



BIRRONG BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Birrong Girls High School

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PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

US Secretary of State

Our school was honoured to be one of only three Sydney schools invited by the Consulate General of the United States of America to send a small group of senior students to meet the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, on Monday 11 August at the National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour.

The Year 11 students (Marium Al Khazaaly, Miqat Al Sodany, Aseel El Kurdi, Christine He, Isabella Johnston Araujo, Kristine King, Nour Salama and Anna Ung) were addressed by Senator Kerry about the importance of maintaining healthy oceans to ensure sustainability for future generations. On board the replica of Captain Cook's ship, Endeavour, some students engaged Senator Kerry in discussion on a range of environmental issues.



US Secretary of State, John Kerry, addressed a select group of Sydney high school students



Nour Salama, Ms Bolanca and Anna Ung at the reception

As can be expected for such an important and high profile visitor to our city, security was on high alert and the media was ever present. However, even with these pressures, the girls displayed great maturity and composure. It was a privilege for Ms Bolanca and me to accompany the girls as they were outstanding ambassadors for our school.

The following day, I received this excellent feedback in an email from the US Consulate General's office:

Please pass on our thanks to the girls who are a credit to the school. Well behaved/mannered, intelligent, friendly and respectful, wonderful virtues to have in this day and age.

From my perspective, it was unfortunate that we could only send a small number of students to represent our school, as I know that in our student body there are many more girls who would have acquitted themselves with equal distinction given the opportunity.

New School Planning Process

As part of the Department of Education and Communities' new reform agenda, all schools have been directed to consult with their school communities to develop a shared vision and identify three key strategic directions that will form the basis of the 2015-2017 School Plan.

Staff and students will be involved in the planning process throughout the rest of this year by participating in surveys and focus groups etc.

Parents can make their contributions by completing surveys that will be distributed later in the year and by participating in discussions at the scheduled P&C meetings in Terms 3 & 4. I look forward to working with the whole school community to develop a plan that will help the school achieve even greater student excellence!

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Creative and Performing Arts Extravaganza

Our annual showcase of student talent held in our Visual Arts centre on Tuesday 19 August was another resounding success. All visitors enjoyed the high standard of student art on display and had the opportunity to nominate their favourite piece for the People's Choice Award. It was a pleasure to view so many great artworks while our talented singers and musicians entertained with lively performances and our Hospitality students supplied us with delicious food.



Our talented performers kept the audience entertained

On behalf of all who attended the event I wish to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our talented teachers from Creative and Performing Arts and Technology who ensured the success of this year's Extravaganza and the hard work of our Year 11 Hospitality class who did a wonderful job with the catering.

Congratulations to:

- Cassidy Banh, Fereshta Jamshidi, Jiayu Lin and Julie Tran whose artworks were selected for Operation Art, an initiative of the Children's Hospital Westmead. The artworks of these talented Year 7 students will be exhibited at the Armory Gallery, Sydney Olympic Park from Saturday 6 September to Sunday 26 October 2014.
- Alexandra Viles (Year 9) who won the Auburn Future Writers Years 7-9 short story writing competition and Ilesha Hammoud and Tania Tran (Year 9) who were both Highly Commended. Mr Davidson, our dedicated teacher librarian, was also acknowledged with a Teachers' Award for his encouragement of our students to participate in the competition.



Auburn Future Writers Awards Presentation

- The 116 Year 7-9 students who successfully completed the Premier's Reading Challenge 2014.
- Mahbooba Shafei (Business Services), Sarah Al Waely (Hospitality) and Kirstie Butler (Retail Services) who were recognised for their skills at the Vocational Education & Training Awards Evening on Monday 18 August at the Revesby Workers' Club.
- The talented students participating in the UNSW Aspire program.
- The large number of talented and committed Year 10 students participating in the ABCN program.
- Salma Althifairy, Jacqueline Huynh, Jenny Nguyen and Linda Tran who were winners at the Bankstown City Council International Youth Day Debating Competition on 8 August.

Coming Events:

- Parents of Year 12 are invited to join us as we farewell the Year 12 class of 2014 at their **Graduation Ceremony** in the school's hall on Thursday 18 September. Best wishes in your HSC examinations girls and we wish you success and happiness for the future.
- Student and staff volunteers will give their time on **Saturday 6 September** to work on the Zonta Club's Birthing Kit project.
- I extend a warm invitation to all our parents to attend the next **P&C meeting** which will be held on **Wednesday 3 September** in the Common Room at 5pm. At the meeting parents will be asked for their views on the future directions of the school in preparation for the new school plan for 2015-2017.
- I invite you to contact the school (Tel: 9644 5057) to make an appointment with me 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.

Best wishes.

Jenni Wilkins
Principal



BERRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Parents are invited to attend the
P & C MEETING
on **Wednesday 3 September 2014**
at 5pm in the Common Room

DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' REPORT

Subject Selections

Subject selections for Year 11 and Year 9 2014 are currently being finalised. Students in Year 9 study English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography and PDHPE and two elective subjects of their own choice. Students going on to the HSC have even greater choice, English is their only compulsory subject so they can choose at least five other subjects for their Preliminary HSC year. For senior students, it is important that they select subjects not only that they enjoy but that they can do, that is, that suit their ability level. For this reason it is important that students consult their teachers who have the knowledge and expertise to steer them in the right direction. An additional consideration is need. Senior students should consult the Careers Adviser, Mrs Wailes, to ensure that their subjects align with their career paths.

Students who are concerned that they may have made inappropriate choices should see Ms Fletcher as soon as possible. Any variations to subject selections should be completed by Week 8 of next term. After that time, generally only changes within courses will be possible, for example, from Mathematics to Mathematics General.

Birrong Girls Celebrate Literacy and Numeracy

The theme for Birrong Girls' Literacy and Numeracy week was *Lighting the Way to a Better World*. During DEAR students dedicated time to literacy, writing rather than reading. Students wrote sincere and heart felt responses, many of which focused on the need for world peace as the key to a better world. The most outstanding responses will be published in Stellar, our student magazine. These will be selected by a discerning panel of Year 11 judges.

CAPA staff will use the notion of the school's values to work with student leaders on numeracy. Raw data related to the significance of school values in the lives of our students will be collated later in the term and presented as graphs and an artwork in Term 4. We very much look forward to the outcome of this analysis.

Thank you to the Year 11 literacy and numeracy leaders, Ms Bahnam and her Year 10 Maths class, and the CAPA staff whose extraordinary efforts have allowed our students to engage in very meaningful activities as part of Literacy and Numeracy week.

Birrong Girls Light the Way to a Better World

Congratulations to the many students who, because of their involvement in extra-curricular activities, are lighting the way to a better world. The environment team have been working hard to improve the quality of our pond, the prefects have raised considerable funds for Breast Cancer and

for Bear Cottage, a very special place that cares for children with life limiting conditions, and the SRC have sponsored Sabina, our Tanzanian student, for over 10 years. In addition to this, many of our students have successfully participated in the Auburn Future Writers Competition, Year 11 students have been involved in a mentoring program at UNSW, Year 10 students have mentored students from Lidcombe Public School and our Year 9 debaters defeated Sir Joseph Banks Year 10 debaters in the Inter Zone Debating Competition and will now compete in regional semi-finals. Well done, students!



Year 9 debaters

We look forward to seeing even greater participation with large numbers attending the birthing kit initiative organised by the Amnesty team in conjunction with Auburn Zonta Club on 6 September.

Prefects 2014

A special thank you to our outgoing prefect body who have been models of excellence for our students. They have worked cohesively as a team to fulfil the many aspects of their role and will be remembered for their initiative, good humour and strong sense of responsibility. A particular highlight of their role was the quality of their inspiring assembly presentations which explored the lives of young women who have overcome enormous personal challenges to live fulfilling lives and contribute to the betterment of society. Their stories focused on the power of self-belief, determination and personal excellence, qualities which have strong resonance for our students and which reinforced our proud Ad Astra culture.

Ad Astra Year 12 2014

Alas, this is the last newsletter for our Year 12 students. They have been a positive group who have worked well together and supported each other through the best and most challenging of times. Cooperative, responsible and keen to be involved, they will meet the challenges of the future with the same resilience and dedication that they have shown in their years at Birrong Girls. To each graduating Birrong girl: we wish you success - in your HSC, career paths and life choices; may you forever reach for the stars!

Ad Astra!
Ms Fletcher and Ms Crossan
Deputy Principals

WELFARE REPORT

Mobile Dental Care Program

The school has arranged with Australian Mobile Dental Care for all students to receive a free dental assessment, including x-rays and photo imaging, and preventative dental care consultation. Other dental care treatments will also be accessible. The mobile dental clinic will be on the school premises at the end of this term. All students have received an information letter and consent form which is due no later than Monday 1 September to Mrs Salvagio.

Vaccinations Term 3

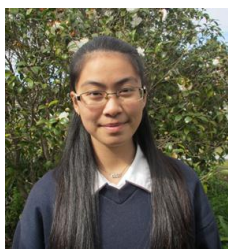
The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Catch-up Vaccination Program for Year 7 will take place on Thursday 11 September. Immunisation nurses will be visiting our school and offering one dose of the free MMR vaccine.

Students have received the information and consent form package. Please read the information provided. If you would like your daughter to receive this vaccine the consent form needs to be completed and returned to the Year Adviser, Ms Waltho, no later than Monday 1 September.

Mobile Blood Donation Program

The school has arranged for a mobile blood donation unit to be at our school on Wednesday 27 August. Some Year 12 and Year 11 students and staff members will be donating blood on the day which will save and support the lives of many people in the community.

Student of the Month Awards



Congratulations to Jasmine Tran of Year 11 who has been awarded the Student of the Month Award for June. She is a mature and diligent student who has demonstrated dedication and commitment to the school community and a positive attitude in all aspects of schooling.

Jasmine has represented the school at the Focus ABCN program and has carried out valuable school service through her commitment and active involvement as a leader in the Year 7 Peer Support program. She has completed 40 hours of volunteer activities and has participated in the Premier's Reading Challenge for four years. Jasmine has also excelled in swimming, representing the school at zone and regional level competitions.



Congratulations to Kirstie Butler of Year 12 who has been awarded the Student of the Month Award for July. She has demonstrated a strong commitment to the school community, as well as persistence, effort and a positive attitude to her learning.

Kirstie has carried out valuable school service through her commitment and active involvement as a motivated member of the school Amnesty International Team and the Peer Mediation Team. She has supported Year 7 students over two years as a Peer Reading Tutor and was a Peer Support Leader.

Congratulations to Hosay Zarmati of Year 12 who has been awarded the Student of the Month Award for August. She has demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to the school community. She is a motivated and diligent student who has a positive attitude in all aspects of schooling.



Hosay has demonstrated leadership and enthusiasm as a school Prefect and in her role of Sports Captain. She has carried out valuable school service through her commitment and active involvement as a motivated member of the school Debating Team, the Amnesty International Team and as a Peer Support Leader.

Mrs Salvagio
Head Teacher Welfare

ENVIRONMENT TEAM POND REGENERATION



The Year 10 Environment Team have been working hard to improve the quality of our pond

CAREERS NEWS

FairGo Driving is offering half price driving lessons for students at \$35/hr. Driving lessons are provided 7 days a week by friendly and experienced licensed instructors. For more information call 9687 9901.

Year 10 – a reminder about your upcoming Work Experience. A number of students have already started organising their work places in a variety of exciting industries; please start thinking about where you would like to go in November. I would like everyone to have secured their places and submitted completed forms by the end of this term. If you would like any assistance or need new forms, please see me. Parents – note that I have a number of copies of the guide for parents/carers, if you would like one please send your daughter to collect it from me.

Year 12 – UAC applications are now open and the first round closing date is 30 September. If you have not collected your UAC guide from me, please do so ASAP. Please book in a time with me if you would like support completing your application.



Parents – to help your daughter, our school is providing for your use the Careers website www.jobjump.com.au. Please go to this site and view the 3 minute introductory video (top right corner on the screen). To go into the website our school password is: puppies.

You will find using the UAC Handbook issued to Year 12s a quicker process by going to the JobJump website and clicking on the ATAR menu option (middle of screen). Now select the Careers field of interest from the Index listing on the left hand side. You can click on the blue UAC Course Code numbers in the first column to receive a full description of the courses. You can also click on any of the Table headings (like 2014 ATAR) and they will sort for you.

Mrs Wailes
Careers Adviser

YEAR 7 EXCURSION TO SYDNEY WILDLIFE ZOO

On Monday 4 August all of Year 7 went to Sydney Wildlife Zoo with our lovely Geography teachers. It was great to explore different habitats and environments from all over the Australian continent. Students were very excited to meet Rex, one of the world's largest saltwater crocodiles, see kangaroos and wallabies in Kangaroo Walk-About and meet the Tasmanian devils in Devil's Den. We also learned about the importance of key species such as the cassowaries in the Daintree Rainforest.

Butterfly Tropics was the first display upon entering the Wildlife Zoo. Students were amazed at the diverse range of animals living in the carefully-created tropical habitat, butterflies flitting through lush ferns and palms and vividly coloured pythons sunning themselves among the vines and slithering through the thick undergrowth.



A student volunteered to wrap a giant python around her neck. Students were allowed to touch and feel different reptiles.



Students observing zoo keepers training Ringo, a bare-nosed baby wombat. When he was found, Ringo was three months old and weighed under 900g. Bare-nosed wombats are naturally found in the coastal regions of south-east Australia and Tasmania.

Students and other visitors listened carefully to the crocodile keeper when he talked about Rex, a patient and clever hunter. We learned that salt water crocodiles wait by the riverbanks, with only their nostrils and eyes above the water, ready to pounce on anything unlucky enough to come close! Their green-grey colour means they are perfectly camouflaged under the water, and they can hold their breath for over two hours! They can feast on anything including cattle and water buffalo, grasping them with their fearsome teeth and performing the incredible "death roll", where they spin their bodies around to drown their prey and twist pieces off, ready to be devoured. After the zoo, we walked across the Pyrmont Bridge with our teachers to the food court at Harbourside Mall.



Year 7 students completed their excursion workbook after lunch at beautiful Darling Harbour

Our excursion to Sydney Wildlife Zoo gave us an opportunity to experience animals and ecosystems from a range of Australian environments, allowing us to identify the uniqueness of the Australian flora and fauna. It was a fun-packed learning day.

By: Lara Webb and Anna Fonua (7G)

SCIENCE WEEK AT LIDCOMBE PUBLIC SCHOOL



Week 6 was Science Week and to help the Year 5 and 6 students celebrate at Lidcombe Public School, four of our Year 10 students ran interactive Science workshops at their school.

Amar Hamed, Hamna Ahmad, Ghaida Alameddine and Narelle Scerri, accompanied by Miss Rothwell, travelled to Lidcombe Public School on Thursday 21 August. The students ran 5 workshops throughout the day for groups of 30 students. They performed a number of demonstrations and interactive activities with the primary school students including: firing an aspirin rocket; creating their own lava lamp; producing sound waves and making a harmonica. The students of Lidcombe Public School and their

teachers had a wonderful time and enjoyed some great Science experiences.

Our students had the opportunity to show their excellent leadership skills and were fantastic representatives of Birrong Girls High School.

Miss Rothwell
Science Faculty

BIRRONG WINS ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

As part of Engineering Week this year, a team of four Year 11 Physics students were selected to represent Birrong Girls at this year's Great Engineering Challenge held at the University of New South Wales, Kensington on Wednesday 6 August.

Forty nine teams from many schools across NSW came to compete. The day consisted of three challenges where students were asked to design, build and test a number of structures.

The Birrong Girls team were most successful in the third challenge where they were asked to construct a catapult and fire a projectile into a small target. They were the only team to successfully hit the target and, as a result, were presented with a trophy from RTAA, sponsor of the challenge.



Pictured from left to right: Christopher Cheong (event coordinator), Nina Tee, Dina Ali Agha, Anna Ung, Janice Ma (Birrong Girls) and Jonathan Barnes (guest speaker from RTAA)

As a teacher, it was pleasing to see the girls working together to meet the challenge. Although they did not win the overall prize, the girls did experience a day at the University and demonstrated the importance of teamwork in achieving success.

Mr Saule
Head Teacher Science

BIRRONG BUILDS A BRIDGE

A group of three Year 9 students (Zenah Allam, Malak Bakri and Abir Al Hassnawi) were selected to represent the school at the Aerocon Bridge Building Competition at the Art Gallery of NSW. The event was part of Engineering Week.

The challenge involved forming a team and using the provided kit (which included 16 balsa wood sticks, string and glue) to build the strongest possible bridge. To achieve success we had to use these limited materials wisely. We sat down and researched different types of bridges on the internet and practised our building skills before settling on our design. Our design was inspired by the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the use of lamination (sticking layers of wood together). We then built the bridge in two days.

Catching a train to the city with Ms Gallard, we walked down to the Art Gallery of NSW where the testing was to take place. After checking in, snapping a few pictures and weighing the bridge (198g) we were interviewed by the judges. They asked questions about the construction and how we achieved the curved shape of the arch. A hair straightener can come in handy when you try to curve a piece of wood! We were ranked first on aesthetics and now needed to see how much weight our bridge would hold.



Our bridge being tested

The order of testing was determined by ballot. The test engineers applied the load to the span of the bridge; we were hoping they would place the load on the arch. At 8kg the bridge failed. We were happy with the result but felt the positioning of the load had an impact. When results were posted, we finished a respectable 6th in a field of 20 schools from across NSW.

Despite not achieving outright victory, we were pleased with the judges' comments. They appreciated the creativity of our arch construction (bring in the hair straightener) originality. This acknowledgement was pleasing as it allowed us to claim the idea as our own. We were the first to use this technique in this competition.

By: Zenah Allam, Malak Bakri and Abir Al Hassnawi

CAPA REPORT

August has been a very busy, exciting and productive month for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) faculty at Birrong Girls High School. The beginning of Term 3 saw the arrival of a new grand piano. The piano is a very deserving arrival for our current HSC music students, five of whom will be performing piano solos. The high standard of their musical skills is a reflection of their focus and commitment to their learning over the course of their primary and high school years. We very proudly were able to present their performances on this beautiful instrument for a lunch hour piano recital and their HSC Trial examination. Anna Nikoliuk presented a thoughtful and sensitive interpretation of Tchaikovsky's piano composition "October" on an instrument deserving of such accomplished musicians. Our current group of HSC music students serve as wonderful role models for our younger students, together we experience classical and popular musical performances of the highest standard.



Vote for "Ad Astra"! (Reach for the Stars...)

Birrong Girls High School has a very active culture of music performance both within the school and at community events. Our junior band "Ad Astra" has been busy being involved with Bankstown's Talent Battle. The girls successfully auditioned and have been involved in professional photo shoots and the making of their own very stylish YouTube Ad! These can be viewed by clicking on the following links: (or you can google **BB4T YouTube**)

YouTube clip of "Ad Astra":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5mX4TkmsGY>

Bankstown's Talent Battle commercial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kX7x8rV0TE&feature=youtu.be>



"Ad Astra" band

We all have the opportunity to support our fabulous junior band to win the People's Choice Award for "Bankstown's Battle for Talent 2014" by clicking the link on the school website.

CAPA Extravaganza

At the CAPA Extravaganza on 19 August many artworks were displayed by a wide range of students from Years 7-12, including the works of our 2014 HSC candidates.



Hospitality students generously provided hors d'oeuvres as artworks were appreciated by all members of our school community. This was followed by a concert full of talented performers...and an enthusiastic audience!



Art Awards have all been selected and we are proud to announce the following students as award winners for 2014:

2014 CAPA Extravaganza Awards

People's Choice Award – Brodie Crowe
Year 7 Visual Arts Award – Kim Ho
Year 8 Visual Arts Award – Justine Mai
Year 9 Visual Arts Award – Cindy Dang
Year 10 Visual Arts Award – Ana Pahulu
Year 11 Visual Arts Award – Zehra Cetin
Year 12 Visual Arts Award – Zhi-Qing Huang

By: CAPA Faculty

UNSW ASPIRE STUDENT SHADOWING DAY

On Thursday 21 August, five Year 11 students, Aseel El Kurdi, Mariam El-Dhaibi, Anna Nguyen, Emily Webb and Christina Trajceska, attended the student shadowing day at UNSW. They were given the opportunity to experience a day in the life of a university student. Activities included social clubs, dancing, attending lectures and meeting with university students. They also received a tour around the campus and the different faculties.

"It was a very realistic experience of uni life and I enjoyed it very much. I discovered that university isn't all about studying and getting a degree, it's about developing the person as a whole through clubs and through interactions with fellow peers that have common interests." Aseel El Kurdi

The student shadowing day allowed students to gain a better understanding of university life and all students returned from the day motivated to attend university after the HSC.

Ms Boyle
Year 11 Adviser

BANKSTOWN CITY COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY DEBATING COMPETITION

On 8 August the Year 9 Debating Team of Linda Tran, Salma Althifairy, Jacqueline Huynh and Jenny Nguyen participated in the Bankstown City Council International Youth Day Debating Competition. After winning their first two rounds on the topics of advertising and the internet the team advanced to the grand final where they won by arguing the Negative case to the topic "That childhood is losing its magic."

Mr Davidson
Teacher Librarian

LIBRARY REPORT

Book Week reached its climax on 22 August when prizes for the competitions were handed out. The quality of poster entries this year was exceptional! Ms Wilkins and I were also impressed with the Poetry performances.

The 2014 Premier's Reading Challenge finished on 22 August and Ms Ozols and I were very pleased to see 116 students complete the challenge. I have emailed the principals of the local primary schools to congratulate the primary teacher librarians who nurtured their students before they reached high school. Thanks to them we had many students who have completed the PRC for 9 or 10 years in a row!

In other library news there will be two authors visiting Auburn Library next week. On Tuesday 2 September, Felicity Castagna, author of *The Incredible Here and Now* will talk about her work, the writing process and how to get published in western Sydney. On Thursday 4 September Edison N. Yongai will launch his novel, *No Name for Refugees*. For more information, please phone 9735 1250 or ask for details in the library.

Mr Davidson
Teacher Librarian

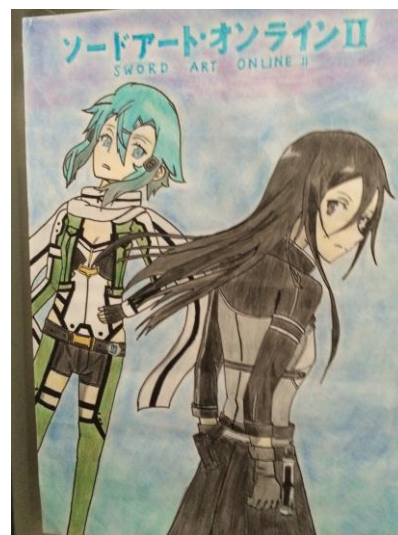
Some of the Book Week entries



Book Week Presentations



Book Week prizes



Attendance Tips

HELP YOUR DAUGHTER TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT SCHOOL AND AT WORK

Even taking a small amount of time out of school can be a problem and your daughter might fall behind with work and be unable to catch up.

A student with a good school record of attendance is setting themselves up for a better future once they leave school. It only takes 3 or 4 days off per term to start seriously affecting your daughter's education. 8 days or more per term and they fall below 85% attendance. This means they are unable to reach their full potential and their future life choices become far more limited.

Mrs George
Head Teacher Administration



FREE & fun program for fitter, healthier, happier kids!

Know if your child is over a healthy weight?
Go to www.go4fun.com.au to see if your child
could do Go4Fun.

Go4Fun is a FREE 10 week program which runs over one school term after school hours. During the program children and their families get involved in fun games and activities and learn about delicious nutritious foods they can eat every day.

Children need to be 7-13 years old and a parent or carer also needs to attend. Younger and/or older siblings are encouraged to attend.

Go to www.go4fun.com.au or
call 1800 780 900
to see if your child could do Go4Fun.

SCHOOL CALENDAR *For your diary / noticeboard*

September:

Monday, 1st to
Friday, 5th

- Year 11 Exams

Wednesday, 3rd

- Year 8 Field Day
- P&C Meeting, Common Room, 5pm

Saturday, 6th

- Zonta Club's Birthing Kit Project

Thursday, 11th

- Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccinations for Year 7

Monday, 15th to
Friday, 19th

- Year 11 Business Services Work Placement

Thursday, 18th

- Year 12 Graduation

Friday, 19th

- Last day of Term 3

Enjoy the School Holidays!

October:

Monday, 6th

- Labour Day Public Holiday

Tuesday, 7th

- **First day of Term 4 for all students and staff**

Friday, 10th

- Year 7 Vaccinations (HPV and Chickenpox)

Monday, 13th

- HSC commences

Wednesday, 22nd

- P&C Meeting, Common Room, 5pm

