



SYNOD 2023 REPORT

WESLEY COLLEGE

MEMBERSHIP

Chair	Matt Braysher
Head of Wesley College	Ross Barron
Moderator	Susy Thomas
Member	Warren Baillie
Member	Dr Ross Goodheart
Member	Cheryl Haak
Member	John Palermo
Member	Jeff Pontifex
Member	Greg Ruthven
Member	Rabia Siddique
Member	Kristie Young
Member	Jessika Hames

REPORT

Introduction and Highlights

2023. Wesley College's Centenary. A significant milestone in the life of Wesley as we honour our past and celebrate 100 years of educating and shaping the lives of almost 15,600 men and women. On 13 February 1923 Wesley Boys' College (as it was at inception), the first Headmaster, John Frederick Ward, welcomed thirty-eight students. At our core is the founding vision of our Methodist forebears, now embraced within the diversity of the Uniting Church in Australia. Wesley College remains proud to be a Uniting Church school and continues to give emphasis to living by Christian values.

The centenary has brought highlights beyond our expectations. To honour our past, bring the community together to celebrate, and look forward to the future, the following, noteworthy traditions were introduced this year:

The ringing of the Tranby Bell

In 1829, the Tranby left England, destined for the Swan River. Aboard the ship were 57 Methodist passengers, including two Methodist Lay Ministers – Mr John Hardey and his brother Mr Joseph Hardey. Joseph Hardey's daughter, Miss Sarah Hardey gave the Tranby's bell to Wesley in the infant years of the College's life.

It has now been mounted on a frame made of wood from the College Chapel's original pews and it is rung to start special College events, and by each new student on their first and last day (as they graduate), reinforcing the message that Wesley will always be a part of each person.

Sarah Hardey Scholarship

Our commitment to providing educational opportunities for those less fortunate remains steadfast and to mark the 100th birthday, we established the *Sarah Hardey Centenary Scholarship Fund*. Sarah Hardey was one of Wesley very first donors. She supported the campaign to buy the land that Wesley still sits on and went on to generously support scholarships to assist those unable to access a Wesley education.

John Wesley Medal

We recognised the absence of an award that celebrates members of our community who have made an outstanding contribution and provided exceptional service over a long period of time. With 'service and giving' as the guiding principle, it was apt for this award to be named for John Wesley. Two worthy community members, Greg Brown (82-86) President of the OWCA, and Patsy Russell-Lane (President of the Wesleyanas) were the inaugural recipients, presented at our 100th Birthday assembly.

A new century and a new Wesley Anthem

Pride is what I hear in the voices of our students and staff as the new anthem rings out across the College at various events, from Junior, Middle and Senior Schools.

Glenn Sarangapany (06-00), a Wesley graduate, award-winning composer, and a member of the band Birds of Tokyo, was commissioned to compose the song. To respect and acknowledge our First Nations people, Glenn collaborated with both Gina Williams and Guy

Ghouse, who adapted a verse into Noongar. The result is an anthem that celebrates who we are at Wesley and what we value.

[LINK TO LISTEN TO THE WESLEY ANTHEM](#)

A Christian Community for Everyone

Whether due to the centenary, or other influences, the College's atmosphere remains charged with renewed energy, and a distinct emphasis on a promising future.

Wesley's structure is unique. We are a Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 school (co-educational up to Year 6, then boys only to Year 12, with a dedicated Middle School for the adolescent years). We have approximately 1300 students on campus, including 164 boarders, mainly from rural Western Australia. The international student market is slowly re-building following the impact of COVID-19. Wesley embraces the diversity that comes from having students from different backgrounds and remains committed to welcoming students from overseas.

The College is a microcosm of the wider community with around 15 faith traditions represented within our student and staff population. The Reverend Manie Strydom and the chaplaincy program are integral to Wesley and the Chapel continues to be a safe and welcome place for both Wesley students and staff. Each term begins with a Staff Chapel service (setting the tone for the term ahead) and every student attends either a weekly, or fortnightly, service. The student services are supported by our Year 12 Faith and Service Prefect, and sub-school Chapel Monitors. Reverend Manie has a strong pastoral care approach aimed at supporting the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of our students, staff, and the extended community.

Every aspect of College life (academic, sport and the arts) is underpinned by our core values *Respect, Integrity, Courage, and Compassion*; and Wesley's Student Wellbeing, Leadership and Service-Learning Programs ensure our values remain central and in alignment with a Uniting Church voice of social justice, inclusion and belonging. Our students continue to inspire us, never taking a back-foot in service-led events including Wesley's annual participation in *Shave for a Cure*. This year, we were 2nd in Western Australia and 3rd in Australia.

Our past community is also a very important part of the Chaplaincy. Past scholars and the broader community re-connect to Wesley through the Chaplaincy – Reverend Manie conducted numerous Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals throughout the year. Some members simply make contact to seek guidance and support.

Wesley's relationship with Reverend Mark Illingworth, South Perth Uniting Church, continues to strengthen with Reverend Illingworth engaging with College staff and students, and Reverend Manie working with the South Perth parish.

Wesley's **Scholarship and Bursary Program** remains an important cornerstone in our mission to offer a Wesley education to talented young people without the means to attend. In 2023, we welcomed 70 scholarship and bursary recipients as they commenced their Wesley journey. The Howard Bantock Memorial Trust Bursary and the Reverend Barry Angus Scholarship will be awarded in 2024. Both awards recognise character, religious empathy, and a commitment to a Christian life.

Strategic Direction

Each year, under the direction of the Wesley College Council and Executive, a fresh strategic plan and priorities are established, demonstrating a response to a changing social, economic and educational landscape. At the centre of the strategic plan is our vision: More than a motto, *'By daring & by doing'* is our vision for inspiring students to be bold, seek personal excellence and serve others.

Formed in 2006, we are extremely proud of our **Moorditj Mob** students and the program it is today. The strength of the program and the community support was never more evident than at this year's *Moorditj By Moonlight* event. We had 2,000 visitors on Ward Oval and our boys stood tall and proud. Currently, we have 47 Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal students on campus in Junior, Middle and Senior Schools. They receive additional pastoral support and have Indigenous tutors and Elders who teach them about their culture, instilling a strong sense of belonging to the land. This is expressed through art, dance, and storytelling which the students are proud to share and ultimately benefits the whole community with increased understanding of indigenous culture.

The College remains committed to its Reconciliation Action Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan, and the Sustainability Action Plan.

Reconciliation Action Plan Wesley continues to make very real progress in furthering our commitment to reconciliation and our First Nations People. NAIDOC Week is an important date in the Wesley calendar – with our Moorditj Mob students at the forefront of celebrations, in collaboration with staff. Wesley staff and students are encouraged to write a personal Acknowledgement of Country – with the hope of gaining knowledge and understanding. This has been a highlight at meetings and assemblies, as staff and students share their personal acknowledgements.

Our Pre-kindergarten students begin class each morning with a simple Acknowledgement of Country. We have engaged a specialist teacher to teach Noongar as a second language in our Junior School and Wesley staff were also offered the opportunity of learning the Noongar Language.

Sustainability – sustainability garden, solar panels, recycling on campus, partnering with Containers for Change (2 bins) and Good Sammy's (2 bins).

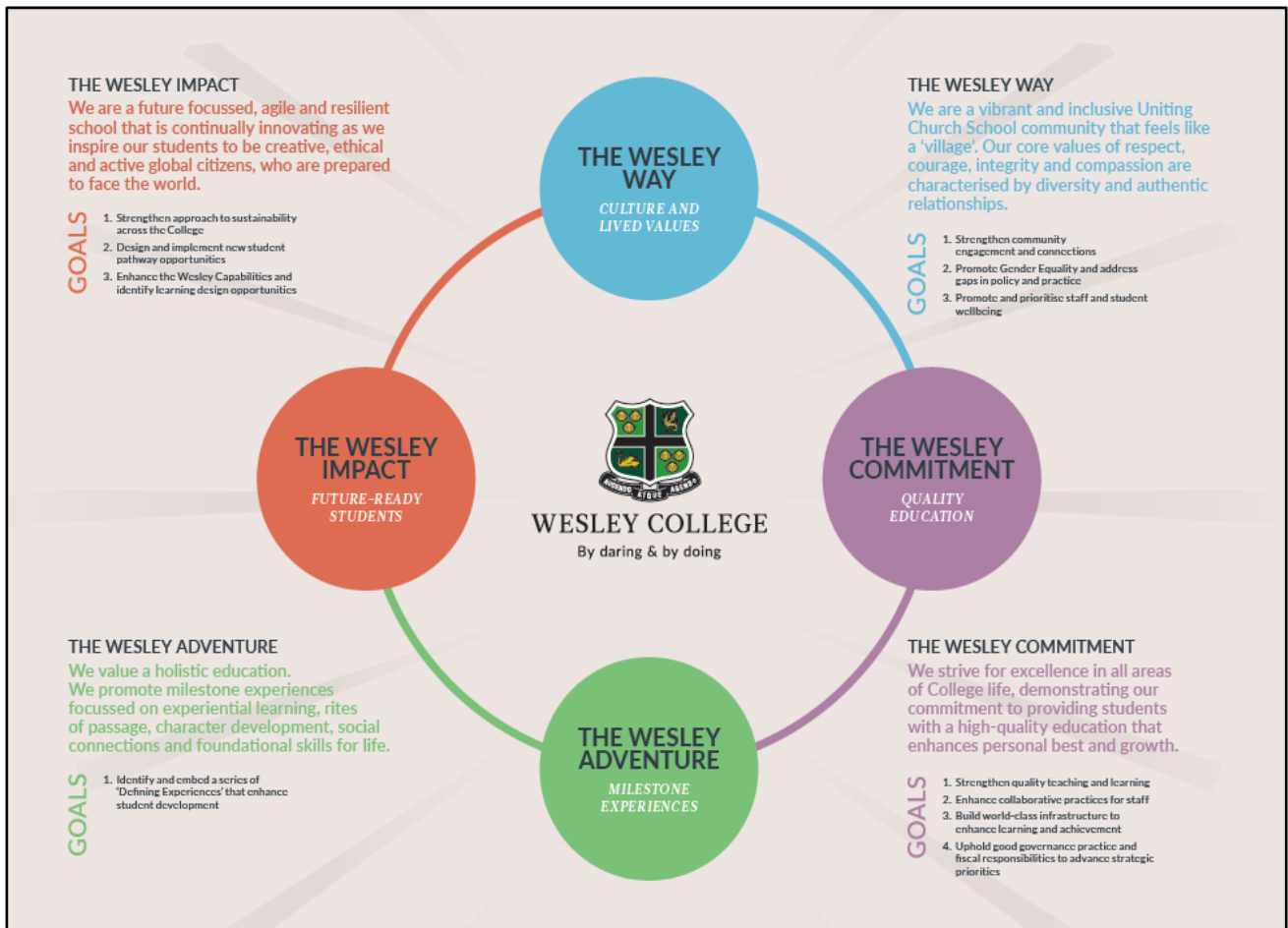
Our flagship **Year 8 Katitjin Program** has a focus on social justice issues in society and the development of personal leadership skills and confidence in challenging situations. The students engage in experiences whereby they have opportunities to hear directly from people most affected by homelessness, drug dependency, poverty, alcoholism and a wide range of community issues and situations, including Uniting WA's Tranby Day Centre.

A Photographic Exhibition is held to raise awareness of the social justice issues the students identify to raise money for the UnitingCare West support network. The culmination of the 10-week program sees the boys participating in an outback camp on Morapoi Station which is run by an indigenous community and the boys use the skill and understanding they have developed on the program alongside the indigenous community members.

I had the privilege of attending Morapoi Camp at the end of Term 1.

Our Year 6 students engage in a week's Katitjin experience to give our leaving girls the opportunity; and for one week in Year 9, our students revisit the learnings and principles acquired in Year 8.

The College continues to put the mental, physical, and emotional health of all community members at the forefront of decision-making and school culture.



Annual Report [2022 Annual Report](#)

Ross Barron, Head of Wesley College
 Email: rossbarron@wesley.wa.edu.au