



ISSUE 1 | June 2026

# VERITAS

THE MAGAZINE OF ST ALBERT'S COLLEGE  
Within the University of New England





**ST ALBERT'S COLLEGE**

The Veritas is the official magazine of St Albert's College. Our students study across a range of degrees at the University of New England, and our alumni cover many fields of professional endeavour. Veritas is a record of this proud and unique regional College.

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**Acknowledgement of Country**

St Albert's College acknowledges the traditional custodians of Australia, the owners of the land and elders past, present and future.



5 • Check-in Day



12 • Parents' Weekend



6 • Commencement Mass & Dinner



8 • Trimester 1 Academic Dinner

# CONTENTS

- Head of College Welcome..... 4
- Check-in Day ..... 5
- Commencement Mass & Dinner ..... 6
- Trimester One Academic Dinner ..... 8
- Whole of College Photo ..... 10
- Parents' Weekend  
A Celebration of Community  
at St Albert's College!..... 12
- Charity Long Lunch  
Farm Angels: Supporting Aussie  
Farmers & Families ..... 16
- Alumni Feature  
Commitment to Community:  
James Pegg's Journey ..... 17

## Head of College Welcome



I'm delighted to welcome you to Veritas 2026—St Albert's chief means of reaching out to our community and spreading the Albies' word, updating you on all things College and keeping you abreast of plans for upcoming events. Watch this space for future editions.

I have been in the big chair here at St Albert's since the start of the year and it has been a pleasure and privilege to immerse myself in the passion and devotion that this place engenders. Perhaps more than anything, it has been the relationships among the people of Armidale and the College itself that have been most instructive for me. Albies is in the fabric of the UNE and in the city of Armidale and this symbiosis, this intertwining of stories, is place defining and place curating.

Having grown up in Toowoomba, life in a regional town has come naturally and happily to me, despite my arriving in an electric car and experiencing what the metro-cool call 'range anxiety' as I

trundled from Stanthorpe to Armidale, nervously watching my car charge dip below 10%.

And what of Albies into 2026 and beyond? The foundations in this place run deep and strong. We are fortunate to have a resident student body who love the College and who turn up in all manner of ways. We listened and our students' committee at the Parents' Ball delivered an event of which the entire community could be proud, making it a signature occasion to press the Albies' story far and wide.

Arriving here and finding a community so welcoming and brimming with potential has been exhilarating and exciting in equal measure. Bring on Tri-2 and all that it holds in store.

**Steve Foley BA/LLB**  
Head of College & Chief Executive Officer

“The foundations in this place run deep and strong. We are fortunate to have a resident student body who love the College and who turn up in all manner of ways.”

## Check-in Day

After a week of preparation for our student leaders, it was all hands on deck as we welcomed 110 freshers to College for the beginning of their new life at Albies in 2026.

Supported by our full College staff and student leaders, first-year residents were welcomed like royalty, as student leaders assisted with bags and personally showed each fresher to their room. In keeping with tradition, each floor had pre-prepared a unique theme, complete with coordinated decorations on every door. The first competition of the year saw Mid C take out the prize for best floor decorations for their theme of 'Christmas'.

While staff worked diligently to finalise paperwork, distribute keys, and hand out welcome goodie bags, parents and students gathered for a community lunch to say their

goodbyes. Later that evening, our new residents came together on the lawn for a cocktail-style function, providing the perfect opportunity to meet their peers and begin settling into the year ahead.

What followed was a couple of weeks of training, UNE orientation, events organised by our Junior Common Room, and preparations for the trimester head. Fresher Jack Power reflected on his arrival at College, saying, “I enjoyed spending time in the Fishbowl on check-in day, I met my mates that very first day in the Fishbowl and the day was all very exciting”.

The highlight for most, of course...Fresher Sport against Robb College a few weeks later in Rugby, Netball, and Hockey!



## Commencement Mass & Dinner

After what was a cracking start to Trimester One of 2026, our College community donned their gowns for Commencement Mass and Dinner. Bussing it to Saints Mary and Joseph Cathedral, students and guests came together to pause and reflect on the year ahead as they attended Commencement Mass and heard from Bishop Peter Mel Murphy.

After a moving liturgy (supported also by members of the Immaculata community), residents joined fellow students, staff, and members of the College board back on campus for canapés on the lawn, before heading into the dining hall for the first formal dinner of the year.

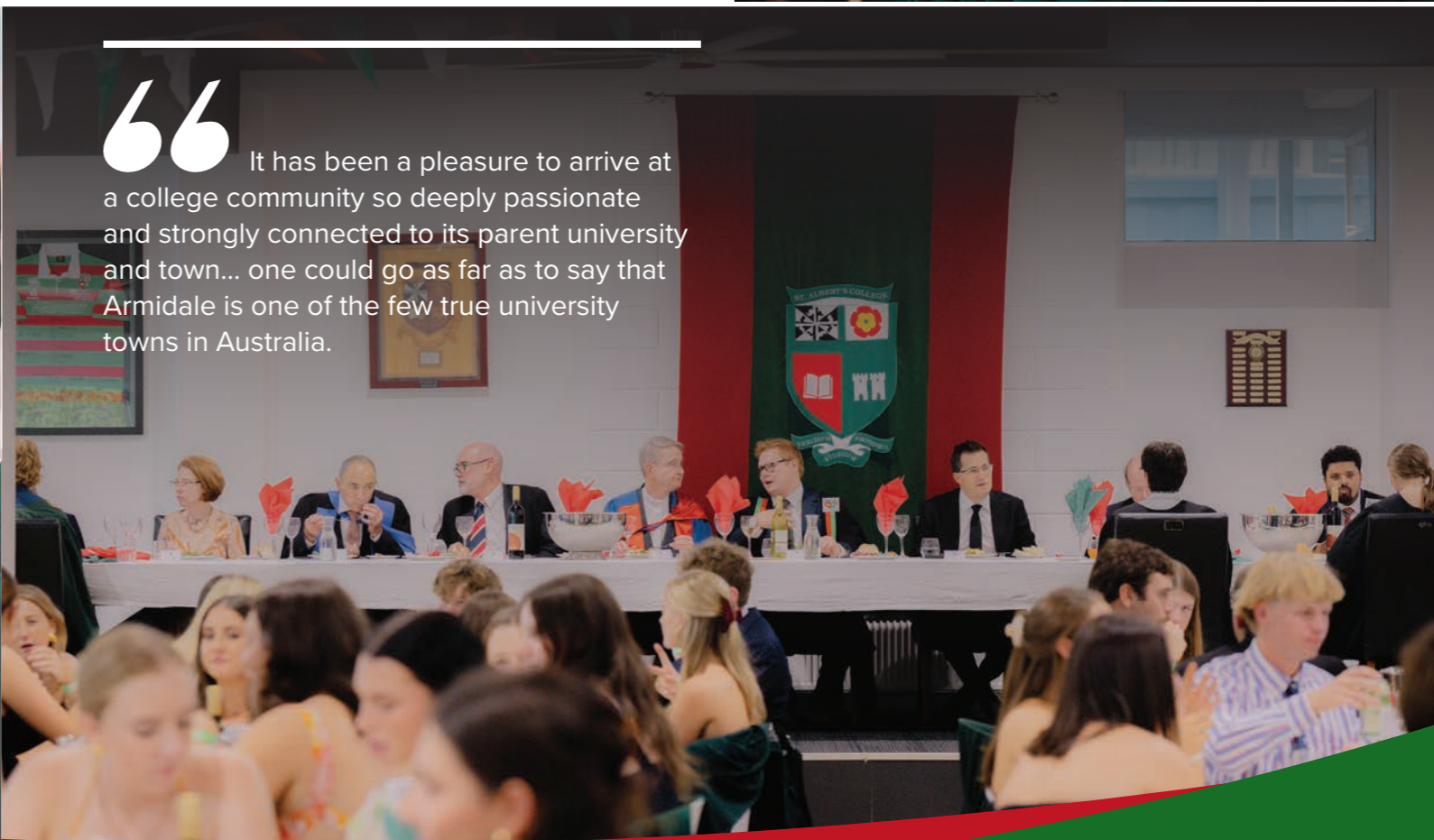
Head of College, Steve Foley addressed the community, thanking College staff and student leaders for the warm welcome he had already received, and offering fresh perspective on a College and community that has been thriving in Armidale since 1969. Stephen remarked:

“It has been a pleasure to arrive at a college community so deeply passionate and strongly connected to its parent university and town... one could go as far as to say that Armidale is one of the few true university towns in Australia.”

Having recently increased its scholarship offerings for 2026, the College awarded five

commencing students entrance scholarships to the value of \$4,000 each, to support them across their first year of residence.

What followed was an evening of thanks for the holidays that were and a moment to share a meal and look forward to the year ahead. As always, the evening ended with a bang with the College band’s first performance of the year.



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## Trimester One Academic Dinner

The break from St Albert's social calendar was short-lived following the return from mid-trimester exams, as students were welcomed back in style with the first Academic Dinner of the year. Celebrating the achievements of Trimester 2 2025, residents gathered in the dining hall sporting attire considerably more refined than the croc-and-sweatpants combinations that typically define life in the Ding.

Among the evening's special guests was UNE's own Fran Cowley, a professor in the Agriculture department and, for many students,

a familiar face from the lecture theatre. Fran offered a candid and engaging reflection on her own university journey, and encouraged students to embrace curiosity not only in their academic lives, but in their everyday social interactions as well. A welcome reminder that the questions worth asking extend well beyond the classroom.

The evening then turned to celebrating our highest achievers, with academic awards presented across distinction and high distinction categories. A standout moment was the recognition of five high distinction

recipients from second and third year, alongside the presentation of the Knight's Prize and the Senior Common Room Award.

The night was brought to a close by the ever-popular band, with students crowding the back of the dining hall, standing on tables and chairs to get look at the private performance. Student leaders were then invited to the Senior Common Room to meet the evening's guests over drinks and snacks, before the group made their way into town to continue the celebrations in true Albies' fashion.

Nights like these serve as a timely reminder that beneath the fun and camaraderie that defines life at Albies, we are part of a proud academic tradition, one where hard work is recognised, achievement is celebrated, and the pursuit of excellence is very much taken seriously.

**Damian Abu-Antoun**  
Senior Academic Advisor





## Parents Weekend 2026

### A Celebration of Community at St Albert's College!

Families travelled from far and wide to St Albert's College for the annual Parents' Weekend and Ball. With Armidale donning its full autumn colour, the weekend began with a spirited hockey match at UNE Sport between Robb College and Albies, followed by netball and free bacon and egg rolls. On the rugby field, Albies delivered a masterclass, coming away with victories against Robb College across all grades and setting the tone for a memorable weekend.

With motels full to the brim, Saturday evening saw more than 600 guests descend upon Armidale and the College for the Parents'

Ball, a night dedicated to celebrating family, community, and connection while raising funds for the Students' Charity of Choice for 2026, Farm Angels. After a successful auction of goods donated by friends of the College, Charity Co-Presidents Chloe Shaw and Kit Lilienstein confirmed that the auction had raised more than \$10,000.

New Head of College, Steve Foley, reflected on the weekend's significance: "Parents' Weekend captures everything that makes St Albert's special—belonging, generosity, and the deep pride families feel in this community."

Junior Common Room Vice President Molly Sailsbury added, "It was a wonderful weekend for everyone's parents to come together and experience a glimpse of our College life."

The night concluded on a high as Terra Firma wrapped their final set with a rousing cover of The Angels' classic, Am I Ever Gonna See Your Face Again. One could imagine legendary

rocker Doc Neeson smiling down as mums, dads, students, staff, and band members alike closed out what was truly one big, joyous night.

First Published in New England Times.





## Charity Long Lunch

### Farm Angels: Supporting Aussies Farmers & Families!

On Saturday, 16 May, Armidale briefly paused the slow creep of winter to celebrate our annual Long Lunch. As the final event of Trimester One before a two-week exam period, the occasion brought residents and guests together in style for a fundraising luncheon in support of our charity partner, Farm Angels.

Organised by the Charity Committee—this year led by Chloe Shaw and Kit Lillenstein (current second year residents)—the event spared no effort in creating a memorable afternoon. Highlights included an impressive charcuterie board worthy of any wedding planner, a woodfire (with special thanks to the team who spent the day prior chopping wood), a live band complete with dancefloor, and raffle. In total, 250 guests attended to show their support. Kit remarked that “It was a great day with many residents and friends supporting a fantastic cause”.

Travelling from Brisbane to represent Farm Angels, Chris Jordan and his son William shared powerful reflections on the importance of supporting rural communities, remembering our roots, and standing by mates in times of need. They spoke about how Farm Angels—formerly Drought Angels—provides direct, practical assistance to farmers experiencing hardship.

Combined with the Parents' Weekend auction, this year's fundraising efforts have raised a little over \$20,000.

Supported by the College, residents each year select a charity to champion through a range of fundraising initiatives and events. Congratulations to Chloe, Kit, and all the volunteers behind the scenes on your exceptional work and dedication so far this year.



## Alumni Feature

### Commitment to Community: James Pegg's Journey



Last year I had the opportunity to sit down with alumnus, James Pegg (Fr2023) to talk about his time at College and some exciting news he received earlier that year. In 2025, James was honoured as Armidale's Youth Citizen of the Year! The discussion naturally focused on James' time at College, his studies in Rural Science at the University of New England, his dedication to the Rural Fire Service and how Albies shaped his journey.

#### CHOOSING ALBIES AND RURAL SCIENCE

“ I had a chat to a few other people at different colleges, but Albies just sort of stuck in my mind as the place I wanted to go because it had all the things I wanted—sports, academic assistance to push me to do my degree, and good people.”

James' journey to Albies began long before he set foot at College. “I've always been keen on the Ag field,” he explained. “So I decided I wanted to do Rural Science as my degree, and I had my heart set on that from about Year 10 or Year 11.” With family ties in Armidale, studying at UNE was a natural choice.

James' journey at Albies began with an interview with the Head of College, after

which he was offered a place for the following year. James recalled, “I had a chat to a few other people at different colleges, but Albies just sort of stuck in my mind as the place I wanted to go because it had all the things I wanted—sports, academic assistance to push me to do my degree, and good people.”

James had done his research beforehand, looking at the website and learning about the vibrant mix of academic and social activities. “I had a look through the website and it was saying, sporting and a bit of academics, and a bit of music. I was really interested in the fact that Albies had music as well. That's what sort of led me to swing more towards Albies, and that they were going to encourage me to stay here.”

The decision proved to be the right one. “When I got here, I met some fantastic people, made some good friends—two of whom I've moved into a house in town with, so that's pretty good.”

## ANSWERING THE CALL TO SERVICE

James had already spent time in the Rural Fire Service in Mudgee before coming to Albies, so continuing that work in Armidale felt like a natural step. “I knew I enjoyed [volunteering for the RFS] and I enjoyed making friends there. I thought that would be a good way to support my community coming into Armidale and to socialise a bit more and make new friends who had a like mind.”

His commitment to the brigade began immediately. “I think it was my first or second day at College, I went straight down to the fire control centre. The RFS said, ‘Yep, we’re really keen to have you.’ The RFS journey here sort of started the first week—I think it was Thursday or Friday of O-Week 2023—I ended up going to a lightning strike call in the first week, so I was pretty keen.”

Balancing life at College with firefighting proved to be a challenge. “I suppose I found that balance a bit tricky in my first year. I was really keen on going out to every call possible, and there was a lot

in 2023. We had a bit of a dry spell in winter, and that sent everything going towards spring.”

Despite the workload, James embraced the experience, pouring his energy into training. “I spent a lot of weekends training at the fire control centre and built up my qualifications, so now I’m a crew leader on the fireground. I’ve got my remote area qualifications, and this year they promoted me to Captain of the remote area team.”

## RISING TO LEADERSHIP

James’ promotion to Captain came as a surprise. “Yeah, I was a bit shocked. They had talked me through it beforehand. They said, ‘Yeah, we’re thinking you’ve got some pretty good commitment to the brigade. We are looking at succession planning, we would like to put you in a position of leadership,’ and I said, ‘Sure, I’ll undertake the qualifications necessary and give that a go.’ So I did that.”

Stepping into leadership has required James to navigate a range of challenges, particularly managing brigade members and preventing

burnout. “We’ve got a pretty small brigade, so managing members and burnout [is important]. I don’t want people to give it their everything for five months and then not be able to give it again.”

Callouts often happen at a moment’s notice. “Lots of last-minute callouts, often fielding calls the night before a call out at 9 o’clock saying, ‘Can you go at 7 o’clock next morning?’ It was a lot of ‘Who do I know?’ A lot of personal phone calls to people and a lot of checking in on people after callouts as well.”

For James, leadership isn’t just about coordinating response efforts—it’s about ensuring the well-being of his team. “One of the big parts of being a team leader is checking on your recruits and the members. After a big callout or a callout where something went a bit wrong, it’s good to chat to them and just check that they’re all okay. Giving the necessary support they need and just having an after-action review with them to work through things, implement that into training if necessary.”

## A RECOGNITION WELL EARNED

James’ commitment to service culminated in a major honor—being named Armidale’s 2025 Youth Citizen of the Year. “I found out in early January 2025, a couple of weeks before Australia Day. They rang me up, I was actually on my way to the fire shed to do a couple of maintenance jobs, which I found pretty funny.”

His district manager, Paul Metcalfe, and his Captain, Chris, had nominated him, submitting an application to the Armidale Council. “They thought it was alright, so they rang me and said, ‘You’ve been nominated.’ I went, ‘Oh, what does that mean?’ They said, “Well, it means you’re to come to the Australia Day Ceremony.” So I rang my Mum and Dad, rang some mates, my girlfriend, and a few of them came up, which was great!”

At the ceremony, James was officially announced as the recipient of the award. “Yeah, James, you got it!” he recalled. “I went, ‘Oh, right.”

Despite the honour, James remains humble about his achievements. “People come up and say well done and I go, ‘Oh, honestly, I just got it because I was helping out, there was nothing special behind it.’ I’m privileged and honoured to have it, but I don’t see myself as anything special. I just got the award, which I’m very thankful for, but it doesn’t change anything. I’m still gonna go to callouts and put everything into the community that I can. Business as usual apart from that.”

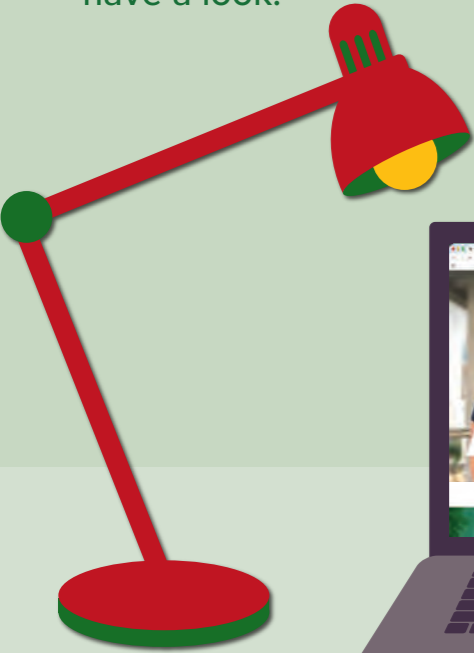
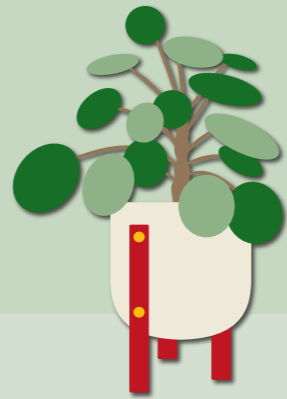
Whether through his academic pursuits in Rural Science or his unwavering dedication to the Rural Fire Service, James Pegg’s story is one of perseverance, community, and purpose. His journey—from resident at Albies to Captain of the remote area team—shows the profound impact of service, leadership, and commitment. Well done, James!

**Jonathan Grace**  
Executive Dean

## INSIDE ISSUE 2

- ✿ Mates' Weekend
- ✿ Careers Week
- ✿ Trimester Two Academic Dinner
- ✿ Women in Sport
- ✿ Valedictory Farewell
- ✿ Alumni Feature
- ✿ and more...

Albies website has had a refresh. Scan the QR code to have a look.



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