



Glendowie
College

Alumni Newsletter



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PRINCIPAL'S LETTER



Kia ora tātou

We finished Term 3 with the house haka/waiata competition. This has grown over the past decade into, with Athletics Day, the premier inter-house event. There is a serious level of commitment by those involved and, as it is a student-led event, provides leadership opportunities to a wide range of students. It is a great way to end the term.

At the end of the year several long-serving staff will be leaving the college. Included in this group is myself. After 40 years at Glendowie College, I have decided that it is time to move on. I would have taught a fair number of the GDC alumni and will depart with fond memories of the college and many of the students and my colleagues. Given the changes taking places in education now, most of which I am, at best, lukewarm about, it seems the right time to leave.

Other long-term staff members who will be leaving at the end of the year are: Head of Careers, David James (32 years), Guidance Counsellor, Glenda Neilson (29 years), and Maths teacher, Terry McBride (23 years). These staff members have served the college and its students very well and will be missed.

Term 3 has been another incredibly busy term. Major events during the term include the Winter Tournament Week. Although results were mixed, the feedback about our teams was that they were committed to perform to their best and had a great team spirit. They were also great ambassadors of the school, appreciative of those who supported them and those who gave up their time to make participating possible.

Congratulations to the Senior Boys Hockey team who won their tournament in Levin. Glendowie College retained the title of top Underwater Hockey School in the country with the Senior Open, Junior Open and Junior Girls all winning silver, while the Senior Girls came fourth. The Premier Netball team finished in the top eight at the UNISS Netball tournament.

Individuals also met with success during the week. Jocelyn Lam won the Under 19 Girls title at the NZSS Table Tennis Championships while Quinn Ngakiau won silver in her weight class at the NZSS Weightlifting Championships. Well done to both girls.



PRINCIPAL'S LETTER



Tournament Week would not be possible without the support of staff, parents and community members who were involved as coaches, managers and a range of other supporting roles.

The Arts had an equally busy term with a variety of events showcasing the incredible talent we have in the college. It started with Dramafest which is two weeks of performances for Years 10–13 students.

Music had a huge programme including the NZ Concert Band Festival in Cambridge where they picked up two bronze, two silver and a gold medal.

At the schools' KBB Festival another two bronzes and a silver were awarded. Dance had two showcase evenings and competed at the Blueprint Hip Hop Dance competition. We also managed to fit in the student-led Te Tuinga Showcase displaying a wide range of talents.

Again, none of this would be possible without the huge commitment of staff and students.

Although it is only the end of term 3, the year is rapidly running out. Year 12 and 13 students had their mock (derived grade) exams in Weeks 8 and 9 and only have three weeks of school next term before they go on study leave for their NCEA exams.

Take care and any support of school events and fundraising is always appreciated. Reflecting on my time here it has always been a community school. I am reminded of that daily by the number of children of former students I see around the grounds.

Ngā mihi nui

Gordon Robertson
Principal



Student Success

TABLE TENNIS

NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOL CHAMPION!

During Tournament Week, Year 13 student, Jocelyn Lam, ventured down to Palmerston North to take on New Zealand's best at the NZSS Table Tennis Cup. Jocelyn entered in the U19 Girls Singles, and in the Teams division in a composite side with Pinehurst and Northcote Colleges.

In the singles, Jocelyn entered the tournament as the number one seed and quickly showed why. She got through the first three rounds without a hitch, only dropping two sets out of eleven.

In the final, she took on the number two seed from Macleans College. Jocelyn could not have started any better winning the first set 11-0. However, she faced some adversity and lost the second game, making it 1-1. She took the third set in a tough battle that required extra points, and won the fourth, taking out the New Zealand Secondary Schools title!

In the Teams grade, the girls managed to get through pool play without much trouble, defeating Rototuna, Burnside and Macleans. In the playoffs they beat Macleans and lost to Saint Kentigern's and Westlake Boys, securing second place.

NZ SECONDARY SCHOOLS SWIMMING NATIONALS

A few weeks ago, we had a team take on New Zealand's best at the NZ Secondary Schools Swimming Championships. Congratulations to Alex McIntosh, Renee Li and Rebecca Rutherford who competed against some first-class opposition.

Alex continues to show that she is one of the best in the country taking home four national titles in the 200m breaststroke, freestyle, Individual Medley and 100m breaststroke, and adding two silver medals in the 50m breaststroke and 100m freestyle to her tally.





HOCKEY BOYS

The Boy's 1XI Hockey team travelled to Levin to compete in the Lower North Island Hockey tournament. It was a wonderful, but long journey through the heart of the North Island to play against teams from the greater Wellington region.



The week started off with a draw (0-0) against St Patricks 1st XI before wins over Hutt Valley High (2-0), Newlands College (3-0), and Stratford High (3-2) to take the team into the semi-final.

The semi-final was played against St Johns College from Hastings who were undefeated in the tournament and for the season. The score was locked in at 2-2 before a final penalty corner just before the whistle blew. Our team worked hard to put away a goal and send us into the finals.

Then in an extremely close final against St Patricks 1st XI, the team continued to put their bodies on the line and gave everything they had to come away with a 1-0 win, making GDC the winners of the tournament.

A fantastic send off for the Year 13s playing their final game: Tristan, Connor, Sam, Leo, Lachie, Youvraj, Manith, Will, and Jack.

NETBALL



Mia Mills and Isabel (Izzy) Oomens were both selected to represent the Auckland Netball Centre at the Novotel North Island Junior Netball Championship in New Plymouth. Mia Mills played in U14-1 and Izzy played in U16 2.



Mia's team finished seventh in the U14A Grade and Izzy's team finished as C Grade champions, earning them promotion to the B Grade in 2027.



INTERNATIONAL SAILING

Leo Brown competed in the 29er World Championships in Kiel, Germany, where he placed seventh overall and helped the NZL Sailing Team take out the Nations Cup for best performing country, for the first time ever!

Elbe White ventured to Spain, taking on the IQFOIL Youth and Junior World Championships, where she took on sixty-two of the World's best. She then headed over to Los Angeles, where she placed second in the Youth Category at the North American Championships.

Jeffrey Du competed at the Optimist World Championships in Morocco, along with two hundred and eighty-five other sailors. Jeffrey managed to qualify for Silver Fleet and placed fifty first, gaining some well-earned international experience.



INTERNATIONAL UNDERWATER HOCKEY

A couple of weeks ago, three of our current GDC students (Rory Smith-Rice, Emilia Hoeglinger and Amy Cilliers), as well as seven former students, represented New Zealand at the Underwater Hockey Age Group World Championships held in Kocaeli/Gebze, Türkiye.

Emilia Hoeglinger and Amy Cilliers were members of the U19 Women's Team, who placed second after a close 1-0 final against Colombia.

Rory Smith-Rice and former student Logan Ross were included in the U19 Men's Team, who placed fourth after two very close finals.

Both the U24 Women's Team and U24 Men's Team won their tournament.





Gala Concert

THE 2026 GALA CONCERT OPENED WITH THE BEAUTIFUL HARMONIES OF THE CHOIR, FOLLOWED BY THE STRING ENSEMBLE, BEFORE THE BIG BAND BROUGHT HIGH-OCTANE ENERGY TO THE STAGE AND THE CONCERT BAND DELIVERED A POWERFUL GRAND FINALE.

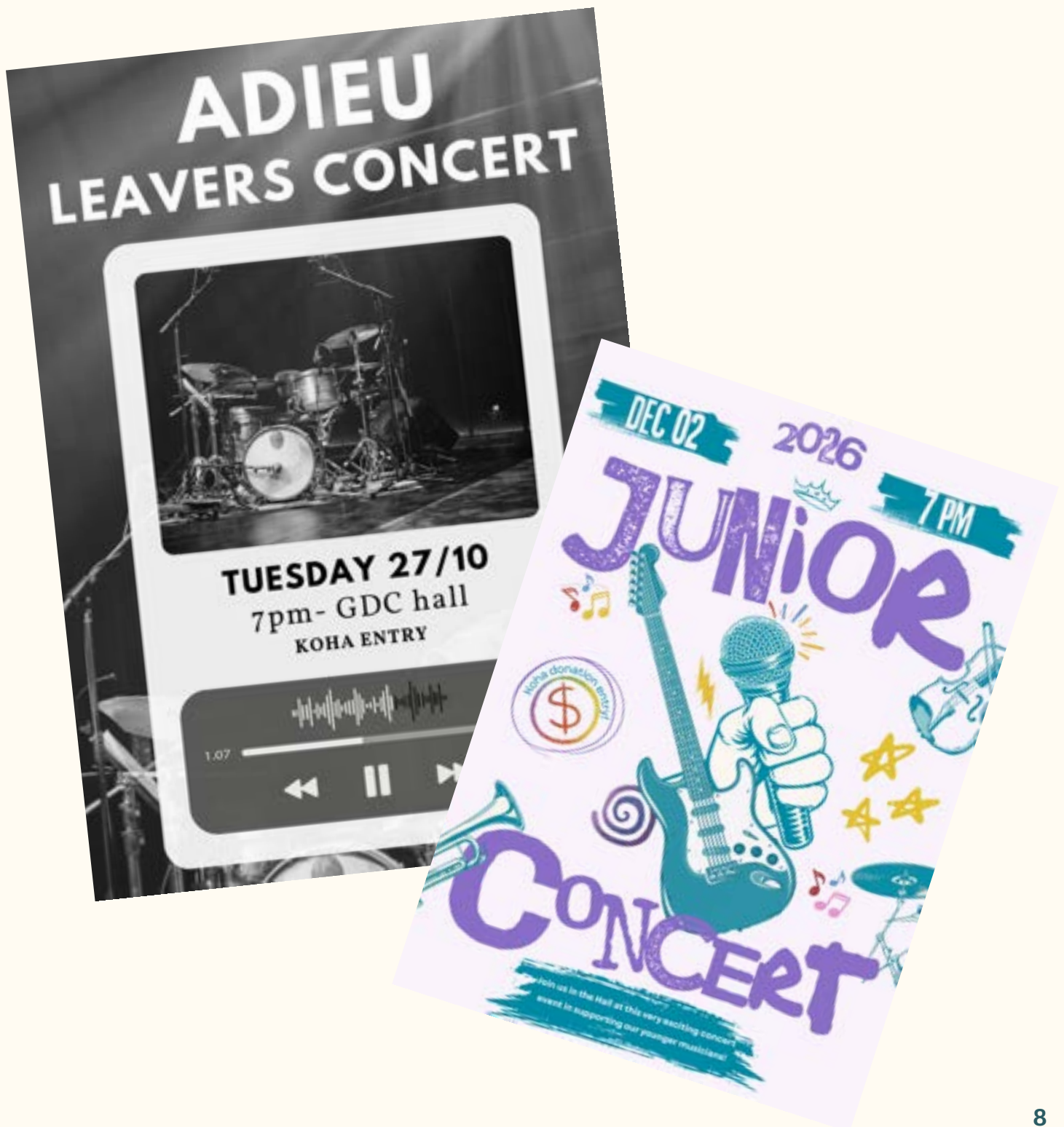




Save the Date

TWO NIGHTS OF MUSIC: LEAVERS' CONCERT & JUNIOR CONCERT

Join us for two special evenings of music at Glendowie College: the Leavers' Concert on 27 October at 7pm, celebrating our senior students' final performance, and the Junior Concert on 2 December at 7pm, showcasing our younger musicians. Koha entry, and all whānau, staff and friends are warmly welcome to attend.





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Alumni Spotlight: Marina Erakovic

(INTERVIEW BY AMELIA FLEETWOOD, YEAR 10 STUDENT)

In this edition of Alumni Spotlight, Year 10 student Amelia Fleetwood sits down with former Glendowie College student Marina Erakovic to talk about her journey from Glendowie College to an international tennis career.



Marina, a former New Zealand number one who represented the country at two Olympic Games and reached a career-high world singles ranking of No. 39, shares her experiences as a professional tennis player and memories of her years at GDC.

You were the number one tennis player in New Zealand. Tell me about your journey.

I was born in Croatia and I moved to New Zealand when I was six years old. I started playing tennis initially in Croatia with my dad and my sister for fun, and then when I came to New Zealand we continued, and we did it as a family until I enrolled in the Auckland tennis squads and started playing there. When I was around 14-15, I started playing ITF juniors and I did well. When I was 16-17, during my last year of high school, I had to decide whether I wanted to play tennis professionally or continue with school. I thought, oh look, I've been doing really well. I was the fifth junior in the world at the time, and so I thought, let's give it a go, and so I tried to make it as a professional. It was a very bumpy journey, a very tough journey. And then, from about the age of 19-20, I cracked the top 100. I had a professional career of 15 or so years and retired when I was 29.

Did you look up to any tennis players as a kid?

My favorite player was Monica Seles at the time. She was from the former Yugoslavia, where I was from as well, and so I really looked up to her. She was very diligent and had a hard work ethic, which was very inspiring. I even got to meet and play with her in the end, which was really cool.



Alumni Spotlight: Marina Erakovic

(INTERVIEW BY AMELIA FLEETWOOD, YEAR 10 STUDENT)

How did you balance training and school?

It was tough. I would take a lot of the material with me when I was traveling to tournaments. A lot of it was cramming when I was back home, which I wouldn't advise. I think it was made more manageable with Miss Young supporting me by taking me through things that I missed. I wouldn't recommend doing what I did, but it worked out.



Do you have a favorite tournament to play in?

I was lucky to have a tournament at home because that meant I got to go home. At the time, it was the ASB Classic, and I always had a chance to play at home. There were pros and cons with that. Sometimes it felt very inspiring and motivating, and the crowd support was amazing. But sometimes I felt a lot of pressure, and I probably couldn't perform as well as I'd like to.

I also like playing in some of the other bigger cities, such as the Grand Slams. Wimbledon was my favorite because I like to play on grass. I loved New York City as a city, when I played in the U.S. Open.

I liked other events that were a little bit more niche, like a tournament in Quebec City, Canada, because it was a really nice city with great food.

I also liked playing in Scandinavia because I felt comfortable: things were really organized, and they had good music. I'd like to go to shows and things like that when I wasn't playing.



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What's it like going to the Olympics?

Incredible. I went to Beijing in 2008, and I was in London in 2012. Both were really awesome. Beijing was really special because that was my first one, and the biggest highlight was the opening ceremony; walking out with all the other athletes. Another highlight is getting to know all the other athletes in the village, especially from New Zealand. Being a tennis player, you don't have a team, and you're on your own on the road a lot.

It was really special for me to come back and connect with New Zealand athletes and learn about what they're up to and how they approach their sport and what they do in terms of their training. We had a very nice community and I made quite a few connections there, so it was a real privilege and honour to be a part of that.



Who was the toughest person you played against when competing?

The toughest person I played against was Serena Williams, because she's probably the greatest female tennis player of all time. I didn't play badly, but she beat me quite squarely. She had a real game that you could feel when you stepped on the court. Her groundstrokes – you could feel the impact and her serve was just above all the rest. There was another player that I could just never beat, a girl from Japan, who was also a top 50 player. Our game styles just didn't match up.

What were the biggest challenges you faced as a professional tennis player?

I had a lot of injuries, and setbacks are really tough. As you know, at certain periods of my career, I was out for six months or more. One injury lasted nearly 9-10 months; nearly a year. One of the things that is always hard from an injury is that you have to come back to the level you were at before, but then everyone's also improved while you were resting and recovering. So you even have to get a little bit better. So that comeback is always very tough.



Alumni Spotlight: Marina Erakovic

(INTERVIEW BY AMELIA FLEETWOOD, YEAR 10 STUDENT)

The other challenge, especially with tennis, is that it's a very long season. You're playing from January until basically November, and then all of that is away from home, especially coming from New Zealand. You're traveling a lot, you don't have your family around you, you don't have your friends, so that's very challenging.



Who's your favorite tennis player now?

I was born in Croatia, former Yugoslavia. Novak Djokovic is from Serbia, which is near where I am from, and he's one of the last players of the era I played in. I am still rooting for him and what he's doing is amazing. Two other players that I also like from the women's side are Karolína Muchová, who has a very creative game, and Coco Gauff.

How is tennis still a part of your life?

So when I retired, which was in 2017, I stepped away from tennis for a little while.

I needed some time off for a couple of years, but then I managed the Billie Jean King Cup for a couple of years. I didn't play, but I helped the team.

I also joined the Tennis New Zealand board. I was there for three years, where I looked at particularly high performance and what Tennis New Zealand was doing in terms of that, and tried to provide some support and knowledge to improve that.

And, when I could, I helped some of our juniors as a mentor. I still really enjoy keeping a part of myself involved in the game and giving back.

How did it feel to be back at GDC today?

Really cool. I don't think I've been back here since 2005, which is the year that I graduated. I loved GDC. Mr Robertson is your principal now. At the time, he taught me economics, and I really enjoyed it. Miss Gibb taught us geography and social studies, which was really cool. I have a lot of fond memories and a lot of friends that I am still in touch with.

What are you doing now?

I work as a business consultant, and I specialize in human-centered design. I work at PwC New Zealand.



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Available yearbooks:

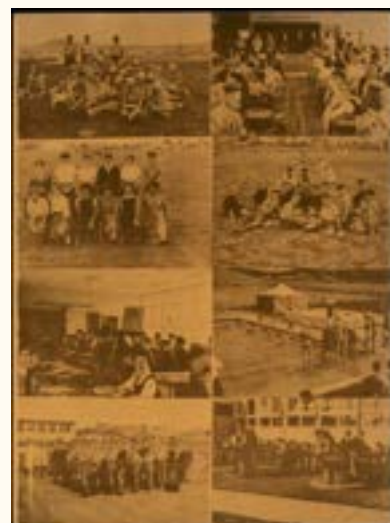
- ④ Every academic year from 1961 to 2023 (excluding the 1985 edition, when the 25th Jubilee edition was issued)
- ④ 25th and 50th Jubilee editions



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Set of 3 yearbooks: \$40

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