

Back to School ... A Bus Tour to The Geelong College

On Thursday 26 February, we had the pleasure of being the guests of prestigious secondary school, The Geelong College, for a tour of its campus, including a special lunch in the dining hall.

Founded in 1861, The Geelong College is a Uniting Church coeducational day and boarding school with approximately 1,300 students aged from three to eighteen. The tour came about as a result of chatting to some residents one lunchtime about their school days. Two of our residents, Mr Barry Beach, Q.C. and Mr Bill Woodburn, both revealed they were former students of The Geelong College.

When arranging permission from the school's Director of Community Relations, Mr Mike Howell, to peruse the grounds, he was kind enough to extend an invitation to include a special lunch in Barry's and Bill's honour.

Both Barry and Bill were chuffed at the prospect of re-visiting their old Alma Mater and looked forward to the outing with great anticipation. On arrival, we were greeted by Mr Howell and a student who was also related to Barry. Both Barry and Bill were reminiscent of their time spent at the College and had many entertaining stories to share, whilst enjoying their visit. Bill was a prominent sportsman, featuring in the school's Old Collegians book and Barry has been honoured in the Hall of Fame, alongside other famous alumni such as, Guy Pearce, Paul Sheahan and many more.

We were guided through the beautiful school, meandering through its historic archways and admiring the magnificently manicured gardens. Afterwards, we were shown to the resplendent dining hall—an impressive wood-panelled building that had been the old dormitory. We were served a lovely lunch and Mr Howell formally welcomed us, paying special tribute to both Barry and Bill. We also listened to one of the Co-Captains of the School, Tansy Pereira, who shared her experience of being a new student starting out at the school. Now in her final year, she reflected on all she had learnt and credited her impressive development to the strong guidance given, whilst at The Geelong College.

All our residents enjoyed the ambience of the school and listened attentively to the interesting changes it had made over the years. There were some other Kew Gardens residents who also recalled occasions when they had played competitive sport on the College's grounds, visiting from other private schools, such as Geelong Grammar, Melbourne Grammar, Scotch College, Ivanhoe Grammar, and Xavier College. It was a lively lunchtime discussion with everyone having a chance to share their own school memories!

On departing, Mr Howell presented both Barry and Bill with a copy of the book, *The Way to the Stars: 150 Years of The Geelong College*. Bill was also presented with the book, *Geelong Collegians at the SECOND WORLD WAR and subsequent conflicts*. This was attributed as he played in the First XVIII and First XI in 1941; it is mentioned in the book along with a complimentary photo. Mr Howell thanked us for making the journey, expressing how he felt privileged to meet with past students, hear their stories, as well as host a luncheon for all our residents.

Returning to Melbourne, we had a very quiet bus load of residents, all dozing at different times after their big day out. We thank The Geelong College for making our visit such a special one and for giving our residents the opportunity to step back in time and remember their days back in the classroom. Special thanks also goes to Lifestyle team member, Clare O'Meara, for organising this fantastic bus tour and for developing such a strong relationship on behalf of our facility with this impressive school.

