



# BIRRONG BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Birrong Girls High School

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## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

### School Development Day

The School Development Day, held on the first day of this term, had as its theme, "Responding to the diverse needs of our students: refugees as learners". Mr Greg Wark, District Guidance Officer for Granville Schools, and Mr Warwick Mahoney, Refugee Student Support Officer, facilitated very engaging workshops that described the trauma associated with the refugee experience and the strategies that we as teachers need to adopt to facilitate learning for students from a refugee background.

Feedback from teachers indicated that they appreciated the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the experiences of refugees and that the information provided will inform their teaching practice. A group of teachers will continue working with Greg over the next few weeks to build and develop their skills in catering to the specific needs of refugee students in their classrooms.

An exceptional supplement to the School Development Day was provided by Sabera Noori (Year 11). On the first assembly of Term 3, Sabera shared her very moving personal story of her family's escape from Afghanistan and arrival in Australia as refugees. Sabera's story, printed in full later in this Bulletin, won the South Western Sydney Refugee Week Writing Competition and she was presented with her award at a conference held on 18 June at Fairfield RSL. After reading this narrative you will agree that Sabera has enormous talent as a writer even though she has only studied English since 2010.

### Subject Selection for HSC 2014

**Year 10** are currently making important decisions regarding subjects and courses for Year 11 2014. The girls have been assisted in this task through the information provided by the very successful Subject Market presented by Head Teachers on Wednesday 17 July. At this market students were reminded that they should *make their subject choices based on their own interest and ability*. Selecting a subject because friends have chosen it, or family members believe it will lead to a high ATAR or even because a particular teacher is teaching it this year, are all foolish reasons on which to base a choice. The best predictors of HSC success are subject choices based on individual ability and interest and school attendance.



Mr McCredden with Year 10 students at the Subject Market

The market was complemented by an informative session on the Board of Studies requirements for the HSC by Ms Fletcher, Deputy Principal, on Thursday 18 July. Armed with all of this information and advice from our Careers Adviser, Ms Austin, the girls will make appropriate decisions about subjects for Year 11 and 12 to enhance pathways into tertiary education and TAFE or the workforce.

To assist your daughters to make appropriate subject selections, Year 10 parents are encouraged to attend a talk with question time on the Board of Studies requirements for the HSC by Ms Fletcher, Deputy Principal at **5pm on Wednesday 31 July in the Common Room** prior to the next meeting of the P&C.

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### Business Partners Afternoon Tea

On Thursday 13 June the school held an afternoon tea to acknowledge and thank the many business partners we have fostered in our community for the extraordinary help they give to our girls. These partners support our students by providing exciting opportunities in the world of work during Year 10 work experience and the HSC VET course work placements. The time, advice and encouragement they offer provide our students with a valuable glimpse of life beyond school. Our guests were warmly received by Year 12 Retail and Business Services students and enjoyed refreshments prepared and served by Year 12 Hospitality students.

### Year 12

Year 12 students are now hard at work finalising major projects and preparing for their **Trial HSC examinations** which will commence in Week 5. Excellent attendance, motivation and hard work displayed over the length of the course will ensure that Year 12 maximise their success.

### Congratulations to:

- All the talented dancers and their enthusiastic supporters who made the **PDHPE Dance Display on Thursday 27 June** a tremendous success. The display was eagerly viewed by Year 4 & 5 girls from our local primary schools including Birrong, Berala, Yagoona, Regents Park and Lidcombe primary schools. Great talent, dedication and enthusiasm from students and their PDHPE teachers made this a very spectacular show.

- Gulnaz Beg of Year 12** who was acknowledged for her work within the refugee community at the 2013 Western Sydney Refugee Youth Awards during Refugee Week at the Auburn Centre for Community. Gulnaz was presented with the Community Leadership Award by the State MP for Auburn, Barbara Perry (pictured above). Sabera Noori (Year 11) and Maryam Sahow (Year 12) were also recognised at this event for their talent and hard work within the refugee community.



### Thank you to:

- The large crowd of parents who took the opportunity to discuss their daughter's Semester 1 reports with the teachers at the **Parent/Teacher meeting** on Tuesday 25 June. The feedback received from the online survey completed by parents on the evening was very positive. Parents indicated they believe very strongly that:
  - the school provides a safe and secure learning environment for their daughters,
  - the teachers are caring and provide stimulating and challenging learning activities,

- the school's focus on technology is vital for preparing students for careers in the modern world, and
- the school is always looking for ways to improve what it does.

### Coming Events

All parents are warmly invited to the next **P&C meeting at 5pm on Wednesday 31 July** in the Common Room. This meeting will follow a talk with question time on the Board of Studies requirements for the HSC by Ms Fletcher, Deputy Principal.

I invite you to contact the school to make an appointment with me (Tel: 9644 5057) if you have any issues that you wish to discuss about your daughter's education. I hope you enjoy reading about the achievements and activities of the school in the following pages.

Jenni Wilkins  
**Principal**

### REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

*"...Let us pick up our books and our pens, they are powerful ... One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world. Education is the only solution..."* Malala Yousafzai, Speech to the United Nations (on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday)

At Birrong Girls High our motto, "**Ad Astra**" (*reach for the stars*) embodies the same message as the words from Malala's speech. We encourage every student to begin this term with high aspirations and the determination to ensure that her participation in class work, homework and extra-curricular activities will ensure that she can be proud of her report for Semester 2.

**Ad Astra** means to:

- Learn to the best of our ability
- Communicate and pursue our high expectations
- Value original ideas and achievement in academic, creative and sporting pursuits
- Model and value intellectual curiosity, creativity and critical thinking
- Celebrate our achievements

Every student should be thinking about her own personal excellence, her ambitions and goals for this term. She should be setting weekly targets and ensuring that each day is a stepping stone towards making ambitions turn into realities.

Another traditional activity which reflected the leadership and extra work which many of our students willingly take on, in addition to their studies, was the BGHS Business Partners Afternoon Tea. Hospitality students catered for the event whilst students from Business Services,

Retail Services and Sport Coaching organised invitations and helped by ensuring that visitors enjoyed the afternoon of food, musical performances and the opportunity to see some impressive examples of students' work in Visual Arts. The afternoon tea is a small acknowledgement by the staff and students of our appreciation to businesses who take our students for Work Experience in Year 10 and for mandatory work placement hours required by senior students undertaking Vocational Education subjects such as Retail Services, Business Services, Hospitality and Sport Coaching.



Some of the students who assisted with the Business Partners Afternoon Tea

NAIDOC Week, which always falls during the Term 2 school holidays, was celebrated at the last assembly of Term 2, as our indigenous students led the school assembly with maturity, confident public speaking skills and with pride. Indigenous performers, Beatrice and Uncle George, performed dances and songs, explaining the significance of each part of their performance to the audience. Our students were moved and impressed by the agility and symbolism of the dances. Many students were keen to volunteer to learn and perform the dance steps on stage under the tutelage of Beatrice.



NAIDOC Week was celebrated during assembly

Parent/Teacher afternoon, which took place during Week 9 of Term 2, was very well patronised, despite the stormy weather. Teachers always value the chance to speak directly to parents about the progress of students and to

suggest ways in which students can further improve their knowledge and skills in each subject. We hope that parents are guiding and supporting their daughters to follow up on the suggestions made by their teachers.

The beginning of Term 3 is a good time to remind parents that junior students should be utilising their free access to **Mathletics** as a way of ensuring improvement in their numeracy skills. Similarly, we advise parents to encourage students to read at home (novels and non-fiction books) to broaden their vocabulary, improve spelling and to expand their general knowledge. Effective reading requires a quiet place away from noise and distractions. We recommend that students read for at least an hour each night. Swapping an hour of cyber communication for an hour of reading will go a long way towards helping girls learn a lot more about themselves, others and the world in which they live.

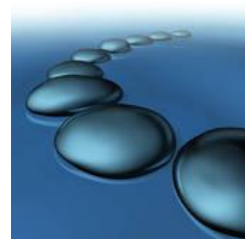
Finally, we would like to acknowledge the long hours teachers, Year Advisers and Head Teachers spend working before and after school and on the weekends. In addition to face to face teaching, they prepare, mark, plan, assess, report on students, support and help students who have questions or problems, counsel parents, undertake extra professional training and oversee all the extra-curricular activities which make education at Birrong Girls High so broad and rich. We would like to publicly recognise their efforts and sincerely thank them for their enthusiasm and for all the contributions they make towards ensuring that Birrong Girls High continues to be such a positive, inclusive learning environment where every student has the opportunity to attain her **personal best**.

Ad Astra.

Ms Crossan and Ms Fletcher  
Deputy Principals

*The stepping stones to success are not always smooth..  
Some of them are sharp and jagged, others are edgy and slippery..  
You may fall a number of times but as you rise up, you learn..  
The journey may not be as pleasant as you've expected but painful as it may seem, these stones help you get closer to your destination.*

Claire G.



## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES AT BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

#### ATTENDANCE

- At Birrong Girls High School students are expected to attend school every day unless there is genuine illness or reason for absence.
- If your daughter is absent from school you will need to contact the school via phone or reply text to explain her absence.
- Your reply text should include your daughter's full name, roll class and a brief reason for the absence.
- There will be no need for a written note once you reply to the text or contact the school via phone.
- Unexplained absences will appear on your daughter's report at the end of the semester.

#### EARLY LEAVERS

- If your daughter needs to leave school early for reasons such as dentist appointments she is to bring a note from you.
- The note should contain her name, the time she needs to leave school and the reason for leaving. This note should also provide a contact number and parent signature.
- The note must be given to the Head Teacher Administration by 8:20am on the day your daughter needs to leave early. Your daughter will then receive an official Department of Education exit pass.

#### LATECOMERS

- At Birrong Girls classes begin at 8:30am.
- Girls who arrive after this time are to go to the late room where their time of arrival is recorded. Girls will receive a blue late note for parents to complete. Once the blue late note is completed it is to be given to the Head Teacher Administration.
- All late students must see the Head Teacher Administration at recess on the day of the late arrival. Detentions and letters to parents will be issued with persistent lateness.
- If your daughter knows she will be late she is encouraged to bring a note to explain why.

#### TRUANCY

- There is an expectation at Birrong Girls High School that students take responsibility for their learning. This includes attending all scheduled classes.
- Teachers mark their class roll each lesson. If your daughter is absent from class but not on an excursion or the daily absentee sheet, her absence is reported to the Head Teacher Administration.
- Letters are sent home and phone calls are made to inform parents that their child has been absent.
- All truancy issues will be documented on your daughter's school records and displayed on your daughter's school report.

Mrs George  
Head Teacher Administration

## WELFARE REPORT

### Student of the Month Award

Congratulations to Trang Dao of Year 11 who has been awarded the Student of the Month award for June 2013. She is a mature and diligent student who has a positive attitude in all aspects of schooling and has demonstrated



outstanding dedication and commitment to the school community. Trang has carried out valuable school service through her commitment and active involvement as a Student Representative Council member, as a leader in the Year 7 Peer Support program and as a member of the Amnesty International and Environmental teams. She has volunteered her time to various school events such as the Year 7 Welcome BBQ and the History Numeracy Project.

### Dental Care Program

The school has arranged with Australian Mobile Dental Care for all students to receive a free dental assessment and screening which includes x-rays and/or photos. The mobile dental clinic will start on the school premises in Week 6 of this term from 19 August. This service is also an important preventative dental care consultation. The assessment results will be provided and if additional dental treatment, such as fillings, is required it can be provided by the mobile dental clinic during school time if parents consent. Students who have the Medicare Teen Dental Voucher can use it for a free professional clean and sealants.

All students received a note and consent form for the free assessment and screening service. If you would like your daughter to receive this service please complete, sign and return the form which is to be placed in the box outside the Reception office.



Ms Salvagio  
Head Teacher Welfare

## NEW TEACHER

**Demis Aravena**  
English



My name is Demis Aravena and I join Birrong Girls High School after teaching as a temporary English teacher at Ashcroft High School for 8 years. I began teaching in 2001 and have worked in various schools, including a year abroad in England.

I have had experience in leading workshops on public speaking and debating and have been involved in facilitating student leadership with programs such as The Duke of Edinburgh, Peer Support Training as well as charity events like The 40 Hour Famine and fun runs such as The Mother's Day Classic.

I look forward to my time at Birrong Girls High School. I hope to facilitate students in their academic pursuits and provide the foundation for them to excel in all walks of life.

## BUSINESS PARTNERS AFTERNOON TEA

On Thursday 13 June, Birrong Girls High School held an afternoon tea to thank our business associates for their support in assisting students with work placement, work experience and other extraordinary student activities such as the UTS Summer School.

Riana Oliver and Prinita Thevarajah (Year 12 Music students) and Joslin Setu and Cindy Zhou (Year 11 Music students) sang exceptionally and impressed our guests with their talent. Suezan Kassem and Jessica La Delfa, school VET student award winners, thanked our guests on behalf of our school community. Without the cooperation of the many businesses who take our students, Year 10, 11 and 12 students would miss out on many valuable experiences which help to prepare them for life beyond school.

Thank you to Ms Fedes who coordinated the afternoon and to the Year 12 Hospitality classes who worked tirelessly with Ms Morozov, Ms Vassos and Mr Da Cunha to provide an extraordinary buffet of savouries and sweets.

Ms Crossan  
**Deputy Principal**

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

On 30 May we attended a leadership event held for the captains of schools from the South Western Sydney region at State Parliament House. It was a privilege to attend such an extraordinary event because we were granted the opportunity to meet state MPs and to watch them in action from the public gallery in both the Lower and Upper House.

We were inspired by how passionate and humorous politics can be, compared to what we are shown in the media. We were also given the chance to meet fellow leaders of other schools, which made the experience even more fulfilling.

As well as going to State Parliament, we were given a tour of Government House and were addressed by the acting Governor-General of Australia, and the first woman to be appointed Governor of NSW, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, AC, CVO. She imparted the importance of leadership, and how we can use our roles to benefit our community. Youth, according to Marie Bashir, should not deter us from making strong contributions to our communities; in fact, our contributions have the potential to be the most significant. In particular, Marie Bashir spoke about the greater roles that women played in leadership, and how we must seize every opportunity that is presented to us. She spoke of how wonderful it is that women now hold key positions such as Governor-General, and Prime Minister (at the time of writing), something completely unheard of in Australian history.

The tour of Government House was an experience in itself, and in particular, the address given to us by one of the influential and powerful women in Australia. All in all, the day was extremely memorable and further ingrained in us the importance of leadership.

**By: Christina Le and Iman Sayed Mahmoud,  
Year 12**



## BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

**Parents are invited to attend the  
P & C MEETING  
on Wednesday, 31 July 2013  
at 5pm in the Common Room**

## CAREERS REPORT

### New Childcare qualification requirements

From 1 January 2014, many qualification requirements for centre-based and family day care services will be changing. All family day care coordinators must have an approved diploma level education and care qualification or above. All family day care educators must have, or be actively working towards, an approved Certificate III level education and care qualification (except eligible South Australian educators under Regulation 336, which expires in 2015).

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/news-media/news/five-fast-facts-qualification-requirements-for-2014#sthash.hTNVH9BU.dpuf>

### Year 12: UAC

I am currently distributing the 2013-14 UAC Guides to all Year 12 students, via roll call groups. The UAC guide has over 1500 courses offered by 25 institutions (see back cover). Part 3 of the guide (page 445) has information about a further nine institutions but you need to apply to those nine institutions directly.

UAC applications open on 7 August at the website [www.uac.edu.au/undergraduate](http://www.uac.edu.au/undergraduate). UAC will send each student a 4 digit PIN to use with your online application. This is different from your Board of Studies PIN so keep it safe and confidential.

It costs \$28 to apply to UAC and you need a Visa or MasterCard credit card to apply or use BPAY at a post office (page 26). Please keep a copy of your receipt for payment.

UAC applications close on 27 September. Check the second last column of Table 1 (pages 60-125) of the UAC Guide for courses that have an early closing date.

You can submit a maximum of nine preferences. The way UAC works is that the system looks to see if you have enough ATAR points to get your first preference. If you do you are made an offer. If not the system then checks your 2<sup>nd</sup> preference, down to your 9<sup>th</sup> preference and makes an offer on the first course you have sufficient ATAR points to get into.

So make sure you list your preferences in the order you wish to do the course. If you got 99.95 (maximum ATAR) and your first preference had an ATAR cut off of 60 that would be the course you would be offered, even if your 9<sup>th</sup> preference was for a course with an ATAR cut off of 99.95.

My advice is to apply for any course just to get registered with UAC by 27 September. Then concentrate on doing your absolute best in the HSC exams.

After the HSC is over then worry about your nine preferences. Once you are registered with UAC you can change your preferences without charge as often as you like until 4 January 2014. The only

students who need to worry more about UAC preferences are those applying for scholarships or applying for courses that say that course must be your first preference, the rest of you can worry about UAC after you've done the HSC as long as you have registered one course by 27 September.

Successful students will be made an offer by UAC at 9pm on 16 January 2014.

If you intend going to University next year check out page 14 of the 2013-14 UAC guide which lists all the **Open Days**. You would not buy a pair of jeans without trying them on; spend some time checking out which institution best fits you for the next three to five years!



There is a lot more useful information at <http://www.uac.edu.au/schoolink/year-12.shtml>

### Scholarships

#### Teacher Education Scholarships

For further information contact the Scholarship Team on telephone 1300 301 435 or by email at [scholarships@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:scholarships@det.nsw.edu.au).

#### Ex-service Scholarships

The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) is a national independent charity administering tertiary scholarships for children and grandchildren of ex-service men and women. AVCAT administers scholarships to the children of those who have served our country in peace and war in the Australian Army, Navy and Air Force. Scholarships are generally paid for three years and are between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per year. Scholarship applications open on 18 August. Telephone 9213 7999 or 1800 620 361 (voicemail). Email: [avcat@dva.gov.au](mailto:avcat@dva.gov.au). Website: [www.avcat.org.au](http://www.avcat.org.au).

### Year 10 Work Experience Block 2

Your second block is 18 November – 22 November. Please make the most of this opportunity to try out a potential career as this is the last such opportunity you have before gaining your HSC. Please hand in your completed pink forms ASAP. In the first block 140 students only tried out 24 occupations. There are over 600 different careers so check out the Job Guide before choosing an employer to approach.

### Year 10 – 12 Tax File Number (TFN)

Each student should have a TFN. Please see me to apply if you do not have a TFN. This number stays with you for life and should never be revealed to anyone except your employer.

That's all for now.

Ms Austin  
Careers Adviser

## YEAR 9 GEOGRAPHY 1 STUDENTS PLANT NEW TREES

On 20 June we received over 40 new trees from the Bankstown City Council's tree giveaway and they were planted on the oval by Year 9 Geography 1 students. The plants came in many different shapes and sizes, and each student was given the chance to name a plant. These trees are an important part of the school as it allows us to have the opportunity to watch the trees grow, just like our education. We were deeply grateful to receive these trees as it gave us a chance to leave behind a memory of us in the school.



Mr Vongratsavai with Year 9 Geography 1 students

Our class teacher, Ms Stachiw, along with the General Assistant, Noah Vongratsavai, assisted us in planting the 40 trees. We located an area to plant the trees and this became a new home for them. With School Tree Day approaching we have already done half the job by planting the trees.

By: **Amirah Bahsa and Amy Ye, 9G1**

## NATIONAL COMPUTER SCIENCE SCHOOL CHALLENGE

The University of Sydney is inviting any interested student to participate in the National Computer Science School (NCSS) Challenge for the Year 2013. It is an online programming competition for high school students. More information is on our school's noticeboard next to Room 1.



## PDHPE DANCE DISPLAY SUCCESS!

Congratulations must go to our girls for their carefully choreographed and entertaining performances at this year's annual PDHPE Dance Display.

It was the first year of our new model where we invited our five local primary schools to view the Dance Display. Over 300 Year 4 and 5 students from Lidcombe, Regents Park, Birrong, Yagoona and Berala primary schools arrived very excited on the second last day of Term 2 to view our display. The primary school students were very entertained, with eyes wide open enjoying every performance. This year we chose the themes of animation and Disney. We entertained the audience with cleverly and uniquely choreographed class performances from Shrek, Madagascar, Pirates of the Caribbean, Camp Rock, Shake It Up and Rio. We received positive feedback from both the primary school students and teachers, who all commented on the quality of the performances and were very keen to come back again next year.

Congratulations to the following Year 7 and 8 class groups that successfully made it into the Dance Display this year - 7H, 7C, 7B, 7S, 8H and 8B. Both Dance elective groups also performed, with Year 9 performing to "Shake It Out" and Year 10 to "Step Up", both exciting and slick performances. All students should be commended on their application to dance and their performance skills.

## The following students from Year 9 and 10 choreographed and performed outstanding routines:

"Ballerina Rockers": Katerina Katkarovski, Alex Mai, Dakota Gotty and Sharon Phan. "Like This": Hadisa Taheri, Belinda Tearea, Ana Pahulu and Raihana Wazefadost. "Wholes versus Hollows": Taylor Baker, Bessie Barbour, Emily Micev, Thu Thu Htet and Helen Mac. "The Azontos": Tacey Lau, Tajtiana Fasavalu, Marina Harry, Alana Leha, Peta Mounगतonga and Tyrina Trego. "Queens of the Jungle": Amar Hamed, Hamna Ahmed, Narelle Scerri, Hayley Brisenden and Ghaida Alameddine. "Chaos in the Masquerade Ball": Duha Al-Hassnawi, Ghada Alameddine, Miqat Al Sodany, Dalena Tran, Emily Webb and Dyini Taleh. "Military Misfits": Pauline Mua, Victoria Pahulu, Jamie Legaspi and Seren Gokus. "Upgraders": Hawa Bah, Princess Collins, Fatima Khudhair, Fathima Hassim Marikkar and Zainab Haidary. "Back to Life": Isabella Johnston Araujo, Nour Salama and Manar Laalaa. "Soldier On": Jessica Bartolo, Nana Derbas, Xiao Lu Guo, Zahra Abdulkader, Sylvia Jeong, Sarah El-Esh and Ilesha Ghantous. "Fight to the Death": An Dinh, Anna Nguyen, Marium Al Khazaaly, Jasmine Tran, Kristine King, Nina Tee and Kha-Linh Dao. "Humanoids": Zoe Zhuo, Christine He, Anna He, Anna Ung, Cindy Chen, Hareem Abbasi and Vivian Chau.

Thank you to the following students and teachers for their valuable contribution to the success of the Dance Display:

- The PDHPE staff for their hard work and dedication towards choreographing and organising the event.
- Year 10 PASS for stage decorations and supervisory roles.
- Ms Martin, Ms Trinh and Ms Rothwell for being our wonderful judges.
- The Sound Crew, Mr Thomas, Nour Salama, Manar Laalaa and Isabella Johnston Araujo.
- Mrs George and Mr Thomas for their fabulous PowerPoint presentation.
- Mr Thomas and Ms Sirris for technical assistance and video production.

A final congratulations must go to the three performances that were nominated 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> for 2013. First place "Humanoids", second place "Chaos in the Masquerade Ball" and third place presented to "Soldier On". These students should be congratulated for their commitment to both dance composition and performance.

Mrs Lord  
Head Teacher PDHPE

### PDHPE Dance Display 2013





## LIBRARY NEWS

Winter is the busiest season for the Library. When it is cold and windy outside, the Library is warm. Borrowing rates are very high as students race to finish the 2013 Premier's Reading Challenge. (<https://products.schools.nsw.edu.au/prc/home.html>). If you need help please see us as the Challenge finishes on 23 August.

Also happening in August is Book Week when there are competitions for celebrating the book and the story. (<http://cbca.org.au/index.htm>). Competition forms are available at the Circulation Desk.

Of course the Library is more than just books, it is an activity centre. The Chess Club has brought out the best of some very skilled students. The *Wrap with Love* program has been running each Thursday at lunchtime for knitters and crocheters. Ms Wilkins gave us a hand with the spinning wheel.



**Ms Wilkins at the wheel with a student**

Lastly, I will mention some exciting news for residents of Bankstown. A new Library and Knowledge Centre is being built and is due to open next February. On 18 July I attended the Bankstown Library Advisory Meeting and Mr Gary Starr, Manager of Community and Cultural Services, gave us details of all the impressive new facilities. I have membership forms for Bankstown residents and I can't recommend the benefits of membership enough.

Mr Davidson  
**Teacher Librarian**

## YEAR 9 SCIENCE STUDENTS VISIT MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

On Friday 19 July, Ms Rajcevski and her enthusiastic Year 9 Science students were lucky enough to have the opportunity to attend the Science and Engineering Challenge at Macquarie University.

We arrived at school at around 7:15am for a 7:30am departure. The bus trip to Macquarie University took an hour which gave us time to prepare some strategies with our friends.

Once we arrived at the university we were given an introduction and coloured bracelets to wear. This helped the leaders identify each group so that we could experience a variety of activities. My group attempted *The String Ways* where we had to work out the shortest routes between a number of points. It was a very challenging activity and required a lot of "brain power" and a variety of tactics. In the end we felt satisfied at completing 8 out of the 12 scenarios given to us in the short time allocated to us to complete them.

After lunch we were sent to our next activity which required us to build a tower and test its strength to see how many weights it could support without toppling over. All together we managed to place 6 weights on our tower before it fell down. Next we needed to build a new model tower and test it in an earthquake simulator. We placed weights on the top again to see how much weight our new tower could support before collapsing over. My group was happy, as we won a couple of the challenges.



**Year 9 Science students with the completed model tower**

The day was an amazing experience, well worth the early wake up call. Thank you to Mr Saule and Ms Rajcevski for organising this great experience. Many of the students who attended have a new understanding of the connection between science experiments, observations, calculations and the relationship between science and engineering.

**By: Hayley Brisenden, Year 9**

## YEARS 9, 10 & 11 VISUAL ARTS CAMP

As the sun was rising on the morning of Monday 22 July, we boarded a coach and headed south from Birrong to the beautiful property of the artist, Arthur Boyd. On the coach were 24 enthusiastic Visual Art elective students accompanied by Ms Winchcombe and Mrs Anthony. After a scenic 4 hour drive past ocean views and dairy farms, we left the city far behind and arrived at the Riversdale property, near Nowra. We were given a tour of Arthur Boyd's homestead and the magical experience of wandering around his artist studio, which was exactly as it had been left on the last time that he painted in it. Guided by the property's experienced art educators, we walked down to the river and sat on the sand for an ink and mixed media workshop. Following that we participated in a pastel drawing workshop of the iconic Pulpit Rock. As the cool afternoon air descended we drove to our camp accommodation at Bundanon, perched on the hillside overlooking the picturesque Shoalhaven River. After feasting on a delicious evening meal, we worked well into the night on an introspective workshop exploring skulls, bones and the landscape. Awoken the next morning by a magnificent sunrise and wombats and kangaroos grazing nearby, we ate breakfast and then immersed ourselves into a guided workshop which resulted in our own handmade, artist books. The coach pulled up just after lunch and signalled a sad farewell to the wonderful property and amazing art making experiences. Carrying bags, artworks and plenty of smiles, we boarded the coach for home.



Visual Arts Camp participants enjoy the view

## YEAR 7 EXCURSION TO THE 'SYDNEY MODERNS' EXHIBITION

All of Year 7 attended an inspiring exhibition titled the 'Sydney Moderns – Art for a New World' on Wednesday, 24 July. The exhibition was a wonderful celebration of our glorious harbour city. We arrived at the Art Gallery of NSW and were escorted into the Domain Theatre. We listened to a descriptive overview of the exhibition by the gallery education officer. The group had the chance to view the exhibition and draw some inspirational images.

After lunch in the Domain we had a session of drawing breathtaking views of the Woolloomooloo Bay vista and then boarded the buses to return to school.



'Sydney Moderns' excursion at the Art Gallery of NSW

Ms Winchcombe  
**CAPA Faculty**

## PERSONALISED LEARNING AND SUPPORT TOOL (PLASST) 2013 TRIAL

During the next few weeks our school, along with other public schools in the area, will be participating in the trial of a new tool (PLASST) being developed by the Department of Education and Communities for teachers to identify the learning and support needs of their students.

This trial is focussed on the development of a sound and reliable online tool that, when finalised, can be used by teachers in collaboration with parents and carers to identify the strengths and educational needs of students with additional learning and support needs. This information will assist schools in planning and personalising learning and support for individual students who require adjustments in their day to day learning. The trial will involve teachers completing an online questionnaire about the educational needs of some of their students. Students themselves will not be required to complete any additional work or be formally assessed as part of the trial. This trial will not impact on students' education provisions.

Further information about the PLASST trial, including the collection and use of data in the trial, will be provided by the school in a letter to parents and carers. If you have any questions about the PLASST trial, would like to discuss your child's involvement or would prefer that your child does not participate, please telephone the school on 9644 5057.

### Telephone Interpreter Service

If you need help with English to make an enquiry contact the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. The operator will call the number you provide and get an interpreter on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

## BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL CALENDAR

*For your diary / noticeboard*

### **July:**

Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> to  
Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup>                      ■ Year 11 Hospitality Work  
Placements

Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup>                      ■ P&C Meeting, Common  
Room, 5pm

### **August:**

Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup>                      ■ Maths Competition

Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> to  
Friday, 9<sup>th</sup>                      ■ Year 11 Hospitality Work  
Placements

Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> to  
Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup>                      ■ Year 12 Trial Exams

Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> August to  
Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> September                      ■ Year 11 Exams

### **September:**

Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup>                      ■ P&C Meeting, Common  
Room, 5pm

Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> to  
Friday, 6<sup>th</sup>                      ■ CHS Athletics Carnival

Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> to  
Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup>                      ■ Year 10 Formal Exams

Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> to  
Friday, 20<sup>th</sup>                      ■ Year 11 Business Services  
Work Placements

Friday, 20<sup>th</sup>                      ■ Year 12 Graduation

## 2013 WESTERN SYDNEY REFUGEE YOUTH AWARDS



Award recipients, Gulnaz and Maryam

## PARENT TIPS

### **Food allergies**

Do you know a child with a serious food allergy?  
Read about how to recognise a reaction - to help  
keep the kids we love safe.

Find out more:

<http://www.foodallergyaware.com.au/awareness/>

### **Writing essays made easier**

Rather than worrying about an essay for weeks,  
suggest your child get in some early preparation  
and have the self-belief that they can do it.

Find out more:

<http://www.schooltoz.nsw.edu.au/homework-and-study/homework-tips/10-tips-for-writing-an-essay>

### **Sorting fact from fiction**

You can't always trust what you read when  
researching information for homework,  
assignments or projects. Here are ways your child  
can tell a good website – or any document – from  
a bad one.

Find out more:

<http://www.schooltoz.nsw.edu.au/homework-and-study/homework-tips/sorting-fact-from-fiction>

**Go4Fun**

Healthy • Active • Happy • Kids



NSW  
GOVERNMENT

Health  
Population  
Health

**FREE fun program for kids to become fitter, healthier and happier!**

**Do you have children 7-13 years old?  
Are you worried about their weight?**

Go4Fun is a FREE healthy living program for kids to become fitter, healthier and happier. The program is fun and interactive and supports 7-13 year old children and their families to adopt a healthy lifestyle and a long lasting and healthy approach to living. Children and their families become fitter, healthier and happier as they have fun, meet new friends and learn new skills.

Places on the program are limited, so register today for **Term 4** and make sure you don't miss out!

Free call 1800 780 900 or register online at  
[www.mendcentral.org/go4fun](http://www.mendcentral.org/go4fun)

**Name: Sabera Noori**

## **Refugee Week Writing Competition**

### **“My personal story”**

In 1997, in a small village, a little girl opened her eyes for the first time. This little girl landed in a place that was shattered by war that had left no signs of justice, humanity or freedom. Her life started in a land called Afghanistan, in a village called Jaghury.

This little girl started her life with the visions of world's beauty and peacefulness. But gradually, she saw the world's reality; war and conflict surrounded her land. People like her who were born into the minority ethnic group, Hazara, experienced discrimination and racism at the hands of other majority ethnic groups. The land she grew up in was extremely cruel, filled with inequality and discrimination. It was a land where women were trapped in their mud brick cages like restricted birds and told not to even dream of education. Females were not allowed to access any source of education as they were being discriminated against based on their femininity. This is how they had to live, not having the right to get an education but rather kept in their cages and counted as inferior. This child lived in a place that was filled with constant sounds of gunfire coming from the mountains which disturbed people's peace, especially during the night. So, there was no peace. This child's family realised that there was no future for their child and that they had to do something about it. Something deep in her family's heart told them that life did not necessarily have to be like this; that somewhere in the world it was possible to be in quietness and serenity and peace. But they did not know how and they did not know where. This child wanted to be free from the chains of discrimination, to be judged only by character and not by gender. This child wanted to be free from the destructive fear that surrounded her.

She was very young when her family decided to flee their homeland not only because they feared persecution and wanted safety and security for themselves but they hoped for a better life and freedom. During their journey her family had to struggle and go through a lot of hardships but eventually they reached a country called Pakistan in a city of Quetta. When this child left her beloved land, Afghanistan, she didn't only leave its war-torn homeland but also left lovely relatives and cousins.

After arriving in Quetta, Pakistan, this child, with her family, was finally soothed and relaxed for a few years and after some years, this child started Dari School. The school she went to was small and had only six classrooms. The girl did four hours of school each day and learned some basic education. She also did one hour of English classes and learned some English. After a few years, the world's silence was shattered and disturbed once again with the searing sound of bombs. Conflict began and many lives were lost. The lives of members of the ethnic group Hazara were again in danger. Rivers of tears drenched this child and her family's eyes. There was no hope for a bright future in Quetta, Pakistan. She and her family, again fearing persecution, began to plead for safety, security and freedom.

But the horror changed when the beautiful news of coming to Australia overshadowed the fear of persecution. Her father decided to sponsor his family to come to Australia. This girl, including her brother, sister and mother fled towards Australia with the hope of starting a new and a better life. They arrived in Australia on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2009. Her impression of Australia contrasted greatly with her memories of Afghanistan. The idea that freedom and opportunity actually exists in Australia restored hope in this girl. When she arrived in Australia, she began to feel relaxed and hopeful knowing that freedom and security exist and there is nothing to fear. She tried to adapt to this new land, full of opportunities and learned the English language. After 1 month, she attended Chester Hill Intensive English Centre where ESL students go. With the help of the teachers at the IEC, she began to learn more English and she did quite a lot of public speaking which improved her speaking and confidence. She graduated from the IEC after one year and attended Birrong Girls High School in 2011, starting from year nine and she is now in year eleven.

Now she has been in Australia for three and a half years and still faces English difficulties so she is trying her best to improve her English. In order to search for a better life, her family moved to a different country. Her parents did this to take their children out of the darkness and the gloomy life and to once again hope to start a new life.

She is now extremely happy being in Australia with her complete family and with the shadow of her parents upon her to care for her and support her, she is now really motivated. She is happy that she is safe and secure and finds herself lucky to be in a country like Australia. Living in Australia made her life easier and much more comfortable than it was in Jaghury. She wants to take the opportunities and, with her hard work, she hopes to make the dream of becoming a doctor come true in the future and wants to be successful in her life and help people.

That girl is not anyone else but me. This is my personal life experience and my refugee story.

