

PARENTS OF PERFORMING ARTS COMMITTEE – AGM March 2026

President's Report for 2025 – Nicky Parasidis

Welcome everyone to our AGM and especially our new Performing Arts Captains for 2026: Dimitre Gosios, Chloe Glaister, Ivy Hale-Moore, Jaiden Dollery and Xavier Teo

2025 was my first year as President, however I have been on the Parents of Performing Arts Committee for many years, this year being my ninth and final year. Once again, POPA continued to support the Performing Arts program through its active fundraising initiatives, promotion of the program, and valuable feedback. 2025 also saw a small influx of new Committee members, it was great to welcome Bronwyn, Julia, Georgie C, Abbi, Victoria and Renae.

POPA's fundraising efforts in 2025 raised over \$8000 profit through our annual Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas Raffles as well as the Bunnings Sausage Sizzle. And this year saw a new fundraising activity: Metro Cinemas Boronia movie night of the live action version of 'How to Train Your Dragon', a fun family night mid June. Thank you to the businesses and people who generously donated prizes for raffles throughout 2025, these included Bunnings Vermont, Kidman Kandles, Icing on the Cake, Metro Cinemas Boronia, and Proquip International.

In addition to its fundraising efforts, POPA hosted the Production Gala Night supper, managed front-of-house refreshments at numerous showcases, hosted an International Teachers' Day morning tea, attended meetings, and enjoyed many fun moments together, especially the wrapping and curly bowing of the raffle prizes catchups!

Unfortunately, at the end of 2025 we said farewell to Leanne Bedford and Nicholetta Rigano, who had both been long-serving members of the committee. We sincerely thank them for their many years of dedication, significant contributions, and valued support. Their commitment and friendship have been greatly appreciated by the committee. Not all doom and gloom though because we will still have the pleasure of Nicholetta's presence at future meetings.

Thank you to all of the POPA Committee members for your assistance, advice, suggestions and contributions throughout 2025. I'd also like to thank everyone in our community who volunteered to help at the Bunnings Sausage Sizzle, bought a raffle ticket or donated items towards raffles.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Carrie Wallis, Andrew Lewis and the College Council for the respect they extend to our committee and for their continued support of our efforts in supporting the program.

And last but not least, my sincere thanks to Daniel van Bergen for enabling POPA to contribute to his vision for a broad and inclusive program. Your commitment to a student-centred approach has enabled the program to grow stronger each year, with opportunities for participation available to every student.

I may have originally lurked in the shadows with POPA for a few years, all because my children's involvement in the program inspired me to join nine years ago. Since then, I have seen firsthand the dedication, energy, and generosity of the Committee; from raising funds, supporting productions, and creating a welcoming, fun, vibrant community that strengthens our Performing Arts program.

I will miss this community.



Leader of Performing Arts Report

Parents of Performing Arts AGM 2026

2025 has been another outstanding year for the Performing Arts program at Wantirna College. We have continued to see strong growth across our Instrumental Music program, classroom electives in Dance, Theatre and Music, and our VCE subjects. Our ensembles and concerts have flourished, reflecting a year of stability, achievement and exciting progress for our students and staff.

At the beginning of the year we welcomed Ms Gabi Bergman (Drama) to the team as well as saw the return of Ms Laura Knox (Drama) to a permanent position. Each of these staff members quickly became valued contributors to our program, earning the respect and appreciation of students and colleagues alike.

Our Year 7 Instrument Trial Day once again proved to be a highlight, giving students the opportunity to explore the wide range of instruments offered at the College. The event was a tremendous success and resulted in our largest ever Year 7 Instrumental Music intake, with 104 students beginning their musical journey – our highest number yet!

The annual Staff Concert provided a wonderful launch to our performance calendar, with staff sharing their talents and passion for music with students and the wider community. Thank you to our Principal, Carrie Wallis, for her entertaining role as MC on the evening.

The Instrumental Soirées at the end of Term 1 remain an important milestone for many students, providing a welcoming and supportive environment for their first public performances while also introducing new families to the Performing Arts community.

Term 2 featured our highly anticipated Showcase series. The Dance Showcase attracted its largest audience to date, while the Solo Showcase highlighted the impressive talent and dedication of our students. Both the Ensemble and Contemporary Showcases were performed to full audiences, with our ensembles delivering performances of a very high standard. This year saw the addition of a new Showcase – the Chamber Showcase. This event allowed our choirs and smaller ensemble to show their skills and sound in an intimate setting.

Music Camp moved to CYC The Island on Philip Island this year and once again proved to be a highlight of the year. With over 180 students participating in rehearsals, workshops and performances, the camp provided an invaluable opportunity for students to develop their musicianship while strengthening friendships across the program.

Our College production of *Chicago: Teen Edition* was another major success. The professionalism, energy and creativity displayed by our performers, musicians and technical crew made it an unforgettable experience for audiences.

Many of our ensembles also represented Wantirna College at external events including the Victorian Schools' Music Festival, the Royal South Street Eisteddfod and the NEVR Concert. A particular highlight was the Symphonic Band winning the Intermediate Concert Band section at South Street for the second time in a row, competing against 14 other outstanding school ensembles.

The Gala Concert once again took place at Bunjil Place and provided a spectacular culmination to the year's performances. Our ensembles truly performed at their best and it was a fantastic event. This was our first event that included our senior Theatre Studies Monologues which has been a long term goal to represent all of our Performing Arts disciplines at the gala. Thank you to Jason and Evan Henderson for their valuable contributions to this event.

Our Parents of Performing Arts Committee continues to play an essential role in supporting our students and events. Their work across Showcases, Recitals, Production and fundraising initiatives—raised over \$8000—has made a significant contribution to our program.

This year also saw some staffing changes. Mrs Ashleigh Benjamin departed at the end of Semester 1, and after many decades of service to Wantirna College, Ms Beryl Birrell retired. Beryl's contribution to Performing Arts and the wider school community has been extraordinary, and she will be deeply missed. We thank both staff members for their dedication and wish them every success in the future. I would also like to thank Mr Tom Lindsay and Ms Laura Knox for their support during the year.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated Performing Arts staff, whose passion and commitment make the success of this program possible. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable work of our Performing Arts Administrator, Mrs Nicholetta Rigano, whose organisation and problem-solving support every aspect of the program.

Special thanks also go to Mr Andrew Lewis for his tireless work leading Tech Crew and supporting events through sound, lighting, photography and administration.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Parents of Performing Arts Committee for their ongoing support, and acknowledge the outgoing members and executive team whose dedication has made a lasting contribution to our community.

I look forward to continuing to work with our staff, students and families as we build on this momentum and continue to strengthen the Performing Arts program at Wantirna College.

Daniel van Bergen
Leader of Performing Arts
Wantirna College