



MARGARET RIVER

Independent SCHOOL

EST. 1982 AS NYINDAMURRA FAMILY SCHOOL

Alumni News

Edition 17 | June 2026

**Welcome to the 17th edition of our *Alumni News*,
a publication keeping students connected with Margaret River Independent School, formerly
Nyindamurra Family School.**

Inspired by our 30th (2012) and 40th anniversaries (2022), we are reconnecting with former students via an Alumni List and this quarterly newsletter, featuring updates from past students and contemporary school news. We want to share your news and memories of the school and maintain strong links with you for the future. We invite you to visit the Alumni section on the school's website at www.mris.wa.edu.au and see all our news on Facebook and Instagram.

Please join our Alumni List, share some memories with us for future editions and perhaps include a current photograph of yourself at work or play with your family.

For information contact Melissa White (melissa.white@mr.is.wa.edu.au) or the school on 08 9757 7515.

Alex Giles: From MRIS to Summer Bay



Alex (second from the right) with some of the graduating class of 1998

For Alex Giles, memories of Margaret River Independent School (formerly Nyindamurra Family School) are impossible to narrow down. "There's far too many cherished memories to count!" he said. "The sports carnivals against Karridale, the camps, and especially the end-of-year concerts were the highlight of my year." But one memory stands out as something more tangible — the mud-brick oven. Every student (and many parents) created a distinctive brick, decorating it with objects reflecting their identity. Those bricks were then combined to build the oven, something the whole community could enjoy. The oven became a kind of time capsule. "Every time I returned to the school, I would locate my brick and find comfort in my own contribution to something really special and lasting."

Growing Up at MRIS

Alex schooled at MRIS from Yr 1 -7. His cohort of five — including Layla, Nic, Tyler and Daniel — "was possibly one of the biggest cohorts of the 90s!" During these years, his creative identity truly took shape. "Wendy did a great job in setting the foundation and with Lynne Serventy, Maree Mohn and Manfred Bruggler as my Drama, Art and Music teachers, it was ingrained in me to value creativity from day one. In my experience, specifically in drama, I found a calling that's very much a part of me personally, but also where I have grown professionally."



Alex on the set of *Home and Away*

Beyond the arts, Alex credits his time at school for nurturing his deep love of Australian wildlife. "I'm at home in the bush," he says. "I'm always wanting to learn more about my surroundings — it's a part of my personality I'm very proud of and hope to pass along to my own family."

Today, Alex lives in Sydney with his wife Kaleigh and son Westley. He writes for the iconic Australian television series *Home and Away* and works as a Script Coordinator, supporting the show's cast and creative team. His creative work extends beyond television. His original play *An Entirely Ordinary Town* received a Broadway workshop in 2023, and he is currently developing *The Shredder Dawgs*, a lawn-bowls hip-hopera with Australian artist *Drapht*. Alex has also appeared in major musical theatre productions including *Wicked*, *Rent* and *The Wedding Singer*, and recently starred in Sydney's premiere of *The SpongeBob Musical*. On weekends, he performs with cover band *The Bad 80's Band* under the stage name Ferris Cooler.

Giving Back

"My memories of Nyindamurra/MRIS are such a huge part of who I am," Alex says. He welcomes current students and families to reach out about careers in film and television or simply to connect.

"I'm so grateful for the childhood and education I was graced with — and would love to give back to that community if ever I can."

You are invited to contribute a multiple of 5 (\$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$500) each term. This project follows the school's Bush School motto — *From little things, big things grow* — demonstrating that small ongoing activity can assist with big developments.

See the website www.mris.wa.edu.au for further information.