I am delighted to be sitting in as Principal, Alstonville High School. My first impressions, and I suspect they will last, are of a staff collectively working to ensure that students achieve their personal best. I have had doors opened for me, I have had conversations with the 2015 Year 12 who appear focused and already on task and I have visited the hall where Year 7 and 9 have been busily responding to questions on exam papers. I have had to explain my teaching career to curious students and been unsuccessful in the Melbourne Cup sweep. I have been privileged to be surrounded by a community that cares about each other. All this in my first week!

I have been in hospitality kitchens, wandered the playground, farewelled Basketball players and enjoyed getting to know the staff and students and soon, the parents. The last few weeks of any school year are busy and this is certainly the case here.

Exams are nearing completion as reports are written. Year 11 have now entered Year 12 and are already looking towards their HSC. Year 12, 2014 are organising innovative ways to be transported in all their collective finery to the Formal on Thursday 13 November.

The smell of heat heralds the end of the year coming, the summer holidays and the Christmas cheer, but there is still assessment to be completed and learning to occur. Make the most of the next few weeks as it carries you into the holidays and through until 2015.

Have a great fortnight.

Janeen Silcock
Principal

The Up Close 2014 magazine is ready to go. Pay now at the front office only $20 be in the first 100 and receive a gift!! These will also be sold at the Year 12 Formal on Thursday night 13th November 2014.
15 years Girls putting Basketball back on Alstonville High’s Calendar

Last week the 15yrs Girls Basketball team travelled down to Terrigal to compete in the final eight of the CHS Knockout Competition.

The team, consisting of Zoe Hurley (C), Charlotte Yager (C), Molly Hughes, Sarah Bransgrove, Leilani Rohweder, Ashleigh Brown and Trisha Calugay, were a last minute nomination into the 2014 knockout draw and as such have only been playing together since September.

After claiming the Richmond Zone Championship in Lismore, then defeating Southern Cross in Ballina at the Regional level, the girls were looking forward to playing Merewether High School in front of our home crowd. This wasn’t to be, with the Newcastle based team forfeiting.

That win catapulted the girls into a whole other level of Basketball; they were now in the final eight teams of the state!! Only two of the girls, Zoe and Charlotte, had played at a representative level before and the rest had little to no experience playing Basketball.

In preparation for the increased speed and skill at which the games would be played at the CHS Championships, as well as getting much needed game time, the team competed in the Trinity College Basketball Invitational in the Open Division early this term in Lismore. They played well, winning 2 games and losing 1 against much older girls.

The final eight draw matched us against Tumut, Mackellar and Oxley High Schools. We would have to win two of these games if we were to progress into the final four. The first game against Tumut was evenly matched, however their higher shooting percentage, gave them a solid lead into the second. We were defeated 56-18.

With the nerves of game one behind us we went up against Mackellar Girls College from the Northern Beaches of Sydney. Our defence and shot percentage improved, however their experience and all-round knowledge of the game made it very hard for us to gain the upper hand. After a third quarter fight back, we eventually went down 56-31.

The team was definitely pumped for our third game of the day against Oxley; a win would mean we would play off for 5th. The girls got off to a solid start but weren’t closing down enough shots to gain a commanding lead. The threat of an early night and no shopping seemed to motivate the team and we finished with a 10 point win, 32-22, ending the day on a high.

The 5th place playoff game was against the ‘locals’, Terrigal High School. The girls were very positive and we were determined to play well. The scores stayed close for much of the first half. Our overall game play and team work was at an all-time high but foul trouble again meant we struggled to keep the pressure on.

The last quarter was extremely close, with the final score being 32-27. 6th in the state as a very impressive effort.

To say I am proud of all the girls would be an under-statement. Their development and success has been pleasing to watch and as a coach I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of a positive team environment. Congratulations girls and well done!

A big Thanks goes to Trish Rohweder and Lachlan Bransgrove for driving the team down to Terrigal. The sound of your friendly cheers really motivated the girls and was a great help to me.

Alison Larrescy

Junior Boys Cricket

Our Junior Boys Cricket teams are off to a winning start for the season. The Years 7/8 team is through to the Far North Coast Final of the Matthew Phelps Shield 20-20 competition. The boys have defeated Xavier Catholic College and Murwillumbah High School and will meet the winner of Woodlawn or Trinity in the final in Lismore on the 26th of November.

In the National Bank 40 Over competition for our U14’s Boys team is through to round 3 after a forfeit from Maclean High School and a close game against Lismore High in round 2. Alstonville 132 – Kyle Yager 26, Jackson Forster 28, Jordan McNally 14, James Leslie 18 and Ethan Houlden 11no. In reply Lismore managed 109 with Matthew Job, Kyle Yager with 3 wickets and Jordan Coughran, Jordan McNally with 2 wickets each. The next game will be this Friday 14th November at Geoff Watt Oval in Alstonville against Kadina or Evans River.

Jack Larrescy

Climate Change and Me

On Monday, 10th of November twenty one students from Alstonville High School were given the opportunity to take part in a research program on climate change at Southern Cross University. Most students were from the Year 7 with a few students from Year 8.

The students were given access to the Climate Change and Me website where they will be able to post poems, pictures and any activities that they have conducted as part of creating awareness regarding this key global issue. Students were given tips on conducting an interview with their peers as a way of knowing the views of the younger generation on climate change. The role of these students as researchers will be ongoing for the next three years with the staff and scientists at SCU interacting with them directly and electronically.

The students were very motivated and engaged in the activities and were excellent ambassadors of the school. We hope that their passion and commitment is vital to persuade others, especially their peers to view climate change as a serious issue.
Debating

To compose a logical, yet highly complex and sophisticated argument in one hour, and then present it to an audience is daunting for most students. To have your presentation attacked, and then turn back to critique the opposing argument would be a challenge that would leave many of us dumbfounded. For sixteen of our brightest and most articulate students, however, it is an art form that I never tire of watching come together. In 2014, Alstonville High School has continued its proud tradition of participation in both the Ballina Council Debating Challenge and the New South Wales-wide Premier’s Debating Challenge. This year we entered four teams in all competitions. Furthermore, four of our Year 9 and 10 debate team members were lucky enough to attend the annual North Coast Regional Debating Finals in Coffs Harbour with their very supportive coach, Ms Kelly Twyford. A member of that team, Andrew Entwistle, was even selected to be a member of the NSW State debating team. Yet again, I have been lucky enough to coordinate our teams and, with all competitions completed, present our year in review:

Premier’s Debating Challenge: Year 11 and 12

Alstonville’s senior side finished 1st in their zone group in Term 2. This was the same side who competed against Sydney Boys’ High School in a State Final in 2013, minus Suzie Scott. Led by their new team advisor, Anais Cross, the team worked hard to maintain a very busy schedule; juggling rigorous HSC study with a hectic travel schedule for debating. Despite strong wins against Tweed High School and Byron Bay High School, they came unstuck in a very close North Coast final against a younger Murwillumbah High School side who went on to reach the state finals. Congratulations to Anais, Ashleigh Smith, Chloe Timms and Henry Coyne who I am sure will go on to achieve great success at their chosen Universities next year. They have left big shoes to fill. However, it will be nice to go on debating trips with a little less back seat singing!

Premier’s Debating Challenge: Year 9 and 10

Alstonville’s Year 9 and 10 debating team competed well in their Zone group debates. For the first time, they were coached by Ms Twyford, who helped them improve the content and structure of their arguments. The major highlight of the team was the role played by Lucy Turner of Year 8, who stepped up to the challenge of debating in an older year group. Despite not advancing in to the area finals, the team was lucky enough to attend the North Coast Regional Finals in Coffs Harbour. This allowed them to compete against teams from as far away as Forster, which has given them excellent experience to take into next year’s competition. As Lucy transitions into Year 9 in 2015, we’re sure the experience will assist her in helping us remain successful in this highly competitive division.

Premier’s Debating Challenge: Year 7 and 8

The Year 7 and 8 division of debating involves a very big leap from the primary school competition. The Premier’s Debating Challenge requires students to present an argument of at least
6 minutes and usually involves large audiences and highly critical adjudicators. Furthermore, they are only given one hour to prepare and receive no assistance from their teachers or electronic devices. Obviously this requires great team understanding, maturity and responsibility. Our two teams from Alstonville High School have these traits in abundance. This was exemplified in the group stage of the competition as our teams finished first and second in their group with Southern Cross High School’s two sides. The fact that one of these teams consisted entirely of Year 7 students, most of whom had not debated in the past, is very encouraging for our school’s future in the competition. Unfortunately, only one side could progress and our team consisting of Finn Ball, Lucy Turner, Evie Lopes and Clare Johns were the winners on this occasion. This team went on to debate Kadina High School and Mullumbimby High School in Area and Regional finals. After winning both of those debates they progressed to the Inter-Regional final to decide the team that would go to Sydney for the State Finals. Unfortunately, our team lost a very narrow debate to Norfolk Island High School via video conference. I’m sure the team would agree with me when I say we require some better video conferencing equipment as we certainly intend on beating Norfolk Island next year and going all the way to Sydney! A big congratulations to our Region Champions as well as the second side, who I’m sure will continue debating in 2015.

Finally, to the parents, carers and siblings of our debating students, thank you for the ongoing support. At times debates can be organised very hastily, it is your willingness to support the team that really does allow us to continue achieving so highly.

As always, we welcome new members to try out in 2015 in all age groups. Thank you for a great year!

Scott Thomas / English

Scholarships for Alstonville High School Students

The Combined Services Club of Ballina Inc has awarded Scholarships to Eden Knott and Amber Moss in Year 10. These scholarships provide $1500 as financial assistance to allow the students to achieve their academic goals. The girls were selected after interviews from a field of over 20 students based on their consistent personal and academic performance and involvement in community activities.

The club has been supporting local students in this manner since 2006 and Alstonville High School would like to thank them for providing such worthwhile opportunities for local students and to congratulate the girls on their success.

The Anglican Church has also offered a scholarship of $1500 for the first time in 2014 to a student at our school to assist them in achieving their goals for their senior studies. This scholarship, based on admirable personal and spiritual qualities and exemplary work ethic, was awarded to Rebecca Parker. Alstonville High would again like to take this opportunity to thank Church members for their generosity and support, and to congratulate Rebecca on her success.

Senior Attendance

All senior students have been given a ‘Senior Attendance Variation’ form. Please read the changes that affect your child and discuss their responsibilities with them. Forms are to be signed by students and parents and returned to Mrs O’Brien. A blue ‘Student permission to drive private vehicle to school’ form has also been included. Please complete and return if appropriate.

Stephanie O’Brien

The Girl to Women Festival.

On Sunday 18th January 2015 Girl to Women Festival will be held at the Lennox Head Cultural and Community Centre. It is open to the whole family and provides a forum for young women, their families and the community to explore relevant issues and join in the celebration of who they are.

There is a full day of presentations, performances, workshops and market stalls available for you to explore. If you are interested in attending this festival, you can access their website on www.girltowomen.com.au .

I also have flyers if anyone would like more information.

Kerri Crethar
P&C, Canteen & Uniform News

All Canteen Volunteers are invited to our
Thankyou Morning Tea
On December 2\textsuperscript{nd} at 11am
On the Skye Deck

Canteen and Uniform News

- Try our fresh wraps, rolls and sandwiches for recess and lunch
- Check out our daily blackboard specials

Uniform Shop

- Starting Year 7 next year? Beat the rush and buy your uniforms and book packs early.

UNIFORM SHOP OPENING HOURS
8am - 10am
Monday, Wednesday, Friday

What would it mean if your teenager had the mindset and motivation to create a successful future?

Brent Williams has been running world-class Empower U programs for young people for over a decade now. Teaching them how to take control of their lives and achieve a new sense of self-worth, determination and empowerment.

Whether it's:
- more motivation,
- improved attitude,
- better exam results,
- a savings plan,
- leading a green job,
- or just a more open family relationship,

You will see results fast!

Empower U is for 14-25 year olds, November 21\textsuperscript{st} - 23\textsuperscript{rd} Ballina TAFE club.
Go to EmpowerUandYouth.com.au or call 0412281213