ISSUE 01. THE NEXT STEP



THE BOARDING
SCHOOL COLLECTIVE

Our mission is to ensure *every* parent, no matter their location or circumstances, knows that boarding school can be a real, *reachable* option for their child. We exist to break *down* barriers, challenge assumptions, and *open doors* to opportunity.





Get in touch

We would love to hear your thoughts on our first edition. Email us at *info@boardingschoolco.com.au* or connect with us on our socials

/THEBOARDINGSCHOOLCOLLECTIVE

Listen to our podcast

Letters from Home is our podcast sharing the real voices and lived experiences of boarding. **Nailing Homesickness** is a special capsule series from Letters from Home. It's a space where we help new boarders – and their families – get ready to take that big step away from home.



CHOOSING A BOARDING SCHOOL

We've pulled together the questions parents tell us matter most.



THE ULTIMATE PACKING LIST

Based on the real-life experiences of families who have gone before.

Back cover: Thank you to the Hooke Family and photographer Bec Haycraft.

Contents

Director's Welcome	4
Choosing a Boarding School	10
Real Stories: *Big Steps, Big Love*	15
Real Stories: *"Go Floppy"*	31
Real Stories: *Beyond the Comfort Zone*	49
Real Stories: *When they're choices, but you still choose boarding school*	59
Real Stories: *When the journey changes direction*	65
Real Stories: *From the station schoolroom to the world*	79
The Ultimate Packing List	86
School Directory	89
Guide for parents – Letters from Home	90
Guide for kids – Nailing Homesickness	91

THE BOARDING SCHOOL COLLECTIVE



Director's welcome

Welcome, and thank you for being here. For many families, the journey towards boarding school begins long before enrolment forms or campus tours. It starts around kitchen tables, in utes on long drives, on the phone with friends who have been through it before, and often with a mix of excitement and uncertainty. If that sounds familiar, you are in exactly the right place.

The Boarding Schools Expo was created to make this process easier for families like yours.

This year marks our 22nd year, and what began as a small gathering has grown into something quite extraordinary. Today we host more face-to-face events than ever before, and that growth has happened for a simple reason: families still value real conversations in an intentional environment. In a world where so much information is online, there is still nothing quite like being able to stand in front of someone, ask your questions and have a genuine discussion about your child's future.

That is what these expos are for.

They are not about glossy brochures or polished marketing. They are about connection. They are about creating a space where families can ask the questions that really matter – about learning, wellbeing, boarding life, friendships, homesickness, opportunities and the many practical considerations that come with sending a child away to school.

At The Boarding School Collective, our purpose is simple: to support rural, regional and remote families as they navigate the boarding school journey.

Many of our families live hours from the nearest major centre. For some, attending school away from home is not just an option – it is the pathway that allows their children access to a full and diverse education. We understand the logistics, the emotional weight of the decision, and the deep hope that sits behind it.

And that is why we do what we do.

Over the years we have welcomed thousands of families through our doors and introduced them to schools from across Australia. But these expos are not just about families. They are also about the schools that show up – year after year – because they believe in this mission as strongly as we do.

Across the events you attend this year there are, collectively, over 70 schools joining us (at the time of writing). I want to take a moment to acknowledge them.

These schools travel long distances to be here. They bring their admissions teams, their boarding staff and often their principals. They pack up displays, load vehicles and spend days on the road because they understand how important it is to meet families where they are.

What I admire most is the spirit in which they do it.

Boarding schools attending these expos stand alongside their peers – sometimes schools that families might also be considering. They share a space with what could easily be described as their competition. But what you will see if you walk around the room is something different.

You will see collaboration.

You will see schools supporting one another, sharing ideas and engaging in conversations that ultimately serve a bigger purpose: ensuring that bush families have access to them, closer to home.

That willingness to show up together speaks volumes about the boarding sector in Australia. It reflects a shared commitment to young people and to the communities they come from.

And for rural and remote families, that commitment matters enormously.

Because for many children growing up in the bush, boarding school opens doors – to academic pathways, to sports and arts opportunities, to friendships that span the country and often last a lifetime. It is not always an easy path, but it is one that has shaped generations of resilient, capable young Australians.

I have had the privilege of seeing this journey from many angles.

As the Director of The Boarding School Collective, I spend my days speaking with families across Australia who are researching schools, preparing their children for boarding, or navigating those early terms away from home. Through our podcasts, resources and events we hear countless stories of courage, adjustment, growth and success.

But I also bring a personal perspective to this work.

Like many of you, I have been through the boarding school journey as a parent. I know what it feels like to pack the car at the beginning of term. I know the mix of pride and nerves that sits in your chest as you leave the driveway. And I know how powerful it is to feel supported by a community that understands the experience.

That lived experience is what continues to drive me and my team.

We truly believe that families deserve access to clear information, honest conversations and welcoming spaces where they can explore their options without pressure.

These expos are designed to be exactly that. So take your time today. Walk around the room. Introduce yourself.

Ask the questions that are on your mind – even the ones you think might be small or obvious. They are never small when it comes to your child.

Speak with multiple schools. Compare notes. Listen to what resonates with you and, importantly, with your child.

Because in the end, choosing a boarding school is not about finding the "best" school on paper. It is about finding the right fit for your child – a place where they will be known, supported and encouraged to grow.

To the families attending today, thank you for trusting us to be part of this stage of your journey.

To the schools who continue to stand beside us and support these events, thank you for your commitment to rural and remote communities.

And to the young people whose futures sit at the centre of these conversations – this is all for you.

I truly love what I do, and it is a privilege to welcome you to the 2026 Boarding Schools Expo.

Every chance. Every child. Everywhere.

Amanda Ferrari, Director

Our team

Behind every Boarding School Collective event *is a team who truly understands the journey you are on.*

Between us there is close to 50 years of lived experience as either a boarding student, or have been boarding parents ourselves, with children who have headed off, faced homesickness and found their feet away from home. We are here to welcome you, answer questions and share what we have learnt along the way – so you feel supported, informed and confident as you take the next step for your family.



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Director



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Administration Support

How to *get the most* out of your expo visit

Attending a Boarding School Expo is *one of the most valuable steps* you can take when researching schools for your child.



In one room, in one afternoon or evening, you'll have the opportunity to speak directly with dozens of schools, ask the questions that matter most to your family, and start building a clearer picture of what boarding life might look like for your child.

But with up to 40 schools at some events, there is a lot to take in. The key is to give yourself time, arrive prepared, and stay open-minded. Some of the best discoveries families make at an Expo are the ones they never expected. Below are a few simple tips to help you get the most out of your visit.

ALLOW YOURSELF PLENTY OF TIME

The most important thing you can bring to an Expo is time. With so many schools under one roof, there is an enormous amount of information and opportunity waiting for you.

- Try to allow at least 1.5 – 2 hours at the Expo if you can.
- Take time to walk the room first and get a feel for the schools attending.
- Prioritise the schools you most want to speak with, but don't rush the conversations.
- Remember that these representatives have travelled to your region specifically to meet families like yours – they genuinely want to talk with you.

Many families say their most valuable insights come from unhurried conversations.

→

DO A LITTLE PREPARATION BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

A small amount of preparation can make your Expo visit far more productive.

Before attending:

- Visit our website and look at the list of schools attending your event.
- Identify three to five schools you definitely want to speak with.
- Note down a few key questions you'd like to ask each school.
- Think about what matters most for your child – academic pathways, location, boarding environment, sport, wellbeing or extracurricular opportunities.

Having a short list helps you feel organised, but remember: the Expo is also about discovery.

BE OPEN TO THE "WILD CARD"

One of the most interesting things we've learned after more than two decades of hosting expos is this:

Over 90% of families who attend end up considering schools they had never originally thought about.

We always encourage families to include at least one "wild card" school in their conversations.

That might be:

- A school in a location you hadn't considered
- A co-educational school when you had been thinking single-sex
- A smaller school that offers a different style of learning
- A school recommended by another family you meet on the day

Sometimes a five-minute conversation can completely shift your perspective.

ASK THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER TO YOU

The Expo is your chance to ask real questions – not just the ones you see in brochures.

Schools expect families to ask about things like:

- Boarding routines and supervision
- Academic support for boarders
- How homesickness is handled
- Weekend activities and leave arrangements
- Travel logistics for rural and remote families
- Scholarships or bursary opportunities

There are no silly questions. Every family's situation is different, and schools are there to help you explore what might work best for your child.



TAKE NOTES AS YOU GO

By the end of the Expo you may have spoken with several schools, and it can be surprisingly easy for the details to blur together. A few quick notes can make a big difference later.

You might want to jot down:

- First impressions of each school
- Key things you liked
- Questions you still have
- Anything your child noticed or commented on

Those notes will be incredibly helpful when you begin narrowing down your shortlist later.

BRING YOUR CHILD INTO THE CONVERSATION

If your child is attending the Expo with you, encourage them to participate in the conversations. This is an important decision for them as well, and it can be incredibly valuable for them to:

- Ask their own questions
- Listen to how schools describe boarding life
- Compare different environments and opportunities
- Start imagining themselves in those spaces

Many families tell us that the Expo becomes a wonderful opportunity for open conversations between parents and children about what they're looking for in a school. The School of the Expo Award is a perfect gateway to these conversations.

TAKE PART IN THE SCHOOL OF THE EXPO AWARD

At every Boarding School Expo, families are invited to take part in our much-loved School of the Expo Award.

This award gives visiting families the chance to recognise the schools that stood out during the event.

Voting is simple and fun. Families rate the schools they meet based on:

- The friendliness of the school representatives
- The presentation of their booth area
- The knowledge they share about boarding life

When you submit your vote, you are automatically entered into the draw to win a significant cash prize.

We find children especially love getting involved – comparing notes, sharing opinions and helping their parents make decisions. For us, watching families walk around together, discussing the schools they've met and weighing up their options, is exactly what the Expo is all about.



ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

Finally, remember that the Expo is not about making a decision on the spot. It is about starting the conversation, gathering information and building confidence in the process ahead.

When you leave the Expo you will likely walk away with:

- New ideas
- A shortlist of schools to explore further
- Resources to review at home
- And often a sense of relief that you've taken the first step

For many families, the Expo becomes the moment when the journey towards boarding school begins to feel clearer.

And we're honoured to be part of that with you.

Choosing a Boarding School

Choosing a boarding school is *one of the biggest decisions a family will make.*

After speaking with thousands of families over more than two decades of boarding school expos, we've pulled together the questions parents tell us matter most. Use this checklist as a starting point – at an expo, on a school tour, or around the kitchen table at home.

There is no perfect school, only the school that feels right for your child.



SCHOOL POLICIES AND VALUES

- Do the school's values feel like a good fit for our family and for my child?
- Does the school clearly promote kindness, respect, inclusion and belonging?
- Am I comfortable with the school's approach to behaviour, discipline and restorative practice?
- Does the school have clear anti-bullying, child safety and complaints policies?
- How does the school manage conflict, friendship issues and social challenges within the boarding house?
- Does the school have clear expectations around digital behaviour, social media use and online conduct?
- How are mobile phones and devices managed during the school day, in the boarding house and overnight?
- Are there student leadership opportunities that help build confidence, responsibility and community?
- If faith is part of the school's identity, does that sit comfortably with our family?
- Does the school feel genuinely warm, grounded and caring–not just impressive on paper?

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- Does the curriculum offer the subjects, pathways and opportunities my child may want to pursue?
- Will the learning environment suit my child academically – extension, support, pace and expectations?
- How are classes structured, and will that suit my child's confidence and learning style?
- What does academic support look like for boarders after hours?
- Is there supervised prep or homework time, and is it calm, structured and age-appropriate?
- What technology is provided or expected for learning?
- How are progress, assessment and reports communicated to parents?
- Are there strong careers, tertiary or vocational pathway supports?
- Will this school challenge my child appropriately without overwhelming them?

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Does the school cater for my child's interests – sport, music, arts, agriculture, leadership, service or clubs?
- Is there enough variety for a child who may still be discovering what they love?
- Are weekend and after-school activities well organised for boarders?
- If my child's preferred activity is not offered, can it be pursued externally?
- How are transport, supervision and permissions managed for extra-curricular commitments?
- Are there extra costs attached to certain activities, camps, competitions or private coaching?
- Does the school value participation and enjoyment, not just high performance?
- Will my child have enough to do outside class time to feel connected and engaged?

LOCATION AND ACCESS

- Is the school realistic and manageable for us to get to from home?
- What are the travel options at the start and end of term, for exeats and emergencies?
- How easy is it for family members or trusted friends to visit or take my child out?
- Is the school near airports, bus or rail connections if that matters for our family?
- Are there nearby services the school uses for sport, medical appointments or outings?
- If siblings are at different schools, is that manageable for weekends and logistics?
- How does the school support new families who live a long way away?

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

- How does the school communicate with parents – email, phone, app or parent portal?
- How often will I hear from boarding staff, and about what?
- Who do I contact first if I have a concern – Head of House, boarding supervisor, tutor, year coordinator?
- How closely do the academic and boarding teams work together?
- Will I have opportunities to meet key staff before and during the year?
- Are there parent groups, welcome weekends or other ways to build connection with the community?
- What is the school's philosophy around parent contact with boarders?

- How are homesickness, friendship issues or wellbeing concerns communicated to families?

BOARDING FACILITIES

- Will my child feel safe, comfortable and known in the boarding house?
- What are the rooms, bathrooms, common spaces and study areas actually like?
- Is the level of supervision appropriate for my child's age and stage?
- Who is on duty overnight, on weekends and in emergencies?
- What medical, counselling and wellbeing support is available to boarders?
- If my child is worried, upset or unwell, who can they talk to and how quickly is support provided?
- How are meals, dietary requirements and allergies managed?
- What are the routines around prep, lights out, laundry, leave and downtime?
- Are there healthy weekend recreation options and enough structure for younger boarders?
- Is there a peer support or buddy system for new boarders?
- Are facilities and routines suitable for the number and ages of boarders enrolled?

LEARNING SUPPORT, NEURODIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- How does the school identify and support students with learning differences such as ADHD, dyslexia, autism or processing differences?
- Is there a dedicated learning support or inclusive education team?
- What classroom adjustments or learning supports can be provided?
- How do academic and boarding staff work together to support students who need additional support?
- Can boarding routines be adapted where needed?
- What documentation or assessments will the school require prior to enrolment?
- Is the school open and realistic about the support it can offer?
- If my child is gifted as well as neurodivergent, how is that supported?

TRANSITION AND FIRST-YEAR BOARDING SUPPORT

- What transition programs exist before the school year begins?
- Is there an orientation day, overnight stay or induction program?
- Are new boarders paired with buddies or mentors?
- How are first-term homesickness and adjustment supported?
- How quickly are concerns noticed and acted upon during the early weeks?
- What support is there for parents during the transition?
- Are there additional supports for younger boarders or students from remote communities?

DIGITAL LIFE, PHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- What is the school's mobile phone policy during the day and in boarding?
- Are devices collected overnight or locked away for younger year groups?
- How does the school manage cyberbullying or social media misuse?
- How are students taught healthy digital habits and respectful online behaviour?
- What expectations does the school have of parents around digital boundaries?
- How are group chats and social media challenges handled within boarding houses?

FEES AND CHARGES

- Do I clearly understand what is included in tuition and boarding fees?
- What additional costs should I budget for – uniforms, books, laptops, travel, sport, music, camps or tutoring?
- Are there scholarships, bursaries or financial support options available?
- Is there a payment plan available?
- Are there additional charges for learning support or specialist programs?
- How often do fees increase?
- What happens if boarding is not the right fit and we need to withdraw?



Your Shortlist

- Have I visited the school in person, or attended an expo or school tour?
- Have I spoken with boarding staff as well as admissions staff?
- Have I seen the boarding house during a normal school week?
- Can I picture my child belonging here – socially, emotionally and practically?
- Does this school feel right for my child, not just impressive to me?
- What is my child saying after the visit – and what are they not saying?

Sometimes the decision becomes clear when a school simply feels like the right fit.

You don't need to ask every question at once. Choose your three most important questions and start there. The right conversations will follow.



AMANDA'S "FIVE QUESTIONS I ALWAYS ASK BOARDING SCHOOLS"

When I speak with schools from across Australia, these are the questions I always ask.

1. How do you support new boarders in their first six weeks? The transition period tells you a lot about a school.

2. Who notices first if a child is struggling? And what happens next?

3. How do academic staff and boarding staff communicate with each other? The best schools operate as one team around the child.

4. What does a normal weekday and weekend actually look like for boarders? Routine and balance are everything.

5. If this were your own child, what kind of student thrives here? The honesty in this answer is often the most revealing.

DUBBO

Expo Dates: 15 & 16 May 2026

Abbotsleigh NSW
Ascham School NSW
Barker College NSW
Calrossy Anglican School NSW
Canberra Girls Grammar School ACT
Canberra Grammar School ACT
Cranbrook School NSW
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School NSW
Frensham NSW
Hurlstone Agricultural High School NSW
Kambala NSW
Kincoppal Rose Bay NSW
Kinross Wolaroi School NSW
Knox Grammar School NSW
Loreto Normanhurst NSW
Macquarie Anglican Grammar School NSW
NEGS NSW
PLC Armidale NSW
PLC Sydney NSW
Pymble Ladies' College NSW
Ravenswood School for Girls NSW
Red Bend Catholic College NSW
Saint Ignatius' College Riverview NSW
Scots All Saints College NSW
SCOTS PGC College QLD
Shore School NSW
St Catherine's School Sydney NSW
St Gregory's College NSW
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill NSW
St Scholastica's College NSW
St Stanislaus' College NSW
St Vincent's College NSW
Tara Anglican School for Girls NSW
The Armidale School (TAS) NSW
The King's School NSW
The McDonald College NSW
The Scots College, Sydney NSW
Toowoomba Grammar School QLD
Wenona NSW
Yanco Agricultural High School NSW



Big Steps, Big Love:

A Single Mum's Leap Toward Boarding School

When Lisa Green first walked into a Boarding Schools Expo, she wasn't sure if the dream would even be possible. But with courage, honest conversations and the support of a bursary, she and her daughter Ellie have now begun the boarding school journey they once only hoped for.

For ten years, life for Lisa Green and her daughter Ellie revolved around a familiar rhythm in Dubbo – school, dancing, singing rehearsals, and the busy logistics that come with raising an energetic and curious teenager.

Lisa laughs when she describes those years as "the Ellie and Mummy show."

"Ellie makes life really easy for me," she says. "She's busy dancing and singing and acting, and I just follow her lead. Like everyone else, I'm her private secretary – getting her from spot to spot."

But behind that comfortable routine was a quiet question Lisa had been turning over for some time: was there something more out there for Ellie?

Like many regional families, Lisa had always kept boarding school in the back of her mind as a possible option. Not a certainty – more of a plan B if the right opportunities didn't present themselves closer to home.

"When we moved to Dubbo ten years ago, I had no idea what sort of learner Ellie would be or what would set her on fire," she says.

As Ellie grew, however, her interests became clear.

"She's a really avid learner. She just wants to soak up everything she can get her hands on. And then the arts – dancing, singing, acting – when all of that started to become apparent, that plan B started to feel more like something we might need rather than just want."

Still, the idea of boarding school came with a major obstacle. As a single parent, Lisa knew the financial realities were significant.

"A scholarship or bursary was non-negotiable," she says simply.

→








A PREMIER CO-EDUCATIONAL DAY & BOARDING SCHOOL IN ORANGE NSW

Kinross Wolaroi School is a leader in education, delivering exceptional teaching and academic excellence for over 140 years. We offer a safe, supportive and inspiring environment from Pre-Kinder to Year 12, with small class sizes, dedicated teachers and a dynamic curriculum that empowers every student to achieve their best.

Learning extends beyond the classroom through diverse co-curricular opportunities in music, drama, sport and leadership, helping students build confidence, resilience and lifelong skills. Our boarding community provides a welcoming home away from home, fostering independence and strong friendships.

With modern facilities, personalised learning pathways and a nurturing school culture, Kinross Wolaroi empowers students to embrace challenges and contribute meaningfully to their world.

Enrolling now for 2027 and 2028.

To learn more or arrange a tour, visit www.kws.nsw.edu.au, call 02 6392 0300, or email admissions@kws.nsw.edu.au

KINROSS WOLAROI SCHOOL

"Schools really do want country kids to have these opportunities."

"That was the only way we could even consider it."

So when she heard about the Boarding Schools Expo coming to Dubbo, she decided to go – even though she wasn't sure what she would find.

Walking through the doors that day took courage.

"I was absolutely apprehensive," Lisa admits. "There was that unknown – do we get our hopes up and then realise we just can't do it? Maybe there are no scholarships, maybe Ellie wouldn't qualify, maybe it's just not possible."

Encouragement from friends who had already navigated the boarding school journey helped push her through the door.

"They said to me, 'Just go and talk to them. What's the worst thing that can happen?'"

Inside the Expo hall were around 40 schools, each with staff ready to speak with families. Lisa made a decision early on that honesty was the best approach.

"I just launched straight in," she says. "I said, 'Look, I'm happy to chat, but I need to tell you straight away – we can't even consider your school unless there are scholarships or bursaries available.'"

To her surprise, the conversations that followed were warm, open and encouraging.

"There wasn't a single school that made me feel uncomfortable asking that question," she says. "They were beautiful about it."

By the end of the day, Lisa had narrowed the possibilities down to four schools that seemed like a strong fit.

Then she went to pick Ellie up from school.

"I said, 'Let's go back this afternoon and you can talk to them yourself.'"

Ellie made her way around the stands, asking questions and meeting staff – and when she finished, her list of favourites matched her mum's exactly.

"That was when we knew we had a starting point," Lisa says.

Over the following year, the process became more serious. Lisa and Ellie visited schools, explored their options and eventually Ellie sat scholarship examinations.

Throughout it all, Lisa kept Ellie's father involved in the conversations.

"We both went to boarding school ourselves," she explains. "I went to school in Sydney and he went to Brisbane, and we both really enjoyed the experience."

While Lisa has largely raised Ellie on her own, she says major decisions have always been discussed together.

"Anytime I've got a big decision to make for Ellie, I'll run it by her Dad. We're lucky that we tend to see things in a similar way when it comes to bringing her up."

When Ellie received two scholarship offers, the family faced a final decision.

One school was closer to home. The other – Frensham – was further away but felt like the best overall fit.

For Lisa, choosing a school was never about prestige. It was about environment.

"There were a few things that were absolute must-haves," she says. "Ellie had to walk in and feel like she belonged there. People told me that when you visit the right school you'll feel it – and they were right."

Academic opportunities mattered, but so did creativity, wellbeing and space.

"The arts are really important to Ellie – languages, music, dance, singing – so we needed a school that valued those things," Lisa says.

"Space was another one. Just the ability to go for a run and get the wind in your sails when you need to."

→

Welfare also played a major role in the decision.

“We wanted to know that the girls were really supported,” she says. “That their wellbeing mattered.”

Ultimately, Frensham stood out.

“We felt their approach to the girls’ welfare and education was a really good fit for us.”

For Lisa, the decision also reflects her deeply held beliefs about education and independence.

“I come from a family of four girls,” she says. “We all stand on our own two feet and have chased whatever career path is right for us.”

That philosophy shapes the way she thinks about Ellie’s future.

“I’m not anti-boys,” she laughs. “I’m just pro-girls. I want Ellie to be able to stand alone with a good education behind her.”

Boarding school, she believes, will help nurture that independence – while also giving Ellie something she’s always craved. Connection.

As an only child at home, Ellie had always loved being surrounded by other young people, particularly through Moorambilla Choir camps.

“When we visited the boarding houses she said, ‘Mum, there are only two beds in here – I want to be with everybody!’” Lisa recalls with a smile.

“She just loves being around people.”

Now, having begun her journey at Frensham, Ellie is settling in well – something that brings enormous comfort to Lisa.

Like many boarding parents, the first goodbye was emotional, but the excitement of watching Ellie step into this new chapter has quickly taken hold.

“I’m just so excited to see what she learns and what opportunities she grabs hold of,” Lisa says.

And she has one clear message for other single parents who might assume boarding school is out of reach.

“Just go and ask the question,” she says.

“Schools really do want country kids to have these opportunities. The worst thing that can happen is they say no – but there are more scholarships and bursaries out there than people realise.”

For Lisa and Ellie, that willingness to ask has opened a door.

And now, with Ellie settling into life at Frensham, that once tentative plan B has become something far more powerful – the beginning of a new chapter built on courage, opportunity and a whole lot of love.

LISA’S TOP 5 TIPS FOR SINGLE PARENTS EXPLORING BOARDING SCHOOL

1. Just walk through the door

Attending an expo or school open day is the best way to start. You don’t need all the answers – simply beginning the conversation can open doors you didn’t know existed.

2. Be upfront about finances

If scholarships or bursaries are essential, say so early. Schools are used to these conversations and can quickly guide you toward the opportunities that might be available.

3. Involve the other parent where possible

Even when families live separately, sharing the research and decision-making can help ensure everyone feels comfortable with such a significant step.

4. Look beyond academics

Think about the whole environment – welfare, opportunities in the arts or sport, space to move and breathe, and whether your child feels comfortable and excited when they visit.

5. Remember it’s worth asking

Many families assume boarding school is out of reach, but scholarships, bursaries and government support programs exist. The only way to discover what’s possible is to start the conversation.





MACQUARIE ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

DUBBO, NSW

Step into the everyday life of a Macquarie boarder through our immersive Boarding Experience Program – stay overnight in our facilities and spend a full school day alongside our students. It is the ideal way to discover the rhythm, routine and community that make boarding at Macquarie such a supportive and rewarding experience.

During the visit, students join afternoon activities, meet our dedicated boarding staff and connect with current boarders who are eager to share what daily life is really like. From supervised evening study sessions to relaxed social time, participants gain a genuine insight into how boarding fosters learning, independence and personal growth. They will also gain insight into how boarders successfully balance their academic responsibilities with a diverse suite of co-curricular pursuits, including sport, music, leadership and service, all nurtured by our supportive community.

Macquarie Boarding is a boutique program for students in Years 7–12, accommodating 56 boarders. This small scale ensures a warm, family-style atmosphere where every young person is known, supported and valued. Families can choose from full-time or weekly boarding (Monday to Friday) options to best suit their needs.

Set on 40 acres on the fringe of Dubbo, our boarding facilities offer both comfort and space. Rooms house a maximum of two students, each with their own ensuite – creating exceptional student-to-bathroom ratios and a level of privacy rarely found in boarding environments. Older students are also supported with part-time work opportunities, helping them grow in confidence and responsibility.

Whether you’re considering boarding for academic focus, personal development or the opportunity to join a close-knit community, the Boarding Experience Program provides the perfect introduction.

To register your interest, please contact our school.

> MAGS.NSW.EDU.AU

Where academic excellence meets opportunity

KINROSS WOLAROI SCHOOL, ORANGE, NSW





For more than 140 years, Kinross Wolaroi School has been helping young people grow into confident, capable individuals. Built on strong traditions and a genuine sense of care, the School offers an environment where students are known as individuals and supported to achieve their best, both in and beyond the classroom.

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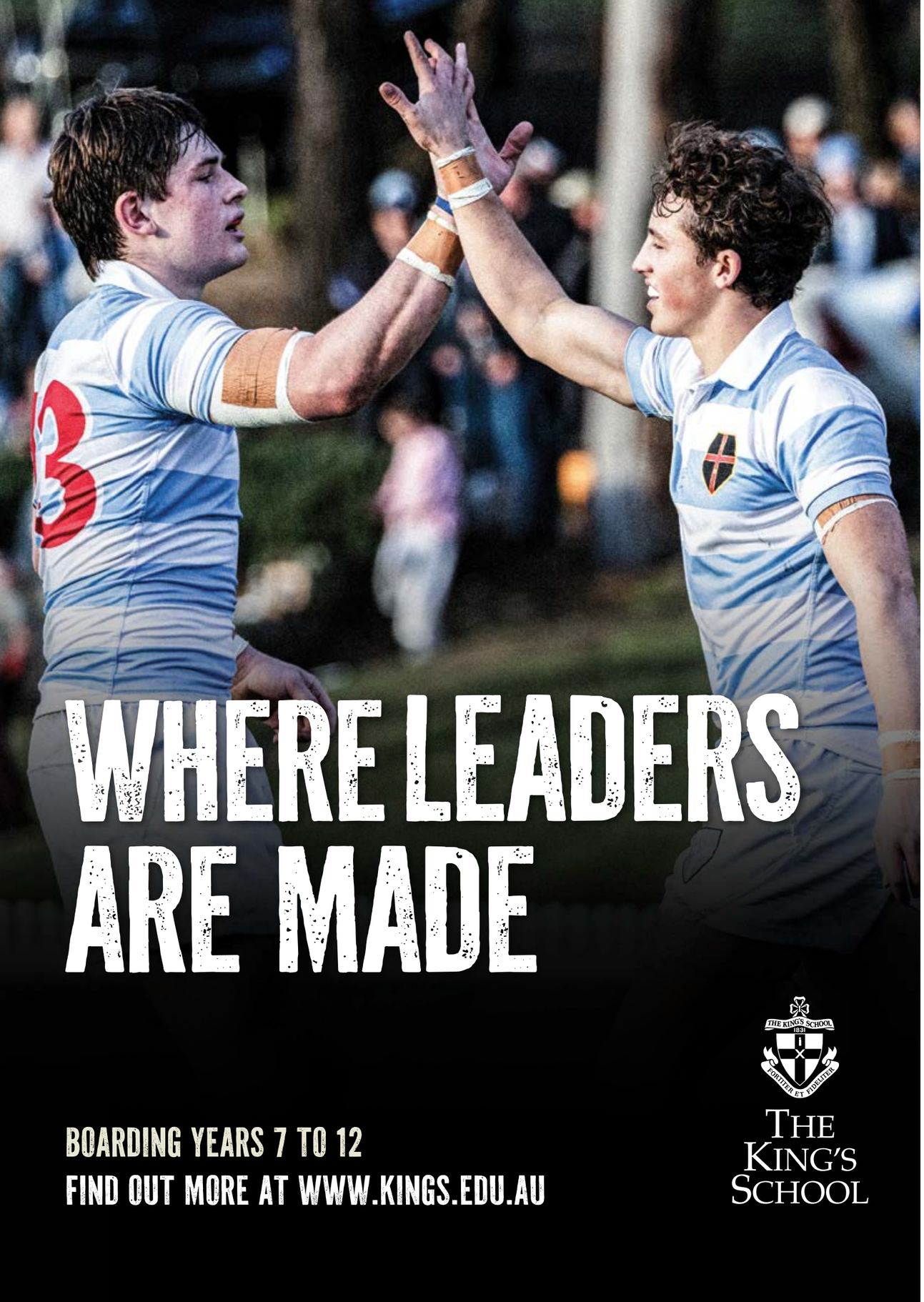


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With strong pastoral care, regular family contact and a homely environment, boarding at Tudor House feels like an extension of family life.

Boys who attend Tudor House also enjoy a smooth transition to The King's School, Senior School, entering Year 7 with confidence and connection.

"Learning is an adventure at Tudor House, and with adventure comes the opportunity to develop young people into leaders of the future," says Mr Larby.

To find out more about the co-educational primary boarding adventure at Tudor House, visit our website:

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Head of College, Mr Richard Ford, emphasizes our commitment to community: “We provide every opportunity for students to connect – whether through extension learning or social activities in and around Bathurst.”

Scots All Saints College is renowned for its outstanding co-curricular programs in Sport, Agriculture, Music, and the Arts. Our students consistently achieve at regional and interstate competitions, but the true reward lies in the friendships and sense of belonging they build – whether helping during lambing season or playing bagpipes at dawn services.

For families seeking space, opportunity, and a nurturing environment where siblings can live and learn together, Scots All Saints College offers more than an education– it’s a lifestyle. Discover why boarding here is the perfect choice for your child’s future.

> SCOTSALLSAINTS.NSW.EDU.AU

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From their first day, new boarders are welcomed into the community with the support of a senior buddy who helps them settle in — from navigating daily routines to feeling at home on campus. Shared meals, weekend sport, quiet study times and celebrations all contribute to friendships that grow quickly and last a lifetime.

At Saint Ignatius' College Riverview, boarding is more than accommodation. It's a place where boys are encouraged to discover their gifts, pursue their interests, and thrive. It's a home, a community, and a place where young men are supported to become fully who they were created to be.

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"Go Floppy"

A Rural Mum's Boarding School Journey

When I first spoke with Sarah Ryan, I'll admit I started as a bit of a fangirl. Sarah is the creative force behind *Quandialla Candle Co*, a beautiful regional brand that began in a small cottage behind her home on the family's merino stud near the tiny village of Quandialla in southern New South Wales.

But as we began talking, the conversation quickly moved beyond candles and creativity to something far more familiar for rural families – the journey of raising children in a remote community and the inevitable moment when you realise high school will mean sending them away.

Sarah and her husband Trev both grew up in Quandialla and attended the local primary school themselves. It's the kind of school that represents everything wonderful about rural childhood – small classes, strong community and teachers who know every child by name.

But like many rural towns, the numbers are tiny.

"When my daughter was in Year 6 there were six in her year," Sarah tells me. "And by the time my youngest finished there were only about thirteen kids in the whole school."

For high school, the options narrow quickly. From Sarah's farm, the nearest secondary schools are about 50 kilometres away in Grenfell or West Wyalong – and even those require complicated bus connections.

"The bus doesn't come past our place," she explains. "And when you're busy on the farm, the logistics of sport and activities just become really hard."

For Sarah and Trev, boarding school wasn't really a question of if – it was simply the most practical path forward.

"We sort of always knew they'd be going," she says.

Their search for a school for their boys happened during the long drought of the late 2010s – a time when many rural families were under enormous financial pressure.

"We were thinking, how are we ever going to afford this?" Sarah remembers.

Friends suggested St Stanislaus College in Bathurst, about two and a half hours away. The Ryans hadn't initially considered it, but they decided to visit.

And like so many families, their decision came down to something hard to quantify – the feeling they got when they walked through the gates.

→



From a tiny school in Quandialla to dorms in Bathurst and Sydney, Sarah Ryan reflects on raising three boarders – and the quiet courage it takes to let them go.

“We met a couple of boys who opened the door for us,” Sarah says. “They were so polite and friendly, but just naturally so. We thought, they’re good boys – it’d be nice if our boys could turn out like that.”

“It wasn’t a flashy school,” she adds. “But it felt down to earth and that suited us.”

As we talk, Sarah raises something many parents quietly worry about – even if you choose the right school, you can’t choose the year group your child lands in.

“You just don’t know,” she says. “Kids change and friendships change as they grow.”

Early on, the Ryans did have a moment where they wondered whether things were working.

“We had a bit of a communication issue with the school at the start,” she says. “So we looked around at other options just to have some information in our back pocket.”

But they resisted making a rushed decision.

“You’ve got to be careful not to jump too quickly,” Sarah says. “Sometimes you need to ride out a few bumps.”

In their case, things improved quickly. Staffing changed, communication settled and the experience became positive again.

“We were very lucky.”

If the decision itself felt practical, the emotional reality of sending a child away was something Sarah admits she wasn’t fully prepared for.

“I was so busy organising uniforms and labelling everything that I didn’t really think about how I’d feel,” she says.

Before her eldest left, Sarah spoke to her own mother, who had sent four children to boarding school decades earlier.

“She still remembered driving home after dropping my brother in Sydney and sitting on the bed thinking, ‘What have I done?’”

That feeling stayed with Sarah during her first drop-off.

“You do wonder if you’ve made the right decision,” she says. “They suddenly look so young.”

The change at home was noticeable too. When the eldest left, the family dynamic shifted for the younger two.

“My middle child really missed having his big brother around,” she says. “He lost his partner in crime.”



One of the biggest adjustments for boarding parents is learning how to support children from a distance.

Sarah says communication has changed dramatically since her own boarding school days.

“We didn’t have mobile phones,” she laughs. “There was one payphone for everyone.”

Instead, her mother wrote letters – one every week for six years.

“I’ve still got them all tied up in a box,” Sarah says.

Those letters mattered.

“The serious ones had impact because you’d spend all day thinking about what she’d said.”

Today Sarah sometimes uses the modern version of that approach – sending longer messages when she wants her sons to really absorb what she’s saying.

“You’ve got time to think about it,” she explains. “And they’ve got time to read it properly.”

While her sons boarded regionally, Sarah’s daughter Clem has taken a different path and is now in Year 8 at Loreto Normanhurst in Sydney.

The decision was largely driven by Clem herself.

“She really wanted an all-girls school,” Sarah says.

After researching online, attending a boarding Expo and visiting schools, Clem was drawn to Loreto – partly because of its large shared dorms for younger students.

“She thought it looked like a big sleepover,” Sarah laughs.

But Sarah sees the value in that.

“It means everyone gets to know each other quickly,” she says. “You can’t just hide away in your room.”

Now that her eldest son has finished school and is working as a jackaroo, Sarah can clearly see the impact boarding school has had.

“I worried about how he’d go,” she admits. “He’s a quiet sort of fella.”

But he has thrived.

“He’s sailed into it better than I ever expected.”

Sarah believes boarding school played a big role in that growth.

“They learn how to live with other people, manage relationships and handle tough situations.”

Even her youngest has surprised her.

“If something happens she’ll say, ‘Mum, it’s okay – I handled it.’”

As our conversation wraps up, I ask Sarah what advice she would give parents just beginning the boarding school journey.

Her answer is simple.

“You’ve got to trust the schools,” she says. “They’ve been doing this a long time.”

And then she shares the piece of wisdom she wishes she had learned earlier.

“You’ve just got to go floppy,” she says with a laugh.

Borrowed from Kate Langbroek, the idea is that when something goes wrong, parents shouldn’t brace for disaster.

“If you stay calm and flexible, you can get through it,” Sarah says.

For rural families, boarding school often means letting go earlier than most. But Sarah’s story is a reminder that while the journey can feel uncomfortable at times, it can also help young people grow into capable, resilient adults. ●

And sometimes the best thing a parent can do is exactly what Sarah suggests – take a breath, trust the process, and go floppy.

SARAH’S TOP 5 TIPS FOR BOARDING SCHOOL FAMILIES

1. Trust the school

Boarding schools have been doing this for a long time. The staff know how to support children through homesickness, friendship issues and the ups and downs of teenage life. Trust that they are there to look after your child.

2. Don’t panic over every bump

Things will not always run perfectly and that is normal. Sometimes you need to ride out a few bumps rather than reacting too quickly or thinking you need to change everything.

3. Keep communication open

Find ways to communicate that work for your child. Sometimes a phone call is enough, but other times a thoughtful message or note gives them time to read it, reflect and respond when they are ready.

4. Remember growth often comes with discomfort

Boarding school asks young people to step outside their comfort zone. Living with others, solving problems and learning to navigate relationships helps build resilience and independence.

5. Go floppy

Sarah’s favourite advice. When something goes wrong, stay calm rather than bracing for disaster. Take a breath, work with the school and trust that most challenges will pass.



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City Wings, Country Roots

For Oaklands mum Tamara Nixon, choosing Melbourne boarding schools for her three children was never really in doubt – but preserving the country spirit at the heart of boarding still matters deeply.

Tamara Nixon knows exactly what boarding school can open up for a child because she has lived it herself.

She grew up on a station in south west New South Wales near Mungo National Park, where getting to school was no simple matter. There was the car trip to the bus, then the long bus ride into town, then the same journey home again. It was a childhood shaped by distance, long days and the practical realities that rural families know so well.

“It didn’t come easy though,” she says of those early school years. “It was a 25 kilometre car ride to the bus and then an hour on the bus. The days were really, really long.”

By Year 9, boarding school became the answer. Not because her family wanted to send her away for the sake of it, but because they could see what it would give her – more time, more opportunity and a wider world.

Now, years later, Tamara is making the same choice for her own children. She and her husband farm near Oaklands in the Southern Riverina, on his family’s sixth-generation property close to the NSW-Victorian border. Their business includes winter cereal crops and summer corn, both dryland and irrigation, and Tamara juggles farm administration with motherhood and the constant motion that comes with parenting children from afar.

Her three children all board in Melbourne. Elise is in her final year of school, Caitlin is in Year 10 and Harry, whose voice many will recognise from Letters from Home’s Nailing Homesickness series, is finding his own rhythm in Year 8 at Scotch College.

“We wanted our kids to have the same experience that we had, which was that your boarding house becomes your family.”

For Tamara, boarding school was always part of the plan.

“We decided on Year 7 because we felt that if we put them into one school, they’re not changing halfway through, having to make new friends and readjust their lives again.”

Like many country parents, she and her husband were guided not by sentimentality, but by what they believed would give their children the best chance to thrive. Their local central school is nearby, but the numbers are small. Around Oaklands, as in so many rural communities, questions of education are tied up with the broader reality of shrinking populations, fewer children and that familiar tension between loyalty to a local school and doing what is right for your own child.

“Nobody wants to put their own kids’ heads on the chopping block for the sake of keeping the dream alive in your small town,” Amanda says during their conversation, and Tamara agrees. She understands that guilt, but she also knows it cannot be the thing that drives a decision.

“We have enough guilt sending them away as it is,” she says. “So you’ve got to take that out of it.”

If Tamara speaks passionately about boarding, it is because she sees what it has already given her children. Confidence. Resilience. Access to city life without losing their sense of home. The ability to move comfortably in different worlds.

“I really think that giving them the opportunity, especially for my kids going to the city, we’re giving them the opportunity of having a metropolitan life, but they’re getting the best of both worlds,” she says. “They still get to come home to the farm.”

It is a simple point, but an important one. For rural families, boarding school is not about replacing a country upbringing. It is about adding to it.

Still, Tamara brings a very particular perspective to the conversation, and it is one that deserves attention. She chose Melbourne boarding schools even though she can see, clearly and honestly, that many of them are grappling with something important – how to maintain the country culture that boarding was so often built on when distance no longer keeps children in the boarding house all weekend.

At some schools, she says, a boarding house can go from full to almost empty by Saturday night. Weekend sport remains, but students are often able to leave on Friday, stay with friends, or head home if they live close enough. In Victoria, where distances are shorter and transport is easier, that changes things.

“The girls really feel it,” Tamara says. “It’s quite isolating at times when the rest of your year level is gone and you’re the only one in your year level still there.”

That observation is at the heart of what makes Tamara’s story so compelling. She is not anti-boarding. Far from it. She believes fiercely in what boarding can offer. But she is also asking a thoughtful question about what happens when the very culture that draws rural families in begins to thin out.

“We wanted our kids to have the same experience that we had, which was that your boarding house becomes your family,” she says. “It’s a special bond. It really is.”

That bond, she explains, is different to an ordinary school friendship. It is built in the ordinary closeness of shared living. The people in a boarding house may not all be in the same friendship group, but they live side by side. They eat together, rest together, carry homesickness together and learn how to belong to one another. In the best sense, it becomes more like family than school.

Tamara is heartened, though, by the efforts schools are making. She points to initiatives like a house system within the girls’ boarding house, where girls from Year 7 to Year 12 are grouped together across age levels and share activities and responsibilities. One Sunday, they might bake cakes for Ronald McDonald House. Another time, they return for a compulsory house dinner. Teenagers may grumble, but Tamara sees the intention behind it.

“I don’t think they realise why it’s compulsory,” she says. “They’re not seeing the underlying skills that they’re trying to create.”

She also believes schools must do more to honour their rural roots in the curriculum, not just the boarding house. One of her frustrations is the lack of agriculture as a subject, particularly in city schools that proudly attract country boarders.

→

"Trust that their country roots are still going to remain strong. You're just going to give them some city wings for a while."

She is encouraged by signs of change, including programs like MLC's Marshmead, where students spend a term living and learning off-grid, cooking, cleaning, caring for animals and paying attention to the rhythms of land and water.

For Tamara, that matters. Rural students bring a kind of diversity that schools should not overlook.

"We bring so much vitality to schools because of our different background," she says. "We do live differently to those in the city."

The longer Tamara speaks, the clearer it becomes that her view of boarding is both practical and tender. She knows the grief of it. She knows the emotional discipline it takes to send a child away while holding your own feelings in check. She knows each child leaves a different ache behind.

"Each child has a different heartache to it," she says. "Parents need to remember how much strength it takes for us to send our children away."

And yet, she would still choose it.

Because when she watches her children now, she sees not just what boarding has cost, but what it has built. She sees daughters who are confident and capable. A son beginning to find his place. Children whose country roots are still strong, but whose world is larger than it would otherwise have been.

In the end, her advice to other parents is beautifully simple.

"Trust your gut," she says. "And trust that your children, their country roots, are still going to remain strong. They're not going to go. You're just going to give them some city wings for a while."

TAMARA'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR BOARDING SCHOOL FAMILIES

1. Trust your gut

When you walk into the right school, you often feel it straight away.

2. Choose the right fit for each child

What suits one child may not suit another, even within the same family.

3. Let go of the guilt

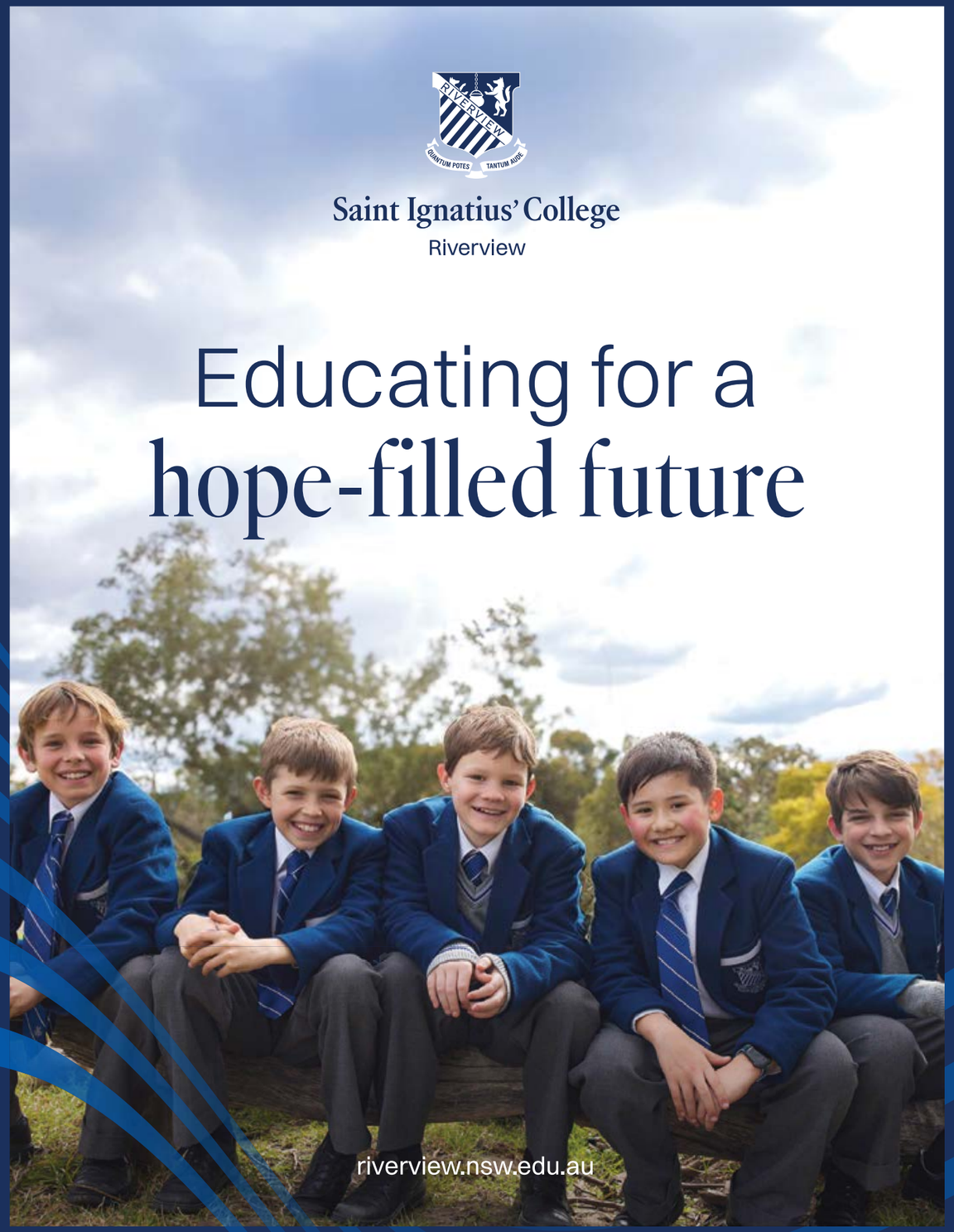
You are not sending your child away to abandon your community. You are trying to give them opportunity.

4. Remember that boarding is a family transition

Homesickness and change are not only for the child. Parents and siblings feel it too.

5. Hold tight to their country roots

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Founded nearly 200 years ago, The King's School was established to educate and develop young men to lead with humility and a commitment to make an outstanding impact on society.

The expansive 320-acre campus in the heart of Sydney provides an ideal learning environment for boys in Years 7 to 12. Guided by the School's philosophy of Academic Excellence and Character Development within a Christian Community, students are encouraged to pursue their full potential not only for personal achievement but for the greater good.

"Residential education is at the heart of The King's School. For our boarders, the School is their second home. It's a place where they live, learn and grow alongside their mates, where they are supported and nurtured by a dedicated team of boarding professionals," says Stephen Edwards, Head of Senior School, The King's School.

At King's, young men are encouraged to develop a healthy risk appetite, embrace challenge and adventure and be actively engaged in the School community.

Year 7 boarders have their own dedicated boarding house, Gowan Brae, designed to provide a smooth transition into senior boarding life. From Years 8 to 12, a vertical boarding mentor program brings students of different year groups together, fostering leadership, mentorship and strong camaraderie.

King's commitment to community is embedded in everything the School does. Shared meals, evening study support and engaging weekend programs connect students across all year levels, as well as on-site staff, creating a unique and vibrant residential culture.

Christian Community is central to a King's education, with Christian values entrenched in every aspect of school life, encouraging students to grow not only in intellect but in heart and character.

At The King's School, boys learn not only in the classroom, but they live their education through experiences that shape character and build lifelong values.

Discover more about The King's School boarding adventure by joining them on one of their regional tours, visiting for a campus tour or registering for a boarding webinar. To register visit **KINGS.EDU.AU**





Step inside McCabe House – the future of boarding

LORETO NORMANHURST, SYDNEY NSW

Step inside McCabe House, Loreto Normanhurst's brand-new boarding house, opening in Term 2, 2026. Designed to inspire independence, creativity, and connection, McCabe House offers modern accommodation, flexible learning spaces, and welcoming common areas.

For current and future boarders, the new boarding house represents both excitement and continuity. Lucy, Boarder Captain 2025, shares her hopes for boarding at McCabe House. "I really hope the new boarding house becomes a place where girls can continue to create the same wonderful memories I've made. Boarding is such a special part of school life, and I feel very grateful to be part of it." Boarder Vice Captain 2025, Phoebe adds, "Boarding at Loreto is significant because it brings together girls from all over Australia, fostering strong, lasting connections."

Boarding at Loreto Normanhurst offers a structured and supportive environment for students across all year levels. Starting in Year 7 gives girls the best foundation for a successful high school journey. Students who start in Year 7 thrive academically and develop exceptional leadership skills. Year 7 boarders benefit from supervised study sessions, a dedicated Mentor Program, and consistent routines that help them settle in with confidence. Across all year levels, students are supported through Homework Help, pastoral care and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.

McCabe House welcomes students from all over Australia and beyond, offering a supportive, vibrant, and safe environment where friendships flourish, independence grows, and every day is full of possibility.

Visit us on 21 March 2026 for Open Day or register for a tour anytime on our website. To speak with our Enrolments Team email enrolments@loretonh.nsw.edu.au.
> LORETONH.NSW.EDU.AU

CANBERRA GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Learn and *live* your possible.

Discover a *female-focused* boarding school providing a *world-class* education in the *heart* of the nation's capital.

Join our 100-year legacy of educational excellence, connection and opportunity and lean into your strengths to become your best self.

Start your journey: cggs.act.edu.au/boarding

SYDNEY, NSW

ASCHAM

Boarding at Ascham offers girls a unique opportunity to live and learn in a nurturing environment that feels like home. Located in the heart of Sydney, our Boarding Houses are safe, supportive spaces where students thrive academically and socially.

Ascham is a school known for outstanding academic results; our unique learning framework, the Dalton Plan, sets us apart.

Our boarders thrive under Dalton — it allows each girl to develop her own rich intellectual life, with individual attention from teachers providing support for every girl to achieve her best, whatever her abilities and aspirations. Boarders' Prep each night is allocated time and supervision to complete weekly assignments.



Life at Ascham is vibrant—weekends feature cultural outings, sport and social activities, while initiatives like Sunday Circles, the City Country Family program and our robust Wellbeing programs foster strong connections and belonging.

Our Boarding community builds confidence, resilience, and lifelong friendships, preparing girls for success beyond school.

Ascham graduates, including all of our treasured boarders, are generous collaborators, critical and agile thinkers, intrinsically motivated and authentically confident.

> ASCHAM.NSW.EDU.AU

CANBERRA, ACT

CANBERRA GRAMMAR SCHOOL

For nearly a century, Canberra Grammar School (CGS) has provided an outstanding education grounded in belonging, independence and opportunity.

Boarding at CGS offers more than accommodation. It is a supportive, connected community where students develop confidence, resilience and lifelong friendships. With full-time and weekly boarding options for Years 7–12, students benefit from modern facilities, dedicated pastoral care and structured academic support.

CGS offers both the Higher School Certificate (HSC) and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), empowering students to choose a pathway aligned with their future aspirations. A rich co-curricular programme across sport, music, service and leadership ensures every student graduates 'Ready for the World'.



Located in Australia's capital, students gain access to national institutions, cultural experiences and a safe, well-connected city environment.

Discover a boarding experience that feels like home while opening doors to exceptional opportunity. Contact enrolments on (02) 6260 9700.

> CGS.ACT.EDU.AU



Boarding school mums — your Village is calling!

Teenagers. They're testing boundaries, finding independence – and often leaving home for the first time to start boarding school. It's a big chapter, not just for them, but for you too.

If you're a rural mum with kids aged 11–18, and you're feeling a little lost in the juggle... you're not alone. Motherland Village is Australia's first online rural mother's group program, with a special program for rural mums with children aged 11-18 years, connecting you with your own personalised support group through our guided 6-week program. Life on the land is beautiful. But for many mums, the real challenge isn't just the demands of rural life; it's the feeling that you're facing it all on your own.

MOTHERLAND VILLAGE IS HERE TO HOLD SPACE FOR YOU.

It's not just a program – it's a community where you'll connect with other mums who get it. The homesickness, the mood swings, the changing family dynamics... and the quiet moments of grief that come with letting go, bit by bit.

Here's what Kerryn from Queensland, had to say after joining our last intake, thanks to a Queensland Government scholarship:

"I absolutely loved the program! Wow! What an incredibly kind, passionate and resilient bunch of women I feel so privileged to have connected with.

Although we live all over Australia, our stories are so similar. I truly believe we have all met for a reason and our lives are better for it – I feel so lucky! I'm so glad I've done this for myself." – Kerryn QLD (11-18 Group)

"Motherland for me was a great experience. I chose to do it, I committed to it, I promised myself to make the absolute most of it and I didn't put expectations on it. I felt I could share openly with my group without judgment; the other ladies had similar experiences to me and so much in common even though we live in different parts of the country. If you're thinking of joining and seeking connection from like minded country mums, Motherland is definitely worth trying." – Kait, QLD (11-18 Group)

So if you've been putting off doing something for you, now is the time as 2026 doors are calling with our first intake for rural mums with children aged 11-18 years starting Monday, May 11! Enrolments close soon, limited places available.

> MOTHERLANDAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/MOTHERLAND-VILLAGE

Scholarships are also available if cost is a barrier. We believe every rural mum deserves access to a mothers' group. Your Village is waiting.

MOTHERLANDAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/SCHOLARSHIP/

MOTHERLAND
Village

ARE YOU A RURAL MUM?

SEEKING CONNECTION?

CHILDREN AGED 11-18 YEARS?



It takes a Village. Find Yours.

Join Australia's first online rural mothers' group program!

The transition to "boarding school mum" can be tough. Connecting with other rural mums can help make you feel less alone as you navigate this chapter. 2026 enrolments are now OPEN for rural mums with kids aged 11-18 years, with multiple intakes across the course of the year!

- 6 Week Online Program
- Facilitated Group Calls
- Video content from subject experts
- FREE access via scholarships

Find out more & apply for a Scholarship

@motherlandaustralia

motherlandaustralia.com.au



A unique opportunity for academic and personal growth

HURLSTONE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL, SYDNEY NSW



Hurlstone Agricultural High School, located in Sydney, New South Wales, stands as the only fully selective, co-educational public school with boarding facilities and a large fully operational farm.

For over 118 years, this institution has provided an enriching education for students, combining rigorous academic studies with a connection to the most vital sector of our economy – agriculture.

Hurlstone Agricultural High School provides the perfect environment to thrive academically and personally across both the boarding and day school. Your child's passion will be enhanced through their time here, while they also broaden their academic horizons, within a balanced diverse approach to learning, growing and achieving.

> HURLSTONE-H.SCHOOLS.NSW.GOV.AU

JINDABYNE, NSW

SNOWY MOUNTAINS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Snowy Mountains Grammar School offers a boarding experience shaped by care, character, and opportunity. Located beside Lake Jindabyne in the heart of the Snowy Mountains, the School provides a true home away from home where students are known as individuals and supported to flourish.

"It's not just what we do, it's how we do it" is reflected in every aspect of boarding life at the school. Strong pastoral care sits alongside high academic expectations, encouraging students to embrace challenge, discover their passions, and grow into confident young adults.

Parents consistently speak of the positive impact boarding has had on their children, from increased independence and resilience to a genuine sense of belonging within a welcoming community.

Surrounded by an exceptional alpine environment, students enjoy unique opportunities across outdoor education, sport, and co-curricular programs, supported by staff who truly know their students. More than a school, a community that knows, challenges, and supports every child.

> SMGS.NSW.EDU.AU



LAUNCESTON, TAS

SCOTCH OAKBURN

For generations, families from across Australia have entrusted us with their child's education and wellbeing. Located in the vibrant heart of Launceston, Tasmania, our boarding community is warm, inclusive and deeply connected – where care is personal, friendships are lifelong, and every student is known and valued.

Our learning environment combines academic excellence with real-world experiences, led by expert educators and supported by personalised programs that build confidence and independence.

With a median ATAR of 86.50 and 65% of students ranking in the top 20% nationally, Scotch Oakburn's approach to learning is personal, purposeful and proven.

Beyond the classroom, students enjoy rich co-curricular opportunities – from sport and the arts to outdoor adventures – all within a safe, spacious and uniquely Tasmanian setting.

With flexible boarding options and a culture grounded in care and possibility, Scotch Oakburn offers exceptional value and an experience that shapes futures.

> SOC.TAS.EDU.AU



Moree

Expo Date: 23 July 2026

Abbotsleigh NSW
Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) QLD
Ascham School NSW
Brisbane Grammar School QLD
Calrossy Anglican School NSW
Concordia Lutheran College QLD
Downlands College QLD
Fairholme College QLD
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School NSW
Frensham NSW
Hurlstone Agricultural High School NSW
Ipswich Girls' Grammar School QLD
Ipswich Grammar School QLD
John Paul College QLD
Marist College Ashgrove QLD
NEGS NSW
PLC Armidale NSW
Pymble Ladies' College NSW
Ravenswood School for Girls NSW
Saint Ignatius' College Riverview NSW
SCOTS PGC College QLD
Shore School NSW
St Gregory's College NSW
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill NSW
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School QLD
St Peters Lutheran College QLD
St Scholastica's College NSW
St Vincent's College NSW
Stuartholme School QLD
The Armidale School (TAS) NSW
The Glennie School QLD
The King's School NSW
The Scots College, Sydney NSW
Toowoomba Grammar School QLD
Wenona NSW

Goondiwindi

Pop-up: 22 July 2026, 5.30pm – 9.30pm

This intimate and relaxed event, featuring discussions about the ***The Spirit of the Bush Foundation Scholarship.***

Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) QLD
Fairholme College QLD
Ipswich Grammar School QLD
John Paul College QLD
Marist College Ashgrove QLD
SCOTS PGC College QLD St Margaret's Anglican Girls School QLD
St Peters Lutheran College QLD
Stuartholme School QLD
The Glennie School QLD
Toowoomba Grammar School QLD



Beyond the comfort zone

When Police Sergeant Daniel Bashford moved his family west to Walgett, boarding school was never part of the plan. But a search for resilience, opportunity and education led his family down a path they never expected.

When Daniel Bashford accepted a promotion with the New South Wales Police and moved his family from the Hunter Valley to Walgett, he knew life would change. What he didn't know was just how much. Fourteen months on, Daniel and his wife have settled into the north-western NSW town with their two daughters and adult son. Like many families moving to remote communities, they arrived aware of Walgett's reputation and the challenges that sometimes make headlines. But what they found instead was something quite different.

"Since we've moved here I can't think of anything else but positives," Daniel says. "Great people, great town. It's certainly not deserving of some of the reputation that it does have because we've found it to be quite the opposite."

Their daughters quickly found their feet – new friendships, local sport and a welcoming community. For Daniel and his wife, the move had been deliberate. They wanted their girls to experience change and build resilience rather than grow up in the comfort of familiar surroundings.

"We could have stayed in the safe haven of the Hunter Valley and they would have been perfectly fine," Daniel explains. "But they would have been protected. We wanted them to experience change and learn how to overcome it."

That thinking would eventually shape a decision they never imagined making.

A CONVERSATION THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Within weeks of arriving in Walgett, the Bashford girls began coming home from school with a new topic of conversation. Their friends were talking about boarding school.

At first, Daniel and his wife were surprised. Boarding school had never been part of their world. They had grown up in families where children attended local schools and came home every afternoon.

"In my mind, boarding school was where the kids of doctors or big farming families went," Daniel says. "We had no real notion of what it involved."

Like many Australians, most of what they thought they knew about boarding school came from films and television. And those stories rarely paint a positive picture.

"We were very blind coming into it," he says.

But the conversations with their daughters kept coming. And the more they listened, the more they realised boarding school might actually present an opportunity.

Suddenly the decision became less about what they were giving up and more about what they might be able to offer their children.

→

"There is no typical boarding school family. We're all just parents trying to do the best we can for our kids."

RESEARCH, RESEARCH AND MORE RESEARCH

Daniel and his wife approached the process the way many parents do when faced with unfamiliar territory – they asked questions. Lots of them.

They spoke to local families, members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association and other police officers who had previously worked in remote areas. They watched videos, read school websites and spoke to anyone who had experience with boarding schools.

"People were probably sick of us asking questions," Daniel laughs.

The more they learned, the more the myths began to fall away.

One common assumption they quickly challenged was the idea of choosing a school close to extended family. Many parents had told them they had done exactly that, only to discover those visits rarely happened.

"The child never ended up going out to visit family and family didn't come to the school," Daniel says. "So that decision didn't really play a part in the end."

Instead, they widened their search. Eventually that led them to Toowoomba in Queensland and to The Glennie School.

THE MOMENT THEY KNEW

Like many families exploring boarding schools for the first time, Daniel says there was a moment when everything simply felt right.

"When you walk into a school you'll know," people had told them.

And they did. Walking through Glennie's gates for the first time, Daniel immediately felt comfortable.

"We walked around and thought this is a place where our daughter is going to be safe, she's going to get a good education and she'll be supported wherever her path takes her."

By the time they left the campus, the decision felt clear.

"We hopped in the car and felt content that she was going to get a really good way forward in that place."

A NEW KIND OF CONFIDENCE

Perhaps the most remarkable change has been in their eldest daughter.

Naturally anxious and resistant to change when she was younger, the move to Walgett has already transformed her confidence.

"Out here she's playing junior rugby union, she's doing dance, she's meeting new people," Daniel says. "She's really come out of her shell."

Now she is preparing for boarding school with excitement rather than fear. She has already attended school visits, made new friends and is eagerly anticipating the next step.

"To see this young girl from the Hunter Valley who was very shy and anxious now wanting to take on the big world – it's pretty special."

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BOARDING SCHOOL FAMILY

For Daniel, one of the biggest lessons has been discovering that boarding school families come from all walks of life. Teachers. Police officers. Nurses. Families who move west for work and find themselves needing education options that simply do not exist locally.

"There is no typical boarding school family," he says. "We're all just parents trying to do the best we can for our kids."

And while sending a child away to school is never easy, Daniel believes the opportunities it creates make it worthwhile.

"Don't be afraid of it," he says. "Do your research and see what opportunities it might open for your children."

For the Bashford family, a move west intended to build resilience has done exactly that – in ways they never expected.

DANIEL'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR FAMILIES CONSIDERING BOARDING SCHOOL

1. Ask questions – lots of them

Speak to families who have children at boarding school and learn from their experiences.

2. Do your research thoroughly

Read widely, watch videos and explore multiple schools before making a decision.

3. Don't assume boarding school is only for certain families

Boarding communities are far more diverse than many people expect.

4. Look beyond geography when choosing a school

Distance to relatives often matters less than the culture and fit of the school itself.

5. Keep an open mind

Approach the decision without preconceived ideas and allow the process to guide you.

A true home away from home

SOMERVILLE HOUSE, BRISBANE QLD



Somerville House offers Brisbane's only private girls' boarding school in the heart of the city – a true home away from home. Our Boarding House welcomes students from Year 5 to Year 12, providing a safe, nurturing environment where friendships flourish and girls grow with purpose.

Located beside the Brisbane River and South Bank Parklands, boarders enjoy vibrant city living – weekend walks, cultural attractions, and even AFL and NRL games at nearby stadiums. Modern facilities include comfortable bedrooms, shared leisure spaces, supervised study areas, soundproof music rooms, and stunning city views.

With a future-focused education, Somerville House empowers girls to excel academically, embrace leadership, and explore diverse pathways, including STEM. In our supportive community, students balance structure with independence – preparing for life beyond school.

> SOMERVILLE.QLD.EDU.AU





A Unique Opportunity for Academic and Personal Growth at Hurlstone Agricultural High School

Hurlstone Agricultural High School, located in Sydney, stands as the only fully selective, co-educational public school with boarding facilities and a large fully operational farm. For over 118 years, we have provided an enriching education for students, combining rigorous academic studies with a connection to the most vital sector of our economy — agriculture.

hurlstone-h.schools.nsw.gov.au
hurlstone-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
(02) 9829 9222
Roy Watts Rd, NSW 2167 Glenfield

Student Growth

Our school's innovative approach to learning offers students the opportunity to not only excel in traditional academic disciplines but also relate their studies to real-world practices.

Agricultural Education

Hurlstone is home to a new large multi-enterprise farm, providing students with hands-on experience that prepares them for future careers in agriculture, science, medicine and beyond.

Boarder Experience

Hurlstone now has a brand new, state of the art, fully air-conditioned boarding facility for male and female students, which accommodates up to 180 boarders from across New South Wales and beyond. This offers students from rural, remote and overseas communities the chance to learn in a supportive, vibrant academic community with high expectations and a commitment to excellence.

Helping heads, hearts and souls flourish

SHORE, SYDNEY NSW



Shore offers boys a well-rounded education where academic development, character formation and a close, supportive community work hand in hand. Our harbourside location gives Boarders a unique urban experience within a village-like setting, and our Boarding Houses sit at the centre of this life, providing clear structure and a place where boys feel known.

Boarders benefit from academic support, guided study routines and access to tutoring. Beyond the classroom, they share extensive Co-Curricular opportunities with their Housemates across Music, Service Learning and outdoor education. Our competitive GPS sports teams are supported by world-class facilities and specialist athlete development. Boarding also adds depth to their social experience, with outdoor cinema nights, varied weekend activities and the chance to attend major sporting events nearby.

Our Admissions team are always available to discuss boarding life, academic pathways and enrolment options. Families are warmly invited to start the conversation by booking a Boarding tour.

> SHORE.NSW.EDU.AU



DISCOVER
EXTRAORDINARY

KNOX GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Come and see us at the Boarding School Expo

Dubbo: Friday 15 - Saturday 16 May
Wagga: Friday 29 - Saturday 30 May
Tamworth: Friday 24 - Saturday 25 July (Meet the Headmaster)

We are also available to visit families in rural NSW to answer any questions about Boarding at Knox - please get in touch.

Find out more about Knox Boarding

Contact Martin Gooding, Head of Engagement, on 02 9473 9768
or email at **goodingm@knox.nsw.edu.au**

WWW.KNOX.NSW.EDU.AU



Equip her for a life of significance

BOARDING FROM YEAR 5

PLC PRESBYTERIAN LADIES' COLLEGE ARMIDALE 1887

AD ASTRA

LEADING LIVES OF Significance PLC ARMIDALE

Boarding a doorway to the future for Bella

THE ARMIDALE SCHOOL (TAS), ARMIDALE NSW



Isabella Henderson: TAS boarder, rowing gold medallist, senior cadet under officer.

For Isabella Henderson from Middlebrook Station, Scone, boarding at The Armidale School has opened up opportunities she could never have imagined.

Deputy senior prefect, the leader of the school's cadet unit and a rowing gold medallist at this year's state championships, Bella credits TAS for carving out a pathway to a very bright future.

"I came to TAS in Year 7 following in the footsteps of my father and grandfather. Boarding has taught me independence, resilience and being challenged to do things I otherwise would not have known about," she said.

Indeed, the NSW champion schoolgirl sculler hopes to one day represent Australia in her sport;

she is also keen to explore officer training with the Australian Defence Force and is proud to be just the second girl to be the senior cadet of the unit.

"TAS been so supportive of my passion to be the best I can be."

TAS will be attending the Dubbo, Moree and Tamworth Boarding School Expos

> AS.NSW.EDU.AU

Downlands College



BROAD CURRICULUM
ACADEMIC SUPPORT
CAREER GUIDANCE RTO & VET TRAINING
PASTORAL CARE & SUPPORT
EXTENSIVE CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES
HEALTH & WELLNESS HUB
38 HECTARES incl. ONSITE RURAL CENTRE

Where your *heart* finds a home.

Downlands is the only ABSA accredited coeducational boarding school in Australia.

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC
PREP-12 | CO-EDUCATIONAL
DAY & BOARDING SCHOOL
TOOWOOMBA, QUEENSLAND

MSC

TOOWOOMBA GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Preparing for what's next. Now.



Purpose built spaces, shaping boys for a changing world.

Grammar TGX



MADE FOR BOYS

YEARS 7-12 BOARDING

IPSWICH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT BOARDING
IPSWICHGRAMMAR.COM

The making of men

CHURCHIE, BRISBANE QLD

For more than 100 years, Anglican Church Grammar School, known as Churchie, has welcomed generations of boarders from rural and regional Australia.

Located on a spacious campus, just minutes from Brisbane's CBD, Churchie offers an immersive seven-day boarding program for boys in Years 7 to 12. Guided by its mission, the making of men, Churchie develops men of character who will lead and serve in their communities.

The school's four founding tenets of academic excellence, spiritual awareness, personal growth and service remain central to boarding life.

All boarders receive exceptional care from a dedicated team of full-time staff who live on campus with their families, creating a safe and supportive environment where every boarder feels a sense of belonging.

To discover how a Churchie education can benefit your son, visit our website or contact their admissions team.

> CHURCHIE.COM.AU



Flourish at Holme

FAIRHOLME, TOOWOOMBA QLD



Fairholme College is a leading girls day and boarding school dedicated to empowering young women through exceptional education and holistic development. Nestled atop the Great Dividing Range in Toowoomba, Fairholme offers a nurturing environment where students thrive academically, socially, and personally. The College fosters integrity, resilience, and compassion, preparing girls for a future of purpose and leadership.

At Fairholme, we believe in the power of an all-girls education. Research shows that girls in single-sex schools are more confident, achieve higher academic outcomes, and develop strong leadership skills.

Join a community that values excellence and belonging. Discover why generations of families choose Fairholme College for an education that shapes futures. Boarding: Years 5 – 12 Day: K – Year 12.

> FAIRHOLME.QLD.EDU.AU

Growing a future in Agriculture

DOWNLANDS COLLEGE, TOOWOOMBA QLD

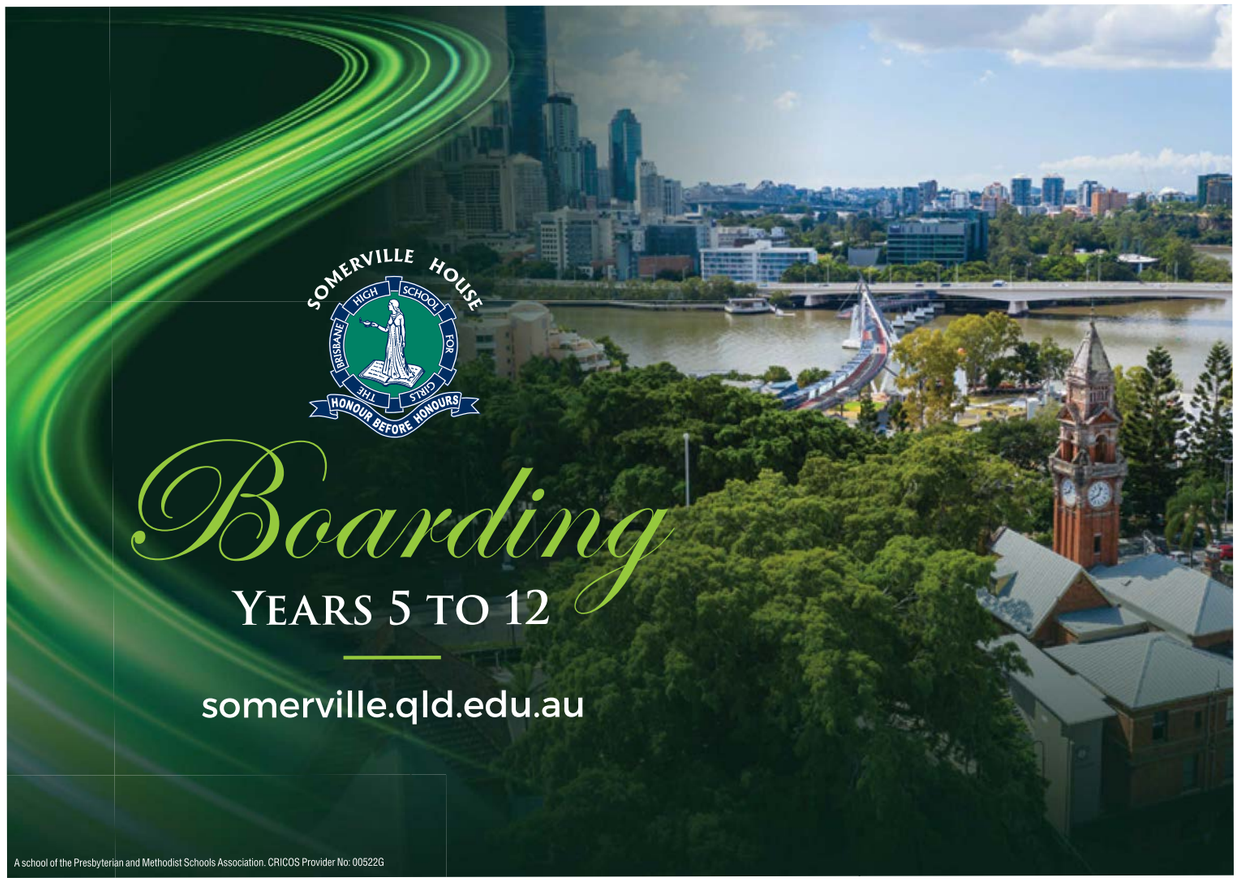


Downlands College Principal Mr Stephen Koch awards Hamish Genrich with the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office SBA of the Year Award for 2025.

In 2025, Downlands College graduate Hamish Genrich was named Queensland's School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year, representing his state at the Australian Training Awards. This prestigious recognition celebrates Hamish's deep-rooted connection to the land and his determination to shape the future of sustainable farming. Growing up on his family farm, Hamish developed an early passion for agriculture. While studying at Downlands, he pursued a school-based traineeship with Rural Training Australia, completing a Certificate III in Agriculture. This allowed him to balance his ATAR studies – including General Agricultural Science – with practical, hands-on experience in livestock and farm management.

Beyond the classroom, Hamish immersed himself in the industry, winning Junior Judge at Rockhampton BEEF Week and serving as an associate judge at the Esk Show with the Downlands Cattle Show team. Supported by the nurturing environment of Downlands College and its on-campus Rural Centre, Hamish has flourished. His journey highlights what is possible when young people are encouraged to follow their hearts. By combining education with real-world experience, Hamish is positioning himself as an inspiring future leader. Congratulations, Hamish, on this well-deserved success. The future of farming is truly bright in your hands.

> DOWNLANDS.QLD.EDU.AU



Tamworth

Expo Dates: 24 & 25 July 2026

Abbotsleigh NSW
Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) QLD
Ascham School NSW
Barker College NSW
Brisbane Grammar School QLD
Calrossy Anglican School NSW
Fairholme College QLD
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School NSW
Frensham NSW
Hurlstone Agricultural High School NSW
Ipswich Girls' Grammar School QLD
John Paul College QLD
Kincoppal Rose Bay NSW
Kinross Wolaroi School NSW
Knox Grammar School NSW
Loreto Normanhurst NSW
Macquarie Anglican Grammar School NSW
NEGS NSW
Newington College NSW
PLC Armidale NSW
Pymble Ladies' College NSW
Ravenswood School for Girls NSW
Saint Ignatius' College Riverview NSW
Scots All Saints College NSW
SCOTS PGC College QLD
Shore School NSW
St Catherine's School Sydney NSW
St Gregory's College NSW
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill NSW
St Peters Lutheran College QLD
St Scholastica's College NSW
St Stanislaus' College NSW
St Vincent's College NSW
Stuartholme School QLD
The Armidale School (TAS) NSW
The Glennie School QLD
The King's School NSW
The Scots College, Sydney NSW
Toowoomba Grammar School QLD
Wenona NSW

When there are choices, but you still choose boarding

Walcha mother Amy Clark on community, critical mass in rural schools and the careful decisions behind sending a child away for opportunity.

Amy Clark did not grow up imagining she would one day be sending her children away to boarding school.

Her childhood was spent between Sydney and the Central Coast, surrounded by horses and a family that placed a quiet but unwavering value on education. “Education was never pushed,” Amy says. “It was just the expectation. You went to school, you finished school and you went on to university. That was just what you did.”

Her father, who is Filipino, placed enormous importance on learning. “Dad always says you can’t take education away from someone,” Amy explains. “If you have it, it’s yours forever.”

Those early influences shaped the way Amy thinks about schooling today. But like many rural families, the path that led her to boarding school for her own children came through life’s unexpected turns.

Amy studied agriculture at university before later retraining as a nurse. She met her husband David while working in the Riverina, and today the couple live on Congi Station, a large sheep and wool property between Walcha and Bendemeer in northern New South Wales. Together they are raising three boys.

Their eldest, Hamish, is now in Year 9 at a regional boarding school in Bathurst NSW.

Life on the land is busy and rewarding, but like many agricultural families it comes with its own realities. Long work hours, seasonal pressures and distance mean that parenting often falls heavily on one set of shoulders.

“It’s a bit like single parenting with a husband,” Amy says with a laugh. “That’s not anyone’s fault. It’s just the nature of farming. Animals need looking after and someone has to be there.”

→



Loreto Normanhurst







First Loreto.
Then the world.

New boarding house
opening Term 2, 2026



Walcha itself is a town Amy speaks about with enormous affection. After moving there three and a half years ago, her family quickly found a welcoming community and strong friendships.

“Walcha is an amazing town,” she says. “It’s one of those communities that is fantastic at doing things together. The show, the sports, the events. It’s a really beautiful place to raise children.”

But like many small towns across rural Australia, the opportunities begin to shift as children move from primary into secondary school.

“Most of the opportunities in town are really geared towards primary school children,” Amy explains. “Once they hit high school age, a lot of those opportunities drop off.”

Student numbers play a role. So does the challenge of attracting teachers with specialist knowledge in smaller regional schools.

“If everyone kept their children at the local high school it would probably be amazing,” she says. “But there’s not the numbers.

Lots of kids leave for high school, whether that’s to Tamworth, Armidale or boarding.”

For Amy and David, the decision about boarding school was never simply about access. They did have a local school option.

“We always had a bus to the local school,” Amy says. “So I can’t purely say it was transport or access. It was more that we wanted our kids to have a really good range of subjects and exposure to lots of things.”

Logistics also weighed heavily. With three boys and a farming business, the idea of driving long distances for sport, activities and specialist subjects quickly became daunting.

“You probably could get them to everything if you stayed local,” Amy says. “But the driving, the logistics, the kilometres. It feels almost crippling to think about how you would manage that.”

Even so, the decision came with its own emotions. For parents who love their small towns, choosing boarding can feel complicated.

“There is guilt,” Amy admits. “You feel a bit like you’re letting the town down.”

At the same time, parents want to give their children the best opportunities they can.

“I didn’t want my children to be the guinea pigs trying to keep the numbers up,” she says. “You want them to have every opportunity.”

Amy’s own perspective on boarding school was shaped years earlier when her younger siblings became weekly boarders in Sydney.

“I could see the friendships and the connections they were making,” she says. “They still see their school friends all the time. From the outside looking in, you could see that community.”

Later at university she noticed the same thing among students who had boarded.

“They already had a network,” she says. “They had this sense of belonging. I remember thinking how amazing that looked.”

When it came time to start researching schools for her own boys, Amy and David approached the process carefully. Like many rural families, they began by attending a Boarding Schools Expo.

Their eldest was in Year 4 at the time.

“I wondered if we were going too early,” Amy says. “But it turns out you’re not. There’s a lot to learn and it’s not a quick process.”

Meeting multiple schools in one place helped the couple narrow down their options before visiting campuses in person.

“Talking to someone face to face is really important,” she says. “You’re sending your baby away. I wanted to feel like they’d actually listened to me and understood what was important to our family.”

Eventually they toured five schools before deciding on their Bathurst choice.

For Amy, the decision also had to work for all three of her boys. Each one is very different.

“Hamish is very academic,” she explains. “Digby has ADHD and dyslexia. Archer is sporty and somewhere in between. I needed a school that could cater for all of them.”

When Hamish first visited the school he now calls ‘home’ during the term, he walked out with a grin that told his mother everything she needed to know.

“He said, ‘Mum, I love it’. And that was something we hadn’t seen anywhere else.”

Today the family is navigating the juggle familiar to many boarding families. One child away, two still at home and constant decisions about travel, sport and weekends.

→

"You're sending your baby away. I wanted to feel like they'd actually listened to me."

But Amy remains clear about why they made the choice.

"At the end of the day I just want my boys to grow into good men," she says. "People who can look someone in the eye, shake their hand and have a conversation."

Boarding school, she hopes, will give them not just an education but something deeper.

"I want them to have that sense that they were part of something special. That they made lifelong friends and had the opportunity to grow."

AMY'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR PARENTS CONSIDERING BOARDING SCHOOL

1. Start researching earlier than you think

Many schools open applications years in advance, so begin learning about options while your child is still in primary school.

2. Go and meet the schools in person

Expos and tours help you understand the culture and values behind each school, not just the brochure.

3. Think about the long-term logistics

Consider sport, travel, distance and how you will juggle multiple children at different stages.

4. Look for the right fit for your child

Every child is different. Find a school that can support your child's strengths and challenges.

5. Trust your instincts

When you find a place that feels right for your child and your family, you will often know.

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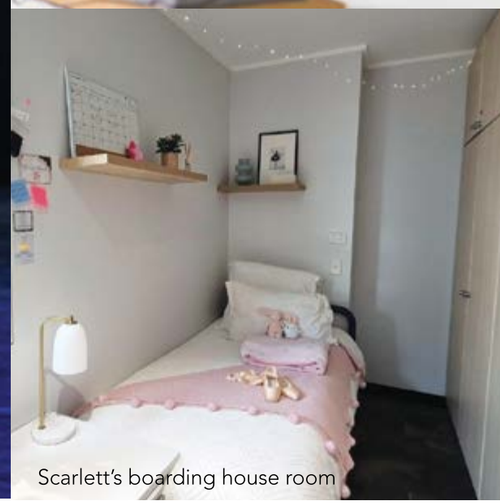
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Scarlett's boarding house room

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Located in the inner west of Sydney, PLC Sydney is a school for girls from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12, with boarding from Year 7.

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Young women of integrity and purpose



When the journey changes direction

A Barraba mother reflects on trusting your instincts, finding the right fit, and the bush spirit that keeps boarding houses alive.

When Geraldine Clark talks about the final weeks of Year 12, you can hear both pride and disbelief in her voice.

"We've done the last sports event, the diploma graduation, the art show, the media show – everything," she says with a laugh. "It's all coming to an end."

For Geraldine and her husband Rowan, farmers from Barraba in northern New South Wales, the boarding school years have been a long and meaningful chapter in family life. Like many rural families, they knew early on that secondary education would likely mean leaving home.

But what Geraldine's story reminds us is that the path through boarding school is not always a straight line. Sometimes the bravest thing a parent can do is change direction.

Geraldine and Rowan began thinking about boarding school long before their daughters reached high school age. Living in Barraba meant they always understood that the opportunities they wanted for their girls might eventually require leaving home.

"We knew when we moved back to Barraba that we'd probably have to look at boarding schools," she says. "So we started looking when Nina was in kindergarten, just to understand what was out there and how different schools felt."

The Clarks looked widely. They visited schools in both New South Wales and Queensland and listened carefully to the experiences of other families. Living roughly halfway between Sydney and Brisbane gave them options, but familiarity also played a role in the decision.

"We had lived in Queensland before, so Brisbane felt comfortable to us," Geraldine explains. "We could pack the car, head down on a Saturday afternoon, have breakfast Sunday morning and drive home again. That made it feel manageable."

But practicalities were only part of the decision. For Geraldine, one moment during a school visit stood out and helped confirm they had found the right place.

"We walked into reception and a staff member walked out into the

→

corridor and started chatting to girls by name – asking about their weekend netball and how things were going. I thought straight away, they really know these students."

As the tour continued, that feeling only grew stronger.

"You could hear the classrooms. Teachers interacting with the girls, laughter coming out into the corridor. It just felt alive. Nina looked at us and Rowan and I looked at each other and thought – yes, this feels right."

Nina began boarding in Brisbane and initially settled well. But as the years progressed, Geraldine began noticing subtle changes.

"She was an overachiever," Geraldine says. "Everything had to be perfect – always coming first. Eventually she just burned out."

It was a difficult moment for the family. They loved the school and had formed strong friendships within the community, but they knew something wasn't quite right.

"We were starting to worry because we were noticing things. And you just have to ask yourself – if we leave her here, is it going to improve?"

The turning point came unexpectedly in the family kitchen.

"I walked in one day and said, 'Do you want to go back to Brisbane?' My husband stopped mid-bite and looked at me like something big was happening. But we all knew we needed to think differently."

Nina moved to a boarding school in Toowoomba at the start of Year 10.

"She settled in really well," Geraldine says. "She found a lovely group of friends and had some phenomenal teachers. It just worked."

Looking back, Geraldine believes the willingness to pivot made all the difference.

"It's always the best intentions when you choose a school. But sometimes the best intentions don't work, so you adapt and move on."

Their younger daughter Hesie took a completely different path. Because of learning challenges, the family deliberately looked for a school that focused strongly on wellbeing and supporting each student to reach their own potential.

"We needed somewhere that wasn't just about top academic results," Geraldine explains. "A place where kids who needed extra support were encouraged to do their best in their own way."

Hesie began boarding earlier, spending time in Toowoomba before eventually completing her senior years at St Hilda's on the Gold Coast.

"They only get to do these years once – they're in Year 7 once, Year 10 once, Year 12 once. You can't repeat them. So sometimes you have to make the call and choose your child."

"It's been terrific for her," Geraldine says. "She hasn't looked back."

Through both daughters' experiences, Geraldine developed a deep appreciation for the culture of boarding houses and the role rural students play in shaping them.

"When the boarding house is alive, the school is alive," she says.

Country students often arrive at boarding school having grown up with responsibility and independence. They bring humour, resilience and a willingness to get involved in everything.

"They come into a completely different environment and they live there. They muck in, they have a crack and when one's down, the others pick them up. No one gets left behind."

Geraldine laughs as she recalls one moment that perfectly captured the contrast between country life and city boarding school.

"The head of boarding once told me she loved asking Nina what she did in the holidays," she says. "One time Nina said, 'Well miss, I shot the guts out of a fox.' Then she pulled out her phone to show the photo. Half the girls just stared in disbelief."

For Geraldine, those moments are a reminder that country kids bring something unique to boarding communities.

"They keep it real," she says with a smile.

Now, as the final Year 12 events wrap up and the boarding chapter draws to a close, Geraldine finds herself reflecting on just how much those years meant.

"I've been an emotional wreck this year," she admits. "Part of you is ready for the next stage, but another part realises you'll never do these things again – the end-of-term pickups, the sporting trips, the bus rides."

Despite the challenges and changes along the way, she remains grateful for the journey.

"It's a wonderful experience – not just for the kids but for parents too. You meet incredible families and become part of a community that stretches right across the country."

And if there is one message Geraldine would share with parents navigating their own boarding school decisions, it is this – trust yourself.

"Stay connected with the school, talk things through and don't let things fester. But if it really isn't working, don't be afraid to make a change."

GERALDINE'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR BOARDING SCHOOL FAMILIES

1. Start looking early

Begin exploring schools well before your child reaches high school so you have time to understand the options and get a feel for different environments.

2. Trust the 'vibe'

Pay attention to how a school feels when you walk through it – the interactions between staff and students often tell you more than brochures or results.

3. Stay connected with the school

Maintain open communication with teachers and boarding staff so concerns can be addressed early and your child remains well supported.

4. Remember every child is different

Each child has their own needs, personality and learning style, so the right school for one may not necessarily be the right fit for another.

5. Be willing to change course if needed

If a school is not working for your child, be open to reassessing the situation and making a change in order to find a better fit.





Learn and live your possible

CANBERRA GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL (CGGS), ACT

With a proud boarding tradition dating back 100 years, the CGGS ‘BoHo’ is Canberra’s only exclusively female Boarding House, and was the first Boarding House in the ACT. Within its historic walls, generations of women have learnt and led, navigated change and challenges to emerge empowered and independent.

Pivotal to the School’s 100-year legacy of educational excellence, connection and opportunity is its renowned Scholarship and Bursary Program, which is currently open for applications.

Prospective boarders have access to the Program, which has two streams: the Scholarship stream, recognising student dedication and excellence and the Bursary stream, which aims to provide a world-class education to those for whom it may otherwise not be possible. The Bursary stream is open year-round to boarding students living in remote, regional and rural communities.

CGGS Principal Terrie Jones says the Scholarship and Bursary Program further strengthens the CGGS boarding experience.

“Our boarders come from all corners of the globe, so naturally, diversity is celebrated. Respect and harmony are championed and each individual is known and valued,” says Terrie. “Our Boarders wake up to a community that feels connected. It’s a female-focused home where kindness and compassion shape every interaction, and one in which everyone belongs.”

Located centrally in Canberra’s picturesque inner south, the Boarding House is within minutes of Australia’s national institutions, high-performance sport facilities, Embassies and Parliament House.

Boarders make the most of every day amongst 10 hectares of beautifully manicured gardens and outdoor grounds, with access to state-of-the-art facilities. Beyond a world-class educational setting, Boarders have access to the School’s extensive co-curricular program, Cygnus at CGGS, designed for a broad, holistic experience with over 100 options on offer.

> CGGS.ACT.EDU.AU/BOARDING

A home away from home for future performers

THE MCDONALD COLLEGE, SYDNEY NSW

The boarding house at The McDonald College is a vibrant, nurturing community where young performers truly find their tribe.

We welcome students from across Australia and overseas, including many from regional areas looking for a place where their passion for the performing arts is recognised, supported and celebrated.

Conveniently located in Sydney’s Inner West, the College offers direct train access, making travel simple for boarders.

We are also minutes away from Sydney Olympic Park, home to world-class sporting venues, entertainment precincts and recreational facilities that enrich our students’ daily lives.

Families often tell us that boarding has transformed their child’s experience. “For the first time, my son was surrounded by people who loved the same things he did,” one parent shares. “He finally felt like he belonged.”



Living only steps from professional dance studios, acting and music spaces, academic classrooms, and our Elite Tennis facilities allows boarders to focus fully on their training, studies and wellbeing.

Our small, family-style boarding house ensures every student is known and supported. Residential staff provide 24/7 care, guiding routines that balance study, healthy habits and downtime.

As one boarder describes it: “It feels like living with a big family — we look out for each other.”

For rural students especially, the experience is life changing. “I finally found people who ‘get’ me,” says another. “It’s like finding my people.”

At The McDonald College, boarding is a place to grow, perform and shine.

Discover your place with us.

> MCDONALD.NSW.EDU.AU



JOIN OUR BOARDING COMMUNITY







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SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES AVAILABLE

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A city school with a country heart

TARA ANGLICAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
SYDNEY, NSW

Set within 12 hectares of green, open space, Tara's boarding community offers something rare: the freedom for girls to live, learn and grow in an environment that feels both uplifting and grounded. Eggleton House isn't simply a place to stay – it is a space where girls are encouraged to develop independence, broaden their perspectives and take ownership of their futures.

Boarding at Tara is intentionally designed to give girls room to become themselves. Daily life is shaped by meaningful routines, supportive staff and friendships that form naturally when young people live and learn side by side. Our boarders quickly discover that they are part of a community that listens, responds and genuinely invests in their journey.

Opportunities extend well beyond the school day. With access to sport, creative programs, cultural outings and weekend adventures, girls are able to explore new interests or deepen existing ones. These experiences help them build confidence, adaptability and a sense of curiosity that stays with them long after they graduate.

Academic structure sits comfortably alongside this vibrant life. Boarders benefit from guidance that encourages focus while still allowing space to unwind, reflect and reset. The result is a balanced environment where students learn to manage their responsibilities with maturity and independence.

At Eggleton House, boarding expands a girl's world – inviting her to step forward with purpose, discover what she is capable of and shape a future that feels truly her own.

> TARA.NSW.EDU.AU



Empowering young women since 1885

ABBOTSLEIGH, SYDNEY NSW



Abbotsleigh inspires girls to strive for excellence, empowering them to become resilient, independent, confident and compassionate young women who believe they are capable of anything. Each girl is encouraged to develop her unique passions and talents, while valuing those of others.

At the forefront of education, Abbotsleigh delivers a deeper learning experience that nurtures the whole girl. Students are supported to think critically, solve complex problems and build understanding that extends beyond the classroom. Dedicated teachers guide each girl to achieve her personal best.

Wellbeing sits at the heart of learning at Abbotsleigh. A comprehensive framework from Pre-K to Year 12 supports students socially, emotionally, spiritually and physically, alongside a rich co-curricular program that builds confidence and resilience.

With a proud boarding tradition since 1885, Abbotsleigh offers a nurturing, home-away-from-home environment where girls develop independence, leadership and lifelong friendships.

> ABBOTSLEIGH.NSW.EDU.AU





MARIST COLLEGE ASHGROVE

A Catholic boys' boarding and day school in the Marist tradition.

www.marash.qld.edu.au



TARA
Anglican School for Girls



Boarding at Tara... a city school with a country heart

Boarding at Tara Anglican School for Girls is an experience like no other - a nurturing community where every student is known, valued and encouraged to flourish. Nestled within 12 hectares of beautiful grounds in North Parramatta, Eggleton House provides the perfect blend of academic excellence, pastoral care, and cocurricular engagement.

From the moment our girls step through the doors, they are embraced by the warmth of the Tara family. Each boarder receives personalised support, fostering deep connections with peers and staff alike. With a wide array of activities - from tennis and swimming to cultural events and weekly excursions - our boarders have endless opportunities to explore their passions and develop their talents.

At Tara, we believe in empowering young women to become confident, independent, and resilient. Our dedicated staff are committed to nurturing the whole person, guiding each student to achieve her full potential in a safe, supportive and inspiring environment. Join us at Eggleton House, where girls grow, thrive and prepare for a future of limitless possibilities.

APPLICATIONS FOR 2027 SCHOLARSHIPS ARE NOW OPEN

For more information, please contact the Tara Anglican School for Girls Enrolments Team on (02) 9630 6655 or scholarships@tara.nsw.edu.au

Eggleton House

Tara Anglican School for Girls - Masons Drive, North Parramatta NSW 2151
02 9630 6655 enrol@tara.nsw.edu.au www.tara.nsw.edu.au

Building the future from the ground up

TOOWOOMBA GRAMMAR SCHOOL, TOOWOOMBA QLD



At Toowoomba Grammar School, purpose-built learning environments are shaping the way boys engage with the world. The Design Engineering and Technology Centre is already transforming learning through specialist laboratories, workshop spaces and collaborative zones that connect theory with practical application.

Nearby, the Agriculture and Industry Centre is nearing completion and will reflect the School's strong regional context. Students will explore food production, sustainability and innovation through authentic, hands-on experiences linked to industry partners.

Both centres provide the foundation for TGX, a learning initiative built around real world challenges. TGX strengthens academic learning by helping boys apply knowledge with purpose while developing curiosity, teamwork and critical thinking.

Headmaster Dr John Kinniburgh says these spaces reflect the School's belief that education must be connected to life beyond the classroom. Together, the DET and AIC ensure learning at Toowoomba Grammar School is firmly focused on what comes next.

> TWGS.QLD.EDU.AU

CALROSSY

GIRLS & BOYS BOARDING
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DISTANCE ED YEARS 5-9

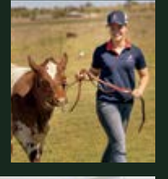






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Where girls grow, thrive and belong

ST SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE, SYDNEY NSW

We know schooling choice is a difficult decision. Your daughter, to complete her education, may need to board. But which boarding school is best for her? We know that the right choice is one of the foundation stones on which your daughter will build her life.



After nearly 150 years, St Scholastica's College knows what it takes to develop young women of character and the special care needed to support them. Our boarding school can never replace home, but it offers its students care, emotional support and a wonderful environment in which the girls can flourish. It is a great place to be, located on the western fringe of the Sydney CBD with excellent access to public transport.

St Scholastica's College offers a wide range of academic, sporting and cultural opportunities, it is a good place to be if you need to live away from home and, in many ways, boarding provides a lifestyle that is the envy of many day students.

> SCHOLASTICA.NSW.EDU.AU



Excellence through balance: empowering girls

KINCOPPAL-ROSE BAY, SYDNEY NSW

Nestled in bushland overlooking Sydney Harbour, Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart offers a transformative education blending tradition with innovation.



At its core is a commitment to excellence through balance – where academic achievement thrives alongside wellbeing, creativity, and purpose.

KRB's all-girls Senior School provides a nurturing environment where students are empowered to grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Research shows girls in single-sex schools often achieve stronger academic outcomes and develop greater confidence and resilience.

At Kincoppal-Rose Bay, academic excellence is a journey tailored to each student. Honours Programs and Cambridge IGCSE offerings challenge and support learners, while personalised teaching ensures every student can thrive. Strong HSC results reflect this commitment.

The SELF+ wellbeing framework supports students to flourish, with initiatives like Tech-Free Thursdays and vertical wellbeing groups fostering connection and community.

KRB's boarding school welcomes students from across Australia and beyond, creating a diverse and supportive environment where lifelong friendships are formed.

Guided by Sacred Heart values, students graduate with strong results, a sense of purpose, and global perspective – ready to make a meaningful impact.

> KRB.NSW.EDU.AU

A smart senior school and boarding solution in North Queensland

TEC-NQ, TOWNSVILLE QLD



In a world where the value of practical skills is growing, Tec-NQ offers a purposeful alternative to traditional high school education. Its Senior School and Boarding program for Years 10 to 12 blends career focused academic learning with nationally recognised vocational training, creating clear pathways to employment, apprenticeships or further study.

Built around the belief that learning should be relevant and engaging, Tec-NQ enables students to complete their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) while working towards trade qualifications in areas such as automotive, electrical, engineering, construction and plumbing.

The curriculum emphasises active, hands on learning, delivered by professional academic and trade qualified facilitators. Integrated work placements form part of the school timetable, allowing students to gain real industry experience while completing their studies.

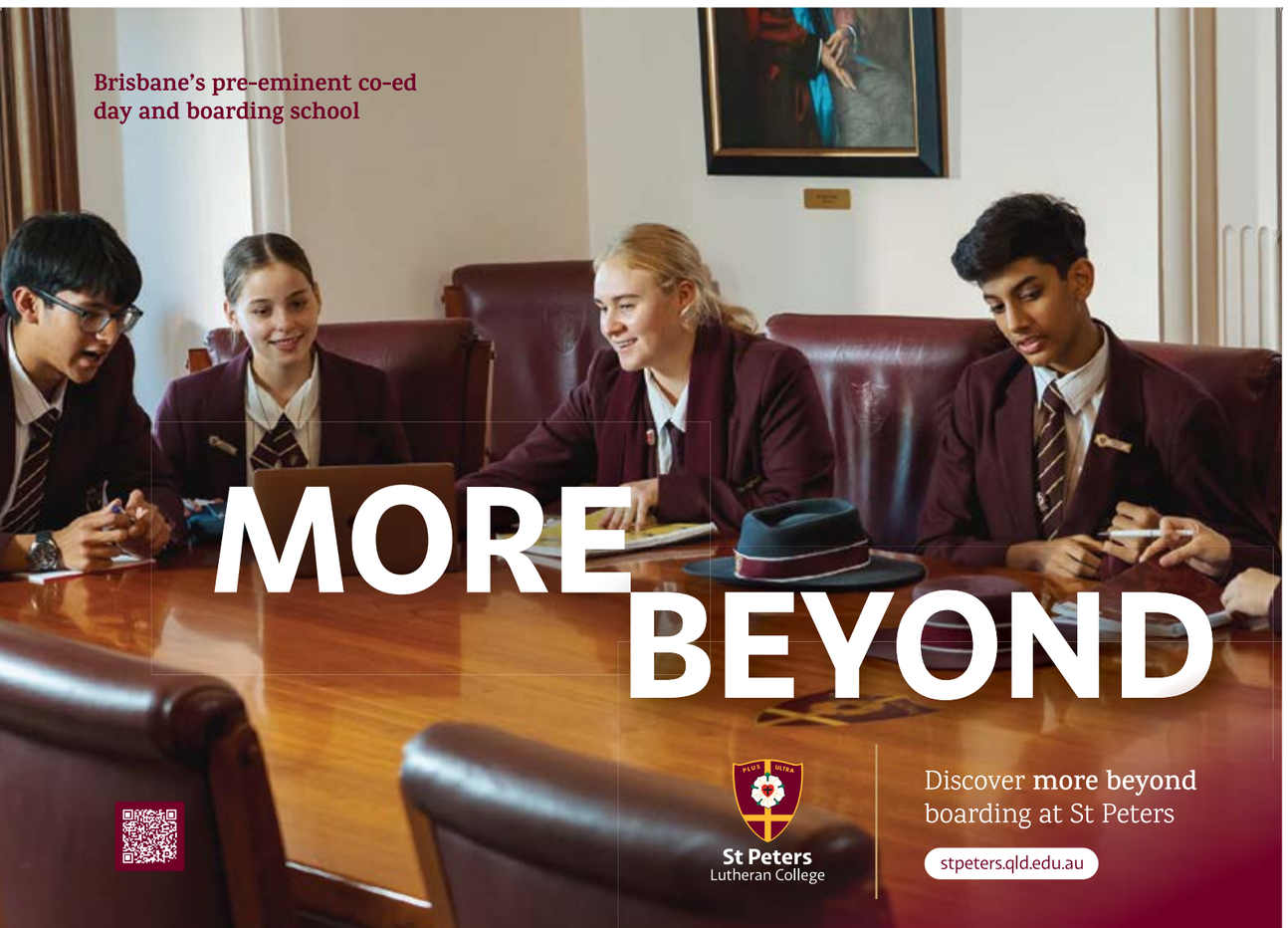
With strong industry partnerships across North Queensland and a modern, supportive boarding environment, Tec-NQ delivers an innovative senior school solution that prepares students for real world success.

> TECNQ.COM.AU

Charleville

Pop-up Date: 18 & 19 October 2026

Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) QLD
Brisbane Grammar School QLD
Concordia Lutheran College QLD
Downlands College QLD
Ipswich Grammar School QLD
John Paul College QLD
Marist College Ashgrove QLD
SCOTS PGC College QLD
Somerville House QLD
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School QLD
St Peters Lutheran College QLD
Toowoomba Grammar School QLD



A boarding community made for boys

IPSWICH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, IPSWICH QLD

Imagine a place where your son can truly flourish beyond the classroom, far from home, but still embraced as part of a caring, down-to-earth community. At Ipswich Grammar School, Queensland's oldest grammar school with 162 years of proud tradition, boarding is more than a place to stay, it's a genuine "home away from home."



Our boys live and breathe our motto, Labore et Honore — work hard with honour. We challenge them, and ourselves, to be our very best each day, and we warmly invite your family to be part of this tradition.

Boarders from rural Queensland, northern NSW and beyond join us from Years 7 to 12, forming lifelong friendships and a strong network of brothers who understand what it means to belong. The boarding community is supported by dedicated, experienced staff who provide the structure, care and encouragement boys need to thrive.

Every day is designed to be stimulating and enriching. With programs tailored to how boys learn best, specialist teachers, and a curriculum that nurtures their curiosity and confidence, we help each student reach his academic, cultural and social potential.

Life at Ipswich Grammar School extends well beyond the classroom. Our GPS opportunities allow boys to compete, create and excel in sport, the arts, debating, science and more. Weekends bring activities, adventures and time with mates, giving boys the chance to relax, connect and enjoy life in their home away from home.

Boarding at Ipswich Grammar School means giving your son a supportive, values-driven environment where he can grow into a confident, grounded young man. We warmly welcome rural families considering a caring, community-minded home for their son's education.

> IPSWICHGRAMMAR.COM

A home for ambition, a path to success

JOHN PAUL COLLEGE, BRISBANE QLD

On a beautiful 33-hectare site, 20 minutes south of Brisbane's CBD, lies John Paul College, one of Queensland's largest and most progressive independent Christian Ecumenical schools. Offering a seamless co-educational journey from Early Learning to Year 12, the College welcomes more than 2,450 students into a community grounded in exceptional learning, dynamic teaching and strong traditional values.

Boarding at John Paul College provides a genuinely special experience: a small, family-focused environment where students grow in confidence, character and independence. Fenton Village is home to 56 students from diverse cultural backgrounds, creating a vibrant community that fosters global awareness and lifelong friendships.

Boarders live in modern boutique-style villas with twin-share ensuite bedrooms, communal kitchenettes and lounges that encourage connection and conversation. With swipe-pass security enhancing privacy and independence, and staff accommodation close by, Fenton Village feels safe, supportive and very much like home.

Life at JPC is balanced and active, with boarders enjoying recreational facilities such as ovals, a games room, basketball court, fire pit and full access to College including the Aquatics Centre, indoor stadium and gymnasium. A comprehensive curriculum offering 28 senior subjects and seven Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificates, combined with extensive sporting, performing arts and social activities, ensures that every student's learning journey is personalised and enriching.

At John Paul College, values are lived, friendships flourish, and students are empowered to strive for their personal best. More than a school, JPC is a family – a supportive, inclusive community where life lessons are learned and futures are shaped.

> JPC.QLD.EDU.AU

Mt Isa

Expo Date: 30 November 2026

Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) QLD
Blackheath & Thornburgh College QLD
Downlands College QLD
Ipswich Girls' Grammar School QLD
Ipswich Grammar School QLD
John Paul College QLD
Marist College Ashgrove QLD
Somerville House QLD
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School QLD
St Peters Lutheran College QLD
Stuartholme School QLD
Tec-NQ QLD
The Cathedral College, Rockhampton QLD
The Cathedral School of St Anne & St James, Townsville QLD
The Glennie School QLD

At the time of printing these were the registered schools. We acknowledge that many schools register closer to the event.



From a station schoolroom to the world

How one outback mum helped launch her daughter from a remote schoolroom to medical school – and is now navigating the next chapter with her youngest son.

"Distance doesn't lower our expectations for our children – it just means we work harder to reach them."

Seventy kilometres outside Julia Creek, on Rutchillo Station in Queensland's McKinlay Shire, Kimberley Wilson has spent nearly two decades doing something most parents could hardly imagine.

She has been the teacher in her own schoolroom.

For eighteen years Kimberley educated her three children through School of the Air – balancing lessons with station life, long distances, community commitments and the unpredictable realities of living in remote Australia.

"It's not supervision," she tells me simply. "It's teaching."

Kimberley knows exactly what she is talking about. Before becoming the full-time teacher in her own home, she trained as a teacher at university in Toowoomba after completing her secondary schooling as a boarder in Charters Towers. Education has always been central to her life.

But raising children in remote Queensland meant education would look very different from the classrooms she once imagined.

Over the years Kimberley has watched distance education change dramatically. When her eldest daughter Peyton began school, learning arrived largely by mail – workbooks and papers families worked through together, supported by occasional on-air sessions.

Today the system looks far more like a conventional classroom, with several hours of live online lessons each day. While the connection between teacher and student has improved, Kimberley says the flexibility remote families once relied upon has tightened considerably.

"You might have to muster on a Monday because that's when the helicopter is booked," she explains. "Or you might have to travel for medical appointments or boarding school drop-offs. That flexibility used to exist in distance education."

Now, if lessons are missed, the responsibility for catching up falls squarely on the parent.

Evenings. Weekends. Whenever the work can be done.

And always unpaid.

→

"For eighteen years I have been doing a job I am trained and registered for," she says. "But there is no salary, no superannuation, no leave. If you live too far from a school, you must provide the teacher."

It is an issue Kimberley has advocated strongly for through the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, where she has spent many years lobbying for greater recognition of the work remote families do to ensure their children can access education.

Before the boarding journeys of her younger children began, there was Peyton.

Peyton had just finished Year 5 and the family was starting to consider boarding school options. Queensland had recently moved Year 7 into secondary school, meaning children would now leave home for boarding at twelve rather than thirteen. The decision weighed heavily.

"It's a really hard thing to do," Kimberley says quietly. "In essence, you are only raising your children to twelve and then sending them out into the world."

Tragically, Peyton passed away unexpectedly before that decision was made.

Kimberley speaks about her eldest daughter with gentle honesty – remembering a horse-loving country girl whose main goal was always to get her schoolwork finished quickly so she could get back in the saddle.

"If I had to sit Peyton on a horse in the schoolroom she would have loved school," she laughs. "She just wanted to get the work done so she could go riding."

Her loss changed the family forever, but it also shaped how Kimberley approached the education of her younger children.

Cadence, Kimberley's middle child, always had a very different relationship with learning.

Even before she started formal schooling, she was correcting spelling across the kitchen table.

"We would be sitting there doing spelling with Peyton and Cadence would pipe up from the side – 'For goodness sake Peyton, it's H-O-U-S-E.' We knew she was going to need extension."

In the early years Kimberley created much of that extension work herself, long before the wealth of online teaching resources that exist today.

Eventually Cadence left the station schoolroom to attend boarding school in Toowoomba – a carefully considered decision.

"I want my children to know what's out there in the world – but I also want others to understand where they come from."

Kimberley wanted strong academic opportunities but also a school environment that would still feel grounded for a bush child.

The choice proved to be the right one.

Through a pathways program at school, Cadence completed Certificate II and III qualifications in Health Services through the Mater Hospital. By seventeen she was working as an Assistant in Nursing back home in Julia Creek – even caring for her own great-grandmother in the local aged care facility.

Today she is studying a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at James Cook University.

Her passion is rural health.

"She has always wanted to be a doctor," Kimberley says. "But she really wants to bring services back to the bush."

One of the things Kimberley values most about boarding school is the connection it builds between rural and city students.

Cadence's classmates travelled overseas, brought global experiences into the classroom and opened new perspectives. At the same time, they were fascinated by her stories of life on Rutchillo.

Boarding houses, Kimberley believes, quietly build understanding between two very different Australias.

"I want my children to know what's out there," she says. "But I also want others to understand where they come from."

Now it is her youngest child's turn.

Zander has just begun Year 7 at boarding school, marking the end of Kimberley's eighteen years as the full-time teacher in the family schoolroom. But the start of his boarding journey has been anything but straightforward.

Rutchillo Station has spent months cut off by severe flooding.

"We were flooded in from the twentieth of December," Kimberley told me recently. "We only managed to get the car out to the bitumen on Monday." (At the time of writing it was end of February)



"Boarding school doesn't just open doors for bush kids – it helps city kids understand rural Australia too."

KIMBERLEY'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR REMOTE FAMILIES

1. Choose the school that fits your child

Every child is different – look for a boarding school that suits their personality, interests and learning style rather than following what others choose.

2. Start the conversation early

Talk openly about boarding school well before the time comes so children understand the opportunities and feel prepared for the transition.

3. Look closely at pathways and opportunities

Programs that offer vocational pathways, leadership experiences and real-world learning can help students discover their direction earlier.

4. Stay connected with the school community

Strong relationships with teachers, boarding staff and other families make a huge difference when you live a long way from the school.

5. Remember that boarding is a partnership

Boarding school works best when families and schools work together to support the child's wellbeing, independence and growth.

Eventually the family made the long journey east to deliver Zander to school, leaving a property under enormous pressure behind them.

"There is no way to sugar coat it – it hasn't been a great start to the year," she said. "He didn't get the holidays he should have and he probably has way more stress than he should starting boarding school."

Like many children from the bush, Zander understands more than most about the realities of life on the land. Flooding, stock losses and financial pressure are not abstract ideas – they are part of everyday family conversation.

Still, Kimberley hopes boarding school will open doors for him.

"He hasn't consistently had that teacher that inspires him yet," she says with a smile. "Maybe he will find that there."

Alongside raising her children, Kimberley has continued advocating through ICPA for equitable access to education for remote families.

For her, equity is simple.

"I just want kids out here to have the same ability to choose the education that is right for them."

Because sometimes the future of a child – even a future doctor – begins in a small schoolroom on a cattle station.

THE BOARDING SCHOOL COLLECTIVE

Because boarding is more than a school choice.



Tune in to our Podcast, ***Letters from Home***, for real voices and lived experiences of boarding, from the heart of rural Australia.

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Formerly Boarding Schools Expo Australia



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ST PETERS LUTHERAN COLLEGE

St Peters Lutheran College Boarding offers a warm and welcoming coeducational boarding experience where every student is known, supported, and encouraged to thrive. In 2026, the College proudly welcomes new Director of Boarding Tim Sedgwick, whose extensive experience and student-centred approach will continue to strengthen the vibrant boarding community at St Peters.



Our boarders are engaged in all aspects of College life. This year they are taking centre stage and stepping confidently into student leadership roles, filling the College Captain and Vice-Captain roles. With a strong emphasis on wellbeing and personal growth, St Peters provides a supportive environment that empowers boarders to develop independence, resilience, and lifelong friendships.

Located on a leafy and expansive campus in Indooroopilly, Brisbane, St Peters Boarding blends a proud boarding tradition with innovation, offering exceptional facilities, holistic care, and enriching academic, cultural and sporting opportunities that help young people flourish, at school and beyond

> STPETERS.QLD.EDU.AU



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The ultimate Boarding School Packing List

The Ultimate Packing List for Boarding School has been one of our most popular blog posts since it was first published in early 2017. It's now 2026 and things are always changing, so we've updated it again.

We know this list is useful to families because it's based on the real-life experiences of families who have gone before. Parents who have done the drop-off, the long drive home, and the many phone calls in between.

Boarding schools do their best to make the boarding house feel like a home away from home. But often it's the small, personal things that mean the most. The items that remind your child of home, family and the life they've come from.

Schools will provide excellent packing lists that cover all the essentials. This list is simply a few extra ideas that families have found helpful over the years.

Sometimes the smallest item can make the biggest difference.

And if you've forgotten something, don't worry. Every boarding parent has.

BOARDING SCHOOL PACKING ESSENTIALS

- Overnight bag – for weekend trips out of the boarding house.
- Beach towel for the pool or beach excursions.
- 2 x underwear bags – so your underwear doesn't end up lost in the mysterious vortex called Boarding School Laundry. Absolutely essential. Some schools will supply these through their clothing shop.
- Padlocks with a number combination lock.
- Plastic tub with your name on it for storing food and personal items.
- Torch – useful when phones are unavailable or lights go out.
- Clock radio or travel alarm to help get you up in the morning. Many schools take phones away at bedtime so it's not ideal to rely on your phone.
- Spare phone or iPad charging cord or power pack for when they inevitably go missing.
- Double adaptor or power board – many boarding houses are older buildings and power points can be limited.
- Dressing gown – lightweight or a warm sloppy joe for colder months and trips down the hallway to the bathroom.
- Permanent marker to write your name on clothing when sewing on labels becomes a lost art.
- Sewing kit for emergencies – replacement buttons, dropped hems and quick repairs.
- Spare labels like Stuck On You labels for naming clothing items.
- Small personal first aid kit – Band-Aids, Panadol (if allowed..), lip balm, antiseptic wipes.
- Reusable water bottle – many students carry these everywhere during the school day.
- Small bedside lamp or clip-on reading light if allowed by the school.

SOME OTHER USEFUL ITEMS

- Bathroom caddy – particularly helpful for the child who likes to see their face wash, body wash and shampoo together. Choose one with drainage holes. No soap.
- Plastic box for period essentials – a small lockable toolbox works well.
- Don't overpack casual clothes. Most boarders live in their school clothes and the good clothes tend to go missing.
- Thongs for the showers or pool deck.
- Lockable toolbox for personal items or treasures.
- Desk top fan. These are gold in older boarding houses.
- Hanging hooks for over cupboard doors to hang ties, belts, hats or towels.
- Hook or loop on the toiletry bag so it can hang inside a locker or cupboard.
- Shoe hanger for locker or wardrobe. Also useful for socks and underwear.
- Ear plugs. Snorers start young.
- Photo album for under the bed so photos can be changed over time.
- Saved contact list in their phone with essential family and friends in case they ever get stuck somewhere.
- Tag all power appliances or check if the school provides this service. Hairdryers, straighteners, chargers and personal fans often need electrical tagging.
- Portable stain remover pen for food or grass stains.

TECHNOLOGY ITEMS

- Phones will usually have limits in boarding houses but a few tech items can make life easier.
- Spare charging cables.
- Portable power bank.
- Portable Bluetooth speaker for dorm music or getting ready in the morning.
- Earbuds or headphones. A headphone splitter can be handy when sharing music quietly with friends.
- Laptop sleeve or protective case.
- Small multi-port USB charger so several devices can charge from one outlet.
- Download movies, playlists or podcasts before the term starts for offline listening.
- Airtag or similar tracker inside their school bag or luggage.

MEMENTOS OF HOME

- Bring your own pillow and doona cover if the school allows it.
- A favourite snuggle blanket.
- A favourite soft toy. Never underestimate the comfort of something familiar.
- Photos of family, pets, friends and home.
- A favourite coffee mug.
- Blu-Tac for photos and posters.
- A pillowcase from home with a familiar smell on it.
- Local rugby club jersey or favourite NRL jersey or cap. Or from the local pub. Instant conversation starter.
- Fairy lights or bunting to personalise their space. Solar powered fair lights if not allowed power.
- A handwritten letter from you tucked into their bag for the first night.

FOR FUN OR QUIETER MOMENTS

- Notebook or diary for writing in quieter moments.
- Portable Bluetooth speaker for music. (Mentioned in Technology Items too)
- Earbuds or headphones. (Mentioned in Technology Items too)
- A good book or magazine to share.
- Playing cards, Uno or a small board game.
- Football, soccer ball, tennis balls or basketball for outdoor time on quieter weekends.
- Ugg boots for around the boarding house.
- Face mask, hair mask or hand cream for pampering weekends.
- A small pack of envelopes and stamps for writing letters home.

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REMEMBER TO LABEL EVERYTHING

Laundry is legendary in boarding houses. If it isn't labelled, there is a good chance it will disappear into the great boarding school vortex.

THE ULTIMATE TOOLKIT FOR MUM AND DAD TO KEEP IN THE CAR FOR WEEKEND VISITS

- Laundry marker
- Liquid Paper pen for dark items
- Stuck On You label stamp
- Small sewing kit
- Dymo label machine for the extra organised parent
- Permanent marker for last minute textbooks
- Extra sew-on labels
- Disposable rain poncho – especially useful when watching sport on wet winter weekends.
- Umbrella
- Spare socks and underwear for your boarder
- Lint roller

THE ULTIMATE BAG TO TAKE TO BOARDING SCHOOL

The days of lugging around huge hard suitcases are largely over. They are heavy, awkward and tend to get damaged on buses and trains.

The best recommendation we can suggest is to purchase a wheelie kit bag. The soft sports bags with wheels and a large zip across the top.

You see them at rugby games, motocross, cricket and footy. They are like the Tardis. You keep unpacking and unpacking and they seem to hold endless amounts.

If you search online for "wheelie kit bag" you'll find plenty of options.

THE FINAL TOUCHES

- You can add to the boarding school experience by sending care packages through the mail. Food top-ups, special treats, forgotten toiletries and little notes from home.
- They are highly anticipated and bring great excitement when they arrive.
- Regular written communication is also important. Email can be a great way to keep a small record of life at home and life at school.

Text messages and phone calls will likely be the most frequent contact, but a thoughtful email, letter or card can mean a great deal.

- A card at exam time.
- A note when you sense they're having a tough week.
- Or just a quick "thinking of you".
- Sometimes the smallest things from home mean the most.

These suggestions are just that – suggestions. Every child and every boarding house is different.

If you have an item that made a difference for your child, please share it with us. The best ideas always come from families who have walked the road before.

2026 Boarding Schools Expos

NSW & ACT	Gender	LOCATION			
		Dubbo	Wagga	Moree	Tamworth
Abbotsleigh, Sydney	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Ascham School, Sydney	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Barker College, Sydney	♂♀	✔			✔
Calrossy Anglican School Tamworth	♂♀	✔		✔	✔
Canberra Girls Grammar School	♀	✔	✔		
Canberra Grammar School	♂♀	✔	✔		
Cranbrook School, Sydney	♂	✔			
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, Tamworth	♂	✔		✔	✔
Frensham, Mittagong	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Sydney	♂♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Kambala, Sydney	♀	✔			
Kincoppal - Rose Bay School, Sydney	♀	✔	✔		✔
Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange	♂♀	✔	✔		✔
Knox Grammar School, Sydney	♂	✔	✔		✔
Loreto Normanhurst, Sydney	♀	✔	✔		✔
Macquarie Anglican Grammar MAGS Dubbo	♂♀	✔			✔
Mount Erin Boarding	♂♀		✔		
NEGS, Armidale	♀	✔		✔	✔
Newington, Sydney	♂		✔		✔
PLC Armidale	♀	✔		✔	✔
PLC Sydney	♀	✔	✔		
Pymble Ladies' College, Sydney	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Ravenswood School for Girls, Sydney	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes	♂♀	✔	✔		
St Catherine's School Sydney	♀	✔	✔		✔
St Francis De Sales Regional College, Leeton	♂♀		✔		
St Gregory's College Campbelltown, Sydney	♂	✔	✔	✔	✔
Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview, Sydney	♂	✔	✔	✔	✔
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, Sydney	♂	✔	✔	✔	✔
St Scholastica's College, Sydney	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst	♂	✔	✔		✔
St Vincent's College, Potts Point, Sydney	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Scots All Saints College, Bathurst	♂♀	✔	✔		✔
Shore, Sydney	♂	✔	✔	✔	✔
Snowy Mountains Grammar School, Jindabyne	♂♀		✔		
Tara Anglican School for Girls, Sydney	♀	✔	✔		
The Armidale School TAS, Armidale	♂♀	✔		✔	✔
The King's School, Sydney	♂	✔	✔	✔	✔
The McDonald College, Sydney	♂♀	✔			
The Scots College, Sydney	♂	✔	✔	✔	✔
The Scots School Albury	♂♀		✔		
Wenona, Sydney	♀	✔	✔	✔	✔
Yanco Agricultural High School	♂♀	✔	✔		
Isolated Children's Parents' Assoc. NSW		✔	✔	✔	✔

QLD	Gender	LOCATION				
		Dubbo	Goondiwindi	Moree	Tamworth	Mount Isa
Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie), East Brisbane	♂		✔	✔	✔	✔
Blackheath & Thornburgh College, Charters Towers	♂♀					✔
Brisbane Grammar School	♂			✔	✔	
Columba Catholic College, Charter Towers	♂♀					✔
Concordia Lutheran College	♂♀			✔		
Downlands College, Toowoomba	♂♀			✔		✔
Fairholme College, Toowoomba	♀		✔	✔	✔	
Ipswich Girls' Grammar School	♀			✔	✔	✔
Ipswich Grammar School	♂		✔	✔		✔
John Paul College	♂♀		✔	✔	✔	✔
Marist College Ashgrove, Brisbane	♂		✔	✔		✔
St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, Brisbane	♀			✔		✔
St Peters Lutheran College, Indooroopilly, Brisbane	♂♀		✔	✔	✔	✔
SCOTS PGC College, Warwick	♂♀	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Stuartholme School, Brisbane	♀		✔	✔	✔	✔
Tec-NQ, Brisbane	♂					✔
The Cathedral College, Rockhampton	♂♀					✔
The Cathedral School of St Anne & St James, Townsville	♂♀					✔
The Glennie School, Toowoomba	♀		✔	✔	✔	✔
Toowoomba Grammar School	♂	✔	✔	✔	✔	

VIC & TAS	Gender	Wagga Wagga
Firbank Grammar School, Melbourne	♀	✔
Methodist Ladies' College MLC, Melbourne	♀	✔
St Catherine's School, Toorak	♀	✔
Scotch College, Melbourne	♂	✔
Scotch Oakburn College, Kings Meadows TAS	♂♀	✔
Wesley College, Melbourne	♂♀	✔
Isolated Children's Parents' Assoc. NSW		✔

2026 EXPO DATES

Dubbo Expo	15 – 16 May
Wagga Wagga Expo	29 – 30 May
Goondiwindi Pop-up	22 July
Moree Pop-up	23 July
Tamworth Expo	24 –25 July
Charleville Pop-up	18 – 19 October
Mount Isa Pop-Up	30 November

Find out more & pre-register
boardingschoolcollective.com.au



The first term *matters most*

A support guide for parents sending a child to Boarding School

Sending a child to boarding school is one of the biggest parenting steps many rural families make. It takes trust, courage and a deep belief in their future. The early weeks can feel unsettling for everyone. That's normal too.

You are not alone in this transition.

1. EXPECT MIXED EMOTIONS – FOR BOTH OF YOU

- Most children feel excitement and homesickness at the same time
- Most parents do too
- Ups and downs are part of settling in, not signs something is wrong

Your calm confidence becomes their safety net.

2. TRUST THE SLOW SETTLING-IN PROCESS

- Friendships take time
- Routines take practice
- Confidence grows quietly

The first six weeks are about adjustment, not perfection.

3. SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE GENTLY

Encourage your child to:

- speak to staff themselves
- manage routines
- solve small problems first

This is how resilience grows.

4. KEEP COMMUNICATION STEADY, NOT CONSTANT

- Predictable contact helps more than frequent contact
- Listen carefully before jumping in to fix things
- Celebrate effort and courage, not just results

Often what children need most is reassurance that they can do this. Your belief in them is everything.

5. FIND YOUR PEOPLE TOO

Connection makes this journey easier.

Join **The Boarding Circle Facebook group** to share experiences with other families walking the same road, and explore the Nailing Homesickness podcast series together with your child.

Boarding school is a transition for the whole family. With the right support around you, it becomes not just manageable – but deeply worthwhile.

Podcast

LETTERS FROM HOME is our podcast sharing the real voices and lived experiences of boarding. Through honest conversations with parents, students and experts, we explore the challenges, the triumphs and the everyday realities of life beyond the places we call home. For families, it offers reassurance, strategies and connection. For schools, it's a window into the hopes and concerns of rural communities, helping strengthen understanding and relationships. Each episode is a letter from the bush to the boarding world.

Leaving home, *not losing home*

A gentle guide for kids starting Boarding School

Starting boarding school is a big step. It takes courage to leave home and try something new.

If you're feeling excited, nervous, unsure – or all three at once – that's completely normal. Thousands of country kids have stood exactly where you are now. They found their people, their confidence and their place. You will too.

1. MISSING HOME MEANS HOME MATTERS

- Homesickness is not a problem to fix – it's a sign you care
- It usually comes and goes in waves
- Talking about it helps it pass faster
- Other boarders feel it too, even if they don't say so

You're not the only one learning how to do this.

2. LITTLE ROUTINES MAKE BIG DIFFERENCES

- Make your bed each morning
- Know where your gear lives
- Keep track of laundry days
- Show up on time, even when you're tired

Routine quietly builds confidence.

3. FRIENDSHIPS GROW SLOWLY - AND THAT'S OK

- Everyone is new at the beginning
- Sit next to someone different at meals
- Ask simple questions like "Where are you from?"
- One good friend is enough to start with

Your people will find you.

4. STAY CONNECTED TO HOME

- Plan regular calls with your family
- Share the small wins, not just the hard bits
- Keep photos or something familiar nearby

Home doesn't disappear when you leave it.

5. IF SOMETHING FEELS HARD, TELL SOMEONE

Boarding staff expect questions. They want to help. Strong boarders are not the ones who cope alone – they're the ones who speak up early.

You are braver than you think. And you don't have to do this by yourself.

If homesickness shows up, listen to the **Nailing Homesickness episodes** from Letters from Home – they're real conversations with students who've already walked this path.



Podcast

NAILING HOMESICKNESS is a special capsule series from Letters from Home. This is our 4th year of speaking to the boarders themselves on how they left home and took on the world. Each boarder answers the same five questions.

Each episode, you'll hear from students from across Australia who've already made that journey – they'll share the real stories of how they settled in, found their people, and made boarding school feel like home.



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