

LOWANNA GRADUATES

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BRYCE MAGNUSON CLASS OF 2007

When did you attend Lowanna College?

From 2002-2007

What were your memories of Lowanna College?

They are generally quite good. A standout was Year 12 as a whole, even though it was challenging. The whole year level got along great, we were well supported by our teachers and we all acknowledged it was the last year of our schooling. It was the last time we'd all get to hang out five days a week. So we made the most of that year.

I also got involved in the different leadership courses that were available, which gave me the opportunity to do some cool extra-curricular stuff (rock climbing, attending lectures by some pretty interesting people, being part of the local council's youth council program come to mind). In hindsight some of those opportunities opened doors for other things I pursued after finishing high school, but they've created some great memories.

How do you think your experiences at Lowanna College helped you become the person you are today?

Throughout high school I was never 'the best' at anything. For any activity we did at school, whether it was playing a particular sport, analysing a particular piece in English or running an experiment in biology, I could name at least three of my peers in that class who were way better than me (with the exception of maths, where that number sat closer to 24).

Regardless, I still tried to do my best, which is something my teachers recognised. In turn they invested their time and energy to help me achieve my best, and in some instances exceed expectations. I may not have been the best, but I had grit. I had persistence. And, by the end of VCE, I had both a result and an offer for a university course that I was proud of.

These experiences taught me to try and to work hard. I could have adopted the mindset



that there were other people in those classes better than me and use that as a poor excuse to not try. Or to even just coast on the basis that I might scrape by without investing much effort. But neither of those approaches would have provided me with the opportunities I've encountered in the last decade.

What did you do after leaving Lowanna College, and where are you now?

In 2008, my first year out of high school, I started studying at university and technically didn't finish until 2017. I completed an undergraduate degree in Business and Commerce at Monash University's Gippsland Campus (now Federation University), followed by an Honours degree in 2011 and a PhD that I worked on from 2012 to 2017.

During that time I worked a few different jobs. I continued working as a lifeguard, which was my part time job during VCE, working as an aide at Lowanna covering long service leave for a brief period but predominately worked

at the university. I started when I was a PhD student, marking exams and assignments for other lecturers. That eventually turned into taking tutorials and eventually lectures. In this role, I was fortunate enough to lecture in Hong Kong and China on a few occasions. I continued working as a sessional lecturer at the Gippsland Campus until 2017.

When I started my PhD, which focused on the marketing of ethical clothing, I also started a small screen printing studio called Straight & Arrow. I liked the theory and the research component of university, but wanted to see if I could make ethical clothing work in the real world on a small scale. So I started by printing my own line of shirts under the same name and expanded into printing shirts for bands, businesses, community groups and a variety of other people. From the networks I created using Straight & Arrow, I've become involved with a few other creative projects, including Gippslandia (a free magazine produced quarterly about the region), photography and



videography projects with Andrew Northover Photography and a few others in their early planning stages.

At the beginning of this year I started a full time position as the new Marketing Lecturer at Federation's University's Berwick Campus.

What are your greatest accomplishments?

Completing my PhD thesis and having it pass examination would be my greatest accomplishment to date.

The feelings associated with finishing something of that scale, that I had invested so much time and energy into, are hard to describe. It still fills me with a huge amount of pride just thinking about how this kid from Newborough completed a PhD.

A few other accomplishments include teaching overseas, which is a truly humbling experience, getting my research published in the top journal in its field and spending half of 2016 teaching in Asia and travelling through Europe.

What advice would you like to give any of our current Lowanna College students?

I'll stick with three pieces that, in hindsight, I probably could've used as a student.

1. To fail is to learn.

Getting something wrong isn't the end of the world, it's actually the complete opposite. The only exception is when you've failed because you didn't try, in which case you learnt nothing and wasted your time. But if you're trying, and you get something wrong, you still gain something from that process. You've learnt a valuable lesson on how to improve, and what not to do in the future. When I started university I couldn't write a report to save myself, but I applied myself, sought feedback when I didn't do something well and improved from there. This same approach has helped me to learn a bunch of other skills and works for anyone who is willing to apply it.



2. **Enjoy the journey**, because the satisfaction associated with the destination can sometimes be short lived (and sometimes overrated). I know this one is a bit of a cliché, but something that is worthwhile doing takes time. By focusing purely on the end goal you end up missing opportunities that pop up in the middle bit, and that middle bit can sometimes be years long. It doesn't matter whether you're restoring a car, studying at university or learning how to paint. The end goal is cool, but the opportunities for learning, enjoying yourself and savouring the small wins you have along the way are ones you shouldn't waste.
3. **Don't let where you're from define you.** Don't forget where you're from either, because it will help shape you and the choices you make in the future (usually for the better if you've learnt from your mistakes, as per my first piece of advice), but don't ever think your future has

been determined by something as trivial as where you are from. While studying during the first year of my PhD at a university in Melbourne I had a lecturer claim that "we don't expect much from our Gippsland cohort", a cutting remark directed at myself and another student. In a class full of people from all corners of the globe we went on to be the first to graduate, myself with two research papers from my thesis already published. The place we were from was not, and still is not, something that prohibits success.

