



**MATTHEW
FLINDERS**
Anglican College

Tribute to Erol

A story written by the Seniors, Class of 2022



Back in 2000, we worried about the start of the new year and the impending doom of the Y2K bug (...ask your parents if you're not up to date with your Modern History!)

But little did we know that one of our favourite Flinderians would make their way to Stringybark Road and into our hearts.

The Sydney 2000 Olympics was about to kick off at the end of Term 3 and Sid the Platypus, Olly the Kookaburra and Millie the Echidna were household names.

But, down at the Forest Glen Sanctuary on the Old Bruce Highway, a proud father emu celebrated the birth of a new chick. Unfortunately, or fortunately, the Sanctuary was unable to secure the necessary paperwork to keep a native animal on their site. They reached out to some old friends and made contact with Mr Chris Bull.

Mr Bull was a foundation staff member, the inaugural Chaplain at Flinders, our much-respected Head of Agricultural Science for over 20 years and the heart, soul and beloved Head of Sutherland House. He also had a heart of gold, an inability to say "no" and the foresight to see that filling in the paperwork and committing to look after a three-week old emu chick might grow into something a little more significant for the Flinders community.

So, late in Term 3, the emu chick arrived at the Farm—and quickly into our hearts. The three Year 8 Agriculture classes soon appointed themselves the chick's principal carers and each decided to give him a name. Erol, Ozzy and Norbert made up the short list.

Listen to the story on our Flinders website here:
<https://www.mfac.edu.au/seniors-of-2020-story-of-erol/>



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During the school day, the emu chick lived with the farm's poultry flock and had dreams of becoming a rooster.

During 2000, Erol was only a day boarder at the Flinders Farm, spending nights at Mr Bull's home or with Year 12 McCubbin student Daniel Adams. Dan seized the opportunity to use Erol as the subject of his Year 12 Agriculture major assignment, weighing the mass of food he consumed each day and the mass the chick put on.

As a result, at the end of the year, Mr Bull made the commitment to keep the emu at the Farm. Daniel passed his assignment with flying colours and even more importantly, the emu chick officially became "Erol".

Erol has been a fixture at the College ever since. He welcomes visitors, especially those from overseas, who can't believe there's an emu living on site. He has seen plenty of kids grow from timid Preppies coming for their first visit to confident Year 9 boys trying to manage a lap of the farm on Erol's back.

Erol's Facebook page was the most popular on the Coast back in the day, with over 3,000 friends (...that's a lot in the early 2000s of social media).

He'd post thoughts, contemplations on life pictures and answer queries about his day. He pined at the end of Term 1, 2016, when his best friend Mr Bull retired from Flinders. He and Erol had been inseparable for 16 years. There was that time when Kevin the Pig tried to muscle in and steal Mr Bull's attention. But running away during the whole of school assemblies and having half of the Secondary School out trying to track him down, meant the relationship was doomed to fail.

Mr Bull always had a ready supply of celery, Erol's favourite food, and would happily walk and talk with him, ensuring he had all a content emu could want for a comfortable life.

Ms Grant, Mr Fights and, most recently, Jeff the Farmer, have all enjoyed the responsibility of caring for Erol.



Image: Farmer Jeff Mclean with regular visitors from FELC feeding Erol a treat of leafy greens.

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We were all grateful that Ms Grant, a trained veterinarian, was on hand a few years ago when Erol became ill. She consulted widely, dosed Erol with antibiotics and spent a number of long nights nursing him back to health.

Erol continues to enjoy his time at Flinders. He loves a visit, the occasional tasty treat and most of all, interacting with all of his favorite Flindarians.

We hope the next time you walk past the Flinders Farm, you drop by and give Erol a hello and appreciate all that he has brought to the College in over 20 years of schooling.

You'd think he would have graduated by now...

Vale Erol | 2000-2025



Image: Artwork from the storybook "Erol & the Beast" written by the Class of 2023 prefects and illustrated by Flinders students



Image: Students with artwork featured in "Erol & the Beast" holding copies of the storybook. Back L-R: Kurtis Millsom, Stephanie Gutierrez, Gabrielle Mann, Samantha Lovely, Hannah Walker. Front L-R: Yurim Noh, Adderley Knibb-Moritz, Harriet Gaskin, Sophia Saeedi



Image: Flinders Head of Junior Primary, Ms Kersti Mowat, holding an 'E for Erol' flash card from the "Welcome to Prep" flashcard series.



Image: Students catching up with Erol. L-R: Fraser Mills, Tom Handley, Rory Neil, Campbell Cooper

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