



The Torch



Edition 47

Message from the Chairman



Dave Mitchell

To all St. Dunstaners and their families

Another year has flown -- we cherish our families and friends and strive to enjoy good sunshine as we move into the festive season.

Looking back on a busy year, I especially recall the well-attended Long Cane Rally held in the Cape

Town Gardens, in the lee of Iziko Museums, and the great feeling, bird songs and nature's freshness as we walked along Government Avenue.

From the team at St. Dunstan's, we send on and share our best wishes to all for a peaceful, restful and joyous holiday break, and a blessed Christmas to those who celebrate.

May the New Year bring lots of joy and many happy times – we look forward to being there with you and alongside you in the journey we travel.

Warm regards to all

Dave Mitchell
Chairman, St. Dunstan's

Farewell to Noretta

After more than 23 years of dedicated and loyal service to St Dunstan's, we bid a fond farewell to **Noretta**, whose remarkable journey with us will come to a close at the end of December 2025.

Throughout her time with the St Dunstan's, Noretta has exemplified what it means to serve with heart, integrity, and purpose. From her very first day, she approached every task — no matter how big or small — with enthusiasm, professionalism, and a determination to make a difference. Her tireless work ethic and attention to detail have ensured that everything she touched was done with excellence and care.

What has truly set Noretta apart, however, is her unwavering compassion and genuine warmth. She has always had time for others — whether it was lending an ear to a colleague, offering guidance to a beneficiary, or stepping in to assist wherever she was needed. Her friendliness and kindness have made her a constant source of positivity in the office, fostering a sense of teamwork and belonging among all who had the privilege of working alongside her. Noretta's deep understanding of our beneficiaries and their unique challenges has been one of her greatest strengths. She has demonstrated empathy, patience, and a rare ability to connect with people on a deeply human level — qualities that have had a lasting impact on countless lives within the St Dunstan's community. Her role extended far beyond her formal responsibilities; she has been a mentor, a supporter, and a trusted confidante to many.



Noretta Minnaar

Her commitment to the **Long Cane Rally** stands as one of her most notable achievements. Year after year, Noretta poured her energy, creativity, and determination into ensuring its success. Her leadership and organisational skills helped make the rally not only a highlight on our calendar, but also a meaningful event that celebrated independence, courage, and community spirit.

As she embarks on her well-deserved retirement, we reflect with immense gratitude on all that Noretta has given to St Dunstan's. Her dedication, resilience, and positive spirit have left an indelible mark on the organisation. While her presence will be deeply missed, her influence and example will continue to guide and inspire us for many years to come.

Noretta, we thank you for your extraordinary contribution, your friendship, and your unwavering commitment to the mission and values of St Dunstan's. We wish you every happiness, good health, and endless joy in this exciting new chapter of your life. May your retirement be filled with rest, adventure, and all the things that bring you peace and fulfilment.

With warm regards and best wishes,

The St Dunstan's Team

Retirement Speech

The time has come for me to embark on a new journey.

Looking back to when I started at St Dunstan's in 1996, I've met and sadly lost so many loved ones along the way. People I grew close to over the years, who touched my life deeply. Sometimes, I can still see and hear them in my mind's eye.

To those whom I spoke with every day, every week or every month: thank you for letting me be a part of your life's journey. I will miss our chats dearly. But as we all know, life goes on, and one day, we'll simply be memories to one another.

Thank you, St Dunstan's, for the wisdom I've gained by seeing the world through the hearts and experiences of our blind members, their spouses, children, and families.

Hugs and kisses to you all.

All my love

Noretta

Beneficiary News

Archie Roberts, a St Dunstaner with tenacity:



Archie Roberts

Archie completed his Masters in Management: In the field of Governance public and development sector monitoring and evaluation.

We extend our greatest admiration for your unwavering dedication throughout your rigorous studies in achieving this significant milestone. Your pursuit of expertise in this critical field is a testament to your commitment. Congratulations and well done on this outstanding accomplishment.

Coaching Success stories

In 2023, the Ian Fraser Memorial Bursary Fund proudly launched its Coaching Programme in partnership with the UCT Centre for Coaching. This initiative has opened a meaningful pathway for visually impaired students to grow with confidence—helping them balance their academic commitments, personal lives, and overall development.

Coaching has proven to be a powerful catalyst for personal and professional transformation. Through this programme, students are supported in setting clear goals, navigating challenges, and unlocking their full potential. Each bursary recipient is paired with a dedicated, professionally trained integral coach who walks alongside them throughout their educational journey, offering guidance, encouragement, and unwavering support.



The impact has already been deeply inspiring. Our students are thriving, and their voices speak best to the value of this partnership. Here is what some of them had to say:

Student 1: I feel empowered to express myself authentically, as my coach has created a space where my thoughts and experiences are respected without judgment. Each session encourages me to share from my personal perspective, with the understanding that my views are shaped by my unique life journey and are not to be deemed incorrect. I approach our interactions with openness, sincerity, and a willingness to grow, while he listens attentively, offers guidance, and assigns tasks that support the achievement of our session goals.

Student 2: For the majority of this year it was personal growth focused, learning to build self-trust, although it was related to my academic journey as well. However, for the last few sessions we've been focusing on time management and anxiety management when it comes to my Masters, because I had found myself in a place where I felt overwhelmed by edits that I had to make and I was losing momentum. He has helped me untangle that mental knot and to regain momentum and an upward spiral.

Student 3: The primary direction of my coaching sessions is focused on both academic and career growth, as these are central to my long-term goals. At the same time, my coach also supports my personal growth by helping me build confidence, empowerment, and resilience. This balance allows me to strengthen my professional development while also addressing personal challenges that may affect my progress. Overall, the sessions guide me toward becoming more prepared, focused, and self-assured in pursuing my future aspirations.

Happy Holidays



We're wrapping up 2025 with big smiles!

Our last day in the office will be 15 December, and we'll be back, refreshed and ready for an amazing new year, on 6 January 2026.

Wishing everyone a safe, joyful, and unforgettable Festive Season!

The End