



SHAPING TOMORROW KYLIE MCCULLAH

## Fifty years of transformation:

### Education in a changing world

As Loreto College Marryatville, South Australia celebrates 120 years of educating girls, Principal Kylie McCullah reflects on how education has changed over the past 50 years and honours a remarkable individual milestone: nearly five decades of service by Mr. David Hall. His career offers more than a testament to loyalty and dedication; it provides a unique lens through which to view the transformation of education itself. Over the past five decades, the educational landscape has shifted dramatically, from what and how we teach, to how we lead, support, and connect with students. Few have witnessed this evolution as closely as Mr. Hall, whose story reflects both the progress the profession has made and the values that remain unchanged at the heart of Loreto College.

The shift has not simply been one of hardware. It has been a pedagogical revolution.

**DAVID HALL'S** recollections are a powerful time capsule. His memory paints a vivid picture of a different era: class sizes of 35 to 40 students, male teachers doubling as groundskeepers, staffroom smoke curling through the air, and Athletics Carnivals on Sundays with parents as the only officials. And yet, even within this era of simplicity and formality, the Loreto spirit of care, connection and community was alive and well.

### From chalk dust to digital dialogue

When Mr. Hall began teaching, chalkboards, spirit duplicators, and the iconic clatter of typewriters were the norm. Technology was limited, and 'the computer room' was just that, a single, designated room housing a few rudimentary machines. Today, Loreto Marryatville's classrooms are digital learning ecosystems, where laptops, screen-mirroring systems, online collaboration tools, cloud platforms and Lumination lab are part of everyday teaching and learning.





But the shift has not simply been one of hardware. It has been a pedagogical revolution. Technology is now used not just to present information, but to empower learners. Students engage with concepts at their own pace, access personalised feedback, and participate in blended environments that extend well beyond the classroom. Loreto's adoption of technology has always had one goal: to enhance learning and foster student agency.

### From uniformity to personalisation

David remembers a time when learning was linear, and academic pathways more limited. Over the years, Loreto's curriculum has expanded and diversified. Psychology, Nutrition, Media Studies, Business Innovation, and STEM-focused electives now sit alongside traditional subjects. The college has also responded to shifts in assessment, from the phasing out of Matriculation and SSABSA, to the evolution of the SACE.

The most profound change, however, is the movement toward inclusive, individualised learning. Where deep care for students once existed informally, it is now underpinned by structures such as Individual Learning Plans and learning enrichment facilities. Students with learning needs are not only recognised—they are supported meaningfully, and their success is a shared responsibility across the college.

### Culture, connection, and community

Culture in schools has undergone profound change. David recalls a time when different sections of the school often operated in silos, divided by leadership, physical spaces, and even mindset. Today, the trend across education is toward greater cohesion: a unified vision that spans from the early years to graduation, shaped by collaboration and continuity.

Governance, too, has evolved significantly. Once led by the Loreto Sisters, who lived and worked on

Loreto's adoption of technology has always had one goal: to enhance learning and foster student agency.

site, leadership has shifted to a contemporary model with expanded administrative support, multiple leadership tiers, and long-term strategic planning.

By the 1990s, most Sisters had departed, apart from the principal, who remained in the role until 2001 when the first lay principal was appointed.

Co-curricular programs, too, have grown in both scope and stature. What once centred on traditional offerings—debating teams or social dancing—has expanded to include national competitions in ethics, critical thinking, enterprise, and leadership. These programs





## SHAPING TOMORROW

KYLIE MCCULLAH

now play a critical role in shaping student confidence, teamwork, and real-world skills.

Facilities have evolved from makeshift and repurposed spaces to purposeful and future-focused environments. Across the country, schools have shifted from simply accommodating students to designing environments that actively support learning, wellbeing, and creativity through performing arts centres, flexible learning spaces, and green outdoor areas.

And yet, amid this transformation, certain constants endure.

The spirit of community, the pursuit of excellence, and the deep relationships that form between teachers, students and families remain the backbone of great schools. As David reflects, there is something powerful in seeing former students return as parents—or even grandparents—and in knowing that while education has changed, the heart of teaching remains the same: to guide, to inspire, and to care.

Indeed, over fifty Loreto Marryatville Old Scholars have returned to the college as staff members at various times over the past fifty years, a testament to the lasting impact of their own education and the strength of the Loreto community.

## The centrality of wellbeing

In recent decades, one of the most important shifts in education has been the recognition that student wellbeing is not an optional extra. It is foundational. Mental health and emotional literacy are now embedded within Loreto Marryatville's culture through our SEAD program and broader pastoral care approach. Students are taught to navigate complexity with empathy, courage, and strength.

This is not a departure from tradition, it is the deepening of our Loreto values: freedom, justice, sincerity, verity, and felicity. Wellbeing is not a program; it is a philosophy—a way of seeing and valuing every student for who they are and who they may become.

## Looking forward, standing firm

As we look to the future, the horizon of education continues to expand. Artificial intelligence, global citizenship, climate

consciousness, and interdisciplinary learning are reshaping what it means to prepare young people for life. Loreto College Marryatville will continue to evolve, guided not just by trends, but by its unwavering belief in the dignity, capacity, and potential of every learner.

In celebrating our 120-year legacy, we honour the many teachers, staff, and Loreto Sisters whose dedication has shaped the heart of our college. While schools may evolve in form, their true purpose remains unchanged: to be places of belonging, growth, and transformation. Throughout it all, the Loreto spirit endures—reflected in the unwavering commitment of our staff, a tradition of academic excellence, and the strong relationships that unite generations of students. Their collective story, like that of the college, is one of evolving while staying true to what matters.

And as for the next fifty years? If they are marked by the same commitment, courage, and care that have carried us thus far, then the future of Loreto—and the future of education—is in very good hands. ■

Loreto College Marryatville is an independent Catholic primary and secondary day and boarding school for girls located in Marryatville, an inner-eastern suburb of Adelaide, South Australia.

## Loreto College Marryatville's Social, Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD) Program

| SEAD                         | 0 - Preschool                            | R- Year 2                         | Years 3 & 4   | Years 5 & 6  | Years 7 & 8  | Years 9 & 10  | Years 11 & 12  |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|
|                              | Belonging                                | Learning about Me!                | Who am I?   | Developing Resilience  | Creating Connections                                       | Building Communities  | Stepping into My Future  |
| <b>Identity</b>              | Discovering who I am                     | Learning about myself             | Finding my identity   | Accepting myself   | Celebrating being me                                       | Having a positive identity  | Shaping the woman I will become  |
| <b>Values</b>                | Immersing in family and community values | Learning about values             | Finding my values   | Understanding my values and ethical decision making                  | Applying my values in responsible decision making          | Being true to my values through wise decision making                                    | Confirming my values through principled decision making                  |
| <b>Emotions</b>              | Recognising my feelings                  | Understanding my feelings         | Building a toolkit to help me respond to my feelings          | Using my toolkit to develop emotional resilience                     | Expanding my toolkit to respond to my emotions             | Developing self-regulation  | Applying self-regulation   |
| <b>Independence</b>          | Developing my sense of independence      | Learning my independence          | Developing autonomy   | Becoming self-sufficient   | Mastering my transition to secondary school                | Taking responsibility   | Being self-directed  |
| <b>Leadership and Voice</b>  | Learning ways to communicate             | Finding my voice                  | Building my voice and taking charge                           | Having a voice and becoming a leader                                 | Maintaining my voice and exploring leadership              | Having a positive voice and stepping up to leadership                                   | Believing in my voice and role modelling leadership                      |
| <b>Friendship</b>            | Building connections with others         | Making friends                    | Being a good friend   | Being inclusive of others  | Building friendships                                       | Accepting and respecting others   | Celebrating others   |
| <b>Relationships</b>         | Experiencing trust in relationships      | Learning about relationships      | Building my relationships                                     | Exploring new relationships  | Broadening my relationships                                | Understanding and constructing positive relationships                                   | Cultivating strong and healthy relationships                             |
| <b>Learning</b>              | Exploring my ideas through play          | Understanding myself as a learner | Developing a growth mindset as a learner                      | Applying a growth mindset to my learning                             | Exploring my strengths as a learner                        | Becoming an autonomous learner  | Demonstrating independence in my learning                                |
| <b>Academic Success</b>      | Meeting developmental milestones         | Learning about goals              | Understanding and planning my learning goals                  | Setting goals and working towards my personal best                   | Developing effective study skills and planning for success | Applying effective study skills and striving for personal excellence                    | Demonstrating self-efficacy as a learner and setting goals for my future |
| <b>Online Engagement</b>     | Exploring technologies                   | Learning about being online       | Developing online literacy and learning safe online practices | Understanding online etiquette and practising safe behaviours online | Applying safe practices and being respectful online        | Understanding my online identity and engaging safely, positively and responsibly online | Modelling a positive self-image and being safe and responsible online    |
| <b>Post School Readiness</b> | Exploring concepts of trade through play | Learning financial awareness      | Developing financial literacy                                 | Applying my financial and entrepreneurial understanding              | Expanding my financial and commercial literacy             | Being financially literate and planning for my future                                   | Demonstrating fiscal cognisance  |
| <b>Future Pathways</b>       | Discovering my interests and strengths   | Learning about who I can be       | Developing a broad understanding of my future                 | Exploring my future identities                                       | Investigating future pathways                              | Broadening my identity and understanding of my future                                   | Planning for my career and tertiary pathway                              |