NEWSLETTER

LAS NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 6, TERM 2

June 2025

LUCINDALE AREA SCHOOL

KEY VALUES

RESPECT YOURSELF

RESPECT OTHERS

RESPECT LEARNING & ENVIRONMENT

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Important Dates 2025

Monday 21st July
Term 3 Start
Start Year 10 Work Experience
Monday 28th July
Paul Curnow Astronomy Presentation Years 3-6
Tuesday 29th July
3 Way Learning Conference 3:30pm - 7.30pm
Swimming Pool Meeting 5:30am
Monday 4th August
Student Free Day
Tuesday 5th August
Young Judges Day 9am-2pm
Wednesday 6th August
PJ Day, BBQ Lunch
Monday 11th August
Start Science Week
Friday 15th August
Quiz Night SRC
Monday 18th August
Start Book Week
Get Home Safe Road Safety Presentation Year 10-12
Tuesday 19th August
Subject Selection/Course Counselling Night & SACE 6:00pm
Wednesday 20th August
Subject Information Session after Home Group by Teachers
Friday 22nd August
Book Week Dress Up Day

Thank You and Congratulations

Gratitude for Community Support

A heartfelt thank you goes to the parents and our Canteen team for their generous support with catering for the **Regional Mad Minute** event, hosted at the Lucindale Town Hall. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the **Lions Club** for coordinating across the region and for providing judges, timekeepers, and helpers - without whom the event could not have gone ahead. Congratulations to the following students Austin, Charles and Harrison.

Reflecting on a Semester of Growth

As we reach the end of the first half of the 2025 school year, I encourage all students to reflect on their learning achievements with a strong sense of pride. This is a time to not only celebrate success but also to consider areas for growth and set meaningful goals for the semester ahead.

To our parents and caregivers, I warmly invite you to sit with your child/children to read through their **Semester Reports.** These are not simply records of academic results, but valuable tools to:

- Identify strengths and achievements
- Recognise areas for development
- Set purposeful goals for continued growth

Offer your children praise, encouragement, and guidance as they reflect on their progress. Your involvement is key to their learning journey.

CONTINUED.....

Acknowledging Your Support

Thank you for every uniform washed, every lunch packed (and unpacked!), the countless drives to and from school, and for your consistent encouragement and love. Your efforts are deeply appreciated and truly make a difference.

Dad's Day Breakfast

On Monday, 23 June, we extend a big thank you to the Parents and Friends Committee for hosting the Dad's Day Breakfast. The specials event recognises the vital role of fathers and father figures in our community, especially during challenging times. We're grateful for the opportunity to celebrate them.

Uniform Expectations Reminder

Please ensure students are wearing the correct Lucindale Area School Uniform:

- Navy Polo Top (no other colours)
- Winter Wear: Navy Shell jacket or Navy Polar Fleece Jumper only with the school logo
- Senior Students (Years 10-11): May wear the senior jumper
- Hats: Only school buckets hats or plain navy bucket hats (no wording).
- **NO CAPS PERMITTED**
- No "Roos" jumpers, black puffer jackets or hoodies

Uniform Items can be purchased via:
www.madeforschool.com.au - search Lucindale Area School

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Why Deep Learning Matters

In a world of rapid change, we're not just preparing students for the next test - we're helping them become:

- Creative thinkers
- Deep learners
- Resilient collaborators
- Reflective individuals

Real learning takes time, repetition, and meaningful connection. Sometimes, not "getting it" right away is the beginning of deeper understanding. At Lucindale Area School, we encourage students to:

- Think about their thinking
- Make connections
- Practice with support
- Take risks and ask questions

This approach:

- Builds resilience and self awareness
- Encourages independent thinking
- Nurtures a love of learning, not a fear of failure

> "What students say about their thinking tells us more than what they complete".

Portfolio Student Free Day - Exploring Pedagogic Shifts

On our recent Student Free Day, staff across the portfolio engaged in powerful professional learning focused on **pedagogic shifts** - reimagining how we design and deliver learning to meet the needs of today's learners and tomorrows citizens.

With the implementation of the new **South Australian Curriculum**, the day provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on how we can more intentionally integrate the **dispositions, capabilities and knowledge** that young people need now, and for life.

Our work was framed through two key lenses:

- **Learning Expeditions** - deep, interdisciplinary inquiries that build relevance, purpose and real world connection.
- **Designing for Engagement** - exploring how learning can be designed to spark curiosity, challenge thinking, and build student ownership.

Staff collaborated to surface opportunities for growth, shared example of effective practice, and began designing rich learning experiences aligning with the goals of the refreshed curriculum. It was a productive and energising day, reaffirming our commitment to engaging every learner in meaning, future -focused learning.

CONTINUED.....

Semester 1 Principal Awards - Middle and Senior School

Citizenship & Character

- Jacob
- Joel
- Kayden
- Alfie
- Paige
- Lacey
- Lily

Leadership

- Jacob
- Harmony
- Kayden
- James
- Paige
- Lacey
- Beth

Future Potential and Aspirations Aligned with School Values

- Heidi
- Paige
- Emma
- Thomas

Dedication, Sportsmanship and Teamwork

- Riley

Consistent Attendence and Punctuality

- Jacob
- Kayden
- James
- Krysandra

Cyber Safety for kids

For helpful family resources on staying safe online, visit:

Issues and advice | eSafety Commissioner
The eSafety Guide |eSafety Commissioner

Wishing all families, a safe, restful,and happy holiday break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back refreshed and ready for a successful Term 3 that starts on Monday, 21 July

Louis de Jager, Principal

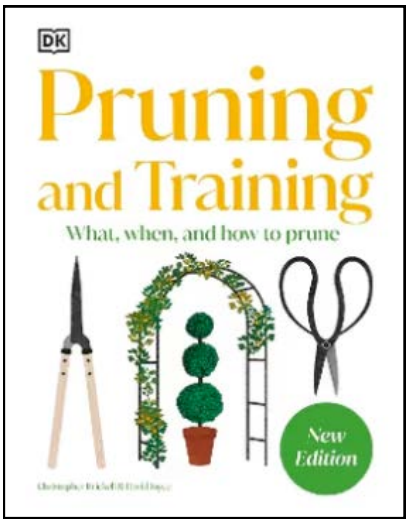
LIBRARY

Library closure

The Lucindale School Community Library will be closed for the first week of the upcoming July school holidays, 7/07/2025 to 13/07/2025.
Re opening on Monday 14th July at 9am for normal opening hours.
Please disregard the opening hours recently published in the LINC Community Newsletter, as these were incorrect.

Advanced notice Book Week dress up day

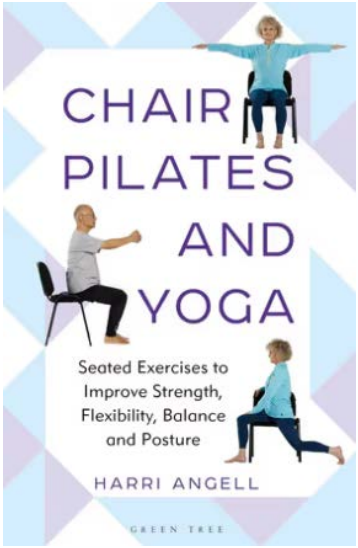
Book Week dress up day will be held on Friday 22nd August. All staff and students are encouraged to
come to school dressed as their favourite book character. Prizes given on the day.
New Reads - Check out these and many more new arrivals by visiting www.libraries.sa.gov.au/client/en_AU/lucindale/



Pruning and training by Cristopher Bricknell

A complete guide to everything you need to know when pruning and training your plants with confidence, from the experts at the RHS. Keep your garden in top shape with the RHS's guide to pruning over 800 plants, shrubs, fruit bushes, ornamental trees, and climbing plants. Clear artworks and step-by-step photographs guide you through some of the simplest - and also more complicated - approaches to keeping your plants in good order.

Chair Pilates and Yoga by Harri Angel



Learn how seated exercise can help you lead a happy, healthy and active life. All you need is somewhere to sit.
If you find movement a challenge, have reduced mobility or are recovering from injury, seated movement is an enjoyable and beneficial alternative to more demanding workouts. Chair Pilates and Yoga is filled with tried and tested exercises to keep you fit and healthy - all while seated on a chair or using a chair as a prop.

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY LIMESTONE COAST ROADSHOW

On Monday 30 June, eleven students from Years 10-12 ventured down to Grant High School for the Flinders University Limestone Coast Roadshow. This was a great event designed to showcase what students can study at university. There were a variety of courses available for students to learn about including Environmental Science, Medical Professions, Allied Health, GIS & Surveying, Agricultural Technology, Nursing and Midwifery, Sports and Active Recreation, Criminology, Early Childhood Education, and more. This was a great opportunity for our students to meet professionals from these industries, and find out what interested them. It was also a good way to find out what you were not interested in!

“It was interesting to see all the career options that are available at Flinders. The Environmental Science session looking at a demonstration of waves on a little beach using a machine to show coastal erosion was a highlight.” – Kayden Grist

Evie Higgins , Careers Pathways/SACE Coordinator

RECEPTION/1/2 GYMNASTICS

As part of our Physical Education curriculum this term, the R-2 students have taken part in a gymnastics program in Millicent. We travelled by bus which was very exciting for the students and then stopped for recess before our first gymnastics session started. Students began their session by learning different warmups on the floor. They then participated in group rotations, learning how to use the trampoline, balance beam, rings and bar. We then headed to the playground for some well-earned lunch and a quick play before heading back to the gymnastics centre for our second session of the day. Before we knew it, we were back on the bus and headed back to school with some very happy and exhausted students!

We have had the most wonderful time participating in the gymnastics program and we would like to thank our parent/grandparent helpers that joined us for the day.

Miss Ferguson and Mrs Wilks

Lucindale Area School Community Library
July 2025 School Holidays Hours

Monday 7th July 2025 to Sunday 13th July 2025
CLOSED

Monday 14/07/25	OPEN	9:00am - 4:00pm
Tuesday 15/07/25	OPEN	9:00am - 4:00pm
Wednesday 16/07/25	OPEN	9:00am - 5:00pm
Thursday 17/07/25	OPEN	9:00am - 5:00pm
Friday 18/07/25	OPEN	9:00am - 4:00pm
Saturday 19/07/25	OPEN	9:00am - 11:30am

HOT CHOCOLATE

AND A MARSHMALLOW

AVAILABLE EVERY TUESDAY FOR TERM 3

Pick up from the Canteen at Recess

YEAR 5/6 OLLIPHANT SCIENCE GAMES

Throughout this term, the Year 5/6 class have been creating a board game on a topic linked to sustainability. The class brainstormed lots of different ideas and topics. Students chose topics of interest and people they would like to work with. Groups of three were formed, based on similar interest. Students then designed their board game concept – drew a plan of their board, what the markers would look like, what the topics of question cards would be, how the game would be played.

After the initial planning stage, all students had to create question and answer cards. Every child had to make 30 question cards related to their particular topic.
Once the question card drafts had been checked by the teacher, students created the template for the cards to be published. The next stage was to design and decorate their board game and work out the way that players will move around on their boards. A number of students created original ideas for their player markers, like mini farmers and recyclable items.

It was interesting, watching the children develop critical thinking and problem solving skills throughout the design process. Students had to collaborate, negotiate, and learn to work together as a team to develop their board games - overcoming problems like the card size, font, images, back to back printing. The students had to devise game rules, aim of the game, number of players, age of the players, set up of the game, and how to win a game.

In week 9, students had the opportunity to play each other's game and give peer feedback on the working of the game. Students then used this feedback to finish and polish their science board game ready for sharing at Primary Assembly then off to Adelaide for Judging.

CONTINUED.....

Charles, George and Amelia - 'Agrilution' based on the past, present and future of farming.

Bridie, Alice and Matilda – 'The Bird Batch' looking at features of different bird breeds.

Gabriel – 'Lucindale Recycling Shed' sorting out different kinds of materials into the different recycling bins.

Skyla, Harriet and Sophie – 'Rainforest Adventures" finding out about creatures of the rainforest.

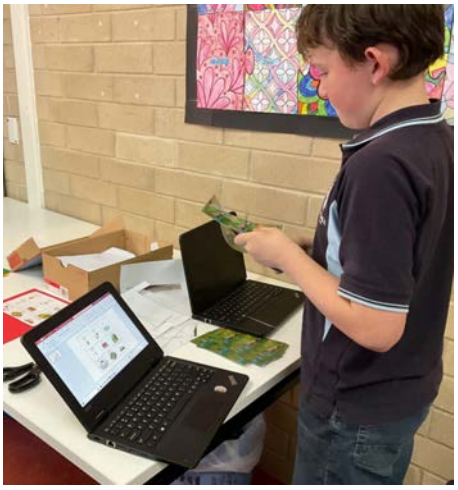
Harry, Harrison and Liam – 'Sustain A Sea' linked to fishing and fishing regulations.

Austin, Jeremy and Daniel – 'Chicken Ladders' related to chicken farming.

Lucy, Marle and Maya – 'BIN GO' looking at recycling using rubbish bins.

John, William and Naithan - 'Farmer's Dilemma' created a farming game about cows, sheep and grains.

Jack, Lincoln and Rylan – 'Bug Bonanza' looking at different insects and pests linked to agriculture.



Pauline Rivett Year 5/6 Science Teacher.

YEAR 1 / 2 HISTORY

Year 1-2 class have been learning about the history of the Lucindale school. Students have analysed old photographs to look at changes that have occurred over time. They learnt about the different house teams, changes in school uniforms, school logos, different playgrounds around the school, changes in buildings and furniture, old school magazines and even created their own timeline from the pavers at the front of the school. It was interesting looking at a 1973 canteen price list and comparing with today's canteen menu.

Pauline Rivett

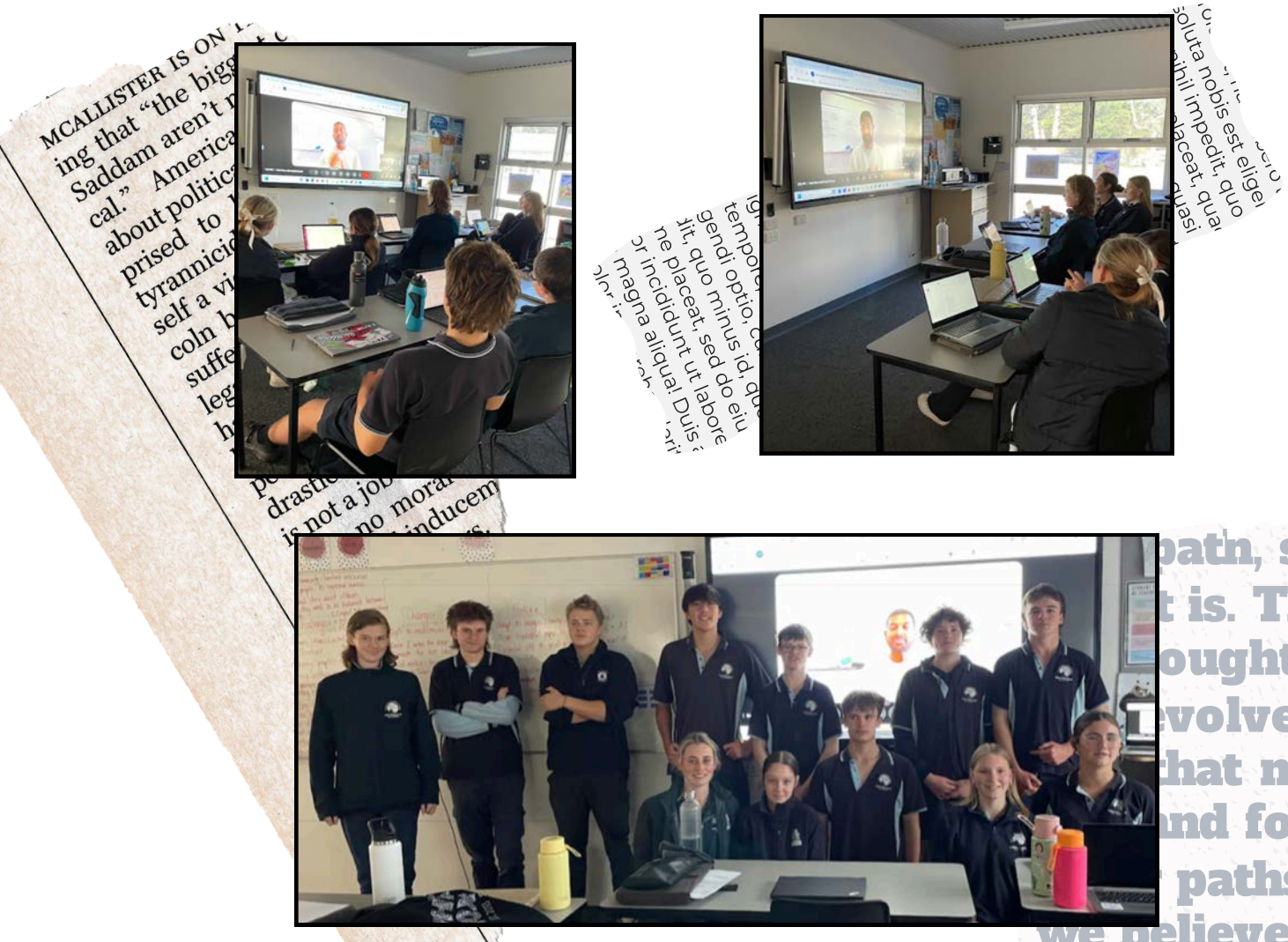
YEAR 10 JOURNALIST INTERVIEW

This week, students were lucky to interview two local journalists - Nasi Swami from the Naracoorte Times and Catherine Miller from the Stock Journal. This was for the basis for the unit of work on Critical and Creative communicators. Students needed to write and design 20 questions each to ask each journalist about his process, pathways, changes and challenges and the future of print media within the ever-changing news cycle.

Things that were learnt included:

- Sometimes it can be difficult to get both sides of the story
- You can be a journalist from a variety of backgrounds
- Journalists can travel to nice places
- It is difficult to come up with stories
- You have to have questions ready to go otherwise it is pointless
- If you want to be something in school, you may not want to be that later in life
- The most rewarding part is getting out in the community and meeting new people
- Both journalists love living in rural areas due to the people

Thank you to both journalists for sharing with the students.



Denise Parkins

Government of South Australia

Hon Blair Boyer MP
Member for Wright

June 2025

Dear parent/caregiver

As cost of living pressures continue to affect many families, the South Australian Government is acting to deliver ongoing financial relief towards the cost of public education.

We want to reduce financial stress for families as much as we can and provide some reassurance for the coming years.

That is why, as part of the 2025-26 State Budget, families with school-aged children will continue to receive a $200 discount per child on their public school's Materials and Services Charge for the next four years.

You don't need to do anything to claim the discount – it will automatically be applied by your school.

The discount does not apply to families approved for the School Card scheme as these families are not required to pay a Materials and Services Charge.

Information on School Card eligibility, income limits and the application process can be found at: SA.GOV.AU - School Card scheme (www.sa.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

Hon Blair Boyer MP
Minister for Education, Training and Skills

Professor Martin Westwell
Chief Executive
Department for Education

Minister for Education, Training and Skills
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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

SAPSASA CROSS COUNTRY

Congratulations to Harry, George, Jeremy, Indi and Maddie who all represented the Upper South East at the State Cross Country Championships, held at Oakbank on Thursday 5th June.
With around 200 athletes competing in each event, the kids all ran beautifully, and they should be very proud of their results.

George - 27th - 12 year old boys
Jeremy - 62nd - 11 year old boys
Harry - 25th - 10 year old boys
Indi - 23rd - 10 year old girls
Maddie - 55th - 10 year old girls

A PIECE BY THE P.C.W

Remember when the 3 R's of learning used to be "Reading, 'Riting & 'Rithmetic"? All essential to being well educated. I believe "Respect" is the fourth and equally important area for learning at home, at school and out in the community. According to the Macquarie Dictionary, the definition of respect is "to show esteem, regard or consideration for". Sounds like a great way of getting along with your family, friends and people that you meet in daily life. It is also important to show respect to ourselves, our environment and things that belong to us and others. The Golden Rule – do to others as you would have them do to you illustrates respect.

Leanne Becroft (Mrs B)
Pastoral Care Worker

NETBALL COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

That's a wrap for Country Champs 2025!

Congratulations to Harmony, Paige and Indi who were selected to play in the KNTNA Country Championship June long weekend. It was a cold and windy weekend for netball. Harmony and Paige represented the under 17's and advanced to the quarter finals. Indi played in the the under 11's and also made the quarter finals.

KNTNA Country Champs
Monday 9th June

Div 1 Quarter Finals

Under 17
Limestone Coast 36 d KNT 21

Under 15
Great Southern 28 d KNT 24

Under 13
Port Augusta 22 d KNT 21

A big thank you to everyone involved in getting our 5 teams to to Country Champs this year. All you efforts are greatly appreciated.

Congratulations to all teams on a fantastic tournament!

KNTNA Country Champs
Saturday 7th June

11 & Under

KNT 10 drew Southern Hills 10

KNT 11 d Kangaroo Island 9

KNT 12 d Mid Hills 6

North Eastern 15 d KNT 6

Yorke Peninsula 15 d KNT 9

3rd Pool A v 3rd Pool B Final

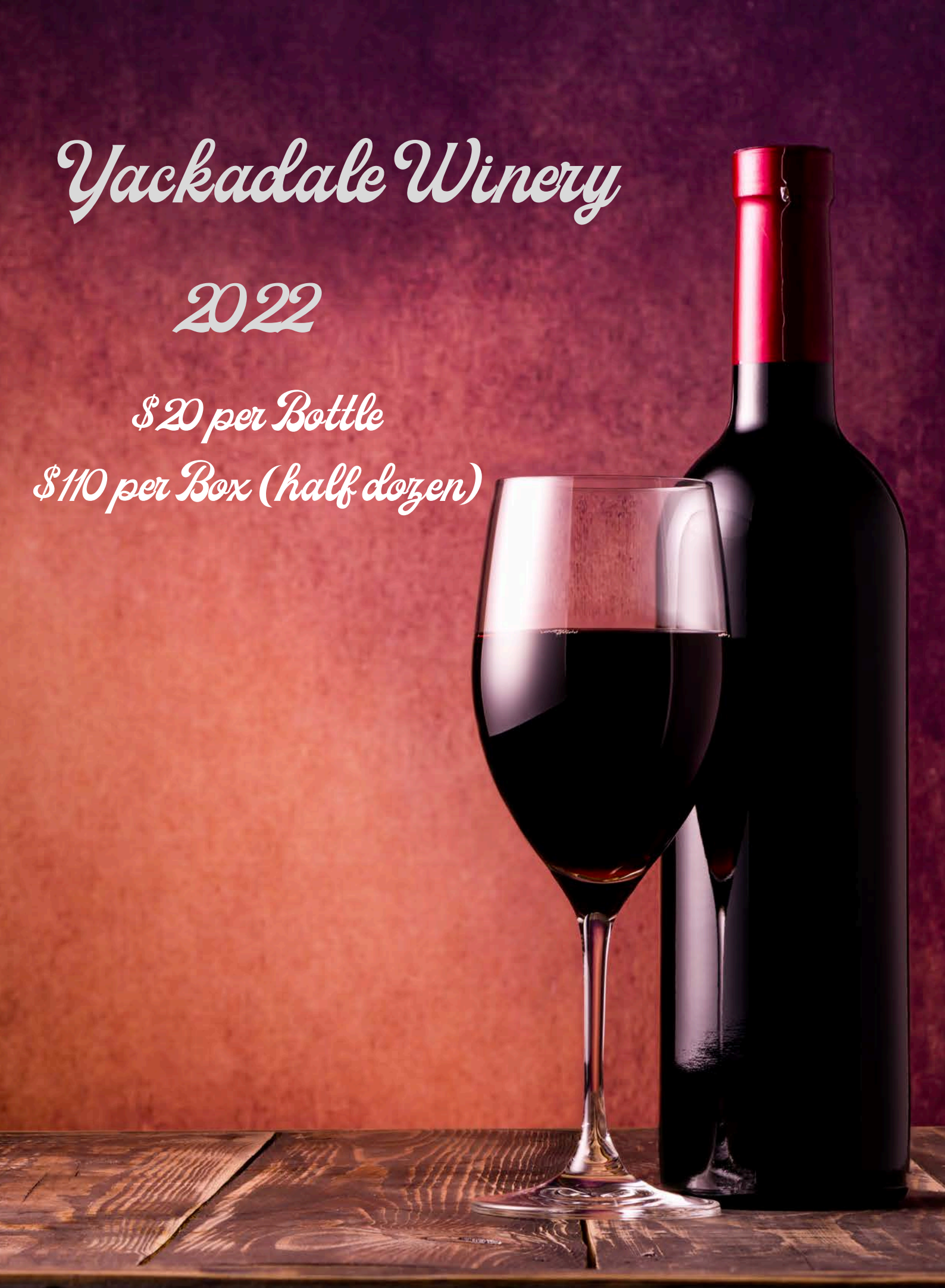
Great Southern 24 d KNT 3

Yackadale Winery

2022

$20 per Bottle

$110 per Box (half dozen)



2025 RURAL YOUTH AMBASSADORS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ON FORUM 2

Last week saw the Rural Youth Ambassadors of South Australia come together in Adelaide for their second face to face Forum.

They spent the week in a number of workshops to further develop their ideas that they identified in Forum I, all aimed at enhancing the education they are provided within rural and remote communities, as well as meeting with a number of organisations to discuss their ideas.

Their week began with a discussion with representatives from the Department for Education where they gained information on what the department was doing to support pre service teachers to be involved in rural and remote placements – an area that Ambassadors are working on. They also heard of the incentives and supports that are available to support teachers to take up employment in a rural or remote school.

They followed these discussions with meeting with Education Heads of School, and their staff, at both Flinders University and Adelaide University where they shared their idea of encouraging more pre service teachers to take up placements in rural communities. Both Universities were very keen on the idea and indicated their support to assist the, Ambassadors in encouraging pre service teachers to go rural in the future.

With this encouragement, the Rural Youth Ambassadors further developed their idea they began in Forum I of developing a number of short video clips that promote their rural communities and their schools and uploading themonto a social media platform in the near future, develop a “youth mentor” approach for pre service teachers taking up placements in a rural schools, and developing “Welcome Packs (including food vouchers, discount cards, support for accommodation, etc) that they will present to pre service teachers when they arrive in a rural community.

The Rural Youth Ambassadors also facilitated a half day engaging workshop focused on developing activities and programs aimed at improving the mental wellbeing of young people in rural communities. Representatives from the Department for Education, Dollys Dream, Research organisations, and Think Effective came together to explore how a whole community approach can be developed to support the mental well-being of rural young people.

The workshops were a great opportunity to discuss a range of ideas, and the Ambassadors have agreed to work with these various organisations in developing programs within their local communities in the near future.

Paige and Kayden

RURAL AMBASSADOR AWARD
ASC OF SA

YEAR 7 / 8 COWS CREATE CAREERS

SPONSORING PARTNERS

Dairy Australia

GARDINER FOUNDATION

SADA Fresh

This term our year 7 & 8 students in Agriculture have been enjoying learning about a wide range of aspects connected with the dairy industry whilst caring for two dairy calves at school. This program is proudly offered by Jaydee Events Pty Ltd. The project aims to introduce students to opportunities for both vocational and university pathways, involve dairy farmers and industry advocates to encourage and support students throughout the project, support students in making informed career decisions by providing connections to the education and employment sectors in the dairy industry, and learn how to care for calves. Students have completed worksheets, created models and movies, and have written letters and scientific reports as part of the competition. Our students top work now competes against other schools in the district and we now eagerly await the results. Many thanks to Jaydee Events, Dairy Australia, Max Care, Gardiner Foundation and Sarda Fresh for being sponsors of this great program and giving our students this opportunity.

Carol Hille

LIONS MAD MINUTE REGIONAL COMPETITION

On Wednesday 25 June, 3 of our Year 5/6 students represented Lucindale Area School by competing in the Lions Mad Minute Regional Competition for the Upper South East, which was held at the Lucindale Town Hall. Students practiced for weeks in the lead-up to this event with their class. They were then judged and the top three plus a reserve were selected. The competition involves selecting a Challenge or a Super Challenge question and then speaking in front of an audience about that topic for one minute. Students need to be prepared, and able to think on their feet, all while demonstrating strong public speaking skills. On Competition day, our students competed against 15 other schools!

After a bit of a reshuffle due to unforeseen circumstances, our team consisted of Austin Hann, Harrison Reynolds, and Charles Bruce. Austin's Super Challenge question was: "We should clean our teeth after school at lunch." Harrison's Super Challenge question was "Summer is better than Winter." Charles' Super Challenge question was "We should have more school excursions." They all did a tremendous job and represented our school splendidly. Unfortunately, the competition was fierce, and LAS did not place this year, but we congratulate the boys regardless for having a go.

I would like to thank Lucindale Lions member Andrew Copping for helping with the majority of the organisation, Alex for assisting with the sound system, and especially the Canteen Committee and their volunteers for catering the morning tea for the day.

Evie Higgins

INDIGENOUS GARDEN

"The Indigenous Garden " project has had many volunteers over the last few weeks. Students who displayed good behaviour earned the privilege to assist our Groundskeeper Joel in its construction.

Students have weeded garden beds, shovelled and levelled dirt for the delivery of bark chips and rocks.

Ashton completed this garden gate made from old rusty welded tools as a feature and entrance to the garden.

Other school initiatives include bush Tucker plants for use in Home Economics and an outdoor sink with a wooden cover made by boarding house students.

It's been a great project involving all year levels with much more to complete next term. The opening of the garden will be in Term 4 alongside the Art exhibition. Stay tuned.

JoJo Spook

WELLBEING

FRESH FRUIT WEDNESDAYS

Thanks to Foodbank and Woolworths we have been able to provide fresh fruit to our primary students each week. Students enjoy a selection of watermelon, apples, bananas, oranges, and mandarins. This program not only supports healthy eating habits but also gives the students a nice boost throughout their day. A perfect snack between recess and lunch. We are very grateful to Foodbank and Woolworths for their ongoing commitment to supporting school communities and promoting student wellbeing and ensuring that every child has access to nutritious food during the school week.

Alex Dakiniewicz, Wellbeing

PASTORAL CARE

During our final Pastoral Care lessons in the Secondary School in Term 3, our students have been doing team building activities. These allow students to work as a team towards a common goal, but also enjoy the social aspect of competing against their peers. In Week 9 the students were given limited materials (pasta, string, tape, paper and marshmallows), and given the instructions to make the highest tower possible using them. The creativity really came out as students began pivoting their ideas and improving their designs. This task allowed the students to have agency and demonstrate their teamwork along with their understanding. The students had a lot of fun despite some objections about who actually won.

Alex Dakiniewicz, Wellbeing

RECEPTION / 1 / 2 HASS

Students in the Reception/Year 1 class have been learning about their own History and how we grow and change in our lifetime. We have shared baby photos and made timelines. Today the students made 'hats' of what they would like to do when they are older.

Congratulations!

Melissa

We proudly acknowledge and celebrate your 10 years of dedicated service with the Department for Education. Your commitment, passion, and contribution to the learning and growth of students over the past decade is truly appreciated. Thank you for everything you do!

YEAR 10 MIGRATION HISTORY TASK

BY FRANCIS

Chapter One

My story started lying on a bed in our old house. The fan hummed above me, barely stirring the thick air. My shirt clung to my back, damp with sweat, and the mosquito net above my head swayed gently with every movement I made. Outside, the buzz of cicadas was broken only by the distant bark of a dog and the low growl of a motorbike crawling down the alley.

I wasn't asleep.

I hadn't slept properly in days.

Through the thing wooden wall, I heard my parents' voices – low, tense, the way adults speak when they're trying not to wake children.

"Tuan," Ma whispered, "they took Mrs. Lan's son. Gone. No trial. Just gone."

There was a pause. Then Ba's voice, rough and quiet.

"Anh was in the South army. We knew this might happen."

"So were you."

Silence.

I shifted under the netting, careful not to let it crack. Mai snored softly beside me, hugging her stuffed rabbit – the one with the missing ear. She still didn't understand. She thought we were going on a holiday soon. Maybe we were.

"Minh is nearly a man now," Ma said. You know what they'll do when he turns sixteen. Re-education, they call it. But it's a prison. Or worse."

Another silence. Then Ba sighed. I imagined him rubbing the bridge of his nose like he always did when the radio said something bad.

"I have the contact. We leave in three nights. By boat. We'll go south. Quietly. Only what we can carry."

I clenched the thin straw mat beneath me.

Leave? By boat? I'd heard the stories – people crammed into wooden shells, floating into nowhere. Pirates. Storms. Drowning. I'd seen the girl at school who came back after her cousins died at sea. She didn't speak anymore.

"Will we make it?" Ma's voice cracked, just a little.

"We will die here, or we risk dying free," Ba said.

The fan clicked off. The room felt even hotter. The silence that followed wasn't peace – it was fear. Thick and real.

I turned to face the wall, eyes wide open in the dark.

I should have been thinking about school. Soccer. Girls.
But all I could think about was the sea.
And whether it would let us live.

Chapter Two: Three Days Later

I was fifteen when we left Vietnam.

That night, the air was thick and heavy – the kind where sweat clings to your skin like a ghost you can't shake. The cicadas buzzed loudly, but all I could hear was the quiet rhythm of Mama's prayers, whispered over and over like a secret spell to keep us safe. Ba Moved carefully, carrying Mai wrapped tight in a faded blanket, cradling her as if she was already too fragile for this world.

The boat waiting for us was smaller than I had imagined. Its wooden hull was splintered and worn, the paint peeling from years of sun and salt. It rocked gently against the dock, loaded with supplies – battered bags, cans of water, and the old fishing nets tangled like memories. Two old men sat nearby; one was the man who smuggled the boat to us, his face weathered like dry leather, and the other was a quiet passenger, eyes cast toward the dark sea. There was also a girl about my age, her hair tangled and eyes wide with fear or maybe hope.

We climbed in silently, the wood creaking under our weight. Ba nodded once at the smuggler, who gave a silent nod back. With a slow push, the boat slid away from the shore, cutting through the black water. The last thing I saw were the faint, flickering lights of the coast behind us, shrinking until they were just memories. Then, as the boat rocked gently in the waves, I closed my eyes and drifted off to sleep, not knowing what tomorrow would bring.

CONTINUED.....

Chapter Three

I woke up at the crack of dawn and then threw up over the side of the boat. I shared a sorry glance at the rest of my family, and the two other passengers. Everyone looked sick. That's when the reality struck that I was floating on the ocean, on a small boat, my old life and home left behind. I thought about my friends from school, who I would never see again.

Everyone sat staring at the ocean in their own world of thought. That's when the conversations started. We sat and listened as the old man introduced himself as Mr. Pham. He told us that he grew up in a fishing village. His father taught him to sail by the time he has eight. During the early years of the war, he avoided politics. He only cared about keeping his family fed and his boat intact. In the final years of the Vietnam War, North Vietnamese forces took control of his village. His boat was commandeered, and he was forced to transport supplies for the communist army. He hated it, but saying no meant punishment – or worse.

"As this was happening, my eldest son was secretly helping American soldiers nearby. When the North found out, they executed him right in front of me." Mr. Pham looked at the floor of the boat and shook his head. "I never forgave myself."

Chapter Four

The days were long, and the nights were longer. The air was always a mix of salt and sweat. Breakfast were tiny rations. Sticky rice, dried fish or a piece of fruit – shared carefully. Mr. Pham checked the boat. "We drifted east again," he muttered. "You said we would reach the island in three days," Ba said. "And I also said that the sea doesn't care about our plans," Mr. Pham replied, slightly annoyed. I noticed that the girl, Thao, had stopped eating. She seemed to be saving her rations for later.

Around midday, the wind began to change. It was subtle at first, a whisper brushing the waves, stirring the boat's worn wooden boards. Mr. Pham stood at the bow, eyes narrowing toward the horizon. "The weather's shifting," he said quietly.

Ba frowned, tightening the rope around a crate. "Storms come fast out here. We should prepare."

The clouds began to roll in — not the lazy cotton puffs from the morning, but heavy, dark curtains creeping across the sky like a warning.

Thao sat beside me, her gaze fixed upward. "I hate this feeling — like the world's holding its breath."

I nodded, swallowing the lump in my throat. "You think it'll last?"

Before she could answer, a distant rumble rolled across the water. The boat rocked gently, but the waves were growing taller, sharper.

Mr. Pham called out, "Secure everything. Fast."

The old sailor moved with practiced speed, tying down loose supplies, his hands steady despite the tension.

Ba helped, but his eyes stayed on the horizon, where the first fat drops of rain began to fall.

The wind howled louder now, whipping the edges of our clothes and pulling at our hair.

Mai cried out, startled. Mama hugged her tightly, whispering prayers.

Lightning flickered in the distance — a quick flash, then another.

The sea beneath us started to churn, no longer the calm blue of morning, but a boiling, angry gray.

I gripped the side of the boat, heart pounding, knowing what was coming. The sky darkened fast, swallowing the sun like a shadow. The wind whipped the waves into white-capped monsters that crashed against the wooden boat, rocking it violently.

"Hold on!" Ba shouted, gripping Mai tighter against his chest. Mama clutched Mai's small body, eyes wide with fear.

The boat groaned under the strain, water splashing over the sides, soaking us all.

Thao's usual sarcasm was gone — her face was pale, jaw clenched.

I grabbed a rope, heart pounding, struggling to keep my footing as the deck tilted sharply beneath me. Rain stung my face like needles, the cold shocking after days of heat.

Mai whimpered. "Minh..." she cried. I wrapped my arms around her through the blanket, trying to shelter her from the chaos.

The boat lurched sideways — for a moment, I thought we'd flip. Ba cursed loudly, balancing himself against the mast.

Lightning cracked the sky, illuminating the terror on everyone's faces. The storm screamed like the war itself — angry, unforgiving.

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Minutes felt like hours. When the rain finally slowed, the sea was a restless, dark blanket. We were soaked, trembling, but alive.

Ba wiped rain from his eyes and said quietly, “We survived.”

Mr. Pham nodded. “The ocean tests us, but it doesn’t own us.”
Thao looked at me and whispered, “We’ll make it. We must.”

I sat slumped against a crate, soaked to the bone, arms wrapped around Mai. She was quiet now, just breathing against me. Mama was next to us, her hair trembling as she stroked Mai’s damp hair.

Ba was at the edge of the boat, face hard, staring into the water as if it owed him something.

Thao was on the other side of the boat, legs pulled up to her chest, staring at the sky. She didn’t speak, but when I met her eyes, I saw something new there – not fear, but understanding.

We all could have lost our lives that day.

Finally, Mr. Pham spoke. His voice was hoarse. “We lost some food. A little water. But we’re alive.”

Ba didn’t turn around. “For now.”

“We can patch the railing around the tarp. The oar’s still usable,” Mr. Pham continued, calmly. “We move forward. Always forward.”

The sky was beginning to clear. Golden light broke through the clouds like a promise. It was the most beautiful sunset I had ever seen, right in the middle of the ocean. In that moment, I knew that we would make it to Australia.

Chapter Five

It was sometime after midnight when I felt it.

The boat moved differently — slower, less dragged by the pull of the open sea. The wind had stilled, and the waves had softened, like the ocean itself was easing us in.

“Land,” Mr. Pham said hoarsely, leaning over the side. His voice cracked as if the word had grown foreign in his mouth. “There’s land ahead.”

We all sat up, eyes wide, hearts suddenly thudding.

Through the darkness, a faint shape rose ahead — low, still, unfamiliar. But real. Not a cloud or another trick of exhaustion. Land. Earth.

Mama gripped Ba’s arm. “Is it really—”

Ba just nodded, his throat too tight for words.

I stared ahead. Trees. A ridge. A coastline lit faintly by moonlight. Australia.

No one cheered. No one dared. It was too fragile — like a dream that might vanish if we breathed too hard.

Thao stood beside me. “We made it,” she whispered, almost in disbelief.

Mr. Pham was already preparing to guide us in, hands on the tiller, eyes clearer than they’d been in days. “There’s a cove. Over there. Quiet.”

The boat drifted silently through calm waters. Every creak felt louder than it should have. We passed a stretch of dark sand, rocks jutting out like sleeping giants.

When we finally touched shore, no one moved for a moment.

Then Mama stepped out first, holding Mai close to her chest. Her feet sank into the damp sand. Ba followed, then Thao, Mr. Pham, and the others. I was the last to leave the boat. My legs shook when they met solid ground.

I knelt down and touched the earth. It was warm.

The stars above looked different here — not like the ones over Vietnam. Not like the ones over the endless sea.

We didn’t say much that night. We built a small fire with driftwood and sat in a circle, half-asleep, too tired to cry, too amazed to talk.

Thao sat beside me and whispered, “What now?”

I looked out at the boat — our broken, beautiful boat — and then up at the sky.

“I don’t know,” I said. “But we’re here. That’s enough for now.”

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Epilogue

I’m thirty now.
Sometimes I still wake up before dawn, just to hear the wind and remember the way the ocean used to sound. It’s different here — softer, kinder — but it still carries ghosts if you listen close enough.
Mr. Pham passed away five years ago. Heart failure. He died in his garden, quietly, with dirt on his hands and a half-planted tree beside him. At the funeral, Ba said, “He got us here. He never stopped moving forward.” I visit his grave every New Year.
Ba and Mama live nearby. Ba runs a small mechanic shop. Mama teaches Vietnamese cooking classes at the community centre. Mai is studying to be a nurse — she barely remembers the boat, just flashes of Mama’s heartbeat and the smell of salt.
And Thao?
She’s my wife now. We got married under a gum tree by the coast. She still doesn't talk much about what she lost, but every now and then, she’ll take out the drawing her little brother gave her. It’s faded, folded so many times the edges look like lace.
We have a son. His name is Pham.
At night, sometimes we sit on the porch, watch the stars, and don’t say a word. There’s peace in the silence now — not fear. Just the weight of what we carried, and the beauty of where we landed.
We made it.
And somehow, we’re still here.

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