

Morale, Motivation and Mateship.



A joint School Captain's perspective on his final year at MHS as he studies online and celebrates his 18th birthday in isolation.



From Peter Stathopoulos
President, MHSOBA Inc.

One of the true pleasures of being involved with the MHSOBA is the interaction with current Melbourne High School students and seeing the personal development they achieve during their time at the school.

One of the areas that the Old Boys' community assists in is the Junior Leadership Program which is run during Term 1 for eligible Year 10 students. I must thank those who have led the charge in this area over the past seven years: David Saul, Wayne Chow, Daryl Brooks and Deniz Atakan. This year we saw the program expand to include Year 10 students from Mac.Robertson Girls' High School with great results.

It has been my pleasure to be involved with the selection process of Keith 'Bluey' Truscott Scholars where Year 10 students are chosen for what we feel is a most prestigious appointment.

Over the past few years it has been a joy to see some of these students then go on to occupy senior leadership roles within the school such as School Captain and Vice Captain and Senior SRC leadership roles.

One such student is Shayan Soroush who is joint School Captain of Melbourne High this year. Shayan is also one of the Year 12 'Bluey' Truscott Scholars in the Class of 2020 and a member of the MHS School Council. He has been involved with sports such as Soccer and Futsal and has played the Tuba in the Symphony Orchestra with short spells in the Davis Band and the Tattam band.

Morale, Motivation and Mateship (con't)



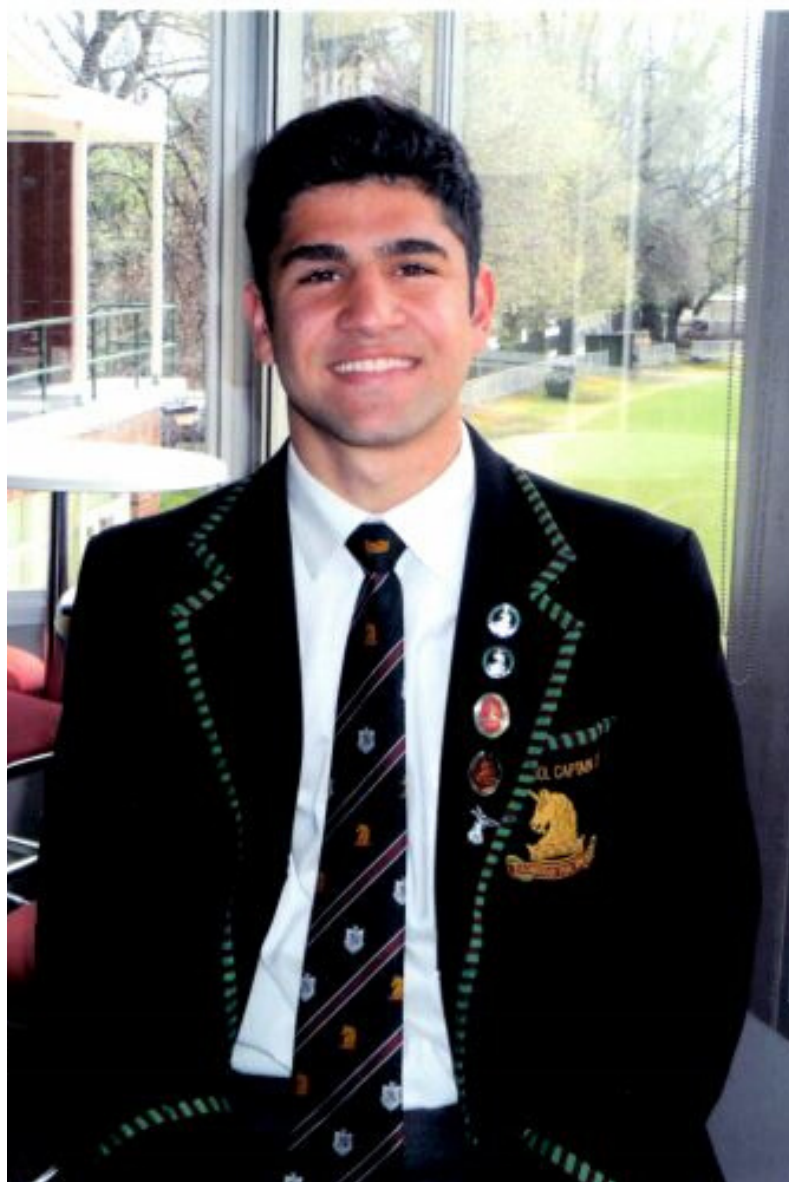
In 2020, Shayan was also a Chorals Conductor for Forrest's Free choice piece. Outside of school, he's heavily involved with Refereeing Football Victoria competitions including the National Premier League and Senior Men's State League.

It's my opinion that Shayan has a very bright future and I look forward to him maintaining a long and productive relationship with the MHSOBA once he graduates from MHS.

Today - Monday 4 May 2020 - Shayan celebrates his 18th birthday.

On behalf of the MHSOBA I would like to wish him all the best for the day and for all his pursuits going forward.

Recently I contacted Shayan to see how he was coping and progressing and I managed to ask him some questions about the year to date.



**Joint MHS School Captain and
Keith 'Bluey' Truscott Scholar 2020,
Shayan Soroush**

Here is what ensued... _____

Morale, Motivation and Mateship (con't)



Peter: How has the online learning experience been and what have you been doing during this period?

Shayan: Since the middle of last term, we were all expecting it to come but we just weren't sure when it would.

We are about four weeks into it now and I've just been finding that it requires a very different approach to learning and revising the content from class. We typically have 1-2 virtual lessons for each subject using Microsoft Teams, where the teachers run through the content we are supposed to cover in that week and explain the tasks that we have to complete and hand in.

We can ask our teachers questions during the online classes, but outside of class it's more up to us to use our resources and be slightly more independent in our learning. The teachers still answer our questions and give feedback on our work with online submissions, but that lack of face-to-face interaction makes it a different dynamic.

The most challenging part about online learning is the lack of social interaction with friends. There aren't any before school and after school train rides, recesses and lunchtimes where we get to spend time with each other and have a laugh.

We are still connected through social media and we can video-call each other through Zoom and other platforms but it's just not the same.

The pandemic has also forced events like the Junior & Senior Socials, North Sydney Boys' High Exchange, Adelaide High Exchange and Athletics to all be cancelled. In the last few years, these activities presented us with the best opportunities to get involved and have fun with our friends.

Morale, Motivation and Mateship (con't)



Peter: How has the online learning experience been and what have you been doing during this period? (con't)

Shayan: Another side to mateship at MHS is the fact that we all look after each other and keep each other accountable, whether that be for keeping up to date with classes and study progress or even staying involved with sports, clubs and music.

In isolation, that aspect of it is almost removed. The other Year 12 leaders and I have taken on the responsibility and tried our best to maintain everyone's morale and motivation during isolation.

We have been making a series of 'Isolation Diary' vlogs through the MHS Student Voice Facebook page and the SRC YouTube Channel, where each student in the video films and shares some of the things they do on the daily in isolation. They also share general advice, study tips and new activities to try.

Andrew, my partner School Captain, and I have also made videos that would essentially replace our speeches at assemblies about directions and advice for online learning and Term 2 more generally. Apart from reaching out to all our mates and doing our best to keep in touch, I hope that all we're doing has helped to keep the other boys motivated.

Peter: What were your goals before the start of the year and how have they changed because of COVID-19?

Shayan: With my VCE goals, they haven't changed because the pandemic is affecting us Year 12s all in the same way. The admission processes aren't changing, except for a few Universities, and the prerequisites look like they're all going to remain the same.

There are some setbacks with online learning but for me, the best thing to do is to view the crisis as an opportunity to get ahead of the game.

Morale, Motivation and Mateship (con't)



Peter: What were your goals before the start of the year and how have they changed because of COVID-19? (con't)

Shayan: More personally, I was really looking forward to having fun and enjoying all of the events in the last year of school like the exchanges and outside school as well, like many of my friend's 18th birthdays.

My own 18th birthday celebrations were cancelled, which is really sad but I guess that I'll just have to be grateful and cherish any events that do happen once social distancing is finally over.

I had also set big goals for my term as the School Captain. The main one has been to work with the rest of the student leadership team to come up with a proposal that would change the way students are grouped within the school, according to house and combining different year levels in forms.

This proposed 'Vertical' structure would group Year 9s and Year 10s in the same form, and Year 11s and Year 12s in the same form based on their houses. Our rationale is that a restructure like this could bring back a strong house culture within the school and also foster connections between different year levels.

In my conversations with Old Boys from a variety of different decades, it consistently seems like the house culture and spirit used to be a lot more important back then compared to now. Different year levels have been and still are disconnected to a degree, unless you're involved with a lot of different clubs, sports and activities.

I intended to work with everyone else on this proposal in our leadership camp, which was also cancelled because of the pandemic. Instead, we had to readjust to achieve our goal. During the school holidays, we held around 10-12 Microsoft Teams meetings with various working groups and we were able to write our proposal and submit it to the Directions Committee last week.

I presented our proposal in the previous committee meeting and I look forward to developing it with others from our student team for the rest of the year.

Morale, Motivation and Mateship (con't)



Peter: How do you see yourself staying involved within the School and MHSOBA after leaving?

Shayan: A few ways I think. In my time, I've seen Old Boys come back to the school and help with programs like the GMB Mentoring program and the Junior Leadership Model, so I'd love to get involved with those and give back to the future students that go through life at MHS.

As one of the Keith 'Bluey' Truscott Scholars, I have started to suggest and draft an Old Boys Academic Support Program, which I hope will begin in the near future.

The idea that I've shared is for volunteer Old Boys to run School holiday introductory and lecture style programs for VCE students undertaking certain subjects in Year 11 and Year 12.



This could include introductory lectures at the start of the year and exam revision lectures at the end of the year. Melbourne High's most valuable asset are students that all perform so well academically year-in, year-out.

A program like this could really benefit VCE cohorts and stop students from spending hundreds of dollars on companies that would essentially provide similar school holiday programs for introduction, consolidation and revision of course content.

I've also seen some of the Old Boys involved with Soccer come back to school on early mornings and have a kick with the boys that are currently in the team. I'd also love to make small returns like that and stay connected as much as I can, it would bring back many memories; especially now that the school sport season is cancelled for the remainder of the year.