Principal's Report

Welcome back to term 4 for students and staff. Unfortunately, we have had some sad news regarding one of our year 9 students, Josh Allen. Josh has been diagnosed with a very serious life threatening inoperable illness. This means that he and his family will need to spend considerable time in Sydney receiving treatment. This has obviously had an impact on Josh and his family and our thoughts and best wishes go to them at this time. I have spoken to all students on assembly and informed them of support available through the school if they are experiencing difficulties at this time.

On a positive note, students have approached me to organise fundraising activities to support Josh and his family. Whilst I do not normally support whole-school fundraisers for individuals, given the exceptional circumstances confronting Josh in this instance, I have encouraged it as a positive way of focussing students to support him and his family. This fundraising has been organised by SRC and will comprise a Mufti day on Wednesday 30th October (gold coin donation), followed by a disco that evening from 6 – 9 pm. The theme for both events will be “Green or your Team”. Drinks and sausage sandwiches will be on sale during the disco. Proceeds will go to Josh and his family.

Jacaranda Thursday

All students will now have received a letter regarding arrangements for Jacaranda Thursday, 31st October. Please note that this letter was drafted after discussion between all major Grafton schools and after consultation with the Jacaranda Committee. It makes it clear that schools will be open on Thursday all day as it is not a public holiday. However, the letter also acknowledges that many parents/carers may want to participate in festivities with their children on the day. Any absence on the day to attend Jacaranda festivities will be accepted as a valid reason for leave BUT parents must still notify the school of this for their child. If a child is simply absent and no reason is given then we cannot be sure parents/carers are aware of the absence and so it MUST, by Department of Education and Communities policy, be recorded as an unexplained absence. To make it easier for parents/carers I included a tear-off absence note on the bottom of the letter that they can quickly fill out and return it to the school prior to the day. This will also help the school with organisation for the day as it appears unlikely we will have sufficient students in attendance in most years to run normal lessons. Please note that HSC exams will still run as per normal on this day. Further copies of this letter are available from the front office.

New State-Wide Finance System

Grafton High School is one of 229 NSW schools trialling the new state-wide finance and student administration computer system. The finance side of this system will be implemented in early November this year. To facilitate this there will be a “rollover” period from our existing system to the new one. As a result the school will be transaction free from period from 1st November until the 15th November. No Payments during this time.

Unfortunately, the timeline for the implementation of this system has become extremely compressed at a state level. Staff are yet to be trained and only two admin staff will initially be trained. This means that we will have to adopt a “train the trainer” approach to have these staff train the remaining staff back at school. The result is that we will be required to operate the new system as we are learning to use it. As such, I am asking for your understanding and patience during this period of transition to the new system and apologise in advance for any inconvenience. The new system does promise to be a much better one than the existing system, which is many decades old, so we are hoping that any short term pain will be worth it for the long term gain in efficiency and service.

P&C Meeting

A reminder that the next P&C meeting will be held from 7 pm on Thursday 24th October in the staff common room. All parents/carers are welcome to attend.

GoArt

Grafton High School’s P&C GoArt exhibition was an outstanding success! If you didn’t get a chance to call in to the MPC during the last long weekend of the holidays then you missed an absolutely outstanding display of a broad range of art works. We received 191 entries in the open division and 76 entries in the youth section. Our students did extremely well,
picking up many of the prizes in the youth section. The results for the Youth Section are below for your reference:

**Junior:**

**Acrylic**
- 1st: Annabel Green
- 2nd: Kaitlin Townsend
- Highly Commended: Mimi Schaeffer

**Oil**
- 1st: Ryan Eggins

**Watercolour**
- 1st: Annabel Green
- 2nd: Ryan Eggins

**Mixed Media**
- 1st: Ryan Eggins
- 2nd: Sam Bloomer
- Highly Commended: Erica Brown

**Abstract**
- 1st: Jaslyn Smith
- 2nd: Annabel Green
- Highly Commended: Hayley Dicks

**Pastel**
- 1st: Ryan Eggins
- 2nd: Caitlin Peuser

**Pen & Wash**
- 1st: Mahlia Ohimus
- 2nd: Ryan Eggins

**Drawing**
- 1st: Ruby Sullivan
- 2nd: Keira O’Reilly
- Highly Commended: Toby Trstenjak

**Senior:**

**Acrylic**
- 1st: Georgia McKenzie
- 2nd: Julia Green
- Highly Commended: Melanie O’Meara

**Watercolour**
- 1st: Brayden Peuser
- 2nd: Jarrod Peuser

**Mixed Media**
- 1st: Emma Jones
- 2nd: Murphy Thompson
- Highly Commended: Brooke McKenzie

**Abstract**
- 1st: Georgia Mackenzie

**Pastel**
- 1st: Julia Green
- 2nd: Julia Green

**Drawing**
- 1st: Julia Green
- 2nd: Lucy Ryder
- Highly Commended: Brayden Peuser

**Wearable Art - Textiles**
- 1st: Megan Dunk
- 2nd: Sarah Kitcher
- Highly Commended: Natalie Durrington

We were fortunate to have Harold Le Jeune, a respected artist from Port Macquarie, as our guest judge for the awards. Grafton High School Student, Julia Green, won the “Most Outstanding Youth Art Award”. The Lewis Ellem “Most Outstanding Art Award went to Colin South for his Oil Painting “Washpool”.

I would like to thank those students, parents and staff who supported the event and volunteered their time to help make it such a success. I particularly need to acknowledge the efforts of Richard Green, P&C president and his wife and family as well as Fay Boyd, who was the powerhouse behind the organisation for the event as well as a significant sponsor. Fay sponsored the purchase of a painting for the school. As an artist donated one of their paintings, we now have two beautiful paintings hanging in the front foyer for all to enjoy. I look forward to continuing this initiative next year as part of the school’s focus on creative and performing arts. I have included some photos from the event below.

Peter South - Principal
Last term, the Grafton High School Environment Committee conducted a hugely successful Enviroweek, full of activities to encourage a more sustainable school environment. The Monday involved shutting off most lights and technology, where possible, and trying to reduce both our carbon footprint and our $60,000+ annual electricity bill. On Tuesday, the Committee baked an array of goodies, raising money for future projects. Thursday was our first ‘No Waste Day’, where over 50 students brought no waste in their lunch boxes – this is something we would particularly like to focus on in the coming years. And on the Friday, our annual ‘Tee For a Tree Day’ was held, the end result being over 150 native seedlings taken home for planting by committed students. The Committee did an exceptional job, and would like to thank the school community for their efforts in raising over $550, a portion of which has already been spent in planting out the gardens outside T Block.
**Important program for Year 11**

**Young People and Risk Taking**

Risk-taking in adolescence is an essential part of learning and personal development. Every healthy adolescent takes risks as he or she grows towards independence. Most researchers agree that if there is no risk there is no growth. A common problem for some young people is their inability to evaluate the potential risks and consequences of everyday behaviour. Thrill seeking, speeding, the desire to impress one’s friends; feelings of invincibility and the search for new experiences are all motivating forces that drive many teenagers. As a result they are over represented in every category of risk taking resulting in injury and trauma.

The RRISK Program aims to reduce risk-taking behaviour associated with alcohol and drug use, driving and partying amongst year 11 students in the North and Mid North Coast of NSW. RRISK is relevant to the social life, developmental stage and concerns of adolescents. It extends the school based drug education and road safety curriculum by providing opportunities for senior high school students to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills to reduce risk taking and develop safer celebrating strategies.

Over 4500 students from more than 59 high schools from Port Macquarie to Tweed Heads have registered to attend one of 10 RRISK Seminars.

RRISK seminar date for Grafton High School

Coffs Harbour, Southern Cross University - 15th November

Research shows that RRISK is effective in reducing young driver crashes by 44%.

Researchers consider RRISK a best practice program because it builds resilience by equipping young people with strategies and practical skills to manage risks in their social life and on the roads as drivers and passengers.

Look for information about the RRISK Program on the RRISK website www.rrisk.com.au and in this newsletter over the coming weeks.

Year 11 students will receive permission notes this week for this very important program.

*Mrs Nichols (HT Welfare)*

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**“The Australian Age of Dinosaurs”**

The following letter was received last week. Mrs Calvey generously sponsors our membership of “The Australian Age of Dinosaurs” and has donated a full set of their past journals to the Grafton High School Library. The journals are available for loan through the library.

*Dear Staff and students*

Further to your 3 year membership of “The Australian Age of Dinosaurs” (AAOD), along with all the associated journals already gifted to the school, I would very much like to supplement this with a new DVD from the AAOD. It explains in 4 segments of 10 minutes each, the story behind the organisation, why we find dinosaurs in the Winton area; and explains all aspects of the science and activities involved in locating/digging/prepping and preserving dinosaur and other fossils. I hope it proves to be a great addition to your library.

This year’s dig in Winton was, as always, fruitful and very exciting. The annual AAO newsletter is in production and due to be sent to all members by email very soon and will have an update on this and all other activities through 2013. Further information can always be found on the website: aaad.com.au

If I can be of any further assistance, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Very kind regards

*Ali Calvey*

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**Upcoming Events:**

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**Community Notices**

**BECOME A VOLUNTEER HOST FAMILY – IT’S FUN!**

World Education Program (WEP) is inviting you to experience another culture in your own home by becoming a volunteer host family to an international student arriving in January 2014. Students from Switzerland, Finland, the Netherlands, Brazil, Italy, Japan and Thailand are looking forward to experiencing life in Australia, making new friends and becoming a member of an Australian family.

"Another excellent experience for the family. We learned a lot about Italy. Virginia was very helpful and cooperative at home. It is a wonderful thing to give people new experience. Virginia had never eaten mango, been to ten pin bowling or held a crocodile or koala. This is the part I enjoy most about the exchange experience. Virginia will never forget Australia."

- Susan and Anthony, host parents of Virginia (Italy)

It’s easier than you think and a fantastic experience for all!

Find out more!
To help you make this important decision, contact WEP today to receive a full information pack for your family.

*Sylvia Kelly*
Manager Inbound
Exchange Programs
Phone: 1300 884 733
Email: wep@wep.org.au
Online: www.wep.org.au

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**South Services Cricket club**

South Services Cricket club are looking for players to fill their Under 16 team.

The season starts this Friday, so please give Karen Cleaver a call on 0417248134 if you would like a game.