HSC Started

Year 12 students started HSC exams this week. We wish them all the best. Over the school holidays many of our students and staff worked very hard revising and practising for the exams. A big thank you must go to the parents and staff who have worked so hard alongside our students preparing for the HSC. A big thank you also goes out to Paul Grebert for all his work coordinating the exam schedule and preparing venues. Mr Grebert has been working in partnership with our Presiding Officer Mr Hurley and his great team of community members.

Year 12 Breakfast and Farewell Assembly

On the last Friday of Term 3 we held the annual year 12 breakfast and farewell assembly. The weather cooperated and we had a magnificent morning. This event continues to grow and we had very large numbers of students, staff, parents, carers, relatives and friends in attendance. The team of P&C members, parents, student volunteers and staff who organised and ran this event did an excellent job. The fact that we had large numbers of volunteers this year was especially pleasing. Mrs Bowles and Mr Chate did a great job of organising the entertainment, the venue and the program. Once again Mr Roberts did an excellent job of organising all the awards and he was ably supported by Mr Duncan, Mrs Stanton and the English faculty.

School Improvements

Over the recent vacation two important projects were completed at the school. One of our kitchens was upgraded with new stainless steel bench tops and splash backs. They incorporated new sinks and the upgrade also included new storage space. Mr Groves, in consultation with staff, managed this project and the end product is a great improvement. We also had a new covered area constructed at the front of the school. This new entrance opens up the front of the school, improving access, weather cover and safety in the afternoon as students wait for buses. The funding for this project came from a joint funding submission submitted by the school and the P&C. We would like to thank the P&C for their support.
Positive areas from the report include:
- Students with a positive sense of belonging
- Students with positive relationships and students, particularly in the junior years, who value school outcomes
- Students’ view of positive school behaviour
- Low levels of truancy
- Students who try hard to succeed
- Students who felt they had strong advocates outside of school
- School advice on subject selection, career advice and post school planning

Areas where we see there is potential for improvement include:
- Positive homework behaviours
- Intellectual engagement in years 9 and 10
- Student interest and motivation to learn – year 10 in particular
- Students with moderate or high levels of anxiety – year 9 in particular
- Incidents of bullying – year 9 in particular
- Year 7 students planning to finish high school
- Year 7 students planning a post school education or training

The Tell Them From Me student survey was modified from a Canadian survey and it is apparent from feedback from the students that some of the terminology used in the survey was not familiar to Australian students and this has affected the initial data. Feedback has been provided to the team in charge of the survey design and data production on behalf of DEC.

During Term 4 we evaluate our progress on our three year school improvement plan and look to what refinements we need to make. The information that we have gathered from this survey will be used to inform this process. We will also discuss the results with the P&C and Student Representative Council during Term 4.

**Educational Idea for the week**

Recently I read an article by Erica McWilliam and Peter Taylor titled as *Personally Significant Learning: the challenge*.

The authors of this article argue that is obvious that increasing numbers of children, particularly middle class children, are becoming increasingly vulnerable. They argue that this is happening despite the fact that they may have supportive parents, live in nice homes, attend well-resourced schools and enjoy comforts of life that young people in Third World Countries cannot access.

McWilliam and Taylor argue that the reason this is occurring is because they do not see learning as being personally significant. They describe young people who avoid the discomfort of unfamiliar ideas, who do not welcome the lessons that can be learned from making errors, who think of
learning only as a boring necessity, who are reliant on parents and teachers to tell them what to do or to do it for them. They expect things like university degrees to be passports to employability and financial security and they argue that children who grow up with these attitudes are in real trouble.

Why is this happening? In the view of the authors of this article it is because the global transformations that are occurring have made our traditional scripts ineffective when it comes to preparing young people for their living, learning and earning futures.

This article further reinforces our school focus on increasing student engagement and also building student independent learning skills. McWilliam and Taylor have ten propositions to address the challenges that we face and they include:

- Working with students and families to understand that choosing to learn means choosing the discomfort of the unfamiliar and the difficulty in predicting the future
- Learning matters – and understanding how to learn matters most of all
- Kids who experience the pleasure of the rigour of learning will always choose to learn
- Self-managers with powerful learning portfolios trump those who rely solely on credentials
- Teachers have new responsibilities as co-learners

How to work with students, families and teachers to achieve some of these goals is a challenge and the authors of this article do not provide specific details about how this can be done. What they do point to is the concept of ‘meddling in the middle’. They argue that there is a role for teachers (and parents by extension) to demonstrate co-learning with students, modelling how to take risks, do experiments and how to be resilient when those experiments don’t come off. These concepts align closely with the ideas of Habits of Mind that we have outlined previously. This article also supports my belief that we must work with our young people to develop attitudes that value hard work, persistence, critical self-evaluation and respect for the processes or learning. This is the space that we will continue to work in.

**Learning Management Business Review program (LMBR)**

Department of Education and Communities is currently developing and rolling out an extensive and important update to the computer operating systems that support the work of schools. This will result in new financial, student wellbeing, student management and associated software packages being used in all NSW schools. This implementation process is being led by approximately 250 trial schools and Alstonville High School is one of those schools. For the next two weeks we have Leone Chapman, Wendy Tolland and Jill Perkins working in Sydney to test the software package being developed for student management. This term we will transition to new software packages for our financial operations and student wellbeing operations. From time to time this will mean that our normal operations will be interrupted when one software program is stopped and another is started.

Finance will be the first area of school operations that will be affected. From the 6th of November to the 15th of November we will need to cease most of our financial transactions. This will include taking payments, paying accounts or refunds and processing cheques. Any families who are in receipt of school cheques need to have presented these cheques to a bank before the 6th of November or the cheque will be cancelled. Attached to this email is advice we have received from DEC about the transaction free period that will run from the 6th of November until the 15th. We apologise for any inconvenience that this process may cause.

Principal – David Silcock

**Kids in Community Awards 2013 – Tamika Honeyman**

Kids in Community Incorporated (KIC) is a non-profit organisation established in 2000. Based in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, KIC raises awareness of the positive role young people play in our local communities.

On 17th September, the efforts of Tamika Honeyman, in Year 11 were duly recognised in the KIC Awards ceremony, when she received the award for ‘Achieving Against All Odds’ – an award that recognises young people who triumph over considerable personal challenges. Tamika was diagnosed with the blinding condition of Retinitus Pigmentosa as an 8 year old and has continued to cope with declining vision since. Despite the extraordinary adjustments she has had to make in her life, Tamika has remained strong, confident, enthusiastic and generous. She is a gifted student, plans to study Psychology at university and is a highly valued and well-loved member of the school community at Alstonville High School. The optimistic and determined attitude she brings to overcoming the challenges that every day presents is truly remarkable and a model for us all.

CONGRATULATIONS Tamika! A well-deserved award!

**Visual Arts News**

**St Andrews Nursing Home Ballina – 5th Annual Findlay Young Artist Awards**

Congratulations to the following students who received $10 Achievement Awards at the St Andrews Nursing Home Ballina – 5th Annual Findlay Young Artist Awards:

- Hannah Davis Year 11
- Kelly Kortick Year 11
- Rylee Flood Year 10
- Jamie Gale Year 11
- Olivia Hollander Year 7

**CONGRATULATIONS Tamika! A well-deserved award!**
Kirralee Turner - Year 11 - Australian Artist Magazine Recognition
In the October edition of the Australian Artist magazine the achievements of Kirralee Turner who won the student Bentley Art Prize and the Reg and Phyllis Shield Awards are recognised.

Talking to Young People about Alcohol and Drugs
It is best for education about alcohol and drugs to begin before young people are exposed to personal decisions about their use. Young people who have accurate information, coping and decision making skills and understand the issues, will be in a good position to make responsible decisions about alcohol and drugs.

Parents provide a powerful role model when it comes to drinking and attitudes to alcohol and other drugs. Take time to talk. Sitting down with the young person in your care and mapping out a plan of action and what to say if they are offered drugs or alcohol can help equip them for the almost inevitable real event. Listen to what the young person in your family says about alcohol and drugs and follow up with a discussion. Take the opportunities when they come up during everyday activities, for example:

When you pour a glass of alcohol
When alcohol or other drugs are mentioned on TV or other media
When using or giving out medicines
When your young person has an assignment on alcohol, smoking, medicines or other drugs.

It is important to understand that in some situations young people may take risks. Sitting down afterwards and helping them identify where things started to go wrong enables them to consider what they could do differently the next time they are faced with a similar situation.

Australian Alcohol Guideline for Children and young people under 18
Not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

For children under 15
Parents and carers are advised that children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking and that for this age group, not drinking is especially important.

For Young people aged 15-18 years
The safest option is to delay the initiation of drinking for as long as possible.

Australian Alcohol Guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2009 can be found at


Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our website www.rrisk.com.au

Young Drivers aged 17-25 years.
Why are they at risk?

Facts:
1. Road crashes are one of the leading causes of injury, disability and death among young people.
2. Young drivers are over-represented in road crashes compared to other age groups especially young males.
3. Speeding is the major cause of road crashes in NSW and crashes which involve speeding are more likely to result in fatal crashes.
4. Other high-risk behaviours that significantly contribute to road crashes and injuries include:
   - Drink driving
   - Driver fatigue and distraction
   - Not using seat belts

Driver inexperience: Often young drivers don’t realise that it takes time and lots of practice to develop safe driving skills.

Developing brain: Parts of the brain responsible for self-control and for recognising and managing hazards do not fully mature until after the teenage years, so young drivers are more likely to experiment and take dangerous risks.

Overconfidence and risk taking: Young drivers can be over confident about their driving ability and underestimate dangers on the road.

Having friends as passengers: Young drivers may be distracted by passengers or may feel pressured to take risks, such as speeding. Every extra peer passenger carried by a young driver increases the chance of crashing.

Alcohol and other drugs: Young people often do not understand that alcohol and other drugs affect a driver’s skills, mood and most importantly behaviour. Safe driving requires clear judgement, concentration and ability to react to what’s happening on the road.

Busy lifestyles: Work, sport and study often mean busy lifestyles for young people, which may cause them to drive when tired – especially late at night. Driving tired significantly impairs driving, even if the driver doesn’t feel sleepy.

The RRISK program aims to increase awareness of these risk factors and how to improve road safety. For more information about the RRISK program and risk taking, visit our website www.rrisk.com.au

Doug North / Head Teacher PD/H/PE
URGENT!!!

Do you have any offcuts of fabrics or lengths of fabric you do not require? If so we are in urgent need of updating these in our TAS faculty. Please drop them into the front office who will pass on to the staff in the textiles department.

Keryn Akers / TAS Department

Year 8 - ESSA Tests
The Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) test for Year 8 students will be held between Monday 11th November and Friday 15th November 2013. The test takes approximately 80 minutes.

The test is an interactive, multimedia test completed entirely on a computer. It is called ESSA online.

ESSA online contains multiple choice, short response and extended response tasks that are grouped around real-world issues, including a simulated investigation. This is a diagnostic test, with tasks framed on Stage 4 outcomes and essential content in the NSW Science Years 7–10 Syllabus. Students will be tested on their:

- knowledge and understanding of science
- understanding and skills in the process of scientific investigation
- ability to evaluate evidence, make judgements and think critically
- ability to access information and communicate scientific ideas.

Students also complete a survey about their opinions, attitudes and values. Since students complete ESSA online on a computer, they will not need writing materials. However, each student needs to bring headphones or earbuds that plug into a school computer. Earbuds for an iPod or portable player are suitable.

If your child has a disability that needs special consideration or has been educated in English for less than one year, please contact your child’s school to discuss special provisions or possible exemption from the test.

If you have any questions regarding the ESSA test please contact Mr Pelley.

Allan Pelley / Head Teacher Science

Careers Year 11 – Careers – Annual Southern Cross University (Seniors Day) for all schools
This event is on Thursday 24th October. This is a great chance to look at local universities and university life in general. The cost is $4 and permission notes are available from Mrs Horne in the Careers office.

Board of Studies - Review of Languages Education in NSW – Term 4, 2013 public consultation
The community has been invited by the Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP to consider the Learning through Languages and Reference Paper, available for download from the Board’s Languages Review webpage at http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu and then complete an online survey regarding the proposals at http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/lanuagesreview/survey.html.

If any parents or community members would like to contribute to this consultation they are encouraged to complete the survey.

Find Out More!
WEP’s not-for-profit student exchange programs give secondary students the opportunity to choose from over 20 countries to live and study for a summer, semester or even a year. Our programs are designed to fit into the academic schedule to complement your secondary studies with an international exchange experience!

Request Information
If you would like to go overseas or invite an exchange student into your family, simply request a FREE information pack, including our brochure, fee sheet and FREE application form:
- visit www.wep.org.au
- email info@wep.org.au
- call 1300 884 733

Far North Coast Group of CWA Education Grants
The Far North Coast Group of CWA is again offering Education Grants to students in their area of the state, who are entering Year 6, and through Secondary Studies, to Tertiary Education, or Developmental Disabilities Study. We are contacting all schools with students in this category in the hope they will assist us in giving this information out through their School letters and to ask teachers to encourage students they know who would make use of this assistance and ask your co-operation in this endeavour.

These Education Grants are tenable for one (1) year, but recipients may apply each year, if still within the category and are awarded according to the needs of the students.

Please see the school for an application form. The applications must be returned to Mrs Clifford before 25 October 2013. No late applications will be accepted.

If you require any further additional information please contact Mrs Jan Clifford on 02 6624 1583.
Year 12 Breakfast 2013
P&C, Canteen & Uniform News

P&C would like to thank the following sponsors of the Year 12 Farewell Breakfast BBQ: Coles Alstonville, Gold Coast Bakery, Richard Marriott, Alstonville Garden House, and Summerland Amateur Radio Club. Thank you also to professional musician Roo MacKerras for providing the music on the morning and the parent and student volunteer helpers. It was all very much appreciated in making the morning special to our leaving Year 12 students.

The next P&C meeting is on Wednesday 23rd October. All welcome.

Canteen News

- Watch for the specials in the canteen daily.
- New summer menu available soon.
- Volunteers always welcome. 6 hours of your time per term would be very much appreciated.
- Did you know that over 1/3 of our volunteers on our Canteen roster have no children attending the school. Please find time to help.

Parents from year 10 are required to help with ordering of Year 11 jerseys. Please phone Canteen 6628 1797 if you can help.

EFTPOS withdrawals for Canteen Card now available Monday, Wednesday and Friday BEFORE school ONLY. Surcharges apply. Enquires welcome.

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

UNIFORM PRICE CHANGES
From 11th November the prices of uniforms will rise by $1 or $2, some will say the same. Uniforms bought before this date will still be sold at the old prices, if sizes are available.

Thank you for your support