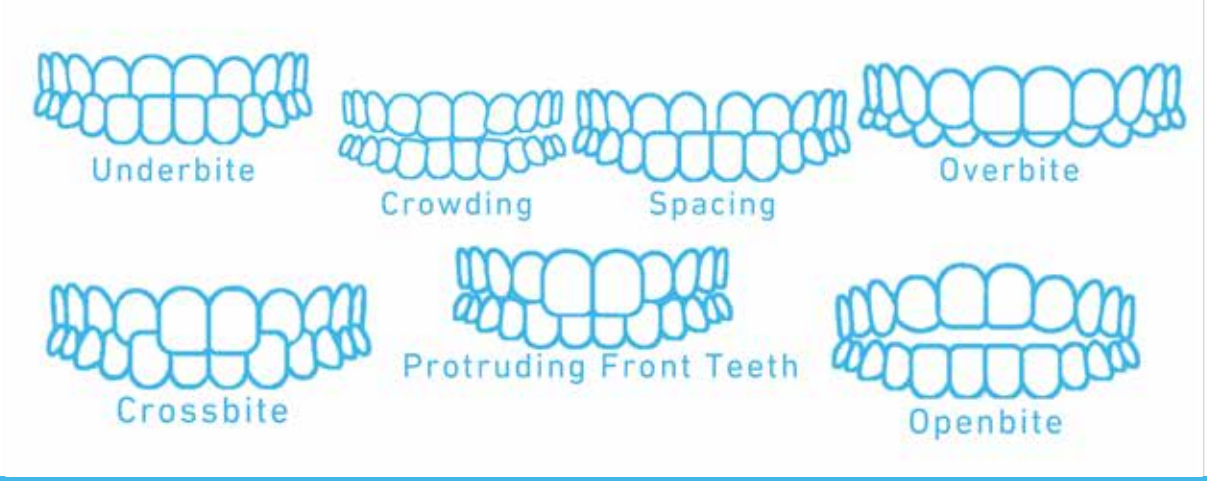

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THE HONOURABLE BRIAN AMBROSE QC: A MARIST STORY OF DISCIPLINE, SERVICE AND LAW

The story of The Honourable Brian Ambrose (1951) QC is not simply the story of a distinguished legal career. It is also a story of wartime Brisbane, a young Marist College Ashgrove finding its feet, a working-class Catholic education, personal resilience and a lifelong respect for learning.

Born in Brisbane on 29 January 1935, Brian Ambrose grew up in years shaped by the Great Depression and the Second World War. His early childhood included time in Roma, where his father worked with the State Government Insurance Office and his mother, whose family background was connected to rural Queensland, introduced him to horses, riding and country life.

When the Pacific War began, the family returned to Brisbane and eventually settled at Ashgrove, near Enoggera Creek. Those wartime years were modest and practical. The family grew food, kept poultry and lived with a degree of self-sufficiency that reflected the demands of the time. Brian later recalled walking to collect milk, helping in the garden and living in a Brisbane where few families owned cars, children rode their bikes freely and neighbourhood life was close and community-centred.

When Marist Brothers College Ashgrove reopened after the departure of soldiers from the campus, Brian was among the early boys to attend. He came to the College as a day boy, first from Kelvin Grove and later from Ashgrove, attending from 1945 to 1951.

In his recollections, Marist Ashgrove was not a privileged institution. It was young, working-class, strongly Catholic and still being built in a very literal sense. Boys were expected to help around the grounds, including fixing fields, moving rocks and making themselves useful. It was, as Brian remembered it, a school of families with ambition, discipline and a desire to prove themselves.

That point mattered to him. In reflecting on later commentary that portrayed Supreme Court judges as products of elite schools and privileged backgrounds, Brian made clear that his Ashgrove experience had been very different. He remembered the College as a place with a strong Irish Catholic influence, where boys came from working-class families and were motivated to show they were the equal of anyone.

He also recalled the influence of the Marist Brothers who taught him. Some were strict, some less so, but they formed part of a school culture that demanded effort. One Brother in particular, Brother Cyprian, left a strong impression. A New Zealander, Brother Cyprian helped strengthen the College and introduced rugby union, shaping a sporting tradition that would become central to Ashgrove life.

Brian's education was interrupted when, at the age of 12, he contracted Type 1 diabetes. At the time, the condition was far less manageable than it is today and the prognosis for a child diagnosed with diabetes was deeply uncertain. He lost around six months of schooling and fell behind his peers. His father, conscious of the seriousness of the illness, encouraged him towards the security of the public service rather than a long university path.

Yet the interruption did not define him. Brian became an avid reader, often reading widely during periods of illness. He later developed a disciplined approach to study, including a rigorous method of preparing for examinations by working through years of past papers. That habit of careful preparation stayed with him throughout his academic and legal life.

At Marist, Brian proved himself an excellent student. In the Junior Public examinations of 1951, he achieved outstanding results: English B, French A, Latin A, Maths A (A), Maths B (B), Chemistry A and Physics A. After leaving the College, he entered the public service, working first in the Agriculture and Stock Department before moving into the Justice Department and the Supreme Court Registry.

Those early years gave him a practical understanding of institutions, bureaucracy and the law before he had formally entered the profession. He observed the legal system not from chambers or the Bench, but from the counter, the records room and the registry. It was a world of files, forms, procedures, personalities and people trying to navigate a system that could feel daunting.

His time in the Supreme Court Registry gave him a close view of how institutions operate. He saw discipline, hierarchy and camaraderie, but also the danger of rules being applied too rigidly. That experience seems to have mattered. Later in life, as a legal practitioner and then as a judge, he carried an awareness that justice depended not only on legal principle, but also on the way courts treated people.

Brian studied law while working, later completing his studies full-time. He attended university in an era when Queensland's legal world was still relatively small and closely connected. The Bar was centred around the old Inns of

Court, where young lawyers learned not only from books and lectures, but from watching senior barristers at work.

Before graduation, Brian read with Patrick Shanahan. This gave him exposure to conferences, court work and the daily habits of senior members of the Bar. He found himself in the company of men who would become significant figures in Queensland law, absorbing lessons in preparation, judgement, advocacy and professional conduct.

In that environment, Brian belonged to a generation helping to bridge two eras. The older legal culture still carried traces of apprenticeship, sectarian divisions and personal networks. At the same time, university-trained lawyers were beginning to reshape the profession. Brian's own approach combined both worlds: practical experience, hard study, disciplined reading and close observation of those already established in the law.

He was admitted in December 1958 and went directly to the Bar. His early practice was shaped largely by criminal law, reflecting the work of Patrick Shanahan and the opportunities available to a young barrister. It meant regular court appearances and the development of confidence on his feet. Over time, his practice broadened into commercial work, land development, local government and town planning law.

His reflections on the profession were thoughtful rather than romantic. He understood the importance of advocacy and personality in criminal law, but also the demands of more technical areas of practice, where legal principle, preparation and close attention to detail became central. This breadth of experience helped form the lawyer he became.

Brian's career continued to grow in significance. He was appointed Queen's Counsel and, in 1985, became a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland. He served on the Court until 2003. Across those 18 years on the Bench, he became part of Queensland's legal history, bringing with him not only legal intellect and professional experience, but also the grounding of his early life: discipline, resilience, practicality and a respect for ordinary people navigating powerful institutions.

For Marist College Ashgrove, Brian Ambrose's story carries a deeper significance. His career was not a straight path paved by privilege. It was built through resilience, study, work and opportunity grasped when it appeared. From a boy riding his bike through wartime Brisbane to a young man reading in the Inns of Court, the same qualities are evident: curiosity, stamina, independence and a refusal to be limited by circumstance.

His life also shows the broader role Marist has played in Queensland's story. In Brian's recollection, Ashgrove was a place that gave boys from ordinary families confidence, discipline and a belief that they could contribute beyond the school gates. It was a school where faith, effort, community and ambition sat closely together.

That Marist connection continued through his family. Brian married Jean and they had two sons, Bret (1987) and Mark (1989), who both attended Marist College Ashgrove. Their sons, as third-generation students, have also carried that connection, with Finlay (2023), Hugh (2026), Wilson (Year 10, 2026) and Owen (Year 8, 2026) part of the broader Ambrose family story at the College.

The 2004 oral history interview with Brian Ambrose, conducted by The Honourable James Thomas AM QC through the Supreme Court Library of Queensland, preserves far more than the details of a legal career. It captures a life shaped by place, family, faith, illness, study, service and determination.

For Ashgrove, it is a reminder that the College's history is written not only in buildings, sporting records and formal occasions, but in the lives of Old Boys who carried its values into public life. In The Honourable Brian Ambrose QC, Marist can recognise one of its own: a boy from wartime Ashgrove who rode his bike to school, worked through adversity and went on to serve Queensland at the highest levels of the law.

Old Boys Judges - Kevin Row (1946), Con McLoughlin (1941), Brian Ambrose (1951)

ERIC GELLING (1958) - ONE OF RUGBY LEAGUE'S FINEST!

The Marist College Ashgrove Old Boys Association is pleased to recognise the outstanding sporting achievements of Eric Gelling, who attended the College as a day boy from Newmarket from 1953 to 1958.

Eric was a contemporary of legendary commentator George Doniger (1956), who remembered him as "a good halfback who served the backs well, setting off many attacking movements". Eric went on to represent Queensland in 1965, 1966 and 1968, and played a key role in Brothers' back-to-back BRL premierships in 1967 and 1968

In 1967, Eric was halfback in Brothers' gripping and tryless 6-2 grand final victory over Norths at Lang Park. The following year, he captained Brothers from five-eighth as they defeated Easts 21-4. That Brothers side included Johnny Gleeson, Dennis Manteit, Barry Dowling and John Bourke, while Easts featured Des Morris, Geoff Connell and Jeff Denman.

Eric's son, Shaun Gelling (1987), kindly provided *The Ashgrovian* with further reflections on his father's career and the family's connection to Ashgrove. "EG, as he is affectionately known among his mates and mine, is my Dad," Shaun said. "Dad's Queensland representative matches against New South Wales were a precursor to what we now know as State of Origin."

After leaving Ashgrove in 1958, Eric was playing first-grade rugby league for Past Brothers by the age of 18. He also played for and captained Brisbane in the Bulimba Cup. Shaun recalls his father's stories of playing alongside certain footballers for Queensland one year, only to line up against them the next after they had moved to Sydney, including Arthur Beetson, who played with Eric for Queensland in 1965 before joining Balmain.

Footage of the 1968 Brothers grand final remains available on YouTube, giving the family the chance to see Eric in action. "It's outstanding," Shaun said. "We got to see how good Dad was."

For Shaun, his father's sporting achievements crossed clubs and generations. Growing up, he heard stories of Eric competing against names such as Arthur Summons, Norm Provan, Graeme Langlands, Reg Gasnier and John Raper. "Unfortunately I didn't get to see much of the damage Dad caused on the footy field in the 1960s, as I was born in 1970," Shaun said. "But I certainly heard plenty from his peers, and from the newspaper clippings his mother, my grandmother, had carefully kept."

The Gelling family's connection to Ashgrove continued through Eric's sons. Scott attended the College from 1980 to 1984, while Shaun attended from 1983 to 1987. Both were day boys and boarders. Shaun fondly remembers boarding life, walking from the Tower Block down to Number 2 for pickup games of touch footy with anyone keen for a run.

"I've walked through Ashgrove with Dad, listening as he pointed out what wasn't there when he was at school," Shaun said. "Those moments sit right alongside the rugby league stories he told me. And every time I walk through the place now, I get the shivers. It always feels like I'm walking among a group of champions, be they sporting, professional, vocational, academic, volunteers and more."

In the case of Scott and Shaun, the apples certainly did not fall far from the tree. Scott was also a skilful halfback and a member of the 1st V Open A Basketball TAS premiership side in 1984. Shaun was vice-captain and halfback of the 1987 1st XV and was awarded Best Back, while John Eales was named Best Forward. Shaun and John were also the formidable opening bowling combination of the undefeated 1987 1st XI.

BLUEY CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE WORLD IN 2026!

The global phenomenon Bluey has become the most-streamed series in the USA for the second year in a row and by some margin! The ratings service's year-end totals have Bluey at 45.2 billion minutes of viewing time on Disney+, leading the rankings for the second straight year. The beloved TV show has captured audiences around the world since it debuted in 2018, winning multiple awards, including Logies, Emmys and BAFTAs.

In the UK, fans celebrated the return of Bluey's Big Play which features an original story by series creator Joe Brumm (1995). The stage production brings the beloved Heeler family to life with larger scale puppets and a fast paced, family friendly storyline. This is the next chapter of the Olivier Award-nominated stage-show which began its huge UK and Ireland 2025/2026 tour at Milton Keynes on November 27.

And here in Queensland, Brisbane's growing video-game industry has scored a big win, with a new Bluey game developed locally and to reach world wide audiences when it launches in October, 2026. Bluey's Happy Snaps was officially unveiled at its South Bank launch in late March, 2026, and it invites players into the blue heeler's world through an interactive, family-friendly experience that stays true to the heart of the hit animated TV series. The project is more than just another Bluey release, showing a clear example of Queensland's growing capability in producing globally competitive games.

The MCA Old Boys community again congratulates Joe Brumm (1995) and Daley Pearson (2001) for their continued success and for showcasing Australian and Marist creativity on the world stage.

Joe Brumm (1995)

Daley Pearson (2001)

SHINE BRIGHT SEAN!

The OBA congratulates UQ Alumni athlete Sean Bright (2024) who is making waves in Hungary with One Eger.

With a detailed performance system tracking both offensive and defensive stats, Sean is currently ranked #1 in the Hungarian U19 division and #16 in Men's Open Div 1—competing alongside national stars and world-class talent.

Shine Bright, Sean!

JAMES MEE (2016) - GOLFER AIMING HIGH!

James Mee (2016) is an accomplished Australian Professional golfer known for setting multiple course records in Queensland, including a 62 gross at North Rockhampton Golf Club in 2022. James also set a course record 62, including two eagles, on January 5, 2025 at the 2025 Geelong BMW Lonsdale Links Pro-Am. He also won the 2022 Central Queensland Open after opening the tournament with an 8-under par course record.

Since 2022 James has elevated his golf performance by working closely with his coach for a stronger, more efficient swing. The countless hours dedicated to improving his downswing certainly prepared him well for the 2025/6 PGA Tour of Australasia major events. Below are his very creditable performances.

On November 21, 2025, James tied 85th in the BMW Australian PGA and was even par after rounds of 74,68. On November 28, 2025, James tied 116th in the ISPS Handa Australian Open, and was +4 after rounds of 72,75.

Minjee Lee and brother Min Woo Lee hosted the Webex Players Series Perth event at Royal Fremantle Golf Club, 8-11 January, 2026, and James again played creditably and although he finished even with the card, again just missed the cut. The Round 2 day's highlight of January 9, 2026 was definitely James Mee making the first albatross of his career at the Par 5, 6th hole, holing his 5-iron from 205 metres!

As a member of the PGA Tour of Australia, James then headed to Victoria for the last two weeks of events, including the penultimate event of the PGA Tour of Australasia schedule at the Heritage Classic and then The National Tournament. James saved his best scoring for the season's final tournaments, both times making the cut (54 players) after two rounds for both events.

At the Heritage Classic in the Yarra Valley region of Victoria, 12-15 March, 2026, James Mee finished in a tie for 19th at 7 under par (70,72,69,70). Fellow Queenslander Will Florimo won the event with 14 under. At the National Golf Club Tournament at Gunnamatta, Victoria, 26-30 March 2026, James Mee finished in a tie for 19th at 4 under par (74,76,65,69). Cameron John won the event with 11 under.

The sky is the limit for James Mee!

DYLAN MCLACHLAN (2016) - QLD BULLS SQUAD MEMBER 2026-27

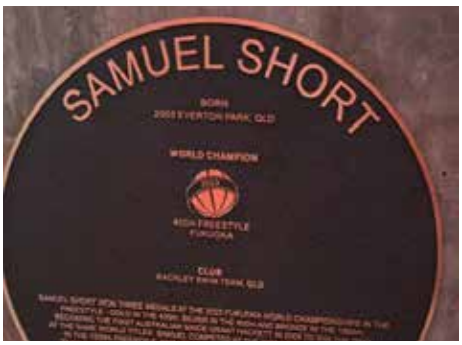
Queensland Bulls have added a back-up wicket-keeper for Jimmy Pierson, signing Valley gloveman, Dylan McLachlan (2016) to his initial Bulls contract. McLachlan, 27 years, made his Bulls debut in February 2024, when he played in a One Day Cup game for Qld v SA ,scoring 44. Dylan has captained the Qld indigenous squad at the National Cricket Championships for the past two years winning player of the match in last year's title win in Mackay. The Bulls finished third in the recently completed Sheffield Shield and One Day Cup competitions.

SAM SHORT (2018) - FREESTYLE CHAMPION

Sam Short (2014-2018) became the first person to win four individual freestyle events at the Australian National Swimming Championships held in Sydney from June 8-13, 2026, since Grant Hackett won the same 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500 metres freestyle in 2004!

It was the same theme all week for Sam - go out fast and hang on! The strategy had earned him new personal best times in the 200 (1:45.16), 400 (3:40.67) and 800 freestyle (7:36.73) this week, including a new textile world record in the latter. Sam swam 14:42 in the 1500m and he also won the gold medal in this event in the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Sam Short will contest these four individual freestyle events at the XXIII Commonwealth Games (Glasgow 2026) and the 4x200 metres freestyle relay. It is a packed program starting on 23 July to August 2, 2026. Go for gold Sam!

Matthew Magnussen (2021) finished 5th in the 200 metres backstroke final (1:58.95) just outside the qualification time. It was better luck for 20 year old freestyle sprinter, Hannah Casey, MSM ex-student, former Marist swimming club member and younger sister of Josh Casey (2022) who was MCA 2022 Swim captain. Hannah made the finals of the 50, 100 and 200 metres freestyle events with a 4th in the 200m her best result and earning relay qualification for Glasgow 2026.



Danny, Josiah (2025), Sam and Nicole

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PRAYERS PLEASE

- Brian John Dawson (1957) passed away peacefully on December 1, 2025, aged 85 years. Brian was the beloved husband of Kay and brother of Peter (1949) and Barry (1960), dayboys from Wilston. Brian was adored by his daughters, Susan, Jennifer and Catherine and their families. Brian's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass from the MCA Chapel, Ashgrove on December 11,2025. Brian was in the1957 MCA 1st XV and also a brilliant wicketkeeper for the 1st XI, taking 5 catches and 1 stumping, v Shorncliffe. Brothers Rugby Club posted the following kind tribute to supporters. "this week we lost a cherished member of our rugby family whose passion for the game and dedication to the club will never be forgotten. As the longest-serving life member, BJ was respected and loved by all-as a player, manager, supporter, and all-round great bloke. Rest in peace, 'Nonkey.'
- Kerry Francis Hartfiel (1962), late of The Gap, originally Bardon, passed away peacefully in November, 2025, aged 78 years. Kerry was the beloved husband of Lyndall for 55 years and much-loved father of Simon (1988), Luke (1991) and Alexandra. Kerry left school after Junior to take up an apprenticeship. Kerry was a very proud old boy and more so with his sons and grandsons, Ben (2025) and Chris (Year 10, 2026 Gilroy) also attending MCA.
- Selwyn Robin "Bob" Pratt (1960), late of Mt Gravatt, originally from Winton, passed away peacefully on January 3, 2026, aged 79 years. Bob was the loving father of Gavin, Damien, Justin, Gabrielle and Deborah and proud grandfather of eight. Bob was laid to rest at Mt Gravatt Cemetery in a private memorial service with his immediate family. Dave Freer (1960) his classmate advised:"Bob was a day boy from Indooroopilly and left MCA in 1960 after completing Junior. This was the case for many as Australia was still finding its way after WW2 and things were still pretty tight and unfortunately many were not in a position to continue school. Bob had begun his working life as a train driver for Queensland Rail, before continuing his service to the community through Queensland Corrective Services. Bob was a hard working, proud Queenslander, known for his dedication and kind heart."
- Anthony V. "Tony" James (1982), originally from The Gap, passed away peacefully from cancer just before Christmas, 2025. Tony's son, Hunter James (2023) was MCA Boarding Captain in 2023, while his father Robert James (51/52, dec'd 2023) was an Old Boy of Eagle Heights and then Ashgrove. Tony attended MCA from Year 4 in 1974 to Year 12 in 1982 as a day boy. Tony's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at the MCA Chapel, Ashgrove on January 8, 2026.
- Henry Vincent "Vince" Frisby, late of Buderim, formerly Killawarra Road, Ashgrove, passed away peacefully on November 16, 2025, aged 97 years. Vince was the devoted husband to Patricia and Clare (dec'd) and beloved father of Mary, Gerard (1975), Paul (1977), Denis (1979), Michael (1981), Timothy (1983) and Jennifer and loved father-in-law and cherished grandfather and great-grandfather. Vince's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at Stella Maris Church, Maroochydore on November 28, 2025.
- John Vincent "Jack" O'Brien, late of the Gap, passed away peacefully on November 16, 2025, aged 98 years. Jack was the dearly beloved husband of Valma for 75 years and loving father of Michael (1968), Mark (1969), Kerry, John (1980) and Cathy and loved father-in-law , grandfather and great-grandfather. Jack's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at St Peter Chanel Church at The Gap on November 27, 2025. Sadly, Valma Andrea O'Brien, loving wife of Jack (dec'd), passed away peacefully on June 14, 2026, aged 97 years. Val's Funeral Mass was held at St Peter Chanel Church at The Gap on July 2, 2026.
- Paula Therese Gardiner, late of Bardon, formerly The Gold Coast and Kauri Road Ashgrove, passed away peacefully on November 30, 2025, aged 86 years. Paula was the loving wife of Jim (dec'd 2018), and much-loved mother of Jim (1980), Terry (1981), Clare, Anna, Catherine, Elizabeth and Margaret and loving mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother. Paula's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at Mater Dei Church, St John's Wood on December 3, 2025.
- Agnes Doxey, late of Red Hill, passed away peacefully on December 17,2025, aged 86 years. Agnes was the loving wife of Allan, and much-loved mother of Sue, Cathy, Michael (1982), Tony (1984), and Chris (1993) and their families. Agnes' life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass just prior to Christmas at St Mary Magdalene Church Bardon. Sadly, John Allan Doxey, beloved husband of Agnes (dec'd), passed away peacefully on May 8, 2026, aged 87 years. Allan and Agnes were the adored grandparents to their 8 grandchildren. Allan's Funeral Mass was held at St Brigid's Church, Red Hill on May 18, 2026.
- Jeannine Grace Treston, late of Ashgrove, formerly Ascot, passed away peacefully on December 24, 2025, aged nearly 95 years. Jeannine was the loving wife of Tom (1947,dec'd) and much-loved mother of Tony (1975), Brendan (1977), Greg (1978), Jane, Rebecca and Luke (1985) and loving mother-in-law and devoted grandmother to eighteen grandchildren. Jeannine's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at St Agatha's Church, Clayfield on January 9, 2026.
- Tony Sherwood, late of The Gap, formerly Bardon, passed away peacefully on March 1, 2026, aged 81 years. Tony was the loving husband of Mary Ann and much-loved father of James (2004) and Patrick and their families of which grandsons Sebastian (Year 5, 2027) and Henry (Year 5, 2029) will continue the MCA tradition. Tony's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass on March 9, 2026 at St Peter Chanel Church, The Gap.

- Daniel Kirkman (1966), late of Strathpine, formerly Keperra passed away peacefully from cancer on January 8,2026. Dan was married to Arna and much-loved father of Amanda, Jacinta, Melissa, Danielle and Luke (dec'd Dec 2025) and their families. Dan was halfback in the all conquering MCA 1966 1stXV and Arna advised: "Dan continued his love for the College by talking up the school to his children and eulogising his time there. Every Sunday morning he would drive them through the school grounds for their Sunday outing before taking them to the bakery for a treat! Their real treat though was to be with their Dad on a Sunday drive." Daniel's Funeral Service was held at Albany Creek Memorial Park, Lakeview Chapel on January 20,2026.

Daniel Kirkman (1966)

- Kerry Glen Medland (1970), late of Enoggera, passed away peacefully on February 27, 2026, aged 72 years, after a long battle with cancer. Kerry was the beloved husband of Helen and loving father of Shaun (2002) and Troy (2005). He was proud pop to Hayden, Ashton, Ryder, Chase, Tallie and Mackenzie. Kerry was also a loving brother to Sharon Bailey and Glen Bailey (1984). Kerry started at Ashgrove as a grade 4 day boy in 1962 and was a member of MCA's breakthrough Aggregate win in the CCC T&F competition. Kerry was a whole hearted participator in sport and this culminated in the dominant 1970 3rd XV undefeated TAS Rugby premiership. Kerry was farewelled with a funeral service celebrating his life on March 10, 2026, held at White Lady's Funerals Chapel, Kelvin Grove on March 10, 2026.
- Geoffrey A. Box (1971) passed away in Brisbane, in August, 2025. Geoff attended MCA as a boarder from Lae, PNG from 1967 (Year 8) till 1970 (sub-senior). Geoff was an outstanding sportsman, playing in the MCA 1969 3rd XV and 1970 2nd XV TAS Rugby premiership teams. But Geoff excelled at Basketball, winning the Best Player award in the Open A premiership. The 1970 B&G recorded: "Credit must go to all the players, but special thanks to Geoff Box who not only gave of his best as a player but willingly refereed games and encouraged the younger players with experienced advice."
- Sam "Tubba" McNeill (2009), late of Girraween Grove Ashgrove passed away peacefully on February 7, 2026, aged 33 years. Sam was the much-loved son of Andrew and Tanya and loving brother of Josh (2004). Sam's Funeral service was held at Holy Cross Funeral Chapel, Kippa Ring on February 18, 2026. "Some people die young but appear to have put a lot of living into their short time here on earth. This was true of Sam 'Tubba' McNeill. For most of his 33 years Sam was confident, funny, playful, and a great friend. He was a happy 'chippy', had a great sense of justice though was not so keen on rules and did not fear taking risks. Sadly though his last few years were a struggle and we trust now that he is resting at peace in a better place. His parents and brother Josh (graduated 2004) farewelled him in a simple but colourful service and appreciated all the prayers and condolences that they received. They request in his memory that you encourage your boys to talk about feelings and share their emotions and please support the R U OK? campaign and Beyond Blue." - Andrew McNeill (Father).

Sam McNeill (2009)

- Janine (Jan) Stevenson, late of Bardon, passed away peacefully on April 25, 2026, aged 89 years. Jan was the loving mother of David (1978), Andrew (1979), Mark (1981), and James (1988) and grandmother to 10 and great-grandmother to 4. Jan's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at Mater Dei Church, St John's Wood on May 2, 2026.
- Jill Phillips, late of Ashgrove, passed away peacefully on March 15, 2026, aged 94 years. Jill was the loving wife of Gordon (dec'd), and much-loved mother of Lawrie (1970), Jen, Terry (1973), Christopher (dec'd), Dan (1980), Louise, James (1987) and grandmother of 9 and great-grandmother. Jill's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at St Finbarr's Church, Ashgrove on April 10, 2026.
- Joan-Ann Kendall, formerly of The Gap, passed away peacefully on April 3, 2026, aged 91 years. Joan-Ann was the beloved wife of Noel and much-loved mother of Tim (1980), Michael (1982) and Alicia.
- Lenore Ann Geraghty, late of Bardon, formerly The Gap passed away peacefully on June 1, 2026, aged 93 years. Lenore was the beloved wife of John, dearly loved mother of Loretta, Stephen (1979), Rosemary and Catherine and treasured grandmother of 13 grandchildren. Lenore's life was celebrated with a Funeral Mass at St Peter Chanel Church, The Gap on June 15.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

The website has a special 'Vale' section where eulogies and memories of Old Boys are recorded. Please visit www.ashgroveoldboys.com.au and click on 'Vale'.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL NEILL (1964)

From Michael's brother, Greg Neill (1969), and son, Raymond Neill, with contributions from Michael's two other siblings, four other children and wife, Kay Neill.

Greg Neill (Marist Ashgrove, 1969)

My brother Michael Neill, the eldest of us five kids, was born in Brisbane in August 1947 to Raymond John Neill and Grace King. He was raised in Bardon and attended St Joseph's Bardon before moving on to Marist Ashgrove in 1956, graduating in 1964.

Back in those days, Marist was much smaller. In 1959, Grade 7 had just 71 students, swelling to 108 by Grade 8. Quite different to today, the cohort actually shrunk to only 50 by Grade 12, likely a reflection that in the 1960s university was not the default choice, with many boys commencing a trade or joining the workforce after Grade 10.

Michael made it through to the end of Grade 12 though. In fact, his final years at Marist were probably his finest socially, academically and athletically. With five As and one B, Michael achieved the highest Senior grades at Marist but surprisingly wasn't dux, that being awarded to Paul Poulgrain, perhaps because the dux was awarded prior to the end-of-year public exams. Michael was a classic crammer, applying himself to his studies only at the very last minute.

Michael's real passion was rugby. While at Marist he represented the First XV in 1963 and 1964 as prop and second row. The 1963 team was captained by Ray Meagher, while the 1964 team was captained by Michael's best mate, College Captain and future Wallaby Barry Honan. Marist performed well in both years, finishing runner-up each time. Notably, 1964 was the last year the Firsts wore white shorts. Michael went on to play first-grade rugby at Brothers after he left school, playing alongside many current and future state and national reps, including Barry, David Dunworth and Mike Freeney.

Sadly for Michael and me, our father, Ray, died at home on 5 July 1964, Michael's Senior year, from a massive heart attack. Aged only 41, our father was a dedicated volunteer for Marist and the parish, and that evening he had been working the flying fox across the gully at the mid-year fete.

Dad's early death catapulted Michael, still aged 16, into an adult role in the family, including helping care for Lesley, our disabled youngest sister. It also meant he had to assume responsibility for driving the family car, a Humber Super Snipe. That even meant driving himself, unaccompanied, to his driving test. Times have changed!

Dad's death probably influenced Michael's career decision. Initially wanting to do an Engineering degree, he was awarded a paid cadetship with the Bureau of Meteorology to study a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Physics, at the University of Queensland. For three years he worked during semester breaks at the Bureau office in Brisbane. Between playing rugby, cramming for exams and hanging out with Barry, Michael would meet his future wife, Kay Rossberg. Funnily enough, Barry went on to marry another Kay, Kay Miles, his childhood sweetheart.

Upon graduation, Michael was posted to Melbourne for a meteorologist's course and this spelled the beginning of the end of his rugby career. He turned out a few times but complained about it being "too bloody cold". Married in 1970, Michael and Kay moved to the warmer climate of Townsville and set about growing their family.

Ray Neill (Nudgee, 1997)

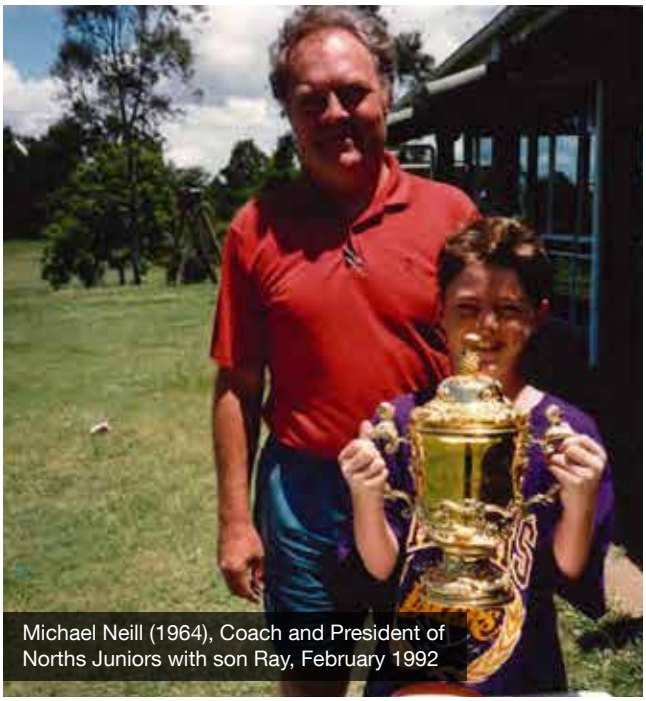
My parents, Michael and Kay, moved back to Brisbane just before Cyclone Althea hit Townsville on Christmas Eve 1971 and my eldest sister, Christine, was born one month later. They quickly added three more girls to the family and then, to my father's unashamed joy, they had a boy, me, in 1980. Our family lived in the same house in Boondall for about 30 years.

I remember Dad being very passionate about his career. He had a keen interest in global warming even back then. For his whole working life, Dad worked shift work, which meant unusual sleep hours. Looking back, I often wonder how he did it with five young kids running around a tiny house making a racket while he was trying to sleep. Michael remained with the BoM for his full 23-year working life, accumulating significant annual and long service leave that he unfortunately was never able to enjoy.

Dad gave his time selflessly to his family and others. Whether it was coaching my rugby team, scoring my sisters' softball games or cooking BBQs at swim carnivals, he was always there. It's been said that Dad never missed a working bee or school presentation night, such was his devotion to us. In the little spare time he had, Dad loved to tinker with things, be it car engines, furniture restoration or his magnificent orchids in our front yard.

Unfortunately, Dad suffered a similar fate to his father, succumbing to a massive heart attack at home on the night of 16 January 1995. He was a fit and seemingly healthy 47-year-old. I was 15 and in Grade 10 at school, slightly younger than he was when he lost his own father.

My father was humble and totally without pretence. He was a notoriously haphazard dresser and possessor of a scrawly hand. He set high standards for himself and expected others to follow suit. He was direct and honest, tough but fair-minded. He was, I think, your ultimate late 20th-century Australian dad who liked the simple things in life, like watching a game of rugby, enjoying a beer or two or camping in a quiet spot with his family. I know Dad loved his time at Marist, and I think the teachings and philosophy of the school shaped much of the man he became.


Michael Neill (1964), Coach and President of Norths Juniors with son Ray, February 1992

VALE BR FRANK MCGRATH (1961)

The Old Boys Association extends its condolences to the Marist Brothers and the family of Br Francis Joseph McGrath FMS, who passed away peacefully on 29 April 2026, the night before his 91st birthday and in the 62nd year of his Marist life.

Known to many as Frank, Br Francis was a Paddington boy who attended Marist College Rosalie before completing his university studies and beginning his teaching career. He came to Marist College Ashgrove as a lay teacher in mid-1958, teaching English and French, and remained at the College until 1963.

One former student recalled Frank as “a masterful teacher” who gave his class a strong grounding in the French language. During his time at Ashgrove, Frank also served as an officer with the College’s Army Cadets, alongside several of the Brothers.

In 1964, aged 28, Frank entered Mittagong as a postulant and later took his first vows as a Marist Brother. His teaching ministry took him to a number of Marist schools, including Enoggera, Pagewood, North Sydney, Canberra, Randwick, Parramatta, Eastwood, St Joseph’s College Hunters Hill and Marist Brothers’ Rosalie.

Br Francis Joseph McGrath (1961)

Br Francis became widely known for his scholarly work on John Henry Newman. He completed doctoral studies at Oxford University and later served as resident archivist at the Birmingham Oratory, where he annotated Newman’s sermons and contributed to the publication of his letters, diaries, sermons and theological writings. His work was recognised with a Centenary Medal.

Br Francis’ life was celebrated with a Requiem Mass in the Chapel of Our Lady and Saint Marcellin at Marist College Ashgrove on 11 May 2026.

The Old Boys Association gives thanks for Br Francis’ life of faith, learning and service, and extends its sympathy to his family, the Marist Brothers’ Community at Ashgrove and all who knew him.

May the perpetual light shine upon him, and may he rest in peace.

"JOHN POWELL (45-47) RECOLLECTIONS" BY DAN CASEY (1970)

John Powell is a relatively old "Old Boy". He was at Ashgrove from Grade 5 to Grade 7, then known as Scholarship, from 1945 to 1947. Not only did he attend the school, he was born and lived in the Suburb for most of his young life. However, by the time he finished his schooling he had probably been through more schools than most of us.

John Powell (1947)

I first met John as a fellow parishioner at the Sacred Heart Church in Maleny. He was one of two older blokes who drove their mobility scooters up the Main Street from the Ben Bryce Retirement Village to Church every Sunday Morning.

Over time his health started to deteriorate and he could no longer make that trip and my wife Anna began to take Communion to him after Mass. We were probably talking over a cuppa one day and it came out that we went to the same school and I wondered if he might be one of the oldest of our "Old Boys" and thought his story should be recorded.

John was born on 18 October 1933 at the Ashgrove Private Hospital, which was then on the Corner of Aloomba Road and Stewart Road. He grew up at the family home at 439 Waterworks Road with his parents and 3 sisters Pauline and Marie who were older, and Cecelia, younger.

He attended a Kindergarten that was located in the same street as Mt St Michael's school which was not built until just before he started school and which his sisters later attended. There was no bus then, so he was driven to Kindy in a horse drawn buggy with a black canvas covering along with 4 or 5 other children. The buggy was driven by a Mr. Mullard who let a very young John take the reins at times. This was possibly the start of a life long love of horses.

Primary school started with the Sisters of Charity at St Finbarr's in Year one which was then known as "babies". John says that the Sisters lived up to their name and were quite a poor order such that when they ran out of food, they would ring a bell so that the parents or congregation could give them a hand.

John has no exact details of his early Primary School but remembers a Miss McCarthy possibly from year 3.

During the War years there was a lot of concern about possible invasion and some of the families moved out to the country area. John moved out to Dalby for a period and remembers going to school out there. They shared a rental house with another family, the Delaneys, and John shared a bed with Peter Delaney who went on to become a Doctor.

When they came back to Brisbane the Waterworks Road House was still rented out so the family moved into their house called "Paul-Marie" at Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast where John went to Star of the Sea Convent School.

John remembers "Surfers" as being a fairly quiet place where he could ride a pony along the beach and Cavel's Hotel had a Zoo next door.

While living at the Gold Coast John had an incident in the water when he nearly drowned and was hospitalized. After that his father had him take swimming lessons at the Pier Swimming Class by a Mr Bell.

The family must have moved back to the Waterworks Road House during 1943 or early '44, and John went to the Marist College at Rosalie prior to Ashgrove reopening in 1945.

He remembers Br. Oliver, who had red hair, as the Principal at Rosalie. There was also a Br. Adrian, who arranged an impressive, annual concert that was attended by the Governor.

It was while at Rosalie that he took up an interest in boxing.

John began year 5 at Ashgrove in 1945 when the school reopened after the army vacated the site.

John is not a big bloke and had little interest in cricket or football but does recall going up to Eagle Heights to play cricket on the Tamborine fields. He continued with boxing under Mr. Ferrier as coach. The ring was set up under the old wooden building on the "Hill" which in the 60s was where we had to sit and eat our lunches. This is roughly where the Champagnat Centre is now.

He was also in the swimming squad as after his incident on the Gold Coast he was one of the few who could actually swim.

He recalls an incident with a teacher at the time, Mr. D G Large, an Englishman with a memorable moustache, who decided that the boys could go swimming in the pool during one period. Unfortunately, many of the group were unprepared and so were allowed to go skinny dipping. As they got changed in the classroom, they then ran down the hill and back up to the classroom without togs! The trees across the creek were probably not thick enough at that stage and the neighbours in Acacia Drive were not amused.

His teacher in Scholarship, year 7, was Br. Linus who John remembers as having red hair and blue eyes. He also recalls Br. Cyprian as the Principal and picked him out immediately from old photos.

Some of John's memories of growing up in that area at that time included that the "Flats" (now Des Connor Park) was where the local courier grazed his horses and was also a good source of mushrooms.

Glenlyon Drive was originally the access to the house of the family who owned most of land between Waterworks Road and the Creek. He can still remember a gate near its intersection with Waterworks Road.

He remembers serving as an Altar Boy at the Marist Monastery chapel in Glenlyon Drive.

There was a family called Wockner who lived across the road and had two blocks. They had a pony called "Keepsake" pastured on one of them and John was allowed to ride him out to The Gap on the weekends.

There was a Picture Theatre in St Johns Wood called the Ambassador and another on the corner of Stewart Road and Waterworks Road, called the Elita.

The tram used to run along Waterworks Road in front of his house to the Terminus just past Glenlyon Drive. The local Shopping Centre was known as the Terminus Shopping Centre, now called Ashgrove West Shopping Centre.

Tennis was played at Gramenze's Tennis Court which was back towards Red Hill.

Some of his classmates who he recalls included John O'Brien and Jack Robba. Other classmates included John Comerford, Dennis Callaghan, Ray Burke (Br Roger), Mark Biltoft, and Graham Blakeney.

Neighbours included Webbers, Sullivans (who had the Grocery Store), Tows, O'Kearneys (who had 4 boys, 2 went to Downlands and 2 to Ashgrove and who were good cricketers) and Carsons. There was a family of Burnetts who lived opposite him and who also owned two adjacent blocks again with a horse on one of them. The Burnett Boys went to Gregory Terrace. One of the Burnetts, Frank, and his father also Frank, were instrumental in the establishment of the Castlemaine Perkins (XXXX) Brewery at Milton. The other son, Bob, was an international level Rugby Referee, who was well known in Rugby circles through the late 60s and 70s. His sons attended MCA!

Through his Scholarship year, which in the 40s was year 7, John's back neighbour (perhaps Mr OKearney) sadly convinced his father that Downlands was a better school and so he completed Sub Junior and Junior (at that time Years 8 and 9) at Toowoomba.

He left school after Junior and worked as a Jackaroo on a sheep and cattle property between Roma and Injune. But he didn't get on with the owner and left after 12 months.

He then worked with his father at Josephson and Sons who were clothing manufacturers and distributors. They made the "Can't Tear Em" brand Khaki Trousers and "Faultless" Shirts. The premises was in Roma Street near City Hall.

He became an Agent for that Company and looked after an area within about a 50 mile radius of Brisbane. This took in Ipswich, Esk, Caboolture and Coolangatta.

He went to live in Canada for an extended period through 1957 and 58.

He then went on to become a forerunner to the backpackers of later years by touring England and Europe in a Van.

When he returned from Overseas, he went back to the clothing industry and eventually ran a Menswear shop at Nundah till he retired to the hill district at Maleny in the hinterland behind the Sunshine Coast.

When he moved to Maleny he rekindled his interest in horses and up till about 10 to 15 years ago, rode in Endurance and Competitive Trail Riding events around South East Queensland.

John still lives in an independent Unit in the Ben Bryce Village with some assistance with cleaning and shopping etc. and can no longer drive his mobility scooter. He maintains an interest in Bush Poetry and used to read at some of the local events. He retains such fond memories of Marist College Ashgrove.

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