Welcome back to a new School year. The students in Transition to Year 6 settled in well last week to the routine of the classrooms while Year 7 to 12 students enjoyed the Outdoor Education Camps. Classes have now begun in all year groups and we all look forward to a productive and rewarding year.

I would like to especially welcome to the School those families that are new to the Macarthur family. This year we have a larger number of families joining the School for the first time than in recent years. I am sure that you will very quickly feel part of the fabric that makes up this great school.

The iPad rollout has begun! All students in Year 8 have now been issued with their iPads with Year 7 students being issued them later in the term.

The HSC results were very pleasing and I have made a brief mention of them below and there is a summary later in The Bulletin.

This year marks a very special anniversary in the life of Macarthur Anglican School. Twenty years ago saw the commencement of the Junior School, initially Kindergarten Year 5 and Year 6. Since its inception, the Junior School was established not as a stand alone school but part of a fully integrated Kindergarten to Year 12 School. Apart from a brief period, where the Junior School was on the old campus in Narellan, the School has been fully integrated on the one campus.

Looking at the wonderful new purpose built facilities that we now boast for our primary school aged students, we should be mindful of where the School has come from in a relatively short space of time and be ever thankful to our God for his providential care over the years.

From The Headmaster’s Desk

Academic Results

The 2012 Academic Year has been a year of very pleasing academic results. The new Record of School Achievement is difficult to compare with previous years but they were certainly, as was expected, excellent. Of primary importance of course are the HSC results and the ATAR scores. Over 80% of students who applied for a university place received their first preference. The 2012 cohort have done themselves very proud. See later in the Bulletin for greater detail of these outstanding results.

DUX
Arlene Dowling
ATAR 97.15
Building Academic Resilience In Our Students

At Macarthur we encourage students to strive for excellence and do their best so they can achieve academic success. An important element of academic success is developing academic resilience. This means being able to cope with pressure, set backs, frustrations and disappointing results.

According to UWS educational researchers, Andrew Martin and Herbert Marsh, academic resilient students can be defined as those who are confident, have low anxiety and demonstrate persistence in their studies, even when their performance is below expectation.

Students who can cope during times of stress and bounce back after receiving critical feedback from teachers have a greater chance of succeeding academically.

Parents can help children develop academic resilience by encouraging them to persevere when they receive poor results. This includes students who are used to achieving full or close to full marks and are disappointed if they don’t. Students need to recognise that errors are indicators of gaps in their knowledge that they need to fill, rather than indicators of their self-worth or intelligence. It is crucial that students read the comments provided by teachers so that they know how to improve.

Academic success comes through students working hard and taking responsibility for their own learning. Students should not be afraid of taking academic risks or making mistakes. Strategies that help students become more academically resilient include:

- Setting and evaluating short term academic goals – it is helpful for students to attain small successes
- Knowing the demands of their study programme. It is important to plan and know when the demanding times will occur. Students should also make sure that they read assessment criteria and know the weightings of tasks.
- Prioritising work, managing time effectively and recognising that not all submitted work can be ‘perfect’ given time constraints
- Focus on learning - seeing critical feedback as a way to help them improve rather than an indication of their lack of knowledge or ability
- Tracking their academic progress and know where they are heading
- Developing skills of persistence and perseverance and recognise that it is important not to give up when faced with challenging tasks or disappointing results.
- Having confidence in their ability to work hard and face challenges. It is important to challenge negative thinking.
- Recognising that they need to try their best as hard work can help them perform better.

For more information, read the Martin and Marsh’s full article [http://www.aare.edu.au/03pap/mar03770.pdf](http://www.aare.edu.au/03pap/mar03770.pdf)

Sometimes when you innovate, you make mistakes. It is best to admit them quickly, and get on with improving your other innovations. Steve Jobs
Student Achievements

Congratulations to Stephanie Hennings in Year 8 who received the honour of being judged Grand Champion Parader in her class at the Dubbo Angus Roundup during January. Competing against experienced competition, Stephanie was able to present her Angus heifer in such a way that judges were impressed by her maturity and control over her animal. It is likely that Stephanie will continue to be recognised in the Cattle Parading arena as she gains more experience and continues to commit herself to the demanding standards expected of Paraders at this level.

Also receiving ribbons for their animals at the same event, were Alexandra Hennings, and Richard and Henry Cartwright. Long days of animal care, parading and cattle appraisal were rewarded by the recognition that the animals handled by these students were judged at the very highest of their class and deserving of this commendable recognition.

* Late last year Kaylie Ekinci came first in two open water-swimming races. Congratulations Kaylie!

* Congratulations to Joshua Sawyer, Katie Parker and Jackson Bartlett (Year 12 2012) who have been awarded their Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. They will be presented their awards later in the year at a vice-regal ceremony.

Robotics Success

Members of the School Robotics team were invited to attend ‘The Big Day Out’ to exhibit with five other schools the ‘Rebound Rumble’ tournament in the Dome area of the Showground. This was a tremendous opportunity for the students to show off their robot and to educate others in Science and Technology elements thereby demonstrating what it takes to build and drive a working robot.

The team has also been invited to Tele-Connect with a team in Iowa, USA in February to compete in a tournament remotely. Four international FTC teams will each design a robot capable of competing in this year’s game. Teams will ship their robots to Iowa, or send plans for a host team to build. Then teams will connect to a Ring It Up! field in a four, remote-team exhibition match, and all four teams will connect to the field simultaneously by operating the robot remotely from their home venue. International teams will also have the opportunity to meet other Iowa teams and interact with them throughout the event via a teleconferencing application.

On the day of the Iowa Championships, volunteer ‘hosts’ will carry around a webcam and laptop so the four exhibition teams will be able to communicate during team interactions and controlling the robot during exhibition match.

It’s a very exciting time for the Robotics team. They are currently making plans to compete in the World Tournament in April in St Louis, USA after winning the National Competition at Macquarie University in November.
Parents & Friends

2013 is shaping up to be a very busy year as both Women at Macarthur (W@M) and Men at Macarthur (M@M) are in the process of organising many community building activities.

The first of these activities will be the New Families Breakfast, which is one way of welcoming new families into our school community. This event will be held on Tuesday 19 February in the Cranmer Room at 7.30am. All new families have been sent an invitation to this event with an RSVP by the 12 February. If you have not yet received an invitation please contact me on the email at the bottom of the page..

W@M will again be hosting the Annual High Tea at Harrington Grove on Saturday 18 May. Please mark this date in your diary.

Parents and Friends have a new initiative for 2013 - a playgroup will commence Monday 25 February. This will be held in the room near After School Care and commence at 9.00am. If you are interested in attending, or would like more information, please contact me. Please sign in as a visitor to the School when attending.

Don’t forget there is a second hand musical instruments register at School. If you are interested in purchasing a second hand instrument please feel free to view this register. It is located with Mrs Fellows in the Heads of School office area.

When next purchasing school shoes please call into the Uniform Shop for a Shoe Talk voucher. Shoe Talk, situated in both Camden and Narellan Town Centre, is offering families a discount on all full priced school shoes and sports shoes. They will donate $5.00 back to the School for every pair of school shoes purchased. Parents and Friends are happy to support this initiative. Prior to purchasing shoes please review the letter sent by Mr Tim Cartwright or the School Diary for details about the style of shoe that is required to be worn by Macarthur students.

Men at Macarthur (M@M) will be hosting the first BBQ Breakfast for the year on Friday 1 March. This will be held near the Junior School carpark and commence at 7.30am.

If you are interested in becoming involved in any of these groups please contact me.

Community Chat

Welcome back to another action packed school year. I hope this finds you all well and rested. To all new families joining Macarthur this year, a warm welcome.

Women on Wednesday has recommenced for the year. The group will be running a Christianity Explained course for people interested in finding out more about the Christian faith. This is a four-week course and will commence Wednesday 13 February.

A couple more dates for your diary or calendar - the Headmaster’s Golf Challenge will be held on Monday 22 April whilst the Annual Fundraising Dinner has been set for Saturday 10 August. Planning for both these events is under way.

The Community Partner Programme is now entering its second year. Please contact me if you would like to find out more about this opportunity. I will be contacting those of you who have expressed an interest in Sponsorship opportunities at school events shortly. If you have a business and would like to find out about Sponsorship packages please contact me.

Sharon Pascoe-Thomas
Community Relations Manager
spascoethomas@macarthur.nsw.edu.au
In previous years, Year Books have been available by Speech and Awards Night. However, this meant the omission of all Spring Term activities. The 2012 Year Book and future Year Books will include the entire year’s activities up to and including Speech and Awards Night. This necessitates a later printing and distribution. The aim is to distribute the 2012 Year Book by the end of Summer Term.

To all who have already so generously donated to the Building Fund.

Movie Screening
Sat, Feb 16th
at 6:30pm
In The Chapel
-All Welcome-
The Snowsports programme is open to all students from Year 3 to 12 and is designed to meet all students' individual needs. The programme caters to all levels of ability, from first timers to advanced skiers and boarders.

The purpose of the programme is to enable students to develop their snowsports skills and/or give students the opportunity to compete in the NSW Interschools Snowsports Competition.

Due to accommodation being very limited in the snowfields we need to know numbers by the end of February to ensure there are enough beds for all interested students.

Booklets with all the details regarding the Snowsports Programme 2013 are now available from either the Staff Centre or the Administration Centre.

An informal parent information night is to be held on Wednesday 20 February 2013 from 7.00pm in the Chapel. Permission notes and deposits will be due by Monday 25 February 2013.

Should you have any questions regarding the programme please feel free to ring Mr. Bedingfield at the School on 4647-5333.

Montana Byers whilst attending the 2012 Australian Championships
Proven Success!

DUX
Arlene Dowling
who scored an
ATAR of 97.15

OTHER PERSONAL
SUCCESSES
1. Keegan Lovell – Premier’s
Award for receiving a Band
6 in five Subjects.
2. Benjamin McKenzie – for his
Encore Nomination in
Music 2 Composition.

All Round Success
13% of students received an
ATAR of over 90
Over 50% of students
received an ATAR of over 80
Over 40 appearances on the
HSC Honour Roll (receiving
either a Band 6 or E4)
25% of students recognised
as Distinguished Achievers
77% of students received a
Band 5

UNIVERSITY OFFERS
As of 31 January 2013, with still more offers to
be made, 77% of students have been
offered a course of their choice at University.

The Median ATAR rose
significantly from a historical
average of 69.75 to 75.15% - the
second consecutive year over 75%

UNIVERSITY COURSES
OFFERED
Occupational Therapy
Asia Pacific Studies/Tourism
Management
Pharmacy
Psychology
Speech Pathology
Communication and Media
Law & International Studies
Landscape Architecture
Zoology
Teaching
Engineering
Economics
Journalism/Law
Nursing
Social Work
Health Science
Music
Commerce

Record of School Achievement (RoSA)
(replacing the School Certificate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Grades</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Macarthur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian History, Civics</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Geography, Civics</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDHPE</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HSC</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 6</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 5</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATAR</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90+</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents and Friends Playgroup

Commencing Monday 25 February
9.00am-11.00am

Time: 9.00am-11.00am
Room adjoining After School Care Room

please contact Sharon Pascoe-Thomas at spascoethomas@macarthur.sw.edu.au or phone 4629-6207.
Welcome Back
Welcome back to another exciting school year at Macarthur. I hope all families managed to relax and rejuvenate over the holiday period. I recognise that after such a long break it can sometimes be difficult for students, parents and teachers to settle back into routines however, it has been a great start to the year.

Celebrate in Christ Almighty King
Each year the Junior School has a theme which is often represented by an animal. In 2013 our animal is the ‘CICAK’ (pronounced Chee-Chuck). The Cicak is an Indonesian gecko (or the common house gecko). In Indonesia, gecko’s often have local names derived from the sounds they make. It is wonderful to see our youngest students walking past ‘Chuck’ the Cicak each morning, attempting to read the acronym ‘Celebrate in Christ Almighty King’. In our recent welcome back assembly we talked about how blessed we are and the many things we are able to celebrate because of God’s love for us.

The way the students have settled in to their new classes has been outstanding this year. I am sure we all remember when we were young and how exciting, yet terribly nerve wracking it was waiting to find out who our new teacher for the year was. I would like to thank each of the students, parents and particularly the teachers who made the transition so seamless.

Parent Helpers
In the Junior School, we recognise the importance of developing a strong home, school partnership in order to help boost student outcomes. During the upcoming ‘Meet the Teacher Evening’ on Thursday 14 February, the T-2 teachers will be asking for parent volunteers to come into the classrooms and assist in many different ways with a particular focus on Literacy.

Important Dates
Monday 11 February 3-6 Swimming Carnival
Thursday 14 February T-6 Meet the Teacher Night
Tuesday 19 February New Family Breakfast 7.00am Cranmer Room
27 February-1 March Years 3-6 Camps
MACARTHUR WELCOMES OUR NEW STUDENTS IN YEARS 1-4

Georgia Roberts Year 2
Sakura Murakami Year 2
Caleb Groves Year 1

Aidan King Year 4
Erin O’Brien Year 3
Ella Turner Year 3

Thomas Fearnside Year 1
Tara Wupper Year 4
Madina Herta Year 4
MACARTHUR WELCOMES OUR NEW STUDENTS IN YEARS 1-4

AND SOME STAFF IN NEW ROLES...

Parent Assistance Needed - Book Club
Children can improve their reading skills by reading. One of the many ways we try to promote reading in the School is through the Scholastic Book Club, available to students in Years T-6. If you are interested in helping run the Book Club by collating orders and distributing books to the children please see your child’s teacher or contact Mrs Elling in the Heads of School office on 4629-6239.

We would like to thank Mrs Angela Daley for her outstanding work in organising Book Club for the teachers and students of the Junior School for a number of years.
A Few Reminders as we begin the School Year

Uniform

A reminder that students need to wear lace-up shoes. Please avoid velcro. Sneakers should be predominately white in colour.

Students need to have their hat at school each day.

Super 8’s Cricket

On January 14 Alexander Frankum and Cameron Ha played in a Super 8’s Cricket tournament organised by the Campbelltown Ghosts Cricket Club. Their team, the Lions, won all of their five games including the grand final. Cameron took a double hat trick while bowling. Alex was voted the team’s best and fairest player by the umpires. A highlight for the boys was meeting players from the Speed Blitz Blues and Sydney Thunder.

Student Pick-Up

In the interests of child safety please do not park in the pick-up area at the front of the School and leave your vehicle.

Bus Procedures

All students catching a bus from school in the afternoon need to meet the teacher on duty under the shade sails in the Middle School courtyard.

Handball After School

For the safety of the students, parents and younger siblings there is to be no handball played after school.
Welcome Back!
Welcome to the 2013 school year at Macarthur and I do hope that all families enjoyed a safe and relaxing Christmas and New Year holiday period together, celebrating the birth of Christ, enjoying family time, and that everyone is refreshed, ready for all that 2013 has in store! It has been a real pleasure to welcome the smiling faces that make our school such a happy place to come to each day.

We have a number of new families joining Macarthur and a very warm welcome is extended to each. Macarthur is such a wonderful place with which to be associated and I am certain that you will be made to feel very welcome.

Prefects and Student Leaders
Congratulations to the Year 9 Middle School Prefects and Year 6 Student Leaders on their induction into these roles for 2013. These leaders enjoyed the leadership training day on Tuesday 5 February with Mr Hordern and myself. We look forward to the contribution these students will make to the life of the School over the course of the year!

Assessment Calendars
Students in Years 7-9 are able to access their assessment calendar now via the School’s website under the Parents Tab in Calendars.

Library
Students in Years 7-9 are reminded that the Library is available after school each day until 4.00pm. This can be a valuable time for students to be completing homework, study or undertaking their assignments utilising the library facilities in a distraction free environment. Half Yearly Examinations are taking place later in the term for Years 8 and 9. You are most welcome to make contact with me if you would like to know more about the facilities and support the students in the lead up to Examinations.

English & Maths Homework Help
English - Thursdays
3.00pm - 4.00pm
Library
Mathematics - Tuesdays
(Changes a little through the term)
2.50pm - 4.00pm
PR5
It was the first day of school and Year 7 headed off to Morisset for a four-day camp, a little anxious as they boarded the buses with many others whom they didn’t know. They were accompanied by the Year 11 peer support leaders who came along to act as helpers and mentors. It was not long before new friendships were made and all were having fun in their activity groups and with their camp leaders. Students were challenged by activities such as the medium ropes, the giant swing, abseiling and the flying fox. Much fun was had during the water sports, namely kayaking, sailing, raft building and swimming. Evening activities finished off the day with many group activities involving lots of laughter and much entertainment. A highlight of the week was the cookout where students had to cook their own spaghetti bolognaise dinner. The students participated in a daily Christian Ministry session where they were able to hear the gospel and listen to God’s word. It was a fantastic few days and laid a good foundation for an excellent start to Year 7’s secondary schooling.

Annette Fitzgerald
Year 7 Advisor
On Tuesday 29 January 2013 sixty-three students and seven teachers left school and headed to Youthworks Waterslea for Year 8 camp. We were unaware of what was ahead of us but knew we were going to have a great time.

The camp leaders at Waterslea were fantastic mentors and great fun. They helped us through all our activities and were always there for us. The food at camp was always enjoyable and meal times were a great time to bond and create new friendships.

There were a large variety of activities which included going on an out trip, canoeing, hiking, abseiling, billy carting, jetty jumping, archery, water slide, pool, prusiking and Christian discovery.

The out trip included hiking, canoeing, camping in a tent, cooking and having a campfire. The out trip was a new experience and we thoroughly enjoyed it along with all its hardships. Christian discovery was done three times over the course of the week. The topic for the week was about creation and how we were created for a purpose.

Abseiling was a challenge to all with some overcoming their fear of heights by abseiling down a 20m or 10m cliff face. Once you starting abseiling down, your fears were taken away with the moment. The whole camp was full of activities which were packed with fun and enjoyment.

Overall Waterslea was a great location and the teachers and camp leaders were amazing in helping us to make this a fun and memorable camp, which we will never forget.

Matilda Offord and Stephanie Hennings
Year 9 enjoyed four days at Rathane in the Royal National Park (Port Hacking). Students at this camp participated in the Youthworks Horizon Programme which included a comprehensive array of outdoor activities including Outdoor Climbing, High Ropes, Christian Discovery, Rock Climbing, Initiatives as well as an Amazing Race. These activities allowed the students to further develop their outdoor skills and to engage in new activities that were challenging and rewarding.

The Youthworks Programme at Rathane also included a fantastic Christian Discovery programme comprising of a series of presentation from the leaders at Rathane followed by small group discussions with teachers and Rathane group leaders. The students were to be applauded with the mature attitude and enthusiasm at these sessions and the Christian discussions that occurred.

All students also participated in their Practice Duke of Edinburgh Hike doing a modified walk through the Royal National Park. Students hiked from Bundeena to Rathane and the following day hiked from Garie to Otford. The teachers and leaders of Rathane all commented on how positive the students were on the hike and the team work they all developed on their first hike.

Some of the Year 9 comments from camp from the students when asked what they enjoyed about the camp were:

- Rachael Soto
  ‘How everyone worked together and supported each other on the hike’.

- Tate Lindsey
  I enjoyed the challenges and experiences of my first long hike.

- Liam Tucker
  Enjoyed the waterslide with my friends.

- Angus Key
  Outdoor climbing was fun and challenging at the same time and a great accomplishment.

- Aimanur Rahman
  Bonding session with the year group and enjoying each others company.

- Madeline Elliott
  Meeting such encouraging leaders at YouthWorks who were easy to talk to when discussing faith and supporting us through camp.

- Meghan Sproule
  Having the opportunity to hike and witness God’s beautiful, breathtaking creation and feeling proud in the end of how far we hiked.

Mr Stuart Hughes, Head of Camp.
It has already been a very exciting start to 2013 with camps for students in The Senior School at Macarthur.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many parents who have congratulated me on my new role as Head of Senior School. I am particularly looking forward to working with the students as they work towards completing their Higher School Certificate and plan for their future studies beyond Macarthur.

There is no substitute for hard work as students complete their Senior years. However, should students need advice on their pattern of study, how to maximise their results or the options open to them in the future I am more than happy to assist.

A reminder that in order for study or homework to be effective students should be doing a little bit often across all subjects and plan appropriately for when assessments are to be handed in. As a guide students should be completing the following amount of study or homework each week.

Year 10: 10 hours
Year 11: 12 hours
Year 12: 15-18 hours

If students need help in developing a study timetable their are many staff that would be keen to assist.

Senior Study Nights

Senior study night provides the opportunity for students in the Senior School to use the Schools facilities outside school hours. They are nights that are supervised by Macarthur staff and run from 4.00pm until 7.30pm with a half hour dinner break. The Library is normally open until 4.00pm each day. This is an ideal time for those students that want the support of a structured environment to assist in their studies, the use of a wide range of resources or struggle with procrastination. Sessions are held on Tuesday and/or Thursday evening depending on demand and further information including cost is available on a note that went home with students on Monday. Spare notes are available from Reception.

Driving

Congratulations to those students who have obtained their Provisional Driving Licence over the holidays. A reminder to parents and students that in order to drive to or from school students will need to apply for approval after they obtain the license but before they start driving to school. Notes are available from the Heads of School Office. It will require the note to be returned along with a letter from the parents. Driving is a privilege and it is important that students appreciate the responsibility.
Year 10 students left for camp at 7.00am, Monday 28th January. They travelled by bus to Bungarra Alpine Centre, 5km out of Jindabyne. On arrival the students were quickly given the task of building a raft that they could paddle out and around a buoy in Lake Jindabyne. They were given barrels, timber and rope to achieve this task. They were also required to have all members of their team on the raft for the entire journey. Two groups managed this task very well and to the amusement of all, the other two teams had an interesting experience.

Over the following four days students and teachers experienced a challenging but rewarding programme involving; A full day of mountain biking, a 20km hike from Charlottes Pass to Thredbo over Mt Kosciuszko, a half-day of river sledding and a half day of abseiling. There was also two overnight camp outs where students survived on ration packs.

The students and staff were amazing, coping with these physical demands with grace and humility. Every student gave each activity their full effort and was rewarded by achieving such difficult tasks. Their behaviour, attitude, effort and support for each other was fantastic. They should be very proud of their achievements. I would like to acknowledge the Macarthur staff who were supportive of the students as they challenged themselves.

Nadine James
Head of Year 10 Camp

“Challenging but rewarding”
It's safe to say that the Year 11 community service camp was the most rewarding camp I have ever experienced. The Burrill Pines campsite was cozy, with one small pathway leading down to the beach, which most students took advantage of.

Convinced by my friends, we decided to wait out the week's bad weather in a tent, rather than a cabin. Looking back, racing through the camp in the pitch-black night trying to dodge the monsoon of rain just for a shower was not something I would readily do again.

Buying and cooking our own food was an experience in itself, although I could have done without the cleaning. Running through Coles picking up whatever junk food we could grab meant a lot of tripping over and face-plants to say the least.

Overall, the activity I enjoyed most was the visit to the nursing home. Along with three boys, I volunteered to spend time with the patients in the dementia ward. At times it was overwhelming, but we all left the nursing home that day with newfound compassion and understanding.

What everyone really loved though was how much closer we'd all become as a peer group. The relaxed atmosphere meant there was always time to have a chat by cabin number 7 (where there was always a crowd), rub elbows with the twenty other people cooking in the too tiny kitchen, or play a game of footy until the sun had set.

I'm glad to say that each person benefited tremendously from this experience and that I won't soon forget the memories I made at Burrill Pines.

Kate Springett
Year 11 Student
Teenagers are not famous for being early risers, so it was a great surprise for everyone (including ourselves) to see us on the camp buses at six o’clock in the morning. After a long bus trip and many stops at McDonalds, we arrived at the campsite in pouring rain. The rain continued for the rest of the afternoon and the next morning, but despite this our spirits remained high as we were kept busy by our teachers fantastic back-up plans. While the free swim at the beach and white water rafting were cancelled, we had a great time at the Coffs Harbour Pet Porpoise Pool, cuddling seals and watching dolphin shows. The afternoon’s agenda was much more messy – an obstacle course in, thanks to the persistent rain, a recently formed bog. Although we were initially unenthusiastic, we ended up as happy as a pig in mud.

We commenced the next day with great excitement due to the fun activities we had in store. These included learning to scuba dive in the local pool, racing our friends at the go-kart track, and chilling out at the water park which was a splash. But the highlight of the camp by far was trivia in which each team dressed up according to their chosen theme. Themes included: Mexican, panda, bridal party and beach. The night ended with waves of laughter, and for the lucky few, victory!

The following day was spent at the sea where we participated in surfing, kayaking and ocean awareness. The best activity though was surf rafting – paddling out in an inflatable raft and catching waves back in. We were having so much fun that most of us ignored the teachers warnings to apply sunscreen regularly. Needless to say, we were all regretting it the next day.

We returned home safely and collapsed into bed, dreaming of the best camp we’ve ever had and excited for the first sleep-in we’d had all week.

Lucy Petchell and Alex Borjevic
Year 12 Students