



# HopeTown Newsletter

Term 2-2015

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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

*Mindfulness* is a word that has been enjoying increasing exposure in the media lately and has been the subject of my messages in the last two Hopetown School newsletters.

We have been looking at a range of mindfulness activities at Hopetown over the past couple of years and have increased opportunities for our students to participate in mindful practice this term. One of our teachers, Mrs Addison is trained to deliver an excellent mindfulness program which comes from the United Kingdom. The program is called 'b' (pronounced 'dot be') and has been developed by academics from Oxford, Cambridge and Exeter universities. Information about the course can be found at [www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

Mindfulness practice is paying attention, with curiosity and calm acceptance, to what is happening moment by moment rather than worrying about what has happened in the past or may happen in the future. It trains us to focus on our present experiences (thoughts, emotions and physical sensations) be they good or bad and to skilfully respond rather than react.

Research and experience have shown that mindfulness can be practised by both students and adults and can improve social, emotional and physical health and wellbeing. It can increase a person's calmness, quality of sleep, self-awareness, self-regulation and empathy. It can reduce anxiety, depression, anti-social behaviour and reactivity.

Mindfulness can strengthen cognitive skills, creativity, working memory, problem solving, planning, attention and focus.

While it is important not to oversell the benefits of mindfulness (it will not miraculously fix everything), it has been encouraging to see the positive effect it has already had on some of our students. The benefits can be short-lived but also have the potential to become consolidated with continued practice. Ideally, we would love our students to continue some mindfulness exercises at home, not as a chore but as a brief and beneficial break from normal routines and activity.

Terry Taylor

Principal

### **Dates to Remember Term 3**

Students return Tuesday 14th July  
Last day of Term 3 - Friday 18th Sept  
NAIDOC Celebrations throughout the term  
Snow Trip—Sun 9th August until Sat 15th August  
School Photos Monday 17th August

## Storm clean up



Hopetown students and their parents/carers can be congratulated on the way they managed the storm events experienced at the beginning of the term. Student safety in transit and on site was given high priority. For many of our students changes in routine can be confront-

ing and difficult to negotiate. Successfully doing so reflects success with the foundations of social and emotional development programs being run at Hopetown.



Thankfully storm damage at Hopetown was minimal compared to many other schools. Shredded vegetation littered the grounds and a large fallen tree damaged the toilet block. Staff and students "worked tough" to soon have classes operating and the grounds looking magnificent.



## Norta Norta Program

*Norta Norta* is a program that aims at increasing the literacy and numeracy skills of our indigenous students. This term, Irene has been presenting the program to our primary students. Irene has used aspects of Aboriginal life to stimulate writing and increase vocabulary, while providing students with a deeper understanding of their cultural history.

These students have had in-school activities such as stories from the Dreaming, art lessons to explore traditional designs and the history of the flag. They have also had several excursions to discover bush tucker, native animals and traditional Aboriginal dancing.

An example of from the Maliga Artworks Showcase



Hopetown students at the grinding rock at Wyong High School

## The Gosford Poppy Project

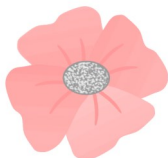
A big thank you to the primary and secondary students and staff at Hopetown who managed to make 70 poppies for the Gosford City Council Poppy Project in just 1 day!!

The poppies were installed at Rotary Park Gosford as a part of the 100 year anniversary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli. The poppies are a traditional symbol of remembrance linked with the battlefields of Gallipoli, France and Belgium.

Rotary Park, Gosford



The *poppy* symbolises the spirit of integrity, respect and remembrance and the park project sends a message of gratitude to all Australians who have made sacrifices during wartime. Hopetown School is very proud to have contributed to this very special community project.



## Chickens in the Classroom

The students from Primary 1 watched seventeen chickens emerge from eggs in the classroom. The boys were amazed when they observed the developing chicks as they used their egg tool to chip around their shell. Eventually, we had 14 yellow and 4 black chickens and they stayed in the room for two weeks. The students handled the chicks gently, they took turns and cleaned any mess the baby chicks made.



A chicken theme was used to stimulate conversation and written activities. The life cycle, free range versus caged eggs, a chicken birth certificate and a daily chicken diary are some of the tasks completed by the students.





### **ANZAC Day at Hopetown**

A display of ANZAC memorabilia was set up in our library during week 1 of Term 2. This was presented to the students as part of our commemoration of 100 years of the ANZAC tradition. The boys were told interesting stories and shown a collection of artefacts and relics.



#### **Monitoring + Action = Healthy Waterways**

As a part of Stage 4 (years 7-8) and 5 (years 9-10) geography studies, students in Woodbury, Flinders and Darcy classes are being trained as Water Watch volunteers. Thank you to Sam from Central Coast Environment Network for taking time to visit some of our students on site and bringing our training up to speed!

Each week, students will be testing the health of local waterways at a number of different locations along Wyong River. This will be expanded to the Pioneer Dairy site in the near future.

Students will be testing for the amount of oxygen in the water, pH levels, dissolved solids, phosphates and temperature. The health of the river is affected by water runoff from storm water, pollutants such as detergent, fertiliser and animal waste and also by the amount of erosion upstream.

Information is then entered into the computer monitoring system to be added to NSW state-wide results. It is a very important collection of information and students involved on a regular basis will be able to add this volunteering experience to their resume.

### **2015 Primary Swimming Carnival**

The Primary Swimming Carnival was held at the Hopetown swimming pool on March 27th. Our swimming carnival is always the climax of a term of swimming lessons and the Special Swimming Scheme. This program provides two intensive weeks of swimming coaching. Students learned vital water awareness and safety skills. Students developed their proficiency in different swimming strokes. The swimming carnival has emphases on fun, participation and sportsmanship. A range of events includes using flippers, noodles and body boards as well as traditional strokes such as freestyle and backstroke.



Our aim is to develop qualities of persistence, resilience and confidence in each of our students by promoting success for all. It was also great to see our students encouraging and cheering other participants during races. A sausage sizzle lunch and a ribbon presentation followed the carnival. The Principal, Mr Taylor, presented the ribbons and congratulated each student on their success.

***Thanks to our parent volunteers and student helpers for ensuring the success of this day.***

## Wallarah 2 Coal Project Grant

The school would like to thank Wallarah 2 Coal Project for their support for one of the school's outdoor education programs. The Coastal and Inland Waterway Exploration Program is designed to get students out onto the water in canoes to explore the rivers, lakes and ocean in the local area. The grant from Wallarah 2 Coal Project will be used to update the school's aging fleet of canoes. The purchase of the new canoes will mean a whole class can now get out on the water at once. The exploration of local waterways via canoe helps support a variety of science, geography and physical education lessons and has proven to be a therapeutic activity for our students.



### Ropes Program

Flinders class enjoyed a ropes program this term which included rock climbing and abseiling activities. The program is designed to enhance students' physical health and confidence in challenging situations. Students visited a number of locations around the Central Coast including indoor venues for rock climbing and cliff faces for abseiling. It was great to see students encouraging each other as they hung from cliff edges up to 20 metres high. Apart from the practical aspects of the program, students learnt auxiliary skills required to abseil and rock climb effectively. These



skills included how to tie a variety of knots and rescue techniques if they find themselves or someone else in difficulty mid-descent.

*Well done to all students who participated in the program!*

### Woodbury Class

Extreme weather conditions have affected Woodbury's participation in the Landcare program at Pioneer Dairy this term. Flooding and loss of electricity at the dairy meant that Woodbury Class have been unable to participate in the organised program.

In its place the class has participated in two separate programs: visits to local libraries (Tuggerah and Lake Haven), as part of their English program; and collection and analysis of water samples for Water Watch.

The students have enjoyed their visits to the local libraries and the opportunity it provided to browse the shelves looking for books to read. Libraries are a great resource and one that can be accessed by our students now and in their post-school lives.



**Landcare**





Hunter TAFE once again played host to Try-a-Skill at Ourimbah Campus for school students on the Central Coast. The displays were entertaining, informative and offered access to some of the basic skills involved within a range of trade fields. The displays seek to motivate school students, young people and others through a 'hands-on' experience and give them a taste of some of the skills required in a number of different careers.

Participants can interact with skilled trades people whilst seeking information from industry experts, apprentices, teachers, trainers and local business owners about VET pathways.

Nine students from Hopetown School, took advantage of the opportunity to connect with the experts and took part in a combined total of over 30 workshops. The enthusiasm shown by all students was outstanding and a testament to their confidence and motivation to seek out employment information.



### Archery Tag

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June, secondary students and staff participated in a game of Archery Tag. This activity was part of their history unit *Medieval Europe* and also tied in with the fiction unit *The Hunger Games* that was studied by Flinders Class.

The activity was run by Armstrong Archery Tag and was held on the school oval. Archery Tag is the newest friendly combat sport that utilises archery with patented foam-tipped arrows to play the game.

Students and staff participated in numerous games, with varying objectives. It certainly had the hearts pumping! All students should be proud of their achievements in persisting with this challenging game and showing outstanding teamwork. This activity would have to be one of the most rewarding moments at Hopetown in the past few years. Well done!



## **Farewell Roslyn Webber**



A much-loved member of Hopetown's school community passed away on 14 June. Roslyn Webber had worked at Hopetown since the 1980s until she retired due to illness two years ago.

Ros began as a house parent in the school's residential program providing a 'family' feel for the students who were boarding over the weekend. Ros then worked in the office for a while but spent most of her Hopetown years as a Teachers' Aide, School Learning Support Officer.

Hopetown was grateful for Ros' artistic talents and her patience when helping students with work and especially their art and craft tasks. Students appreciated her interest in their efforts, her tactful support and creative skills.

Ros also loved to work in the school's vegetable gardens; with students and sometimes alone in her own time. She showed students how to slow down the pace of life, how to appreciate some things that are taken for granted and how to find positive things to do with your free time. Her gentle conversations with our students as they worked the soil were calming and excellent role modelling that so many of the children needed.

The staff have lost a valued colleague, the students a positive role model and support and the world a sensitive, decent, private but caring human being.

