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Old Boys News

No change to a broad, challenging education

The year 2015 will stand in TAS history as a milestone year. It has been marked by strategic decisions that have opened our future to new and bold aspirational goals to grow and develop in ways that could not have been imagined only a few years ago. The decision to pursue these goals through the introduction of co-education has been controversial and attracted more comment and media attention than the School has probably ever had. Ultimately, the lengthy and challenging process of research, wide consultation, weighing of alternative school futures and then planning that has brought us to where we are today has been as healthy as it has been thorough.

Whilst views on the decision of the Board will differ, there can be no doubt that they, collectively, have stood up to face their responsibility to act in the interests of the School not just in the present, but for the long term.

Some might have expected, or even looked for, the decision for change in the future to be reflected in a slowing commitment to what we do in the present at TAS. The evidence makes it clear that this has not been the case. Whether in the classroom or in the wide and deep co-curricular program that this school is renowned for, the pace of school life seems to have accelerated rather than slowed this year.

In academic life, the impact of a new structured preparation program for exams designed to develop good habits for senior years has impacted positively on results in Middle School and beyond.

At the same time there has been a boom in the Creative Arts in 2015. We have never seen as many students learning musical instruments, including those in the flourishing voice program. This can only be encouraged by 2015 HSC accolades for our students selected for exhibition in the prestigious showcases for Music, Visual Arts and Drama, including, once again, film making. We saw this in the success of the 2015 major school production of ‘Once Upon a Mattress’, the Middle School play ‘Lost Property’, the whole of Junior School production of Peter Pan JR, and more recently the very keen competition for roles in the 2016 major production ‘Bye Bye Birdie’ which is already in rehearsal.

The same enthusiasm has been seen in adventure and service activities this year. The Gold Triple Crown, awarded for completing the Coffs Ocean Swim, City to Surf and Hawkesbury Classic in a single year, was earned by a record 24 students this year, whilst holiday service work and representative trips were oversubscribed. That so many of our students continue to value challenge and service over their weekends and holidays is impressive by any measure.

All of this represents our ambition to test and develop character, to promote a worldly empathy and to find the resilience that can only come through the experience of disappointment rather than the universal success and praise that is all too commonly seen as the goal of education.

The ultimate ambition for the School Board is to ensure that the School is able to adapt and evolve to maintain its currency and position as a vibrant leading Christian school offering a broad, challenging education that prepares for life. This is our greatest tradition and it is what our plans for 2016 and beyond aim to protect. Our plans to grow and flourish through the changes decided upon this year offer great promise and much that is worth celebrating.
From the Chairman's Speech Day Address

Last year I stated that this is a School that has always evolved, and will continue to evolve, and adapt to meet the needs of parents, country families and the regional community.

On 31 March, the Board made a very important strategic decision for the School and one of the most significant in its history. This was the decision to implement full co-education in all years from 2016.

“It’s to be expected that passions would run high on a subject such as education, which is close to the hearts of every parent and family member.

I would like to quote from a governance commentator in Sydney that followed the TAS co-ed decision quite closely:

“The key lesson to emerge from this case is that school boards, principals and business managers need to have sophisticated skills to manage all of the stakeholders when proposing change. They need to have the tools and knowledge to identify flashpoints, balance competing interests while holding the needs of students at the centre, and to make important decisions in a transparent, rigorous and accountable way.

“Above all, active and transparent stakeholder engagement is key to ensuring that all parties remain informed and change can progress without causing significant reputational damage. Schools which have a strong governance framework will be in a better position to manage the multifaceted challenges that arise from running an institution entrusted with the vital task of educating and developing our children.”

It is my belief that The Armidale School’s strong governance framework is to be credited with making this change possible, and it will underpin its success.

One boys’ school that the Headmaster mentioned in his presentations in Term 1 was Canberra Grammar School, the last boys’ boarding school to be established in Australia, in 1929. Just over five weeks ago Canberra Grammar announced that it will also become fully co-educational at all levels, with a major transition at the start of 2017. With our move into the co-ed list, TAS becomes the 12th oldest co-ed boarding school in Australia, slotting in just behind Barker College. We join 21, or with Canberra Grammar 22, other independent boarding schools that have changed status to co-ed.

The Board is heartened with the level of interest in co-education from our broad community. Enrolment numbers are well ahead of a number of budgeting and risk assumptions made by the Board back in March when the final decision was made.

Old Boys are the life blood of this School and I am very pleased to see that many of the female students who will start at TAS in 2016 are daughters of Old Boys. It was great to hear from many former TAS boys of all generations supportive of the proposal to move to full co-education.

On the Board

The nine members of the School Board pictured before Speech Day.
Left to right: Mr Rob Busby, Ms Michelle Lawler, Mr Tim Catterall, Mr Will Winter, Mr Rob Perkins, Mrs Karen Tromp, Rev Gary Eastment, Mr Sebastian Hempel, Mr Andrew Erratt. Tim Catterall replaces outgoing Diocesan appointee Dr Nigel Pain, while Andrew Erratt replaces outgoing director Mr Rob Tumeth.
Resilience the key to a remarkable life

Diagnosed with a terminal cancer at only 11 months of age, Michael Crossland went on to not only defy his death sentence, but play professional baseball in the United States, have a satisfying corporate career, and rally against other challenges – a life that provided many moving and inspiring stories to students, families and staff at The Armidale School’s annual speech day on 3 December.

“One thing that I’ve learned throughout all of my journeys is that it’s not the adversity that determines the quality of life that you get to live, it’s about how you deal with your adversities that allows you to live a remarkable life. It’s not how many times you get knocked down, it’s about how many times you get back up,” he said.

“I love the saying ‘I cried when I didn’t get a new pair of shoes until I saw a boy who had no feet’. Sometimes it’s a powerful exercise for you to compare your adversities and your changes with others for you to realise how lucky you are to have what you have,” the National Ambassador for Camp Quality, Australian of the Year finalist and Australia Day ambassador said.

Mr Crossland’s remarkable story was the subject of an episode on ABC TV’s Australian Story which outlined how he overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to achieve success in both his personal and professional life. He told the gathering he was the only one of 25 children who lived after an experimental drug trial; “I wasn’t one of the lucky ones because I survived, I was the lucky one because I wasn’t my mum who had to make a choice every single day to inject into her son a drug that had killed everybody that had ever been on it.”

He said ‘hope’ was one of the most powerful words in the English dictionary: “It does not matter if you are a student, a parent whether you are rich or poor, every single one of you has the same opportunity every single day to instill hope into somebody’s life.”

Mr Crossland urged students to dream big: “when you are educated you have the ability to dream, and when you have the ability to dream you can achieve some amazing things.”

“So many people quit because they look at how far they’ve got to go, not how far they’ve come. You all have the opportunity to live a remarkable life. My mum always taught me to shoot for the moon and if you miss you still end up in the stars. Every day is an opportunity for you to have a dream and a goal and a vision. So go for it.”
Girls make history at TAS

They are proud to be trailblazers in the history of The Armidale School, but Holly Tearle, Maddy Dennis, Emily Blackbourne and Elssya Rogers-Ellis said starting as the first secondary TAS girls at the beginning of Term 4 was more about getting the best HSC they believe they can.

When the TAS Board announced in May that the School would move to full co-education in 2016, Holly thought it would be too late for her to return to the place where she spent her “very happy primary years”. “So when it was decided that day girls going into Year 12 would be able to start in Term 4, I was just so excited at the opportunity,” she said.

Holly, Elyssa and Maddy have all had older brothers go through the school, while Elyssa, Maddy and Emily have been studying some subjects at TAS since the start of Year 11, as part of a combined subjects arrangement TAS has had with other Armidale secondary schools for many years.

Emily’s subject passion may be French, but she is also conscious of history. “I love change – this is not just about moving schools, but is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be the first secondary girls here,” said Emily, who attended an all-girls school in Sydney before her family relocated to Armidale, where she had been at a co-ed school. “The difference between schools isn’t about the gender mix, its about the staff and the students, and I’ve really enjoyed studying at TAS.”

“We’re not here to change the traditions or the culture of the school; we’re here because of the sort of school that TAS is,” said Holly. “I’m honoured not just to be a pioneer with these girls, but I’m also proud to be part of a school that is being a pioneer itself, and setting its own destiny.”

In his Speech Day address, the Headmaster reported that at least 40 girls will be in Middle and Senior School at the start of 2016. The bulk of these will be in Years 9 to 12 and include the four Year 12 girls, who will be joined by a fifth. There will be at least 15 girl boarders coming from as far as Sydney, Moree and across the New England and North West.

“These numbers are very encouraging and the ongoing stream of enquiries gives strong indication that numbers will continue to grow into next year,” Mr Guest said.

“Over half the new girls come from government, Catholic and other schools outside Armidale and our hope that the move to co-education would increase the number of girls in independent schools in Armidale should certainly be realised in 2016.”

Nearing completion, a new wing will enable White House to accommodate all Middle School boy boarders
Outstanding results in HSC

“Relief, satisfaction, excitement” were words Ali Ahsan and Joshua Stevenson used to describe how they felt when they received Australian Tertiary Admission Rankings (ATARs) of above 99 in this year’s HSC.

The two boys were also the only students from the New England North West region named on the All Rounders List in this year’s NSW HSC, for those with a score of more than 90 (or equivalent) across their top 10 units of study.

Ali achieved Band 6 results in Chemistry, Economics, English (Advanced), English Extension 1, Mathematics Extension 1 & 2, and Physics, while Joshua scored a mark above 90 in Ancient History, Business Studies, Economics, English (Advanced), Legal Studies and Mathematics General 2.

“Most of my marks were as expected and were quite similar to my (HSC) trials, so I was relieved about that,” said Ali, who is confident his ATAR will be enough to get him into his preferred course, Medicine at the University of NSW.

Joshua said he was “pretty stoked” by his results, “especially in Ancient History and Business Studies.” He hopes to start studying Business or Economics at either ANU or a university in Sydney after taking a six month break and earning some money.

It is the seventh consecutive year that TAS students have featured on the All Rounders Achievers List, and the two boys make it six in six years to achieve a Band 6 in four subjects, and an ATAR of 98.05. Three other students join the trio with ATARs above 90.

Eleven students made the Distinguished Achievers List, between them achieving 26 Band 6 results in 13 courses – Chemistry, Physics, Economics, English (Advanced), English Extension 1, Mathematics, Mathematics General 2, Mathematics Extension 1 & 2, Music 1, Ancient History, Business Studies, and Legal Studies.

Headmaster Murray Guest congratulated all students on their efforts. “As well as those achieving at the top end, we had a higher number of students getting Band 5s and 6s than in previous years which is most gratifying,” he said.

“In addition, it was most pleasing that we also had students selected and nominated for the HSC creative arts showcases in Drama, Music and Art, reflecting a breadth of achievement.”
Academic competitions

UNSW Economics Competition
Senior students achieved outstanding results in this year’s University of NSW Economics Competition, which TAS has entered in for a number of years.
Charlie Wyatt was awarded a High Distinction for his results which placed him in the top 1.35 percent of the state. Ali Ahsan and Liam Kennedy also achieved a High Distinction each and were placed in the top 1.92 percent, while another High Distinction went to Sebastian Gibson. Two boys were awarded Distinctions.
HSIE Coordinator Mr David Toakley said it was great to see the continuing tradition of the school's best Business Studies and Economics students doing well in such competitions.

Mathematics
The extension Mathematics classes for each year group from Year 6 to Year 12 sat the Australian Mathematics Competition earlier this year. This is a challenging test that is only completed by selective students through Australia and the world. High Distinctions were awarded to Ali Ahsan (Year 12) and Jack Van Roy (Year 6) who also received the Prudence Award for the school's highest number of consecutive correct answers. Thirteen students were awarded Distinctions, and 44, Credits.
In the ICAS Mathematics Competition, sat by selected students from Years 6-10, High Distinctions were achieved by Lachlan Knowles (Year 10) and Jack van Roy. Nine boys were awarded Distinctions, and there were 22 Credits.

English
Congratulations to David Wu, Year 10, for achieving a High Distinction in the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) English competition. These are independent skills-based assessments with a competition element and are the most comprehensive generally available suite of academic assessments and school tests for primary and secondary school students. David’s outstanding result saw him placed in the top 1 per cent of the candidature, which includes students in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Pacific Region, Singapore, South Africa and Australia.

Philosophers ponder the big issues
Is ignorance bliss and knowledge anguish? A big question and the mystery topic which 17 students from The Armidale School contemplated with gusto at the 4th Northern NSW Philosothon on 12-13 October, coming away with awards from the event.
Hosted by Bishop Druitt College Coffs Harbour, the think-a-thon is along a community-of-inquiry model, where groups of students made up of teams from each school, engage in deep thinking and explore big ideas.
The TAS senior team of Alexander Chambers, Nathan Rasmussen, Angus Simmons, Lachlan Tonkin (all Year 11) and Saxon Hughes, James Murphy, Hugh Worsley and Tom Wright (Year 10), were Division A joint winners with O'Connor Catholic College, while Owen Chandler, Angus Cornell, Will Grant, Xavier Tonkin (Year 9) and Hamish Edmonds, Jack Halliday, Harry Mason, Henry O’Neil and Tom Price (Year 8) were runners up in Division B.
Angus Simmons was also awarded the Spirit of Philosothon Award for a student who is able to consider the ideas of others and move the discussion forward.
“It was really great talking about the topics with other young people, and looking at things from a range of perspectives. Once you forgot a judge was sitting in, the discussions just flowed,” Angus said.
Coordinator Ms Catherine Boydell said not only were the students part of a wonderful competition, but they were also able to hear guest lecturers from the University of Queensland’s Philosophy Department discussing the nature of argument.

HSC Creative Arts works showcased
For the Creative Arts the HSC operates a little differently to most other subjects, with students completing, submitting or performing project components months before the actual exams. TAS was delighted to learn about the achievements of a number of HSC students in these major projects. As reported in Binghi 170, Callidren Hunter was nominated for his Drama performance ‘Shallow, Quick’ and Tom Bishop’s Drama film ‘Murder, Apparently’ has been one of only three videos in NSW selected to be part of OnScreen. In Music, Rob Butcher has been selected to perform as part of Bravissimo, the region's HSC Music showcase, next year. Meanwhile in Visual Arts, Tom Bishop’s time-based forms artwork ‘Prismatic Comparisons’ has been selected for ARTEXPRESS and Willis Yung’s work ‘It Must be a Cultural Thing’ was nominated for the same showcase.
Significantly this is the second year in a row for TAS to be recognised in all three disciplines at the highest levels – a reflection of talented students being supported by dedicated staff.
Tom Bishop with cast and crew members Kate Thomas, Paul Fogo, Lesley Bishop and Warren Barti during the making of his film ‘Murder, Apparently’
Art & Language students visit France

Twenty-four French and Art students were fortunate enough to spend their September holidays in France, for what would be a once in a lifetime experience. Around every corner there was something amazing: a château, a cathedral or even a patisserie. Home stays in Loches in the Loire Valley allowed students to immerse themselves fully in the French culture and provided an invaluable opportunity to practice their French language skills with native speakers. Returning to Paris, our Art students were spoilt through a plethora of historical, Impressionist and modern art galleries and Renaissance, Gothic and Neo-Classical architecture. For all students, seeing the beautiful castles and cobbled streets intertwined with modern buildings and cafes instilled an unforgettable insight into French culture.

The group also inspected the subterranean Catacombs, took an evening cruise on the Seine, climbed to the top of the Eiffel tower, visited the Mont St-Michel, explored Monet’s Garden and several museums, including Centre Pompidou and the Louvre.

TAS teachers honoured with industry awards

Throughout high school, Seonia Wark dreamed only of being an accountant: “solely on the basis that it was the only job I imagined where I would get paid well for doing maths-related work all day in my own office”. However the positive influence of her HSC maths teacher opened her mind to a career in education, and on 30 October The Armidale School’s Director of Studies was acknowledged with a William Walker Award, given by the Australian Council for Educational Leadership (ACEL) to recognise professional leadership across many fields.

As both a head of department and more recently as Director of Studies, Mrs Wark has introduced a number of initiatives that have improved the academic culture and performance of the school, including a dramatic revamp of the Stage 5 electives program that has increased by sevenfold course options for Year 9-10 students. In her current role, this has been taken a step further, articulating a vision for the academic program of the school that has been transformative for students.

Also at the awards ceremony, Year 6 teacher Mr Luke Polson was the joint winner of the Australian College of Educators’ Alan Kerr Memorial Award for a teacher with two to six years of service, recognising his excellence in teaching and his contribution to school life. Mr Polson, who is Master in Charge of Football, is part of the technical team at the Hoskins Centre where he mentors students in lighting and sound for both TAS and touring productions. He also coordinates the school’s Junior Round Square program, which incorporates school exchanges, conferences and service projects for Years 6-8 as part of the school’s membership of the global organisation Round Square.

TAS was also represented by Ms Fiona Taber, a former Kerr awardee, who delivered the annual awards lecture, titled ‘Fiji, Forgiving and Fantails – reflections on a year in teaching’. Headmaster Murray Guest said it was testament to the work of the recipients that a large number of parents and colleagues contributed to the nomination process.

“TAS is fortunate to have staff of the caliber of Seonia, Luke and Fiona, and we congratulate them on this much-deserved recognition,” he said.
Croft gains Cash Cup

The annual inter-house creative arts challenge, the Cash Cup, was held in mid-November and Memorial Hall was filled to capacity by students, parents and Old Boys and friends who were treated to a terrific night’s entertainment. The format had four components: an original artwork from each house, a whole-of-house music performance, a house drama involving one person from each year group, and a new segment, a ‘lip sync’ performance on film which was screened on the night.

All students involved were congratulated by the Headmaster on their creativity, courage and sense of fun, with special congratulations to Croft House who were the clear winners on the night. Croft’s exploration of the ‘evolution of a Croft boy’, as ‘narrated by David Attenborough’, was a clever and amusing piece that was rightly acclaimed.

Mac Metdalf, Mike Nyathi and Anthony Russell-Thomas replicate the ‘March of Progress’ to demonstrate the evolution of a Croft boy in this year’s Cash Cup.

TAS places well at Junior Chess League finals

It was a strategic battle like no other, but chess players from TAS held their own against some of the best in the state at the regional finals of the NSW Junior Chess League in Parramatta on 9 November.

TAS, the northern division champions, faced off against the other regional winners in the titles. After defeating North Coast winners John Paul College from Coffs Harbour three boards to one, the TAS IV then had a 4-0 victory over Riverina title holders, Marian Catholic College from Griffith. It was a tougher round against Hunter Valley School of Performing Arts 0-4, before winning two of four boards against Macquarie Anglican Grammar School, Dubbo, then the top board, against against Smith Hill High School Wollongong saw Ali Ahsan winning board one.

TAS came fourth in the titles, behind Macquarie Anglican Grammar of Dubbo and Hunter SPA in equal first, and Smiths Hill High School Wollongong, in third.

“The tournament was a round robin-style competition played with clocks, which added an extra dimension of strategy to the game,” TAS chess coordinator Ms Catherine Boydell said.

TAS Director of Music Leanne Roobol said Gondwana Choirs comprises the most accomplished groups of young people in the country.

“It is a great credit to Andrew, Ziggy and Sam and their musical skills to be selected in their prestigious choirs.”

Singers pitched to success in national choirs

Tapping into their instrument within, three TAS boys have been selected for two of the best national choirs in the nation that will perform at a special concert in Sydney in January.

Year 11 student Andrew Knight has won a spot in the Gondwana Chorale, a national choir for youth aged 17-25, whilst Ziggy Harris and Samuel Thatcher (both Year 10) will be part of Gondwana Singers, for students aged 13-16. Founded in 1989 and based in Sydney the Gondwana Choirs run activities across Australia, and every January hold a special camp which culminates in a performance with some of the best conductors in the country.

“To make it into the choir generally was a privilege, but to be selected for the chorale is the cream on the cake. It’s a bit intimidating regarding the music skills but I think I’ll be ready for the challenge,” Andrew said. Ziggy and Samuel will be performing in Gondwana Singers for the second year.

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Rowing season well underway

Support from the wider community for the TAS rowing program continues, as evident at this year’s season launch at Malpas Dam on 6 November.

Old Boy and TAS Rowing Patron Mr Bob Crossman travelled up from Sydney to present the school’s three crews with their fluorescent training hats and the eight new Croker oars that will furnish our boats this season. These first class new oars have been funded with a donation of $8,000 from the 1963 leavers and very generous personal support from Bob Crossman himself.

Immediately after Speech Day ceremonies concluded, the rowers departed for Grafton for a four day camp that incorporated the inter-schools’ Head of the Clarence Regatta and Grafton Rowing Club Regatta, events that were used to trial rowers as combinations of both ‘pairs’ and ‘fours’, as well as giving those who are new to the sport their first experience in a race format.

“For our crews, it was the perfect opportunity for the boys to develop teamwork, technique and tenacity, in their first outing of the season,” Master in Charge Rowing Will Caldwell said.

Most of the boys have only been rowing together for a few weeks training at Malpas Dam, so an event like this is just as important for them to learn about marshalling, race protocols and sticking to a lane than it is about coming home with any medals,” he said.

The TAS crews will have a second holiday rowing camp at the Manning River in the lead up to the Taree Summer Regatta on 16-17 January. They will also compete at the Sydney Rowing Club regatta on 20 February before the season culminates with the GPS Head of the River on 12 March.

Mountain bikers lap success at All Schools

It has only been a school sport for 12 months, but mountain bike riders from TAS had great success at the NSW All Schools cross country mountain bike championships in Sydney on 21-22 November, pedaling TAS to second place overall.

Four TAS teams were among 200 riders competing in the championships, held at Yellowmundie Regional Park between Richmond and Springwood, with riders aiming to complete the highest number of laps of a designated course, in a four-hour period.

The junior TAS team of Tom Cannington, Alex Kirk and Duncan Chalmers placed first in the junior boys, with Alex Kirk completing the fastest lap in a time of 15:10.

Meanwhile the team of Michael Harris, Lewis Taylor (both TAS) and Jack Feltham (Walcha Central) placed second in the senior boys category, staging a dramatic comeback after falling from first place with a lead of a minute to 14th position when they suffered a flat tyre in the fifth lap. With a strong sense of determination, they managed to claw back a 10 minute deficit in the last two and a half hours of the race, to finish second, with the best lap time of TAS rider Michael Harris (14:13) a mere four seconds behind the fastest lap time on the day.

As a result of the team’s performance, TAS was the second-placed school at the championship.

“All the boys put their bodies on the line and dug deep to come up with such a fantastic result,” said TAS Director of Co-curricular Will Caldwell, who accompanied the boys to Sydney.

“To achieve this success in just the first year of it being a school sport says a lot about the popularity of cross country mountain biking and the skill and commitment of the boys involved.”

TAS Footballers ‘junior team of the year’

The TAS First XI were awarded the trophy for the Local Junior Team of the Year at Armidale Sports Council’s annual Armidale Sports Awards on 19 November, a reflection not just of team success but of the growth in popularity of the sport.

The team was recognised for its terrific season, backing up its first ever Armidale District Football Association first grade premiership in 2015, with a 3-0 victory in the grand final this year. Three of four opens TAS teams made the semi finals, two of which scored grand final berths. Meanwhile the 16As were both minor and major premiers in the 16s Division 1 competition.

This year TAS increased the depth of pre-season fixtures and entered 17 teams into the local ADFA competition, with seven making semi-finals or better.
Basketballers take out NCIS championships

A committed effort against long-term rivals in their second pool match paved the way for the TAS First VIII team to take out the North Coast Independent Schools’ basketball championship undefeated, in Coffs Harbour on 3 November.

After a comfortable victory against Emmanuel Anglican College Ballina 42-5, the TAS team rallied their mental mettle to overcome Bishop Druitt College, Coffs Harbour, 23-18.

They then had a solid win over Kempsey Adventist College 34-9, took out their semi against Clarence Valley Anglican College 36-14, and met Tweed Valley Adventist College in the grand final, coming out victors 14-10.

"The game against Bishop Druitt was mentally, the toughest on the day. We have lost to them for the last three years in a row and come out second in the pool, failing to make it past the semis each year. We could really feel the pressure from them from the start, so we were just stoked to get a victory against them for the first time since 2011," captain Andrew Knight said.

That was the inaugural year of the championships, and Andrew said the boys knew they had to be disciplined on the court to repeat the achievement, particularly with shorter 25 minute game times and no half time.

The championship followed success in their first outing of the season, winning both games against Scots PGC College and a Warwick regional rep team, at Scots three days earlier.

The NCIS association involves schools from across the north coast region, with TAS the most inland member.

Cricket great welcomed

TAS was privileged to host Steve Waugh and 65 riders joining him for the 2015 Captain’s Ride, along with their considerable support crew, at a function at the Hoskins Centre on Tuesday 3 November. The Captain’s Ride was a charity cycle from Sydney to Byron Bay, supporting the Steve Waugh Foundation’s work in the area of rare diseases. Having spent the day riding up the mountain from Gloucester to Walcha, the entourage were still in bright spirits as they were entertained by the TAS Singers and fed from the barbecue by the School’s First XI cricketers. Year 8 student Kieran Dennis, whose talents have seen him play for the school’s First XI, said he was honoured to meet the cricketing legend.

“After the first two wickets, I was really fired up,” Jack said.

“It’s not my first hat-trick but the first in a very long time. I felt glad that I was able to get it having gone so close in my first two balls – I was a bit overwhelmed, actually.”

Needless to say, TAS went on for a speedy dismissal of their opposition, and won the day.

Meanwhile in the under 15s, Kieran Dennis made his debut century and Sambavan Jeyakumar scored his first hat trick in the same game against Uralla in early November.

Jack’s stunning hat-trick

It would have to one of the most spectacular set of bowling figures for the TAS First XI for quite some time.

Bowling against Barbarians in the Armidale competition on 24 October, medium pacer Jack Evans (Year 11) took two wickets with the first two balls of his first over, and then, a third wicket, with his last. Three from six balls is no mean feat - but that was not to be the finish. Staying on, he then took the first two balls of his second over, giving him a hat-trick and the outstanding figure of five wickets from his first eight balls.

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ADVENTURE EDUCATION

activities week

Lucas Atkin takes his canoe through a rapid at Cadet Camp
Challenges met, memories made at Activities Week

Students travelled far and wide stepping out of their comfort zones during Activities Week, the culmination of the year’s program.

As for the past several years, cadets held their annual camp based at the Nymboida Canoe Centre, where the traditional trekking exercise of cadets are complemented by challenging water-based activities including canyoning and kayaking that were not possible in years gone by at the Singleton Army base.

Pioneers (an activity available for boys in Years 10 & 11) trekked and camped along a 55km route from Halls Peak to East Kunderang in the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park.

More than 22 Year 11 students gained their bronze surf medallions under the guidance of senior members of the Sawtell Surf Lifesaving Club; as part of a service component, the TAS boys undertook some sandbagging to stabilise dunes near the clubhouse.

Also from Year 11, those students who are part of the Rural Fire Service program gained bush fire fighter qualifications in the field and that the Armidale RFS Control Centre, also assisting the Dumaresq RFS brigade with a back burning operation at Mt Yarrowyck.

Year 6 students hosted Mosman Prep for their annual visit, enjoying a trip to Blue Hole, a trip to Walcha Dairy Farm, learning about bushrangers in Uralla, and fossicking for gold!

“The week is designed to be a challenging one and it is clear that our students responded to them well,” said the Headmaster, who visited most of the activities during the week.

“This culmination of the year’s program was an important milestone in the TAS calendar and it invariably produces some of the memories that our students will carry through the remainder of their time at school and beyond.”
Leadership, Service, Adventure

Service to others a gift to one’s self

Confronted by disadvantage, TAS students found service has rich rewards, working with orphans, HIV and leprosy sufferers overseas during the September/October holidays.

At St Christopher’s Orphanage in Fiji, 12 boys and a similar number from NEGS and PLC re-tiled a hallway and stairwell, made dormitory cupboards, dug up and planted a vegetable garden, bought and installed new mattresses and entertained children, whilst a group from the three schools including four TAS boys volunteered at the Agape AIDS Orphanage and the McKean Rehabilitation Centre for Leprosy sufferers, both near Chiang Mai in Thailand.

“They are so much less fortunate than us, and there were just three Sisters and one other looking after 30 children at St Christopher’s,” said PJ Woodburn of Year 7.

“These children are so happy and have so much less than us, it really made us realise the difference between needs and wants and what true happiness means.”

Meanwhile in Thailand, where his group did manual maintenance work at two institutions and forged bonds with the residents, Thomas Goodfellow, Year 10, said knowing that the children at the Agape Orphanage were not just without family, but had been infected with HIV/AIDS, put much about his own life into perspective.

“We always think about the small things like no wi-fi or not being able to charge our phones, whereas they have nothing yet are so happy,” he said.

“We were at the McKean Centre I loved helping the older people, many who may not have had arms or legs. I felt so privileged to work with them and it has truly inspired me for life.”

The two service trips are offered annually to TAS students as part of the school’s Leadership, Service and Adventure program.

Prefects appointed at The Armidale School

The Armidale School’s 14 prefects for 2015-16 come from a broad range of localities including Brisbane, Sydney, and across the state.

The senior prefect is Ben Moffatt of Guyra – who is also believed to be the first fifth generation TAS student. Two deputy senior prefects have been appointed – Jarrod Bourke from Moree and Charlie Wyatt from Warren.

Ben Moffatt said he looked forward to upholding the dignity and honour of the school, but also of his position.

“I’d like to think we can forge stronger relationships with the students in younger years and in doing so, set an example that they may follow,” he said.

Lions Youth of the Year Quest

Year 11 students Charlie Wyatt and Jarrod Bourke – joint Deputy Senior Prefects for 2016 – did a fine job representing their school, and themselves, at the Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club’s Youth of the Year Quest on 4 November. As part of the public speaking component, contestants had to give two, 2 minute impromptu speeches and deliver a prepared speech. Former YOTY national finalist Adam Marshall was also impressive with two impromptu speeches while the judges were deliberating.

Remembrance Day a time to reflect

This Remembrance Day, TAS provided the ceremonial guard at the Armidale City service in Central Park, at the same time a guard from the cadet unit formed a catafalque party for the school’s observance, at the flagpole. The ceremony included the laying of a wreath at the Great War honour roll in Big School by deputy senior prefect Jarrod Bourke, and Senior Prefect Ben Moffatt read the poem Requiescant Armidaliensis written by Old Boy ‘R.B.’ – possibly Lieutenant RV Blomfield – and published in the school magazine The Armidalian in December 1918.
Kayakers set the pace in gruelling 111km event

Paddlers from three Armidale schools relished the challenge of the 111km overnight Hawkesbury Canoe Classic on 24-25 October, and raised more than $30,000 for charity in the process.

The Armidale School team, comprising 69 paddlers from TAS, PLC and NEGS, kayaked by moonlight and faced incoming tides and fog in the event, which goes from Windsor to Brooklyn Bridge.

First home for TAS were Year 10 duo Liam Donaldson and Sebastian Scott in a time of 11 hours, 53 minutes and 13 seconds, more than two hours faster than the time they completed the race in last year.

TAS crews added another record to the Hawkesbury Classic books, with Dominic Pilon (TAS) and Dakotah Love (PLC) setting a record for the Long Rec 2 Mixed junior class, finishing in 17:50:02.

The TAS contingent which included eight father/son entries, six father/daughter crews and one mother/daughter combination was not just the largest team in this year’s event, but made up 20 percent of all paddlers.

As a result of the efforts the TAS team won a swag of awards at the official race presentation in Sydney. For only the second time, TAS won the Commonwealth Bank Cup for the best performing team, with points allocated for kilometers completed, number of craft that finish overall, and number of craft that finish within an hour of a class record.

It also took out the Macquarie Cup for the lowest handicapped times for the three fastest boats, and the Arrow Cup for the company whose paddlers (employees and their families) collectively raise the highest sum.

In addition, TAS landcrew members Peter Hall and Cam Banks won the Landcrew of the year award, recognising decades of support to the school’s participation in the event.

Reflection on the Kokoda Track

The humidity and rugged terrain of the Kokoda Track paled into insignificance every time a student from TAS paused to recall the wartime sacrifice of an Australian serviceman.

Five TAS boys and their fathers were part of a group that walked the famous 96km path over a gruelling seven days during the September/October school holidays.

“It was pretty challenging, but very rewarding,” said Matthew Rankmore, who said a highlight was playing touch football with villagers and ‘the Legends’, local porters who accompanied the group of trekkers. “We took several donated footballs and inflated them and left them in the villages, and the kids really appreciated that,” he said.

Damian Nott said it was an eye-opening experience, particularly learning more about the military history of the track.

“Every morning our guide would give us a briefing about the history of the Kokoda campaign as we went along, and how tough it was. It certainly made me think about about the fellas not much older than me, who hadn’t eaten for days, carrying thirty kilos of equipment including firearms through mud and rain, and realising what a challenge that would be,” he said.

“At one stage I did think, ‘why am I here’ – but it was good to put myself out there and do something not a lot of people get to do.”

This was the fifth Kokoda expedition offered by TAS as part of the school’s Leadership, Service and Adventure program.

Record number gain Triple Crown

As reported in the Headmaster’s Speech Day address, this year a record number of students, 26, completed their Triple Crown, an award which recognises those who complete the 2km Coffs Harbour Oceaan Swim, the 14km City to Surf run, and the 111km Hawkesbury Canoe Classic, during their time at TAS. Of those, 24 boys achieved their Gold Triple Crown by completing all three legs in the one year – as did TAS father Rowan Rodgers, who completed the trio of events with son George. The award, now into its third year, continues to attract an increasing number of students wishing to challenge themselves.
Musical a magical experience for all

The Hoskins Centre was transformed into Neverland in December all Junior School students took to the stage for Disney’s Peter Pan JR, a truncated version of JM Barrie’s classic tale and the Disney film about a boy who wouldn’t grow up and a girl who has to.

Students from the very youngest four year olds from Transition to the ‘pirates’ in Year 5 worked hard from the start of last term to make the first Junior School production for many years a success.

“For some students it is the first chance they have had to be on stage and experience the magic of theatre, and Peter Pan is certainly a delightful and imaginative production,” director Mrs Leasa Cleaver said.

“Having all of the Junior School children collaborate and work together across the year groups has been one of the most rewarding aspects.”

Elaborate costumes and a set painted by local artist and former staff member James White brought colour and imagination to the show.

Clockwise from above: Jasper O’Neil captures the magic of Peter Pan; Isabel Newton played Tinkerbell; Hugh Taylor, Lachlan Hunt and Sam Streitz were all Lost Boys; Will Nash as Captain Hook led a band of pirates, including Will Jubb; Maddie Buntine; Ben Rowe as Smee with pirate, Lachlan Morgan. Photos: Terry Cooke
Year 1 explore life under the microscope

From germinating seeds in novelty planters, to exploring minute bugs on flower petals under the microscope in the senior school science labs, Year 1 students have been busy discovering ecology.

The students’ classroom has been alive with a focus on plants, as they have been exploring ‘Living things live in different places where their needs are met’ – part of this term’s IB unit of inquiry, under the theme Sharing the Planet.

Students sowed ryegrass, cress, and barley seeds into individual planters shaped like a human head, and the resulting straight haired, curly headed and some sparse haired grassy heads were a fun way to watch the germination process and understand a plant's needs.

A visit to the Science labs further enhanced the students' understanding about plants, and lab manager Mr Gordon McLennan challenged the students’ thinking as they pondered why flowers are such an array of different colours and shapes.

Triathlon tops off Junior School Bike Safety Day

Junior School students were blessed with a glorious day for the annual Bike Safety and Triathlon Day held in November.

Children started the day with a safety check of their bikes before riding off onto long distance events and navigating their way around obstacle courses. Mountain biking enthusiast and retailer Mr Dave Harris and his son Michael (Year 11) explained to students the parts of a bicycle and the safety elements of riding.

That afternoon all children took part in our annual triathlon, which has children competing in either team or individual events. Teams and individuals from Transition to Year 5 swam a lap or two of the indoor 25m TAS pool, mounted their bikes for a 200m or 400m ride, then ran the same distance before crossing the finish line.

While the focus was on participation, the coveted Sarah Heagney Memorial Trophy was jointly won by Ruby Straker and Sam Ball.

Photo: Oliver Smart, Nawaf Alenazi, Lachlan Costello and Conal Nicoll get ready to race

Passions produce performance

Paul Jarman has composed music for events and choirs across the world, but he said it is the enthusiasm of young children that continues to inspire him.

Speaking at the Junior School Speech Day, he told students, teachers and parents that the key to success was to keep doing what they enjoy doing.

“What would you like to be when you grow up? I hope it is happy. If you do what you love in life, you’ll find happiness and meaning. Do what you love, and you’ll find love, give love and be loved;” he said.

He also told parents that if they look at the child within themselves, they will usually find happiness and joy which can add richness and meaning to life.

At workshops with students earlier in the day, he played folk instruments from various countries, explaining the significance of music in different cultures. A highlight was him conducting all of Junior School singing his work ‘Shackleton’ to delighted parents and friends, at Speech Day.

In addition to composing for various choirs as well as the Australian band Sirocco, his commissions are as diverse as orchestral pieces for the opening ceremony of the Rugby World Cup, to marking the 40th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King for the Boston City Singers, and a tribute to fallen World War One soldiers that has been performed across Europe.

“Music brings so much joy to life, to so get into life and help people.”

Acclaimed musician Paul Jarman was the special guest at Junior School Speech Day
TAS Foundation Summer Organ and Music Recital

The TAS Foundation’s Summer Organ & Music Recital on 20 November was an uplifting showcase of talent.

Since last year’s gala launch of the $100,000 organ donated by a generous Old Boy and his wife, the organ has been enhanced by the installation of 20 ‘facade’ pipes which have not only made this magnificent instrument look all the more majestic, but have also helped improve the quality of the sound emanating from the speakers behind.

The program featured items performed by the TAS Combined Choirs, an organ solo from Mr Warwick Dunham, and vocal solos by Jasper O’Neil, Ms Constance Rolf, Andrew Knight, Ms Leanne Roobol and Mr Stephen Tall.

A special highlight on the night was an organ recital of JS Bach’s Prelude & Fugue in C minor by Organ Scholar Samuel Thatcher, a Year 10 student.

The evening was an outstanding success, further raising the profile of music at TAS whilst raising funds for the Foundation’s work in further upgrades to Memorial Hall.

The concert ended with a rousing rendition of the School Hymn, before patrons enjoyed drinks and supper under the school’s marquee on Dangarfield.

Pig races a highlight at new P&F event

There was plenty of food, music and fun, but it was racing piggies that stole the show at TAS@Dusk on 7 November.

A revamp of the former TAS fete and held at a later time in the day, the event was a great success at every level. Whilst retaining a few favourites such as the plant store and the Emporium of stall holders, things were livened up with new activities for all ages, including Harley rides, wine tasting, a broad range of food and beverage providers and music from TAS students and local band Rough Justice.

A special highlight on the program of six pig races conducted by Noah’s Pig Racing Farm from Queensland, who have appeared on Australia’s Got Talent. Each School House raised money and also conducted a Calcutta and sweeps for their pigs, which were raced through an obstacle course.

What the day also had in common with past fetes was its place in school life as a social event for the TAS community, rather than one carrying any particular focus on student cultural, sporting or other activity.
OLD BOYS

Congratulations

Sir Kina Bona KBE LLB
(71-73) has been appointed a Judge of Papua New Guinea’s National Court and now sits on both the National and Supreme Courts. Sir Kina (photographed at his ceremonial admission to the bench last December) and his wife Judith are based at Buka in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. He was one of dozens of PNG nationals who attended TAS under various schemes between the 1960s and 1980. He last visited TAS for his 40 year reunion in 2011 and was a guest speaker at the OBU Dinner along with his daughter-in-law Caroline (Staff 2013), a small animal vet, seems to be having a fulfilling life at Lillian Rock, between Lismore and Murwillumbah in northern NSW. Ross, who has a keen interest in holistic health, is preparing to start building off the grid, writing books on bird health care and doing some locum work. “I’m also completing my first book in a new series Dowsing from the Heart: Scientific Dowsing for health and well being with Dr Ross Perry,” he writes. This teaches how to use a pendulum without negative interference with a series of charts that help us communicate with our intuition!”

Obituaries

New England lost a man who had been one of its most innovative graziers with the death in July of Jock Fenwicke Nivison AM (TAS 1937), of ‘Yalgoo’ Walcha. Born in 1924, Jock, who completed his education at Shore, clocked up many significant industry achievements. With his uncle he was one of the pioneers of the application of superphosphate by air and helped form Air Farm and Super Air. In the 1960s Jock was involved in the genesis of feed-lotting cattle and explored exporting cattle to Asia; was involved in the first Scannogram program in 1971 (leading the push into ultrasound scanning which is now standard practice in the beef industry internationally); was a former president and treasurer of the Poll Hereford Society and became vice president of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW – but despite all that, his abiding passion was breeding Poll Hereford cattle and merino sheep. Among surviving family members are his daughter-in-law Caroline (Staff 2013), grandson Angus Pring (2000-06), and son-in-law Matthew Macarthur-Onslow (74-79). Another from Walcha to move on to greener pastures recently was David Gill (44-46) who passed away on 31 July at John Flynn Hospital, Tugun Qld, aged 86. After attending Walcha Central School David came to TAS where he enjoyed playing rugby and cricket, captaining the Second XI. Upon leaving school he wanted to be an accountant and moved to Sydney to do this however his father called him home to help run the property ‘Langford’. He continued to play cricket, and was selected into the Emus side (made up of players from New England and some Sydney suburbs), and travelled to Tasmania to play 10 matches. When drought hit, he worked off farm managing the Walcha meatworks, worked as a stock and station agent, and ran the local TAB (he never bet). The continuing cost of maintaining the grand Langford homestead, along with a run of poor seasons, prompted him to sell the property and move to South Grafton, where he purchased a convenience store. He then ran a gift shop in Grafton, was a caretaker of a fruit farm in the Tweed hinterland and then moved to Brisbane where he worked at Queensland University of Technology until he and his wife Shirley (nee Croft), a NEGS Old Girl (46-51), retired and moved to Pottsville. The couple had three children: Philippa, Michael (70-75) and Katrina as well as seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Thanks to Michael for the information.

We note the passing on 10 December of David Hamilton Miller (42-48). David was a talented sportsman at TAS, captaining the school’s shooting team and was also a member of the First XV. In adult life he practised law in Glen Innes and then Grafton, before returning to the Glen Innes district in his early retirement years to breed Murray Grey cattle. Several years later he headed back down the mountain again, to live permanently at Yamba, where he had holidayed for most of his life. Our sympathy to his widow Marilyn, daughters Catherine and Rosemary, and their families.

This 'n' That

1940s
Delighted to hear from Alan Smith (42-44) regarding a note in Binghi 170 about the retirement of Professor Michael Ewing (60-65) from University College London. “Back in December 1965 two young TAS boys presented themselves to BHP in Newcastle applying for Trainee (Steel Industry) Scholarships. The short story is that Michael and Peter Housden (63-65) applied for and were accepted by me for the Wire Industry subsidiary AWI. My colleagues on the selection panel from the other industries (Steelworks, Comsteel) gave me a hard time for expressing my old school preferences,” Alan writes. “Michael did Science and Peter, Commerce. Michael’s record at uni spoke for itself, and I knew, as did my fellow (Technical) superintendent Ralph Cooksey, that Michael would do well academically. Ralph had a pet project that he always gave to my selections to really test them during their end of year employment. The short of it was that we accepted the fact that Michael would go on to greater things in academe. Ralph was most impressed with his approach. Peter also did well in Commerce, but sought and obtained, so far as I know what he told me some time after he had resigned, greater satisfactions elsewhere.”

1960s
Ross Perry (64-65), a small animal vet and bird specialist, seems to be having a fulfilling life at Lillian Rock, between Lismore and Murwillumbah in northern NSW. Ross, who has a keen interest in holistic health, is preparing to start building off the grid, writing books on bird health care and doing some locum work. “I’m also completing my first book in a new series Dowsing from the Heart: Scientific Dowsing for health and well being with Dr Ross Perry,” he writes. This teaches how to use a pendulum without negative interference with a series of charts that help us communicate with our intuition!”

1970s
The Pirates and Lost Boys of Peter Pan JR (see story page 16) were thrilled to meet Mike Hoskins (71-72) and his partner Ami before taking to the stage in Peter Pan JR, in the Creative Arts Centre made possible by the Hoskins’ generosity. Mike and Ami surprised the cast while on a brief visit to Australia in late November.

1980s
Nice to year from Will Lyle (80-84) who is working on the family property ‘Frogmore Park’ Gunnedah. Will is a member of the Gunnedah Rotary Club and is also involved with the Gunnedah Rugby Club.
2000s
Great to hear of a get together that a number of our international students held on 31 October in Hong Kong. Amongst them were (l-r) Ryan (Wai Yan) Leung (04-05), William Lai (03-05), Raymond Chan (01-05), William Cheung (05-08), Timothy Lau (03-07), and Nicholas Poon (05-07). “I am also organising an event including the Old Girls from PLC and NEGS here,” said William Cheung, who is working as a real estate market analyst in Macau. “We would all like to stay in touch with TAS.”

GPS Gold Challenge – Claim the date!
Planning has begun for the 2016 GPS Gold Challenge, to be held on 30 September-1 October (the Friday and Saturday of the October long weekend) in Sydney. Held every two years for Old Boys aged around 50, the 2016 event is for GPS Old Boys who finished Year 12 in 1983 and 1984. In brief, teams representing each school compete in several sports, and on Saturday night a dinner and debate is held at Riverview, with funds raised for Red Kite, which assists children and young people suffering from cancer. It’s a fantastic event so ‘83 and ‘84 leavers, save the date now!

Well done to Sam Bullen (05-10) who has just been awarded a New Colombo Plan scholarship for Singapore in 2016. Sam, who is undertaking a Bachelor of Law/Bachelor of Economics at the University of Queensland, will be studying international law with a focus on trade and investment at the National University of Singapore and is also hoping to undertake an econometric research project with the Singaporean Ministry of Trade and Industry. He will also be learning Mandarin outside his university commitments. “By chance, I was in the public gallery of the House of Representatives when the Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop was discussing the NCP and it was very inspiring to hear her mention my name and the scholarship program during question time,” said Sam, who hopes to build a career around the area of international trade. “Earlier this year, I attended the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law in New York as a Law Asia delegate. I will also be representing The University of Queensland at the Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot in Vienna in March 2016. This competition involves preparing written submissions and participating in oral arguments in relation to an international trade dispute between two commercial parties. I would like to thank Julie Bishop, DFAT and the Australian Government more broadly for providing me with this wonderful opportunity.” Sam is pictured receiving his scholarship certificate from Ms Bishop.

2010s
Halfway along the 55km Mornington Peninsular Coast Trek for the Fred Hollows Foundation, TAS staff member Gaye Piper and past parent and TAS Foundation Director Mindy McDouall (mother of Tom McDouall (02-08) and Henry (07-13) were in need of a podiatrist – and who did they find but “a gorgeous young man by the name of Ed Fenwicke (04-10)” said Mindy, pictured below on the right with Gaye and Ed. Ed started work at on the Peninsular this year after graduating from Charles Sturt University Albury in 2015 with a Bachelor of Podiatry. Writes Ed: “We were participating as a support role for the walkers mid race just tending to sore feet and injuries to help people get to the finish line. I’m not sure exactly what the day raised for Fred Hollows Foundation but was well in excess of one million dollars so it was really good to be apart of. It was a bit of a surprise to recognise people from Armidale that far from home though!”

Old Boys’ Weekend 2016
Set aside 22-24 July 2016 for Old Boys’ Weekend! This is a few weeks earlier than previous years due to the GPS rugby fixtures moving forward in the coming season. As has been customary, the weekend has been set to coincide with the final home game of the season – in 2016, this being against Shore, who TAS will play in fixtures from the 13s to Opens.

We’re looking for reunion organisers for those who left in 1956, 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, 2006 and 2011. Already Jake Johnstone has been rallying the troops from 1976 – (jake@pageharrison.com.au); please contact Donna Jackson in the TAS Development Office at djackson@tas.as.edu.au if you can help.