



SPRING 2021

Brighter Futures

A start in life
a brighter future for young australians



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Enabling Success

The support we provide to our students enables success in a diversity of ways.

We are delighted students have their own unique dreams for the future, and we are always so pleased to see them work towards and achieve these goals. From improving their English and Mathematics grades, to pursuing sporting or artistic passions, to increasing their confidence and more. Witnessing these students succeed in a diversity of ways is not only inspiring, but also highlights the impact of your generous support.

Felice, a Year 6 student, enrolled in, and successfully completed, a holiday program at NIDA for singing and drama. Feedback passed on to us was outstanding, with tutors strongly recommending pursuit of further studies in Drama and saying her self-confidence truly blossomed. She's even written her own songs!

Sid, a Year 11 student, who is very passionate about sport, received an 'A' for Physical Activity and Sports Studies and is very involved with sport at his school. Thanks to the funding provided, he could afford to play American Football as an extra-curricular activity too.

NJ, a Year 5 student, improved immensely with her spelling and literacy skills. She even received a distinction in a spelling competition and participated in our Read-a-thon with a total of 2,650 pages read within a month.

Danny, an aeronautical engineering student, purchased a high performance laptop to use for aerodynamic analysis for his final year research project and attended an

internship with Boeing, both of which will greatly benefit his employment options upon graduation. He also made the Vice Chancellor's List as he was in the top 1% of his peers three years in a row and graduated with a Weighted Average Mark of 90.10%.

Fifi, a Year 8 student, started working with a speech pathologist to assist with her schooling and overall communication skills. Thanks to these sessions and her own hard work, Fifi's confidence increased and she started sharing ideas with her peers and teachers, including in Mathematics and French.

Sana, a Year 12 student, attended Art classes to further develop her artistic skills and pursue her artistic passions, which she says are also an excellent stress relief. Sana also won our Artistic Achievement prize for her fabulous creations.

Tilly, a Year 9 student, made big strides in Mathematics. In fact, she moved from a 'D' to a 'B' within one semester and received our Stephen Floyd Prize for Most Improved in Mathematics.

Sammy graduated from her Bachelor of Veterinary Sciences and Biology with a Grade Point Average of 4.90. She is now a fully qualified vet and is working at a mixed practice clinic in a small rural community and loves the variety of animals she gets to work with – including cows, goats, dogs, cats, birds and reptiles!

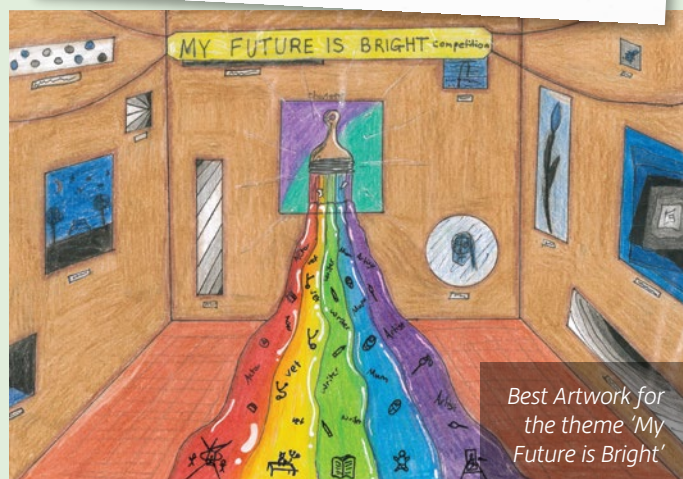
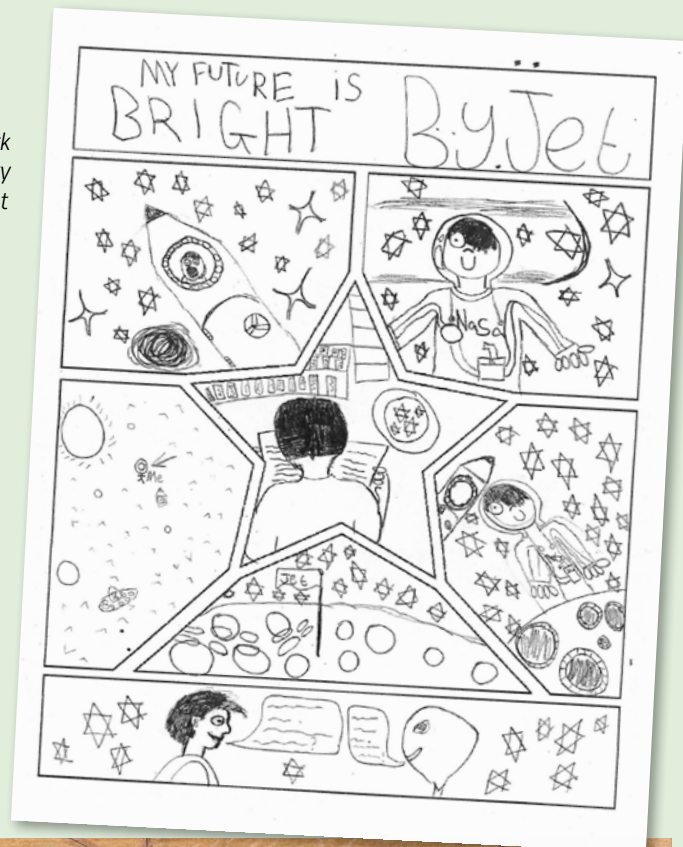
Supporting our students

Throughout this year and because of the various challenges imposed by COVID-19, particularly lockdowns and the consequent challenges of home schooling, our support was not only a necessity, but also required in order to adapt to the changing educational needs of our students.

We increased our contact with students and families, regularly making check in calls with all families impacted by the lockdowns to make sure online learning was as positive an experience as possible, and that financial barriers or limited access to technology would not hamper learning. Ensuring each student had a suitable at home study space where they could work undistracted meant more desks and chairs were required. Some also needed headphones. Increased internet capacity was a necessity, particularly where online tutoring was now occurring.

With lockdowns being extended, we also designed various activities to encourage educational engagement, lift motivation and inspire students to spend time away from screens. The activities achieved this and also proved to be a great way to de-stress and have something a little different to look forward to. One of these activities was a 'Scavenger Hunt', where students were encouraged to head outdoors and find items from a pre-prepared hunt list – including native flora and bodies of water. It was great to hear both students and families got involved. One family even made a day of it and took a picnic! Another initiative involved providing students a choice of kits while in lockdown. They could pick from either a science kit, painting kit or clay kit. Students expressed their excitement and gratitude for these kits, and were eager to use them.

Our Student Engagement Program, which was introduced at the start of this school year, has also helped support our students during lockdown. Each term students have been invited to participate in a different 'challenge'. These have included our Read-a-thon, 'My Future is Bright' Art challenge, and 'Movement for My Health' exercise challenge. Each of these has been met with enthusiasm and has further enhanced our engagement with students. We received all sorts of fabulous and



Best Artwork for
the theme 'My
Future is Bright'



Best Artwork by a Secondary Student

colourful entries for our Art challenge and the winning entries are displayed above. Our movement challenge, which focused on exercise for physical and mental wellbeing, had students going for bushwalks, playing team sports, dancing and even doing housework!

A past student leaves a legacy

In May 2021, we were informed of the passing of Nance (Nancy) McKenzie, a past student of the William Thompson Masonic School and a loyal supporter of *A Start in Life*.

Upon her passing, Nance left us a bequest and we are incredibly thankful for her support. Having a previous student like Nance give back is powerful, as it truly shows how the experiences and generosity of earlier generations can impact those of the future. Nance was also a regular attendee at the William Thompson Masonic School reunions that we held. Upon her passing, one of Nance's daughters informed us that Nance had a deep appreciation of her own schooling and the opportunity to support the education of other children was her way of repaying this.

Nance attended the William Thompson Masonic School from 1926 to 1936. Her mother was incredibly grateful when the school offered to educate and house her four children upon the death of her husband, a war veteran, in a tragic work accident. Nance contributed regularly to the school magazine, and enjoyed excursions to Targona Zoo and the Royal Agricultural Show.



Perhaps as a sign of the significant impact that the school had on Nance's learning, she even went on to become School Captain and Dux of the Year.

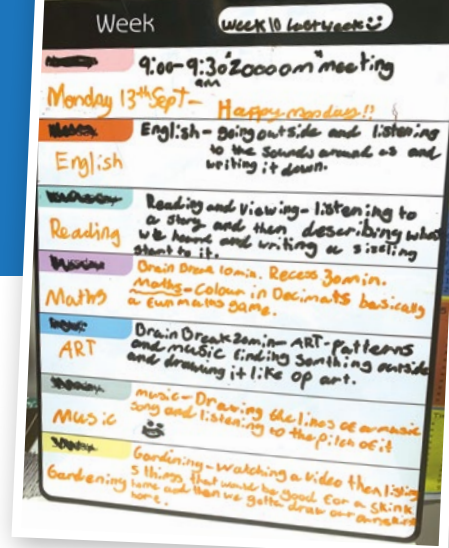
Nance passed on many of these rich memories to her own children, who have now kindly shared them with us. Nance's time at the school was not always easy and was perhaps reflective of the times. While having her siblings in separate living and educational quarters was difficult, she was grateful for being so well cared for by the school. Indeed, Nance's children informed us that, as she had spoken fondly of her time there, they too wished to add to what Nance had set aside for future generations and also recently made a donation to *A Start in Life*.

We offer a warm thank you to Nance and her family for the lasting legacy that they have given to our charity and the children we support. We also wish to acknowledge and thank all those who have left bequests to us previously. They are a powerful way to help ensure young Australians receive the education they deserve and indeed experience a brighter future.

^ Nance as a student of William Thompson Masonic School, in her sports uniform

< Nance and her daughter, Heather, at one of our reunion events





Helping students develop study habits

Building study habits and organisational skills are key to making the most of an education.

Through our program and working with our Student Support Team, many students have been able to build such habits and skillsets, and have consequently experienced great improvements in their learning. The stories below of Al and Tiger demonstrate this.

Al Year 9

With the help of our Student Support Team, Al wanted to create a regular study routine, so we provided him with a visual organiser to help him be more focused and set aside regular time for studying. Al has since been using this organiser to write down tasks along with due dates. At our recent 12 month check in, Al told us he updates it frequently, including using it to write down Maths questions that he wants to ask his tutor. Al's school grades further reflect the impact this increased organisation has had, as he progressed from a 'C' to a 'B' in both English and Mathematics, with his teachers commenting he has consistently demonstrated organisation in his learning behaviours. In fact, Al is currently completing the accelerated Mathematics course at his school, meaning he is studying Year 9 and Year 10 Maths in one year. His tutor believes he could now finish in the top 5 of his course!

Tiger Year 5

Tiger wanted to better manage her homework, so we helped by providing funding for a whiteboard which she now uses to organise her schoolwork. As a result, she progressed up a grade in both Mathematics and Science and Technology, receiving a 'B' for both in her recent school report. To help improve her study routine, our Student Support Team also assisted Tiger in devising a specific learning goal to read for 20 minutes every night. Tiger now reads between 30 minutes and 2 hours each night and has recently received a 'B' in English. Her teacher has also noticed improvements, saying that Tiger is a reflective, meticulous and diligent worker who delivers a high standard of work, and is consistently organised and prepared for class. Tiger even received various school awards, including one for producing excellent work at home and another for literacy.

Through our program and the assistance from our Student Support Team, we are committed to helping all students develop their study habits and organisational skills. Such habits and skillsets are crucial to carry throughout life, and will not only help during schooling years but also future career endeavours.

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