

PINOAK



3. Head of College Report
4. Head of Senior School
5. Director of Curriculum
6. Junior School News
7. Junior Gallery
- 8-9. Feature
10. Old Oxleyan
11. Inspiration
12. Big Issue
13. Senior Gallery
14. Good and Other News
15. Work Experience
16. Newsflash

The writers, editors, and designers of Oxley's Pin Oak begin today by acknowledging the Gundungurra people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we learn and work and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Oxley community.

MOSS VALE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE



JUNIOR MEMBERS ARE BACK

Newcomers encouraged – Ages 12-16

- Fortnightly Friday evenings
 - 5.30pm-8.30pm
- Awesome new friendships
- Valuable life lessons
- Help protect our community
- Build confidence and knowledge around bushfires
- Zero commitment to become a firefighter
- Learn communications, pumps, equipment, and other lifesaving skills

juniors@mossvalerf.org.au



Student Editorial Team
Hannah Zupp, Leah Halstead, Violet FitzSimons,
Thomas Clark, Anouk Hakewill, Lucy Anderson,
Emilie Henderson, Leah Halstead

Designers
Lara Fischer, Chloe Hanrahan

Head of Marketing and PR
Emma Calver

Staff Editor
Emma Calver

Oxley College
Railway Road, Burradoo, NSW, 2576.
Ph: 4861 1366
office@oxley.nsw.edu.au

Photography: AJ Moran, Oscar Fox



In my past Principal roles, I often read a letter from a Boston High School Principal who wrote each year to her new staff and it applies equally as a message to parents:

"Dear Teacher,

I am the victim of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers; children poisoned by educated physicians; infants killed by trained nurses; women and babies shot and burned by high school and College graduates. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: help your students become human. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human."

We strive at Oxley for good academic and co-curricular results that can be measured yet the main game will always remain about character and contribution.

Oxley must continue to promote the positive actions of imagination, creativity, empathy, striving, listening,

Year 12 – HSC Trial Examinations

It was great to see our Year 12 students make use of the Year 12 Study Centre over the July holidays, with many of them attending workshops and completing practice examinations in Weeks 2 and 3 of the winter break. A number of our Year 12s have been impacted by COVID-19 in these first two weeks of term and for them it has been a very frustrating time and we will continue to support them as they recover and return to school in the days ahead. We wish all of our Year 12s well in these next two weeks and have every confidence in each one of them.

Mrs Emily Madden

This term Mrs Emily Madden is joining our Mathematics and Diverse Learning Departments from Launceston Church Grammar School, Tasmania. Mrs Madden is an experienced educator who in addition to teaching Mathematics has held leadership positions as a Senior Pastoral Care Co-ordinator at Wollondilly Anglican College and most recently as a Head of House at her previous school. In addition to her leadership roles and teaching Mathematics, Mrs Madden has a background in learning support and delivering mentoring programmes, as well as teaching PDHPE. We welcome Mrs Madden to Oxley.

Philosophy

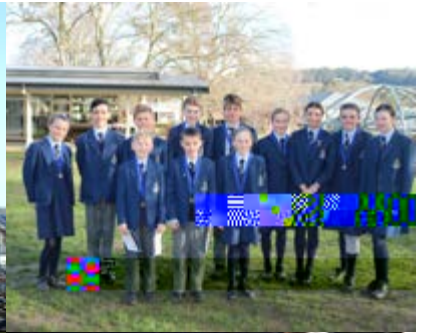
Philosophy, a NESA-approved Year 11 elective, has been a distinctive feature of the curriculum at Oxley since its inception in 2020. Unfortunately, NESA have made changes to the rules around such school-developed courses for Stage 6, which means that this will be the last year that we are able to offer the course. I remain hopeful that in the coming years NSW will come into line with other Australian states (and other countries), in developing such a course at Stage 6. In the meantime, we will be looking to incorporate much of the course into our Cornerstone programme from next year. A major focus of Year 11 Philosophy is epistemology – the theory of knowledge. Students are required to choose or develop a question about

the nature of knowledge, linking it to their HSC electives. This enables them to interrogate the acquisition of knowledge in those subjects, applying critical thinking skills to analyse fundamental questions that are relevant to their life experience. Below are some of the questions that students have explored in their presentations this week. There are, of course, no easy answers to any of these questions! Indeed, one of the key features for those of us that enjoy philosophy (and indeed the humanities more broadly) is that such subjects complicate – rather than simplify - aspects of human culture and society.

Perhaps some of the questions below could be the subject of a dinner table conversation in your home this weekend?

- Is myth and storytelling more important than science?
- What is the purpose of art?

JUNIOR GALLERY



FEATURE

The Feminine Voice

Olivia Rodrigo is a nine-teen-year-old girl who writes songs and sings those songs in front of thousands of people. And yet, despite the fact that society never expected anything more of her, Olivia managed to voice the opinions of millions of women across the globe on a deeply controversial, and often taboo issue. How did this happen?

As per usual, Oliva stepped onto the Glastonbury stage in a fabulous pop star outfit, and sang her songs accompanied by thousands of voices. What happened after this was something truly incredible, those thousands of voices stayed with Olivia as she got up from her piano and spoke about the overturning of Roe v Wade, which had occurred only hours earlier in the USA. Here is what she said:

"I'm devastated and terrified. So many women and so many girls are going to die because of this. I wanted to dedicate this next song to the five members of the Supreme Court who have showed us that at the end of the day, they truly don't give a s*** about freedom. The song is for the justices: Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh. We hate you."

And she proceeded to sing "F*** You" to the supreme court, with the entire crowd of Glastonbury singing passionately along with her.

To some, this action is easily dismissed as childish and volatile. A young woman was upset about the state of politics in her country and decided to sing about via a song jumpacked with the f bomb.

But this moment is so much more than that. Olivia, through this short speech, showed bravery and maturity beyond her years. Through one paragraph, she encapsulated the views of millions of women who previously were unable to express their opinions

on the Supreme Court's recent decision. Who were unable to succinctly show how heartbroken they were to have this decision go ahead. Who were unable to publicly take a stand against the Supreme Court justices, by listing them each by name, one by one.

It's not very often we get to see a woman express herself so well in our society. We aren't really given that much of an opportunity to learn to express our opinions or craft our stories. At dinners, men are the people expected to regale the table with anecdotes,

wrong. This moment is a moment of unity for a group of women who struggled to vocalize the pain and fear they felt, and had their message delivered on the global stage by a teenage girl who wasn't afraid to talk about politics in a pretty dress.

That's one of the most moving things about this moment, the fact that Olivia changed nothing about herself to present her message. She didn't slip into a modest suit or attempt to use words usually reserved for English essays: she spoke her mind just as she was, just how she felt. As a young woman who has had her fair share of speaking competitions and debates, there's often a distinctly unfeminine feeling to the entire event.

To be respected, to be listened to, young girls are often encouraged to adopt masculine traits. To wear their hair back, to abandon the way they would normally speak, to present themselves so that their femininity isn't distracting or ostentatious. The thought of getting up in front of a crowd in a crop top, mini-skirt and fish net stockings to discuss politics is something that would never have even crossed young women's minds - and yet Olivia did it. Olivia got up there and showed the world that femininity isn't something to be diminished when discussing a topic that is extreme in its severity - it is something to be proud of.

Especially with a topic such as Roe v Wade, the fact that femininity is something lacking in the conversation is completely ridiculous. That age old stereotype that femininity means emotion, loose lips and innocence seems to linger in our political discourse, and as a result it's almost impossible for women to truly vocalize how they feel about the issue. How are you supposed to discuss something that of ends the very essence of who you are as a woman, without sounding or acting like a woman? How are you supposed to adopt masculine traits, when the issue is so deeply entwined with feminine culture?

If you'll allow me to let you in on a secret: teenage girls are very aware of the fact that they can be emotional, that they can speak out of turn and discuss things that might be beyond their years. But by no means do these traits make us weak, or ridiculous,

or somehow less equipped to express ourselves. But, as we go through life, time and time again we are presented with a list of ways to make ourselves more respectable, presentable - more successful. Almost every time, the key is to adopt more masculine traits. Femininity has become a synonym for "weakness", and as a result in political discourse it's become a habit for women to hide traits or habits that seem overtly feminine.

Somewhere along the line, whether it be through the lack of female storytelling or the association between femininity and weakness, we've become a society where women are expected to hide their emotions and feelings. It's a shame that we've come to a point where we have to hide our true selves to be taken seriously. We've become a society where we have to hide our true selves to be taken seriously. We've become a society where we have to hide our true selves to be taken seriously.

Can you tell us a little about your career journey since leaving Oxley College?

- I studied Architecture at the University of South Australia and the University of New South Wales. My thesis project looked at public housing offerings for Remote Indigenous Communities in Central Australia.
- While at university I worked in a large commercial architect's office on larger scale projects including railway stations, a school and apartment and commercial office buildings.
- I then worked in a small architectural practice for 10 years on award winning private houses and public buildings, usually with a strong sustainability focus and often with a heritage overlay and lots of regional projects all across NSW and the NT.
- Then, I felt ready to take the plunge and set up my own practice. I now have two kids and am a registered Architect and Certified Passive House designer and my practice has been up and running for 8 years. The focus of my practice is on designing mostly houses to the International Passive House Standard. These buildings are designed to

On Saturday 16 July 2022 an extraordinary and welcome event, some might even say a miracle, occurred on a sporting field. For the first time since 1994, and only the fourth time in history, the mighty New Zealand "All Blacks" lost a test series on home turf. The team fell under the unbearable pressures and expectations set by its own people and the rest of the rugby playing world. The Irish rugby team made history by winning a series to the legendary All Blacks in New Zealand, a team who is often considered the best ever team in any sport in any era – a remarkable win/loss ratio of over 75%! The Irish become the first touring team in the professional era to win a series on New Zealand soil. I'm sure everyone who watched will agree that it was excruciatingly close with the Irish holding off a fierce All Blacks fightback to claim an epic 32-22 win, with Ireland only being too

To invoke the words of Grammy-award winning comedian and Singer-songwriter, Bo Burnham, "the world is changing". Much of the world's populace would never have anticipated that an era of such radical social change would be sweeping the world, very similar to the way that I, myself, never anticipated that Bo Burnham would be a Grammy-award winning songwriter. Major steps are being taken towards the end of unfounded bias and stereotyping, and while much of the world is moving into a time of social sensitivity, the past decade or so has unveiled a chasm beginning to open between sides of the political spectrum. And while, yes, Australia is its own country, separate to the, forgive me for saying, unfathomable chaos of United States politics, much of the world, and particularly the West, is massively influenced by the happenings of the USA.

This applies to many major debates, such as anti-abortion laws, the recent reversal of Roe v. Wade causing global uproar and much fear surrounding the potential ripple effect that this may have on other countries laws surrounding equitable access to contraception, accessibility to female-specific healthcare, and access to abortions for personal or health-related reasons. Others would include matters such as BLM and queer activism, modern day revolutions filtering down the ladder to reach the wider world, with the help of innovations like the internet, streaming services, and social media.

Bearing this in mind, however, the affairs of adults are not my concern. That is to say, they are not completely irrelevant either. Because, while many of the politically concerned high school level Oxleyans, staff members, and parents of the Oxley community will be well aware of the politics referenced above, the average youngster (or, to use an objectively fabulous word, whippersnapper) may not have any interest whatsoever in the political opinions and leaning of any which person. In fact, many little people may not even be aware that one may have any opinions concerning the validity of another's identity. Thoughts induce belief, in turn, influencing behaviours, and vast majority of a small child's serious opinions, outside of "Brussel sprouts are terrible", and "I like my jelly sandals", come from the beliefs and opinions of the adults and the limited access to outside influences that a child of eight may have, thus introducing the importance of quality children's literature.

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SENIOR GALLERY





WORK

Experience

I work room service. Which wasn't really something I ever pictured myself doing if I'm being perfectly honest. When I was little, I always liked to think there were little fairies who came around the hotel and turned the sheets, replaced the soaps and folded the towels. So now that I myself am the mysterious towel fairy, it all felt a bit odd- especially since no one at the front desk had offered me a set of wings.

Anyway, I was walking through the corridor one day, wingless and grumpy as all teenagers are, when I knocked on the door of my last room of the day. I had my lolly lady esque trolley in front of me, the wheels tangling in on themselves every three seconds, and I was just about ready to tie all my towels together and propel down the side of the building if someone even said one wrong thing.

I knock. And I knock again. And again. Once I'm absolutely certain that I've given the possible serial killer inside ample time to escape, I push the door open and find myself face to face with an elderly woman, sitting on her bed in her robe, watching The British Bake Of. Betty, which I discovered that later was her name, didn't seem in the least bit bothered as I awkwardly stepped in, and continued to watch Bake-Of as I replaced and folded all her towels.

Work Experience is a new anonymous student voice column in the Pin Oak, for kids

