



Headmaster's End of Term 1 Letter

1st April 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Senior School Students

As we approach the Christian festival of Easter, Chapel services have focused on the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Objective historians consider this a pivotal historical event that changed human history forever. Christians consider this the central event of history; the event towards which the whole of pre-history was moving and the event that humanity will forever look back to. Regardless of our own individual perspective, for each of us, Easter is a reminder of the sacrifice required to bring people together in unity.

Communities, whether families, friendship groups, neighbourhoods or schools, are built on sacrifice. We must sacrifice some convenience to live alongside one another and some autonomy to achieve effective teamwork. For our School community to be effective, we must sacrifice some of our preferences to a common way and some of our wants to the common good. The sacrifice of which I speak is often called service. At Grammar, we call our students to serve those around them with the kind of service that stems from love, which we define as the active choice to place another's needs above our own. Easter reminds us that greater love has no-one than this, that they lay down their life for their friends (John 15:13). Through His own self-sacrificial actions, Jesus, the Son of God demonstrated His love for us, being prepared to suffer and die to overcome the power of Sin and death and give new life to the peoples of the world.

I am so glad that, as COVID recedes, the staff and students of BMGS will be able to demonstrate beyond the bounds of the School the heart of service that beats strongly within the School.

Periodical Publications

This letter provides readers with access to [Volume 72](#) of the BMGS Altiora Magazine, addressing all that happened in 2020. As we review the achievements wrought amidst the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic one last time, it truly gives us reason to celebrate. I hope you enjoy the experience.

This letter also provides readers with access to the annual publication titled [2020 HSC Review](#). This document highlights the outstanding performances of many individual students as well as the tremendous achievements of the 2020 cohort as a whole. Yet again, they are phenomenal achievements for a non-selective school with a relatively small cohort and a commitment to serving a wide variety of students. It speaks volumes of the dedication of the students and the incredible passion, commitment, expertise and support they receive from their teachers. Almost every subject achieved better than State averages and made a tremendous improvement in adding value to their students' academic outcomes from Year 7 through to Year 12. We are proud of the 2020 Year 12 cohort and look forward to hearing of their further successes in the years ahead!

Staff Matters

The School is currently advertising for a number of positions. If you know of any suitable candidates, please draw their attention to our [advertisements](#). We will introduce new staff to you at the start of Term 2. These ads have been necessitated by a number of staff movements.

Mrs Allison Watts, for many years our School Psychologist, will finish her time with us at the conclusion of Term 1 in order to expand her private practice. Mrs Watts has supported many parents in critical moments and had a significant impact on the lives of many Grammar students over the past decade. We congratulate her on taking this step in her career and know that she will continue to speak peace and wellbeing into the lives of those she serves.

Also moving on is Mrs Bronwen Knebel who has served the School for eleven years in Early Learning and more recently in leading a range of new literacy initiatives in the Junior School. Recognising her passion and capability, the School has invested in Mrs Knebel's leadership capability in recent years, including enrolment in the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) Middle Leaders course. Grammar is Mrs Knebel's first Australian School and, to grow her career, she now seeks further experience within the Australian educational sector. We will be forever thankful for her contribution to the curriculum and culture of BMGS. She will be missed by many.



At the end of this term, we also say farewell to Ms Kristin Alexander, Ms Jacqui Pugh and Mr Richard Macaulay, who each move on to new opportunities in the education sector. Ms Alexander has served the last few years at BMGS as a Learning Enrichment educator whilst she trained to be a teacher. She now leaves us to take up her first teaching role. Ms Pugh and Mr Macaulay were with us for only a term, however we are very grateful for their professionalism and commitment.

Wentworth Falls Pedestrian Safety

I ask that those who access the Wentworth Falls campus by car of a morning or afternoon please prioritise student safety. Please travel slowly through the Junior School crossing area and come to a full stop if someone is waiting on the island. Take special care on School roads and in Kiss and Drop areas. Be patient, pull to a stop as far forward as you are able and look in all directions before pulling out. Pedestrians should use only the marked crossings and not other parts of the road. Senior School students must avoid walking across the round-about at these times of day. If everyone abides by these few simple principles we will ensure our students remain safe.

John Cunningham Student Centre

I have previously advised you of the School's plans to redevelop the Stratford Building into a purpose-built Student Centre. Please take a look at the concept drawings on our [website](#). The construction will take place in the second half of 2021 and require the renovation, and possibly the extension of the building. The design is still in draft form and is anticipated to cost \$800,000, the largest building project undertaken at our School since the Performing Arts Centre was opened in 2012. It is part of a broader plan the School has to ensure that the School offers superb facilities to our students for generations to come.

Giving Day

Linked to this project is our inaugural BMGS Giving Day, organised by the School's Foundation Committee and held during Term 2, on May 5th, 2021. The generosity of our benefactor, Mr Cunningham, has secured the construction of the building, however we will rely on additional donations (that will be tripled by Mr Cunningham) to ensure the building is all that we hope it will be. Funds raised on the Giving Day will contribute to the fit-out, including internal fittings and plantings, tables and chairs, soft furnishings and technology. More information on construction plans will be made available as they are developed and more information on the Giving Day will be forwarded from the Foundation Committee early next term.

Term 2 Letters

The links below provide access to letters from the Heads of School containing reflections on this term and information pertaining to the next for both the specific School and the whole School.

- [Junior School Letter](#)
- [Senior School Letter](#)

Other Communications

Please use the links below to access other relevant documents for your family, including a list of key dates for the remainder of the year. I expect this information will be very valuable to you.

- [Altiora Magazine \(Vol 72\)](#)
- [2020 HSC Review](#)
- [Key Dates for Term 2, 2021](#)

Salutation

On behalf of the staff of Blue Mountains Grammar School, I wish each member of your family health and happiness this Easter break! I look forward to seeing all students return to School on Tuesday April 20th 2021, after a whole-of-School, pupil-free Staff Conference Day on the Monday.

Ian Maynard
Headmaster