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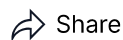
It survived the 2003 fires. Now, it's about to change the lives of countless young people



By [Megan Doherty](#)
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The Galilee School in Kambah is all about second chances, new beginnings, building strong and lasting legacies.

So, it makes sense that Bosco's Barn, at the centre of the campus off Kambah Pool Road, is something of a symbol for the school.

The strong, squat barn, made from stone and wood was one of the few buildings on the property to survive the devastating 2003 firestorm. There are still scorch marks at the base of its hulking support beams.

"Staff at the time actively fought to save the building," school principal Tim McNevin said.

They - and the barn - proved to be resilient and made of the right stuff.

Now, the building is being repurposed to help change the lives of vulnerable young people.



📷 Galilee School principal Tim McNevin outside Bosco's Barn which is set to become Bosco's Cafe on the school campus at Kambah. Picture by Keegan Carroll

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Galilee School has launched a \$15,000 fundraising campaign through the [Hands Across Canberra 2026 Canberra Day Appeal to convert Bosco's Barn into Bosco's Cafe.](#)

It would be a working training cafe designed to give students practical skills and real-world experience.

The independent secondary school, owned and run by not-for-profit organisation Communities at Work has 130 students.

Students in year seven to 10 are at Kambah and, year 11 to 12, at Holder.

Mr McNevin said its style of learning and teaching was in such demand that the school board was considering a third campus, this time on the northside.



Galilee School principal Tim McNevin says Bosco's Barn has become a symbol of the strength of the school and its students. Picture by Keegan Carroll

The school works with young people who are at risk of disengaging from mainstream education or, as Mr McNevin explains it, "are yet to thrive" in that environment. Many have experienced trauma, disrupted learning and complex life challenges.

Mr McNevin said at Galilee, class sizes were kept small, each student had an individual learning plan, students were ferried to and from the

school by staff, there were no mandatory fees and all teaching resources and even food was provided to the students by the school.

"Whatever barrier there may be to learning, we want to remove it," he said.



📷 Scorch marks from the 2003 bushfires can still be seen on the building. Picture by Keegan Carroll

Mr McNevin said Bosco's Cafe was about far more than just transforming a building.

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"For many of our students, the idea of having a job once felt impossible," he said.

"This cafe will create belief and opportunity. It will help students build confidence as they learn to prepare food, make coffee, serve customers and develop teamwork and communication skills. This real workplace experience can open pathways into employment."

The barn-turned-cafe is conveniently located across from the school's new hospitality and events teaching space opened last year at the school. Students could prepare food in its kitchen and deliver it across the courtyard to the kitchen.

Mr McNevin said the \$15,000 was to help kit out the cafe and get it open sometime this year.

The area is slated to be a hospitality hub, eventually open to the public, especially at the monthly South Canberra Community Markets, an initiative of the school and its neighbour in Kambah, the Lions Youth Haven.

Bosco's Barn likely originated before the school, when the site was used to help disengaged and unemployed young men, who probably

also helped to construct the building.

It was named after St John Bosco, a pioneer in educating the poor.

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These days, Galilee is a non-religious school, but just as dedicated to educating those in need.

Mr McNevin said the school was proud of its students and all their achievements, which came through their willingness to trust the

process and the staff's dedication to their work.

"To see such a change in the students and to see them graduate, is remarkable," he said.

Donations to kitting out Bosco's Cafe can be made via the Canberra Day Appeal website at canberra-day-appeal-2026.raiselysite.com/o/galilee-school

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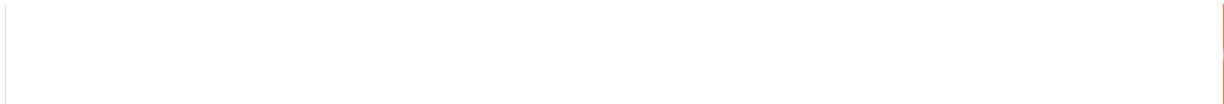


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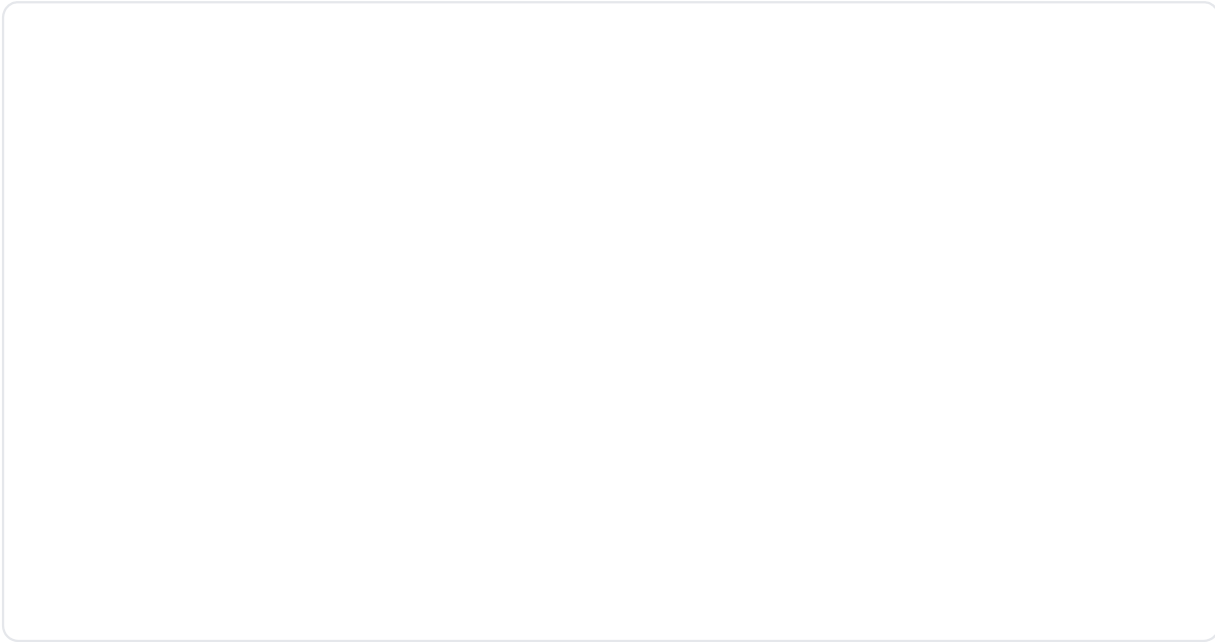
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