

# the Spirit



Issue 25 | 2023

Introducing Our 2024 College Captains (p10)  
Siena in Siena Italy Immersion (p12)  
Spotlight on Siena Alumnae (p16)

Do More • Be More

A CATHOLIC COLLEGE FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION, YEARS 7 TO 12



## Mission

Siena College, a Catholic secondary school in the Dominican tradition, engages young women in a challenging education that empowers them with the personal resources to make a difference in the world, by searching for truth through a culture of lifelong learning.

## Vision

As a vibrant, faith filled Catholic community with a commitment to justice, truth, reconciliation and compassion, we honour the sacred dignity of each person.

We aspire to provide exemplary and innovative education that will challenge young women to achieve their personal best and to embrace the future with hope, courage and confidence.

In the spirit of St Catherine of Siena, by word and action, we encourage young women to identify their strengths, enhance their sense of self worth and be open to new ideas.

## Values

We live the Dominican values through:

**Prayer** by nurturing spirituality and celebrating joyfully as a community of Faith

**Study** by striving for personal excellence, thinking critically and seeking truth through research, creativity and innovation

**Justice** by empowering young women to embrace diversity, respect human dignity and actively engage in the gospel imperative of responding to local and global injustice

**Community** by recognising that a sense of belonging and connectedness is the foundation for fostering good relationships and service to others

## The Spirit

### Editorial Team

*Tracey Grobbelaar* Director of Development

*Amy Stubbs* Marketing Manager

*Christine Lai* Communications and Content Coordinator

### Photography

*David Collopy* Digital Media Coordinator



**SIENA**  
**COLLEGE**  
CAMBERWELL

A CATHOLIC COLLEGE FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION, YEARS 7 TO 12

**Tel:** +61 3 9835 0200

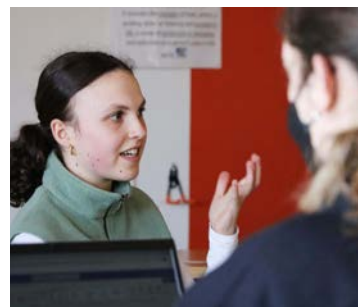
**Email:** [reception@siena.vic.edu.au](mailto:reception@siena.vic.edu.au)

815 Riversdale Road Camberwell 3124

**[www.siena.vic.edu.au](http://www.siena.vic.edu.au)**

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## We Acknowledge Country

Siena College acknowledges that our school community stands and meets on the sacred lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

While there has been great change to this land over the many generations, we know in our hearts and minds that their stories and spirits will always be written in this landscape.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we honour and respect the custodians past, present and emerging and we are grateful for the opportunity to join with them in continuing to nurture this land, water and community.

# From the Principal

Siena College reflects a commitment to education as a source of hope, fostering peace, justice, beauty and truth.

Rooted in a Catholic Dominican context, our philosophy draws inspiration from St Dominic, St Catherine and their model, Jesus Christ. In navigating the digitalised and globalised twenty-first century, emphasis is placed on the six big C skills: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, citizenship and character education. Post-pandemic, the need for connection, customisation and coherence has surfaced, advocating for an education that goes beyond workforce preparation.

Amidst this evolving educational landscape, several accomplishments at Siena College stand out in 2023:

- The Siena in Siena Italy Immersion provided a transformative experience for twenty-five students. It was an exploration of our Dominican roots intertwined with the rich tapestry of Italian arts and culture, and a journey of self discovery.
- We were pleased this year to see a number of very significant projects come to life: our Reconciliation Action Plan, FIRE Carriers Day and the successful production of *Chicago: High School Edition*. The initiatives aimed at cultivating belonging and connection across the four Houses found their most significant expression in the revamped Fiesta format. This dynamic shift saw a multitude of students actively involved, guided by student leaders and supported by the Heads of House.

- The Write a Book in a Day program, spearheaded by Head of Albertus Magnus Learning Centre, Roxanne Summer, facilitated literacy, creativity, collaboration and relational learning.
- Across learning disciplines, students engaged in numerous extension opportunities. We appreciate the various pathways offered to Siena students, including Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs, passion pathways alongside the regular curriculum, and engagement with Year 13 tutors for enhanced learning in Year 12. These offerings have earned us a spot among the Top 5 Catholic Schools in Melbourne.
- We were fortunate to celebrate St Dominic's Day, St Catherine's Day, and our opening and graduation masses as a whole school at St Dominic's parish.
- In our School Review and VRQA process this year, successful compliance across domains, and recognition as a school of best practice and continuous improvement affirmed Siena College's commitment to its mission. The Leadership Team and College Board were instrumental in this success.

Amidst these highlights, daily activities in classrooms – encounters, engagement, challenges and support thrive through robust teacher-student relationships, expert pedagogical practices and personalised attention to each student's growth. Facilitated by exceptional leaders at Faculty, House and Director

levels, all within a culture of teamwork and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

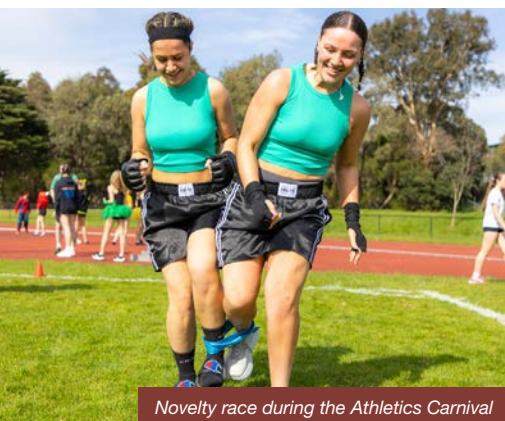
Pope Francis wrote that education should be about offering an education of hope, the flourishing of young people, the promotion of the cause of solidarity, humanity and an ethic of care. This is what we are about.

My gratitude extends to the College Leadership Team, the supportive College Board led by Chair Judith Potter, associated Board committees, and our College Chaplain, Fr Kevin Toomey OP. I also extend my appreciation to Dominican Education Australia, the local Dominican Sisters, teaching and support staff, parents, sponsors and our entire Siena community.

Special recognition is given to 2023 College Captains Hannah Rosel and Majella Hine, along with student leaders and the graduating cohort. The 2023 school year marks another chapter in Siena College's rich history of Dominican education. For this we give thanks and congratulate every student.



**Elizabeth Hanney**  
Principal



Novelty race during the Athletics Carnival



2023 College Captains, Majella and Hannah



Volunteer Study Program



St Dominic's Day



FIRE Carriers Day



Pasta making in Italy



# From the College Board Chair



The Siena community has continued to be a vibrant one in 2023 which is a credit to all staff, students, parents, carers and volunteers.

Siena is the beneficiary of countless hours of generous contributions by volunteer members of our community. The contribution of the Board Committees (see below), as always, has greatly supported the work of the Board who, in their turn, take their governance responsibilities and accountabilities very seriously. I express my appreciation to Board and Board Committee members, the Siena Parents' Association, the Alumnae Association and all volunteers for their generous gift of time, expertise, care and support of the Dominican Mission.

I commend and thank Elizabeth Hanney, the College Leadership Team and all staff for their unwavering commitment and dedication focused on ensuring our students enjoy an optimal education in the Dominican Tradition. The opportunities I have

had to join the full College community on special occasions have given witness to the vitality of our students and their wholehearted engagement in the life of the College.

The College farewells two dedicated Board members at the conclusion of the school year. The generosity and commitment of Sr Judith Lawson OP and Mr George Sfetsos is evident from their extensive service. The Board has been blessed to gain from Sr Judith's insights on education and her guidance on formation in the Dominican Mission, enhancing our understanding of the Dominican story and mission. George has been an exemplary contributor to the Finance and Strategic Property Committees and the Board, serving as Chair of the Strategic Property Committee. He has made a significant contribution to financial planning, and the formulation and implementation of the Master Plan. I wish every member of the Siena community a blessed and joyous Christmas and safe travel over the holiday period.

**Board:** Judith Potter (Chair), Vanessa Barcellona (Deputy Chair from June 2022), Damian Giannangelo, Philip Grant, Michael Kral, Sr Judith Lawson OP, Laura McRae, George Sfetsos, Elizabeth Hanney (Principal; ex-officio) and Tony Grant (Director of Business Services; ex-officio). Minutes Secretary: Cathy Barry.

**Finance Committee:** Damian Giannangelo (Chair), Ross Di Stefano, Sebastian Gadaleta (from July), Austin Whiting, Elizabeth Hanney, Tony Grant, Tracey Grobbelaar, Jennifer Levett and Laurie Federico.

**Policy Committee:** Philip Grant (Chair, Semester 2), Laura McRae (Chair Semester 1), Bridget Goodear, Rhys Barker, Andrew Parnell, Elizabeth Hanney, Antonella Rosati, Dr Anthony Vadala and Sarah Egan.

**Risk Committee:** Michael Kral (Chair), Jane Edwards, Kathryn Levi, David Hawkins, Nicola Quin, Elizabeth Hanney, Tony Grant, Larissa Banks and Donna Laughlin.

**Strategic Property Committee Members:** George Sfetsos (Chair), Tamara Brezzi, Stuart McGurn, Steve Necoski, Shamal Wijesiri, Elizabeth Hanney, Tony Grant, Tracey Grobbelaar.



**Judith Potter**  
Siena College Board Chair



# Dominican News



Women leaders meet politicians in Canberra



Meeting with Senator Maria Kovacic (Sr Trish Madigan on extreme right)

In August 2023, Dominican Sister, Trish Madigan joined a group of Christian women in Canberra as part of the Micah Women Leaders (MWL) Delegation to Parliament House.

This network brings together women Christian leaders across the Australian Church to engage with federal politicians warmly and relationally, leading to significant outcomes on key issues of global justice. Forty-five women from twelve Church denominations met with forty-three politicians from the major parties

(Australian Greens, Australian Labor Party, the Coalition and the Independents).

The group met with politicians to discuss the role Australia can play globally in helping to create a safer world for all – helping to end extreme poverty, fight climate change, reduce inequality, and to lift its aid budget and leadership in the Pacific. All received a positive and productive response from politicians. These discussions were particularly timely as they coincided with the release of the government’s new International Development Policy.

Sr Trish passed on papers prepared by Sr Tabiria Tabeau OP on the experience of the Solomon Islands to each politician.

The Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Mr Pat Conroy, also addressed the group, asking Church leaders to play a role in their communities to address the moral need for an increase in Australia’s aid budget. The group responded, stressing the collective desire of women leaders across the Church, civil society, and business for strong and effective government action on behalf of the world’s most vulnerable.



Sisters in this year’s Pastoral Ministry Diploma Course

## Diploma Course for Solomon Sisters

Catherine McAuley Services Ltd, a subsidiary of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, has been providing pastoral ministry programs for religious women since 2015. In collaboration with Divine Word University since 2016, the organisation has extended its commitment. Currently, twelve of our Dominican Sisters in the Solomon Islands are actively enrolled in the undergraduate program.



Sr Julianna Drobik OP  
DEA Trustee

# Now Available! Siena Central App

College news, notifications, absences and your daughter’s learning overview at your fingertips.

Download ‘Siena Central’ via the App Store or GooglePlay





# Mission and Identity

Our 2023 College Theme, *Pay Attention. Be Astonished. Tell About It.* has been lived out by Siena staff and students this year. As Dominicans, we always need to see the 'big' picture – in this case, the global picture of our Catholic Christian tradition. Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP says *"it is imperative we do this in order to keep our charism recognisable, credible and meaningful for our people."* In 2023, who are 'our people'? Our Siena students, families, staff and community. Across this year, our people have lived the theme authentically in many ways:

**Paying attention** to our world: classroom learning has been enhanced and extended by social justice initiatives including supporting our Dominican Sisters locally and in the Solomon Islands, the Kopanang Community in South Africa, Vinnies and Caritas Australia. As their parting gift to the College, the Class of 2023 made a generous donation to Kopanang families to provide school uniforms.

**Being astonished** by the signs and symbols around us: wellness sessions have highlighted our ability to be both grateful and outward looking, with cocurricular offerings drawing us into moments of achievement and celebration. Our College's natural surroundings have continued to provide us with spaces for reflection and conversation.

**Telling about it:** the Year 12 Retreat, Dominican Days and Staff Formation Sessions have seen the continuation of our story, in the context of listening to the voices of those on the margins. In VCE Religion and Society, Year 10 students engaged with Jewish Christian Muslim Association (JCMA) speakers, while Year 11 students entered into dialogue with Siena staff members in a Religion and Ethics panel.



Year 12 Final Assembly



Year 12 Retreat



Religion and Ethics Panel



JCMA Panel



St Catherine's Day Bake Sale

## St Catherine's Day and St Dominic's Day

When we acknowledge and model the ways of these significant saints in our everyday learnings and interactions, we are embracing and most importantly, continuing their legacy. When we mark their respective Feast Days with special Eucharistic celebrations, we gather as a community of faith to voice prayers and participate in rituals that have continued across time and space to where we are now. St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena are very much alive in us today!



**Jennifer Levett**  
Deputy Principal  
Mission and Identity



# Learning and Teaching

2023 Book Week saw students from Siena College and Hartwell Primary School participating in the Write a Book in a Day (WABIAD) program.

Thirty students from Years 7 to 10 worked in pairs as authors or illustrators, handling all aspects of book creation – from storyboarding and planning to creation and product delivery.

## Initial Planning

The process began with a collaboration session with students from Hartwell Primary School, involving sharing picture books to determine target audience preferences and completing initial storyboarding.

## Creation

On day two, held onsite at Siena College during Book Week, students created their books and participated in workshops led by our teachers. Demonstrations of the technical specifications required for printing were also included. Sessions included:

- **Insights Into the Mind of a Grade 4 Student**  
By Psychology Teacher, Devorah Waysman
- **An Exploration of Cover Art and Typography**  
By Head of The Arts and Technology, Claire Al-Noah
- **Deciding What to ‘Show’ and What to ‘Tell’**  
By Head of English, Punita Mistry

In Term 4, the stories were completed in preparation for printing. With the purchase of International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs), the books were officially published, and a copy of each will be contributed to the State Library of Victoria, becoming part of the literary history of Victoria.

## Product Delivery

The final stage involved Siena students rejoining their Grade 4 junior collaborators and presenting Hartwell Primary School with a finished copy of their books. Students were thrilled to see their names on the dedication page. Books from the project now proudly sit in the lending collections of both Siena College and Hartwell Primary School, or can be purchased online: [bit.ly/3NtIR04](http://bit.ly/3NtIR04)

## Student Reflections

*“The program was really enjoyable, especially collaborating with our group and turning our ideas into reality. Seeing the primary school students being super enthusiastic with the creation of the story made the work super fun. The children took us on a tour of their school and playing with them in the playground reminded us of our own primary school days. When we saw our story for the first time as a real hardcover book, we felt extremely proud. We feel privileged to have had the experience – it is not every day you get to publish a book! I encourage my friends to participate in WABIAD next year.”* Lucy and Kiara (Year 8)

Thank you to our Head of Albertus Magnus Learning Centre, Roxanne Summer, for her initiative and facilitation of this program. We hope that more students can join us next year.



Sneak peak of finished product before presenting to Hartwell Grade 4s



**Donna Laughlin**  
Deputy Principal  
Learning and Teaching



Initial Planning



Creation



Product Delivery



## 2023 Book Week



Writing workshop with Kirsty Murray





# Antonio de Montesinos Award

In Term 3, Siena College conducted the annual Antonio de Montesinos Public Speaking Award, where talented speakers across year levels competed for the highly regarded title.

The award is named after prominent sixteenth century Dominican, Antonio de Montesinos who, with the backing of his Prior, Friar Pedro de Córdoba at Santo Domingo, bravely preached against the enslavement and harsh treatment of the Indigenous peoples on the island of Hispaniola (modern Haiti and Dominican Republic).

The participants first qualified as their year level public speaking champion before competing in front of a live audience of friends, family and staff. Each student presented a four to five minute prepared speech based on the 2023 College Theme, *Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.* They were then required to present a two to three minute impromptu speech on an unseen topic displaying their skills of logic and reason.

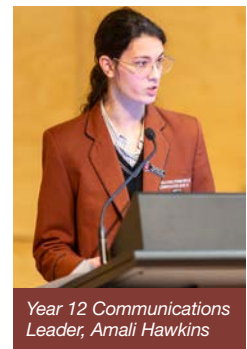
Congratulations to winner, Ciara Whitehouse (Year 9) and Encouragement Award recipient, Gabriella van Delden (Year 8). Well done to all other competitors: Sophia Velasquez (Year 12), Charlotte Lang (Year 11), Priya Simons (Year 10) and Shehrbano Jafari (Year 7), for showcasing their excellent public speaking skills!



2023 Antonio de Montesinos participants



**Emily Black**  
Public Speaking  
Coordinator



Year 12 Communications  
Leader, Amali Hawkins

# 2023 VCE Arts and Technology Exhibition

The VCE Visual Arts and Technology Exhibition took place on Friday, 13 October. We were delighted to welcome Siena alumna, Judy Horacek (Class of 1979) to open the exhibition.

Judy is a renowned cartoonist, illustrator, and artist, known for her work in major publications and children's books like *Where is the Green Sheep?* Judy shared with the audience her artistic journey, emphasised the joy of drawing and discussed the challenges and rewards of her craft. Congratulations to all Year 12 Arts and Technology students on their achievements and we wish them success in their future endeavors.

The People's Choice Award winners for this year were Amelie Giamo (Visual Communication Design), Eva Castaldi (Art Creative Practice), Amber Wadia (Media) and Kaitlyn Patterson (Product Design and Technology). The Principal's Award went to Carla Morel for her artwork entitled *Moments*.



**Judy Horacek**  
(Class of 1979)



**Claire Al-Noah**  
Head of the Arts  
and Technology



**Amelie Giamo**



**Carla Morel**



**Eva Castaldi**



**Amber Wadia**



**Kaitlyn Patterson**







Athletics Carnival





# Wellbeing for Learning



**Antonella Rosati**  
Deputy Principal  
Wellbeing and  
Strategy



**Natalie Kinsella**  
Director of  
Students

Our 2023 College Theme informed the ways we came together as a community to celebrate and acknowledge our students.

With a priority on student voice and agency, we remain dedicated to providing avenues for our students to share ideas about their College and to see these translated into action. The Respectful Relationships Student Team collaborated to identify some of the significant issues facing young people today. These ideas were worked into the Wellness Program and inspired our Body Confident Children and Teens Webinar in October, which was hosted by the Butterfly Foundation for Siena parents and the wider community. The session promoted practical information and tips on positive body image in the home throughout childhood and adolescence.

Dr Jessica Wong joined the Counseling Team in 2023, working alongside dedicated professionals, Lisa Ellis and Gemma Morley. Together, they have consistently supported students and families in navigating wellbeing challenges through evidence based strategies and personalised care. The Counseling Hub also warmly welcomed two exceptional Therapy Dogs, Coco and Rooley, who have played a vital role in providing support and care to our students. Coco and Rooley have been wholeheartedly embraced by the Siena community.

Child Safety remains a fundamental element of all our work with students. Heads of House, Stephanie Vangelista and Sophie Pryn (Cassia), Becky Scott (Dianella), Laine Rice (Kurrajong) and Lauren Seymour (Waratah) supported students by creating opportunities for connection through significant College events and various House activities. In their daily interactions with students, they have lived the Dominican values and led by example.

Wellness Week took place in Term 3 and included the following activities: Highfield Park Nature Walk, Mindful Craft, Meditation Yoga, Circle Time with Therapy Dogs and a friendly staff versus students dodgeball competition. It was a fantastic time of building connections and friendships while promoting self care and growth mindsets.



L-R: Laine Rice, Becky Scott, Sophie Pryn and Lauren Seymour



L-R: Lisa Ellis, Gemma Morley and Jessica Wong



*Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.*

College Captains, Majella Hine and Hannah Rosel, were exemplary leaders who have set the bar high for those who follow. The enthusiasm demonstrated by the Class of 2023 was contagious, as we saw some of the highest participation rates in the annual Fiesta and House Carnivals. They were inspirational 'big sisters' to their Year 7 'little sisters' and strong role models within our Siena community. We thank them for their wonderful display of the 2023 College Theme and we wish them well as they embark on the next chapter of their lives.



# It's All About Perspective

*"Empathy is a quality of character that can change the world."*  
Barack Obama

In 2023, Siena College aimed to cultivate empathy among our students by creating experiences of encounter, engagement and opportunities for reflection.

During Horizons Week, Year 9 students from Siena College and Xavier College participated in a combined City Social Justice Experience titled 'Naarm through a Different Lens'. Workshops by The Big Issue and Jesuit Social Services; city walks, exploration of Birrarung Maar, and visits to the Ecological Justice Hub and the CERES Community Environment Park allowed our students to view the city from alternative perspectives and to understand diverse lived experiences. Students then transitioned from the city to Xavier College, where they worked in groups to create social enterprise models addressing issues they had encountered. This pilot initiative empowered students to see themselves as potential solutions to global challenges.

On Wednesday, 26 July, the Siena College community gathered together for the Vinnies Australia Rug Up Day Fundraiser and reinforced our Dominican commitment to social justice, in conjunction with Wellbeing Week. It offered another opportunity for students to build empathy and appreciate everyday comforts. On a cold winter day, students were allowed to wear layers of warm clothing as classroom heating remained off. The initiative aimed to recognise the impact of rising living costs on families unable to afford heating, financially support Vinnies through student donations and reduce environmental impact by limiting electricity use. The students embraced the day with good spirits, recognising that small acts can make a significant difference in our world.



**Bronwyn Ilott**  
Head of Justice Education



# Student Formation

Working with student leaders is a privilege, offering insight into the concerns and interests of young people. Witnessing the power of teamwork, shared ideas, and a commitment to set and achieve goals is truly inspiring.

A vital part of student leadership at Siena is exemplifying the Dominican Pillar of Service. An example is the combined sale of baked goods in 2023, raising \$3,387.92 among the four Houses. The funds supported Caritas Australia (Project Compassion), Afghan Women's Organisation Victoria, Vinnies and Opening the Doors Foundation. In 2024, the four Houses will align with:

- Cassia:** Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project
- Dianella:** Vinnies
- Kurrajong:** Opening the Doors Foundation
- Waratah:** Caritas Australia

Throughout the year, student leaders will raise awareness and foster connections between students in their Houses and the chosen organisation. Through guest speakers and fundraising activities, students will unite within the Siena community and collaborate with another community on an ongoing basis.

## Student Leadership Day

In 2023, we revamped our Student Leadership schedule, transitioning from a calendar year to a Term 4 turnover

for incoming leaders. This adjustment enables early planning for 2024 and fosters collaboration among leaders. The Student Leadership Day featured an impressive navigation of responsibilities by the student leaders in a packed and positive agenda.

*"It was great to bounce ideas off team members to ensure we are ready for Term 1 2024. A highlight of the day for me was coming together for a lunch in the courtyard with other leaders from my House, it was a lovely opportunity for team bonding and a break from planning."*  
Charlotte (Year 11)

*"Being in a leadership community makes me think of how capable I am to do things in a different way."*  
Claire (Year 7)

*"It was an amazing opportunity to celebrate and recognise what it means to be a leader at Siena, and to set the tone for an exciting 2024!"*  
Tia (Year 10)



**Peta Mackintosh**  
Head of Student Formation





# Introducing Our 2024 College Captains

Tell us a little bit about your family and how you came to Siena.



**Melania:** In 2018, my family relocated from Woodend so that my sister and I could attend an all girls school. My parents chose Siena College for its vibrant community and opportunities. They believed Siena's positive environment and genuine care for students would provide a comfortable space for us to thrive.



**Amy:** I live in Park Orchards with my parents and two brothers. When my brother was entering high school, we explored various schools, including co-ed options. Despite initial uncertainty about Siena College due to proximity from home, my parents were won over during the Open Morning, attracted by the authentic and welcoming community. They were impressed by the rapport between students and staff, and Siena's commitment to social justice.

## What do you love most about Siena?



**Melania:** Siena has brought me immense joy and support throughout my time here. The school's vibrant community, marked by College events tailored to diverse interests, exudes happiness from students, staff and the wider community. Cassia House feels like a second family, filled with endless friendships, stories and laughter. I am grateful for the College's influence in shaping me as an individual with the skills to thrive beyond the Siena gates.



**Amy:** I have discovered much to love during my time here because the Siena community is truly special. Whether through supportive teachers, GSV Sport, impactful immersions, or my House, Cassia, I feel a strong sense of belonging. I have been provided countless opportunities for personal growth, making my Siena experience truly enriching.



L-R: Melania Flunt and Amy Duffy

## Can you describe your leadership style?



**Melania:** My aim is to continually strengthen the Siena community through College events. As a member of the Student Representative Council (SRC) in Year 10, I initiated fundraising for Caritas Ukraine. I encourage my peers to reach out to the SRC and share their passions about social justice issues. Together as a College, we can extend our care and love to other communities.



**Amy:** My approach is to make every 'little moment' count, recognising that small actions can lead to significant changes for individuals within our Siena community and those beyond. I aim to inspire others to share the love of our community with others in the coming year.

## What are you most looking forward to in your final year at Siena?



**Melania:** I am most looking forward to spending this year with my year level, where our strong bond has helped us through the many highs and lows of school life. I am looking forward to dressing up for House Carnivals and dancing our hearts out at Fiesta. I look forward to welcoming the Year 7s and spending time with my 'little sister'. It feels surreal that I am the 'big sister' now and I am eager to create lasting memories with my 'little sister'.



**Amy:** I look forward to helping my year level create a welcoming and fun environment, and encouraging everyone to enjoy the 'little moments.' This includes enjoying the Year 12 common room, dressing up for House Carnivals in full spirit, and coming together to reflect during the Year 12 Retreat.

## Have you given much thought about tertiary studies?



**Melania:** I would love to pursue a course in engineering or science. If I choose engineering, my goal is to study at The University of Melbourne to become a chemical engineer. However, I am also open to pursuing a career in pharmaceuticals and molecular biology.



**Amy:** My passion is helping people. Currently, I am considering applying for Health Services (Disability Studies and Advocacy) at Deakin University. A dream of mine is to work in policy and contribute to the National Disability Insurance Scheme to assist Australians living with disabilities in building the best lives for themselves.

## What is one invaluable thing that Siena College has taught you?



**Melania:** The importance of collaboration, whether within a small group, the entire year level or the broader Siena community. We recognise our collective strength as a team. Additionally, understanding the importance of cultivating relationships and the skill to interact effectively with diverse stakeholders has been a valuable lesson. Siena has ingrained in me the imperative of consistently caring for everyone, underscoring kindness and prioritising others as a fundamental principle.



**Amy:** The ability to look beyond myself, no matter where I am or who I am with. Siena has shaped me into someone who looks towards those on the periphery, always trying to bring them in with me. Doing the little things and showing compassion to everyone can make a world of difference in the lives of others.



We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our 2023 College Captains, Majella Hine and Hannah Rosel, for their extraordinary contributions. To the Class of 2023, we wish you all the best as you embark on your bright and promising futures.







# Farewell, Class of 2023



Year 12 Breakfast with Laura McRae (Class of 2001)



Congratulations to House of the Year, Dianella!





# 2023 Siena Golf Day



Our eighth Siena Golf Day took place on Friday, 3 November. Golf Day is a key fundraiser for the Equity Scholarship Fund.

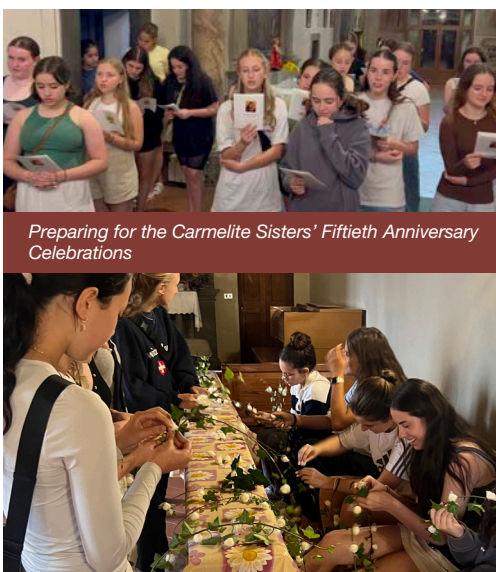
The day was a success with thirteen Gold sponsors and eighty participants. Congratulations to the winning team, Fontic (Matt Robertson, Alex Daikin, Sam Jamieson and Adam Wulf). Thanks to our sponsors for supporting Siena. To contribute or recommend someone for an Equity Scholarship, visit the College website.



**Tracey Grobbelaar**  
Director of Development and Community Relations



Pasta making class with local chef



Preparing for the Carmelite Sisters' Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations



First dinner in Italy at Leonardo's restaurant

## Siena in Siena Italy Immersion

In October, twenty-five Year 9 Italian and Music students participated in the Siena in Siena Immersion in Italy.

The Immersion provided our students with a unique opportunity to delve into Italian history, culture, art and cuisine, while enhancing their language skills and intercultural competence. All of this was set against the backdrop of the Carmelite Sisters' Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations in Italy!

During the trip, staff and students attended the Synod Mass at the Vatican, celebrated by Pope Francis in honour of San Francesco D'Assisi. We extend our gratitude to Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Ms Chiara Porro for making this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity possible. In Rome, students explored the renowned Dominican Church, Santa Sabina and other historical sites. A heartfelt thanks to Dominican Sister Margaret Mayce OP for providing a comprehensive summary of our Dominican story.

In Tavarnelle, our students were warmly welcomed by the local community, receiving roses to honour St Thérèse of Lisieux (the 'Little Flower'). They also engaged with the local school, IC Barberino Tavarnelle. Throughout the journey, students captured symbols and images representing the connections between Siena College and the Dominican and Carmelite Traditions, creating meaningful mementos of their time in Morrocco. This immersive experience has nurtured cultural connections and deepened understanding of history and spirituality.





Attending the Synod Mass celebrated by Pope Francis at the Vatican and spending time with Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Ms Chiara Porro



Exploring world renowned Dominican Church, Santa Sabina with Sr Margaret Mayce OP and historical sites in Italy



Creating meaningful mementos demonstrating the Carmelite and Dominican ties



Carmelite Sisters' Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations



Spending time and attending Mass with the Tavarnelle community, including the local school, IC Barberino





# Spotlight on Siena Staff

Spotlight on Siena Staff is an ongoing series capturing reflections, motivations and advice from some of our amazing Siena College staff – a testament to their unwavering dedication and unique contributions that shape and enrich our community.



**Maree Hodgson**  
Career Practitioner and Teacher  
Nineteen years at Siena College

**How did you get involved in teaching/working as an educator?**

*"I believe my interest in teaching began in Grade 5. My favourite part of the school week was visiting the*

*Prep classroom to assist with their reading. This interest evolved through sports coaching and school leadership roles. I eventually completed a double Bachelor's Degree, combining my interests in Health, Physical Education, Psychology and Teaching. I have not looked back since!"*

**What motivates you in your line of work?**

*"I am motivated by the energy and commitment from my colleagues and students. I am constantly inspired by the work that my colleagues do; and by the achievements and aspirations of the students that I work with."*



**Roxanne Summer**  
Head of Albertus Magnus Learning Centre

Two years at Siena College, twenty years in the education sector

**How has teaching/working in a Catholic single sex school influenced your own faith journey?**

*"Even though I am of a different faith, I am constantly drawing similarities between the Catholic faith and my own faith during my time here at Siena. Being in a faith based school allows me to be part of a community and be surrounded by a culture of kindness."*

**Outline initiative and programs you have established at Siena College.**

*"Growing the area of digital fabrication (3D printing and laser cutting etc.) and introducing a new Year 10 STEAM curriculum."*



**Michael Petrie**  
Head of Senior Pathways  
Seven years at Siena College

**What appeals to you most about teaching/working in a Catholic school?**

*"Catholic schools unashamedly seek to nourish the whole person based on*

*gospel values. We are known for its pursuit of a 'Love One Another' attitude, infused with a Dominican flavour. Working in such an empowering atmosphere is truly fulfilling."*

**Who were your favourite teachers growing up?**

*"I was fortunate to experience the unwavering love and support from countless dedicated Brothers during my secondary school years and Nuns during my primary school years. Their genuine passion for their work, and their devotion to children and the community left a lasting impression on me. I aspired to be like the them."*



**Laine Rice**  
Kurrajong Head of House  
Nine years at Siena College

**What do you love most about teaching/working as an educator?**

*"There are numerous aspects I find gratifying about being an educator, which contribute to making my role as*

*a teacher and Head of House exceptionally fulfilling. I take great pleasure in collaborating closely with young individuals, guiding them along their journey towards accomplishing their objectives amidst the challenges and pressures that secondary school life entails. Witnessing students' progress towards favourable learning and wellbeing outcomes, and being able to provide support brings me immense satisfaction. Cultivating positive relationships with my students is another facet of the job that I truly cherish, as it adds a unique and rewarding dimension to my work."*



**Sonia Singh**  
Leader of Data Informed Practice  
Four years at Siena College

**What do you love most about teaching/working as an educator?**

*"When you enter the classroom in the morning you have no idea what the day will bring. Teaching keeps me*

*engaged at all times. The potential of each child is vast, and I thoroughly enjoy being involved in their secondary school journey. Witnessing the 'click' – that lightbulb moment a student experiences is priceless!"*

**What advice would you give to your younger self starting out in the system?**

*"My four-year teaching experience has led me to embrace the moments where I might 'fail forward'. I would tell my younger self that we as teachers also need to embrace failure which leads to growth, new ideas and success."*



**Minna Jewell**  
Acting Deputy Principal Wellbeing and Strategy  
Ten years at Siena College

**How do you feel about the future of young people today?**

*"Excited! Being young is all about*

*facing challenges and creating spaces for development. They have faced some big global challenges – the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change – young people have been strong agents of change and progress. They have platforms to allow them to be positive influences on their generations, and the ones to follow."*

**Where did you study / have you completed any further study since your Bachelor's degree?**

*"I have a double Bachelor's Degree (Science and Education) from Deakin University and a Master's Degree in Education (Student Wellbeing) from Australian Catholic University."*





# 2023 Community Awards

We congratulate the following community members who were acknowledged at our Night of Excellence on Thursday, 7 December 2023.

The Community Award recognises individuals or families who contributed significantly to Siena College.

The Dr Ursula McKenna Award recognises excellence in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

The Notable Alumna Award recognises a Siena alumna who has made an important contribution in their chosen field, or to the community on a local/global scale.



Community Award Recipients: Tania and Frank Ciampa



Dr Ursula McKenna Award Recipient: Dr Emily Duane (Class of 1998)



Notable Alumna Award Recipient: Sophie Jordan (Class of 1992)



## 2023 Night of Excellence



Visit our College website to learn more: [siena.vic.edu.au/news/2023-night-of-excellence](https://siena.vic.edu.au/news/2023-night-of-excellence)





# Spotlight on Siena Alumnae

Spotlight on Siena Alumnae celebrates the achievements of our alumnae throughout the year, showcasing their remarkable accomplishments and varied career paths. Some of those featured also generously dedicate their time to engage with current students and their parents during our annual Careers Showcase.



**Ella Gurry, pictured right (Class of 2020)**  
Bronze Medallist, FISAF International World Championship

During October 2023, Ella earned a well deserved third place at the FISAF International World Championships in Ghent, Belgium. With sixteen years of experience cultivated since primary school and nurtured at Siena College, aerobics holds deep significance to Ella. The journey to this competitive level has been both challenging and rewarding, demanding sacrifices and unwavering dedication. Congratulations to Ella for brilliantly representing Siena College and Australia with grace, determination and excellence. Ella is currently the Head of the Aerobics Squad at Siena.



**Natalie Keane (Class of 2022)**  
Scholarship Recipient, Cameron University

Natalie secured a Basketball and Academic Scholarship at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma, where she majors in Psychology and minors in Criminal Justice. Representing the Aggies, clad in black and gold, they compete in the Lone Star Conference against universities in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas and Colorado. Playing basketball since age five, Natalie has participated in various domestic and representative tournaments, including the Big V Youth League. Her journey exemplifies a dedication to both academic and athletic pursuits, making her a source of inspiration within the Siena community.



**Abbey Harford (Class of 2022)**  
Data Science Student, Monash University

Abbey embraced the Royal Australian Navy Gap Year Program and found herself falling in love with the Navy lifestyle and the camaraderie among its people. The Navy offered a unique blend of experiences – traversing the country, engaging in firefighting and flood relief efforts, acquiring engine repair skills, and spotting dolphins – all within a single day. Currently, the Australian Navy has a twenty-three percent female representation, signifying promising prospects for women in defense. Although Abbey plans to pursue Data Science at Monash University, a potential Navy career remains under consideration.



**Carmel O'Brien OAM FAPS (Class of 1969)**  
Counselling Psychologist, Psychrespect

*"Do not underestimate yourself. Be generous to others with your knowledge and support. Take the serious things seriously and have fun with the rest."*



**Mia Catalano (Class of 2018)**  
Strategic Communications Graduate, Level Crossing Removal Project

*"Choose a broad degree or even a double degree to allow for many more options if you are still unsure of what you want to do."*



**Jane Edwards (Class of 1992)**  
Executive Manager, nbn® (Fraud Management and Investigations)

*"There is absolutely no need to pressure yourself to 'have it all figured out' straight out of school."*



**Anna McFarland (Class of 1993)**  
Assistant Director, National Disability Insurance Agency

*"Do something you enjoy not what you think others expect. Live for yourself."*



**Stephanie McKenzie (Class of 2011)**  
Human Resource Business Partner, K&L Gates

*"You can have a degree to your name, however practical experience is what will take you places."*



**A/Prof Laura Scardamaglia FACD (Class of 1988)**  
Consultant Dermatologist and Clinical Associate Professor, The University of Melbourne

*"Try everything, do not worry about not getting right the first time. Believe in yourself and have fun."*



**Michele Timms OAM (Class of 1982)**  
Professional Basketball Coach, Michele Timms Basketball Academy

*"YOU CAN ONLY DO YOUR BEST!!! That is all you can be expected by anyone and yourself to do."*



**Ellen Welsh (Class of 2012)**  
Digital Operations Coordinator and Project Manager, The Bouverie Centre

*"Follow your passions and do not be afraid to try something new, you never know where it might lead you."*



**Prof Michelle Welsh (Class of 1983)**  
Corporate Law Professor and Senior Deputy Dean, Monash Business School

*"Worry less about being shy because leaders come in different shapes and sizes."*



# Alumnae News

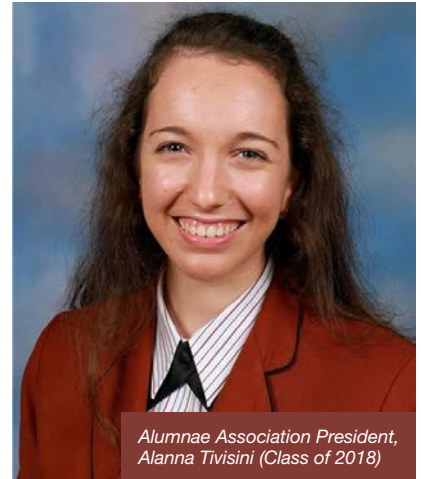
## Decade Reunions

We hosted two wonderful Decade Reunions for the Classes of 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003 and 2013 in October 2023. Numerous comments were made on the changes to the College since *"their time here"* and many conversations began with *"Do you remember..."* referring to classrooms, favourite teachers and countless memories made with friends.

Friendships were renewed and genuine interest was shown to each other while learning about the varied paths taken by each individual. We now eagerly look forward to our 2024 reunions!

## Alumnae Association

The Annual General Meeting saw the election of new President, Alanna Tivisini (Class of 2018). Dr Lisa Higgins (Class of 1993) transitioned to the position of Vice President, embodying a seamless blend of experience and fresh perspectives. Siena College would like to thank outgoing Executive and committee members for their work over the past year in promoting the Alumnae Association, and their ongoing support of the Siena College Development Team and all members of the Siena community. In 2024, we eagerly anticipate fostering the continual growth and support of our vibrant alumnae community.



Alumnae Association President, Alanna Tivisini (Class of 2018)



Class of 1983



Class of 2003



Class of 1973 (College Board Chair, Judith Potter, extreme right)



Class of 1993



Class of 2013



Class of 2013



Class of 2013



Class of 1983



Class of 1993



Class of 1983 with former staff member, Carolyn Scriven



Class of 2013



# 2023 Notable Alumna



Sophie presenting her keynote speech at the 2023 Night of Excellence

*'I could explore opportunities at Siena that made me excited about my future and helped me develop skills that I use every day.'*

A Bachelor of Planning and Design (Hons) and a career in urban planning was not exactly what Sophie Jordan (Class of 1992) had planned. *'Missing out on a university place to study architecture was very difficult. It was everything I had focused on during school. However, it led me to something I was more suited for – town planning.'*

Sophie applied her town planning skills to local government for five years and then the private sector for another ten before starting her own consulting business. Today, she is a director and owner of Contour Town Planning. Her career has always focused on inner-urban development, and more recently on specialised residential accommodation such as aged care, social and student housing. *'Knowing that I played a role in a development that was of genuine benefit to those who struggle to access the right housing for their age, income or physical health is what inspires me to move on to the next project.'*

At Siena, Sophie developed a strong connection to community, and understood that she could contribute professionally and personally. She says, *'This understanding remains a guiding principle in all aspects of my life.'*

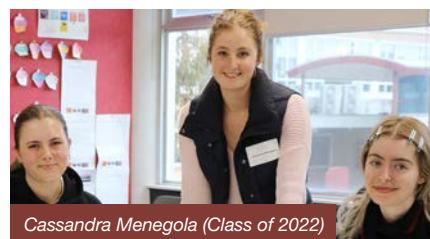
## Siena Alumnae Give Back

In October, a group of remarkable Siena alumnae generously devoted their time and expertise to our Year 12 study groups.

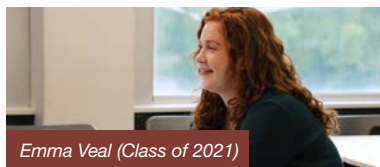
They assisted students in their VCE exam preparation by sharing invaluable study and motivational tips. A heartfelt thank you to our alumnae for providing guidance and sharing their wealth of knowledge with the Class of 2023. What a marvellous initiative to connect the past, present and future – a supportive network and additional study tool for our graduating cohort.



Helya Ezadi (Class of 2022)



Cassandra Menegola (Class of 2022)



Emma Veal (Class of 2021)



Elena Cruz (Class of 2020)



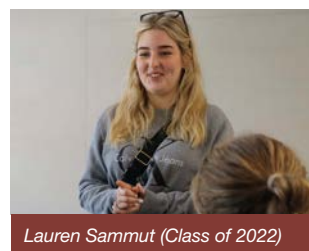
Alicia Molè (Class of 2022)



2021 Proxime Accessit, Hayley Di Stefano



Paris Poon (Class of 2020)



Lauren Sammut (Class of 2022)



## Save the Date

Class of 2022 One Year Reunion  
Wednesday, 8 May | 5.30pm to 7.00pm

1940s, 50s and 60s Reunion  
Saturday, 26 October 2024 | 2.30pm to 4.00pm

Decade Reunions  
**Class of 1974, Class of 1984 and Class of 1994**  
**Class of 2004 and Class of 2024**  
Saturday, 26 October 2024 | 5.30pm to 7.00pm

Further details will be made available on the College website in 2024.

If you would like help organising an offsite reunion whilst you wait to celebrate your cohort's milestone Decade Reunion, please contact the Alumnae Office at [alumnae@siena.vic.edu.au](mailto:alumnae@siena.vic.edu.au). Our Alumnae Coordinator would love to help you with venue ideas and invitation mailouts.





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the Siena Alumnae app

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## Introducing the Siena Alumnae App

Now you can effortlessly catch up on Alumnae news, dive into Facebook posts, stay updated on school happenings and explore handy links – all at lightning speed!

Head to the App Store, search for 'Siena Alumnae' and hit that download button. Let's stay connected like never before: [siena-alumnae.app.link](https://siena-alumnae.app.link)

## Alumnae Wall Inscriptions for 2023/24



The Alumnae Wall located in the Convent and Cloisters is an historic tribute to our Dominican Sisters, Prioresses, Board Chairs and Principals, along with a panel for students from each decade commencing from 1940. Every student who attended Siena College from 1940 onwards, has the opportunity to have her name inscribed on the panels making up the wall.

Inscriptions are \$50 per student and further details are available via this link:

[events.humanitix.com/alumnae-wall-2024](https://events.humanitix.com/alumnae-wall-2024)

This is an ongoing initiative with inscriptions for the 2023 to 2024 period closing on **30 June 2024**.

## Births and Marriages

**Sophia Edwards, née Navin** (Class of 2007) and Tom welcomed Harry Mark Edwards on 17 June 2023.

**Eliza Dickinson** (Class of 2011) married Patrick Byrne at Wye River, Victoria (pictured right) on 3 February 2023. The bridal party consisted of the following alumnae: Karsha Dickinson (Class of 2002), Petrea Dickinson (Class of 2003), Geraldine O'Shannessy (Class of 2011) and Tess Drobik (Class of 2012).

**Mia Roussidis, née Gargano** (Class of 2012) and staff member, **Nick Roussidis** welcomed Mila Grace Roussidis on 15 October 2023. Nonna **Lucy Gargano** (staff member) was delighted to meet her newest granddaughter.

Staff member, **Stephanie Vangelista** and husband, Andrew welcomed Felix (pictured extreme right) in October 2023.

Staff member, **Chimene Bousejean** and husband, Mayank welcomed Amara Patel (pictured right) on 25 November 2023.

We also congratulate the following staff members on their recent weddings, **Georgina Dow** and **Dominic Loschiavo**.



## We Remember

**Joan Munday, née Pattison** (Class of 1947) was sister to Bernadette Kilduff (Class of 1946) and Margaret Renwick (Class of 1953). She will be sorely missed by her seven grandchildren, twenty-seven grandchildren and forty-seven great grandchildren. *May She Rest in Peace.*





# Meet Our New SPA President, Adrian Cursio



2024 SPA Committee (L-R): Noel Jones, Secretary; Kaisha Gurry, Vice President; Adrian Cursio, President; Sooma Jafari, Treasurer



Hosting the 2023 Fathers' Day Breakfast

Growing up in the eastern suburbs, Adrian's Italian childhood in a vibrant nine-member family, including his beloved Nonna, shaped his journey.

Graduating in Commerce, he became a certified public accountant, steering family businesses across forty countries. Now the owner of Accata based in Doncaster and Nairobi, Kenya, Adrian finds fulfillment in business consulting and wealth advisory.

His journey with the Siena Parents' Association began as Treasurer in 2020; therefore, taking on the role of President was a natural continuation of his commitment to the Siena community.

Collaborating with the College Leadership Team and parent volunteers has been heartening and rewarding. Armed with a distinctive skill set, Adrian aspires to continually bring fresh ideas and strategies to SPA, building on the solid contributions of past Presidents.

A commitment to Catholic education led him to choose Siena College for his daughters' education. Upon thorough evaluation of different schools, Siena stood out. The College not only fulfilled the criteria for facilities, logistics and tradition, but also left a lasting impression with its dedication to empowering young women and fostering independence.

Adrian has also come to appreciate how Siena upholds the values of *Veritas*.

As Adrian reflects on the challenges of 2023, he admires the resilience of the SPA community. Despite the demands of a hectic year, rallying volunteers for fundraising presented its unique set of challenges. Looking ahead, Adrian envisions the future of SPA focusing on hosting carefully curated, high quality events and actively engaging new parents, especially fathers. Contributing to the Siena community tied to his daughters' education brings Adrian immense fulfillment. He is enthusiastic about imparting the value of volunteering as to his daughters.

## From the Archives



Throughout the year, the archival collections have been instrumental in highlighting the College's history, serving as a reminder to new students of the legacy left by alumnae and evoking fond memories for those returning to the College for various events.

New displays have been strategically installed throughout the College, including in the Undercroft and Student Reception display cabinets, the Heritage Room Gallery leading to the top of the Chapel, and most recently, a photo display in the Thomas Aquinas corridor featuring student artwork created this year.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all alumnae and past staff members who generously donated items such as photos (both digital and print versions), yearbooks, letters, subject reports, event programs, newsletters, certificates, badges, blazer pockets, magazines and other ephemera. Each of these contributions plays a crucial role in expanding our archival collection, allowing us to recognise and preserve the rich history of all students, staff and members of the Siena community for future generations. Please email me at [archives@siena.vic.edu.au](mailto:archives@siena.vic.edu.au) if you have any archives related queries.



Marian Jenkinson  
College Archivist





Music Camp



# Annual Music Concert: Off the Record



Siena College and De La Salle College Concert



Rising Stars



International Women's Day Concert



Chicago: High School Edition



Night of Jazz



Cabaret Night



Autumn Concert





## VISIT US!

Register for an  
Open Morning or  
a College Tour



**SIENA**  
**COLLEGE**  
CAMBERWELL

A CATHOLIC SCHOOL FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN  
THE DOMINICAN TRADITION, YEARS 7 TO 12

## OPEN MORNING DATES

**TERM 1 2024**

Friday, 9 February

Thursday, 21 March

**TERM 2 2024**

Friday, 3 May

Monday, 27 May

9.30am – 11.00am

[www.siena.vic.edu.au](http://www.siena.vic.edu.au)



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