

# Skyline Education Foundation 2026 Mid-Year Newsletter



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## **A Message from Our CEO**

*Samantha MacRae*

As we reach the halfway point of 2026, I am proud to reflect on what has already been a meaningful year for Skyline Education Foundation. Across Victoria, our students have embraced opportunities that challenge them, build confidence and expand their sense of what is possible. From masterclasses and work experience placements to academic mentoring and university pathway exploration, each experience has helped students take important steps toward their futures.

In May, we also marked Skyline's 20th Anniversary at the National Gallery of Victoria, bringing together students, alumni, partners, donors and friends to celebrate two decades of impact. It was a powerful reminder that while much has changed, our mission remains the same: ensuring talented young people are not limited by circumstance.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our supporters, partners, volunteers and advocates. Thank you for being part of the Skyline community and for helping create the opportunities featured throughout this update.



# A Skyline Day in North-East Victoria

Our annual Residential Camp took place in January, bringing together students from across Victoria for a memorable few days of learning, connection and personal growth.

Unfortunately, severe bushfires in North-East Victoria prevented several students from travelling and participating alongside their peers.

Rather than miss out entirely, Program Managers Kristy and Martha travelled to the region and delivered a dedicated one-day Skyline experience for local students.

Five students attended the catch-up event, beginning the day by sharing personal items and stories before participating in workshops focused on purpose, wellbeing and academic confidence.



*“Meeting other Skyliners was a real highlight of the day. It helped me understand the program better, build connections with other students and feel more confident attending the next Masterclass because I already knew some familiar faces”*



The smaller setting created opportunities for deeper conversations and personalised support, while still providing the connection and community that sits at the heart of Skyline.

Students particularly valued the opportunity to meet like-minded peers, with every participant agreeing that the event helped them build meaningful connections.



# Larita Academy

In April, seven Skyline alumni spent four inspiring days at Larita Academy, a unique leadership and personal development program that brings together young people from across Australia to explore purpose, confidence and community.

The experience challenged students to think differently, build new skills and learn from an impressive lineup of guest speakers and facilitators. Just as importantly, it strengthened the bonds within our own alumni community. Throughout the week, our Skyliners could be found sitting front and centre, asking thoughtful questions and supporting one another every step of the way.

The standout moment came on the final day. Throughout the program, students earn "Larita Cash" through participation and engagement. At the closing auction, our seven alumni pooled every dollar they had earned with one goal in mind: winning the \$1,000 charitable donation prize for Skyline.

Against strong competition, they won. Their reason was simple. **"It's because we love Skyline so much."**

The proud phone call to our team afterwards is one we won't forget.



The generosity didn't stop there. The group also combined their resources to secure an exercise and gift voucher pack, which they shared amongst themselves, while Keely (Class of 2024) was lucky enough to walk away with a new Apple Watch.

Student feedback reflected the impact of the experience, with 100% of participants saying they would recommend the program to others. Students highlighted the quality of the guest speakers, networking opportunities and practical skills gained, with many reporting increased confidence and a stronger sense of connection.



# Unlocking Potential Through The Institute of Enquiring Minds

So far this year, five Skyline students were awarded places in the Institute for Enquiring Minds mentoring program, receiving personalised one-to-one academic support alongside a laptop to assist their learning.

Access to high-quality tutoring can be transformative, but it is often out of reach for families facing financial barriers. Through this partnership, students receive tailored support that helps strengthen subject knowledge, build confidence and develop effective learning habits.

For many participants, the impact has extended far beyond mathematics.

*“For myself, I would say that Enquiring Minds has made a huge difference in ways I didn’t even expect across all subjects. Having access to an iPad for schoolwork has massively changed things for me across all subjects, especially with handwriting and spelling corrections as I have dyslexia. I had no clue some of these supports even existed, and after trying many different aids, this is the only one that has not only helped a lot but also made me feel normal. It even gave me confidence in English without me expecting it”*

*“Overall, the main reason Methods has improved is because I’ve had this time to work on skills I either missed or never properly learnt, helping fill gaps I didn’t even realise I had. This is helping me work towards my future goal of becoming an engineer and building the maths skills I need to get there. I’m very thankful for this opportunity.” Skyline Student - Class of 2027*

The program has also helped students tackle challenges with greater confidence.

*“The Institute for Enquiring Minds mentoring program has had a big impact on my confidence within my learning, in particular my calculus and problem-solving skills. I feel more comfortable tackling both ambiguous problems. I have started attempting the 'challenge work' provided by my school, and I feel more confident when learning and completing new work.” Skyline student - Class of 2026*

Programs like Enquiring Minds help ensure talented young people have access to the same academic support opportunities as their more advantaged peers, opening doors that might otherwise remain closed.



## Exploring Careers in Healthcare: ForHealth Work Experience

For the second consecutive year, Skyline partnered with ForHealth Medical Centres to provide hands-on healthcare work experience opportunities for students interested in medical and allied health careers.

Three students completed placements during the April school holidays, with another three students already confirmed for the July intake.

These placements offer far more than a glimpse into a workplace. Students spend time observing a wide range of healthcare professionals, gaining insight into day-to-day clinical environments, exploring different career pathways and asking questions directly to people working in the field.

For many Skyline students, this exposure is invaluable. Professional networks and career role models are not always readily available within their communities, making opportunities like this particularly powerful.

One participating student reflected that the experience helped turn a general interest in healthcare into a much clearer understanding of what a future career could look like. Through conversations with practitioners and first-hand observation, they gained confidence in their aspirations and a greater appreciation for the many pathways available within the health sector.

We are grateful to ForHealth for continuing to invest in the next generation of healthcare professionals.



*"I would recommend this work experience to any student considering a career in healthcare. It gave me valuable insight into what working in a clinical environment is really like and helped me better understand how healthcare professionals communicate and manage different situations"*

*"It was an amazing experience. Everything I learned was so helpful, and it not only confirmed my interest in healthcare but also reinforced my goal of becoming a paramedic"*



# Exploring Careers in Law

In June, Skyline students had the opportunity to participate in an engaging career conversation with corporate lawyer Jack Noone.

Through an interactive Q&A session, Jack shared his journey into the legal profession, demonstrating that career pathways are not always straightforward. Beginning in science and neuroscience research before later pursuing postgraduate law studies, his story highlighted the value of remaining open to new opportunities and experiences.

Students gained insight into the world of corporate law, learning about mergers and acquisitions, contract negotiations, due diligence and the role lawyers play in helping businesses navigate complex transactions. Jack also discussed how emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, are changing the legal profession while reinforcing the continued importance of human judgement, critical thinking and expertise.

The conversation extended beyond legal practice, with Jack offering practical advice on university pathways, clerkships, graduate programs and the importance of gaining experience through volunteering, part-time work and extracurricular activities.

A key message for students was that strong academic results matter, but initiative, leadership and curiosity can be equally important in helping young people stand out and create opportunities for themselves.

We extend our sincere thanks to Jack for generously sharing his time, experiences and insights with our students. His willingness to answer questions openly and honestly provided students with a valuable glimpse into both the legal profession and the many pathways that can lead there.



**Interested in sharing your career journey with Skyline students?**

We are always looking for professionals willing to participate in Q&A sessions and career conversations. If you would like to support students by sharing your experiences please email [samantha@skylinefoundation.org.au](mailto:samantha@skylinefoundation.org.au)



# Celebrating 20 Years of Impact

This year, Skyline marked a significant milestone, celebrating twenty years of supporting talented young people across Victoria.

Students, alumni, donors, partners and supporters gathered at the National Gallery of Victoria to reflect on two decades of opportunity, achievement and community.

Throughout the evening, one message resonated: **Talent exists everywhere, even when opportunity does not.**

The event featured a special video message from former Prime Minister The Honourable Julia Gillard AC, who acknowledged Skyline's longstanding contribution to educational equity and recognised the importance of ensuring young people are not limited by circumstance or postcode.

Dr Ari Metuamate, Master of Ormond College, delivered a powerful keynote address centred on the importance of community and collective support. Reflecting on the impact of Skyline, Ari shared the Māori proverb "**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi. Engari he toa taki tini**" – any success I have achieved is not mine alone, but of the many who supported me along the way.

The message struck a chord with the audience and perfectly captured the Skyline story. Every student success is made possible by a community of people who believe in their potential and help create opportunities along the way.

The evening's highlight was a panel discussion featuring alumni and current students whose stories illustrated the lasting impact of Skyline.



**Long**, a member of Skyline's **very first cohort** (Class of 2007) reflected on growing up navigating "between cultures" and questioning where he belonged. He described Skyline as the first place where he truly found community and connection.

*"When you're someone in the liminal spaces between cultures, you really feel, do I belong?"*

Long shared that Skyline's impact has remained lifelong, shaping not only his education and career, but the way he now wants to create belonging for others. **"Skyline helped me find my voice. It helped me see my story differently. It gave me the space to build confidence and a sense of belonging, and to find strength in the words I use to describe myself"**

**Jasmin, Class of 2011**, now completing a PhD in Linguistics and Social Work, reflected on how Skyline gave her the confidence to pursue passions that once felt unconventional or unrealistic.

She described Skyline as a place where curiosity was celebrated and where she felt comfortable embracing her love of learning.

*"I never felt like I couldn't share what I was excited about learning."*

Looking back, Jasmin credits Skyline with helping shape her academic journey. **"I don't think I would be pursuing the things that I'm actually passionate about if I hadn't had that boost of confidence."**



**Keely (Class of 2024)**, now a Hansen Scholar and Computer Science student, reflected on how Skyline changed her belief in what was possible.

*"I was often told that STEM was something I shouldn't pursue as a girl. Skyline was able to turn pursuing STEM from something that felt completely unrealistic into something that's real and achievable."*

Encouraged by Skyline to apply for the Hansen Scholarship, Keely ultimately secured a place in the program. *"I thought there was absolutely no way I would qualify for something like the Hansen Scholarship, but Skyline believed in me when I didn't myself."*

Looking back, Keely summed up Skyline's impact simply: **"Skyline changed the trajectory of my life."**



**Ken (Class of 2025)**, recipient of the Dafydd Lewis Trust Scholarship and Dux of his school, spoke openly about the pressure and uncertainty he experienced during VCE. *"I was so hyper-focused on studying and getting a high ATAR that I neglected my future."*

Passionate about healthcare, Ken was able to access work experience opportunities through Skyline, helping turn an interest into a clearer pathway forward. *"I found a clearer path to my future and solidified my passion"*

Ken also reflected on the impact of the Skyline community.

**"Being in Skyline, you're surrounded by people who are extremely motivated. I'd be much more pessimistic about my outlook on life without Skyline."**

**Current Year 12 student James** shared the experience of growing up in a regional town of around 200 people, where university once felt distant and difficult to imagine. Skyline helped transform that ambition into a clear and tangible pathway through university exposure, residential programs and mentoring.

*"The support Skyline's given me has really given my ambitious goals direction."*

James also reflected on the isolation many regional students experience and the importance of finding like-minded peers beyond his small town. *"What I thought that I needed the most was to be part of a community of like-minded students."*

He described Skyline as helping him realise that ambitious goals were not only possible, but achievable. **"Before Skyline, the pathway felt unclear. Now I feel like I can actually see what comes next."**



# Student Spotlight

## Issy - Class of 2027

When Issy identified a gap in the support available for academically motivated students at her school, she didn't wait for someone else to solve it.

As Kyneton Secondary College's Senior Excellence Captain, Issy has been working with staff to create opportunities for students to connect with like-minded peers, access valuable resources and learn about opportunities beyond the classroom. Her initiative aims to create a supportive environment where students can pursue their goals, share knowledge and encourage one another's success.

Reflecting on her work this year, Issy shared:

*"For this year, I'm my school's senior Excellence captain, and I wanted to use my experience with scholarship and work experience applications to good use for helping others! Our school does have a group in place for 'high-ability' students to assist with any struggles they may have and discuss with like-minded individuals; however, the students are only selected by teachers for performing well academically, not students who want to do just as well, and there are no obvious and easily-accessible resources for students like me for help with scholarship applications or staying informed about opportunities."*

*"So, my goal regarding my role is to improve the advocacy and inclusion of all students with an academic mindset, both for this year and to make a positive impact on the school for future students at Kyneton High. I have made progress with supportive teachers in setting up a club that can hopefully be run bi-weekly for students to come hang out in a quiet space to do schoolwork, help others, be helped, or learn about opportunities that they may have!"*

*"My hope is that students will be able to have a space where they can feel supported by like-minded students, revise their own studies and gain experience by tutoring others, and give students the chance to be aware of the resources available to them for their student experience and career."*

Through her leadership, Issy is helping create lasting opportunities for students at her school, ensuring more young people feel supported, informed and connected.



# Student Spotlight

## Ayush - Class of 2027

Ayush is a student who embraces every opportunity to learn, lead and contribute. From youth advocacy and robotics to sport and technology, he has built an impressive range of experiences while pursuing his passion for engineering and innovation.

Whether he's representing young people in his community, starting new initiatives at school or exploring emerging technologies, Ayush approaches each opportunity with enthusiasm and curiosity.

Sharing a little about himself, Ayush said:

*"I'm the kind of person who loves to be involved and have a balanced life, mixing hockey, youth advocacy and passion projects. I love robotics and public speaking and I'm currently studying subjects like Specialist Maths and Systems Engineering, with Physics and Software Development as accelerates."*

*"I was last year's Junior Mayor of Greater Geelong, have participated in the Student Council for every school I've been a part of and aim to lead teams in things I'm passionate about. For example, I'm starting a robotics team at my school!"*

One of Ayush's highlights this year has been pursuing an exciting international opportunity.

*"I've been really proud of working towards qualifying for a trip to Shenzhen for a hardware hackathon! I get to make my own project there while exploring a major global technology hub!"*

Skyline has also played an important role in supporting his journey.

*"I loved our Resi and masterclass that we attended. I've made some great friends, and have been provided with a mentor that has supported me so much through resources, advice and just a person to talk to."*

Looking to the future, Ayush has ambitious goals in the technology sector.

*"I hope to get into some sort of engineering or computer science degree, eventually doing something with hardware and software. I want to work in something like quantum tech, supercomputers or robots. I love technology, and it's something I've been passionate about for quite some time."*



# Skyline Hatch: Practical Support for VCE Success

Throughout the first half of 2026, Skyline Hatch provided students with practical tools, study strategies and guidance to support their senior secondary education.

A key feature of Hatch is the VCE Hacks series: short, practical workshops designed to help students navigate some of the biggest challenges of VCE. Delivered by recent high-achieving VCE graduates, including Skyline alumni, these sessions combine academic expertise with real-world experience and relatable advice.

This year, three VCE Hacks sessions were delivered live online and recorded for students to access on demand:

#### **Head Start: Study Skills:**

Helping students establish effective study habits and learning routines from the beginning of the year.

#### **Time Management and Effective Scheduling:**

Providing practical strategies for balancing school, extracurricular commitments and personal wellbeing.

#### **GAT Preparation:**

Equipping students with tips, techniques and confidence ahead of this important assessment.

In addition to the online sessions, Skyline Hatch delivered presentations and workshops to students across Victoria, including Lyndhurst Secondary College, Wyndham Central College, Bendigo Senior Secondary College, CHES, Keysborough Secondary College (Banksia and Acacia Campuses), Virtual School Victoria and Tallangatta Secondary College.

By sharing practical strategies and insights from students who have recently navigated VCE themselves, Skyline Hatch helps young people feel more confident, informed and prepared for the year ahead.



*Watching our alumni choose to give back to the program that supported them is a powerful reminder of the community Skyline continues to build.*



# Looking Ahead

As we move into the second half of 2026, we look forward to continuing to create opportunities for talented young people across Victoria.

Applications are now open for the Skyline Class of 2028, with nominations being received from schools, teachers and community partners across the state. The selection process will continue throughout the coming months, before our newest cohort begins their Skyline journey later this year.

We are also looking forward to delivering our July and September Masterclass events for the current cohort and celebrating the achievements of our graduating Class of 2026 at Graduation in November.

To our partners, donors, volunteers and supporters, thank you. Your generosity and belief in young people make these opportunities possible.

## Support the Next Generation

Every donation helps Skyline provide life-changing opportunities for talented young people facing educational disadvantage.

Donate today and help ensure talent is never limited by circumstance.

[DONATE](#)

