

# The Vacy Voice

## The newsletter of Vacy Public School

### Emmy-Lee Runs To Region

In a big day of racing at a very muddy zone cross-country carnival, Emmy-Lee Warr led the way amongst some terrific efforts, in coming 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 12 years girls race, earning her way through to the regional carnival on May 27.

Jarrod Hughes also turned in a sterling effort with a 7<sup>th</sup> placing in the 12 years boys, being named as first reserve for the next level.

Special mention must be made as well to our 10 years boys who missed the start after a mix-up, ran after their race from about 100m metres behind, and still achieved great finishes with Ty Deacon coming 19<sup>th</sup> and Liam Key 26<sup>th</sup>.

All students performed well through the day. The track was extremely wet, especially after the Field Days last week, and they were fortunate in being able to hold them at all. Our athletes came back covered in mud but kept their effort up all the way through. I was a very proud principal on Friday to see the effort put in and the support our students gave each other through the day. Many thanks to all of our parents who came along too.

### From The Principal...

Today sees the start of our annual NAPLAN assessments with Year 3 and Year 5 sitting the papers in Mrs. Fonti's room. They will sit the reading paper today, writing and language conventions tomorrow and numeracy on Thursday. We wish our students all the best in the challenges the assessment provides.

I was interested this morning to listen to the conversation being held on the radio regarding NAPLAN. It is an assessment that causes much stress through the community. It is also an assessment that is designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in some very specific areas of the curriculum on a particular day at a particular school. It is not an assessment to stress about.

At Vacy Public School, NAPLAN does not drive what we do or what we are about as a school. I know that the results are going to be reported in a variety of ways through the media and through a variety of media. I know that the results will be discussed by parents and community and that comparisons will be made. NAPLAN is not designed for these conversations. As teachers, we will sit down with the data when it is released in September and look at the patterns that emerge for our school and for individual students. We also look at our trend data over the past four years because, with the size of our classes, it provides a more accurate assessment of where we are at as a school.

Our results last year were terrific and did reflect the previous few years. Our value added data (improvement between Years 3 and 5) placed us at the top of our region in a year in which we experienced incredible upheaval and stress. This indicates that we are moving in the right direction with a strong and professionally competent staff.

The only stress that should be associated with NAPLAN for our students is the stress of undertaking an unfamiliar assessment. We don't teach NAPLAN skills. Students don't answer NAPLAN-like questions as part of their regular curriculum. I once had a student hardly answer a question in an early NAPLAN assessment because they were so thrown by the ethnicity of the names included in the test, they thought they couldn't read it properly. It is appropriate that students become familiar with the format of the assessment for this reason. It is not unlike our experiences at school. We went through having our weekly quiz and term assessments and then came to the school certificate and the HSC, both of which were

### Dates To Remember

May 10	K-2 drama excursion
May 10-12	NAPLAN
May 11	P&C Annual General Meeting
May 13	PSSA Boys' Soccer v Paterson
May 13	Principals' meeting-Maitland
May 13	School disco 6:30pm
May 16	Debating v Paterson
May 16-19	State AFL - Mr. Greaves attending
May 24	ICAS computing competition
Jun 8	ICAS science competition
Jun 13	Queen's Birthday holiday
Jun 15-16	Life Education Van visit
Jun 21	ICAS spelling/writing competition
Jul 1	Last day of Term 2

entirely foreign to us in format and daunting to us in attempting. We first had those stresses in Year 10 and thought them great enough, our children today face them in Year 3.

I know our students will do their very best in the assessments over the next three days. That is all we ask of them but we ask that of them every day anyway. Just advise them not to stress, to have fun with the new experience and to look forward to challenging themselves again in two years time.

Regards,

Kevin Greaves (principal)

### **P&C Annual General Meeting**

The AGM will be held tomorrow night in the staff room from 7:30pm. It is really important that we get a good roll-up so that we can ensure a good representation of parents.

In the general meeting immediately following, we will be discussing the results of the surveys regarding the election of captains from this year forward. To have your say, please come along (or send your apologies through the school office if you cannot).

### **Class News**

#### **Kinder/Year 1**

Today K/1/2 enjoyed a wonderful performance "Mime-O-Rama" at Paterson Pre-school. The children watched dramatic techniques and we thank the Pre-school for having us.

This week we welcome parent helpers to K/1/2 literacy groups. Groups are on Tuesday to Friday from 10.00am to 11.00am. Anyone who might have some time available to help out (even fortnightly) please see me.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the school disco on Friday night. The disco starts at 6.30pm and ends at 8.00pm.

Readers can be changed on your child's news day.

#### **Year 2**

We had a fantastic excursion to Paterson Pre-school today. We watched a mime performance and many of the children got to participate. The children might like to tell you of the actor's innovative use of ducted air-conditioning pipe!

Well done to Hayden, Imogen and Max who were our class representatives for cross-country on Friday. It was a long way to run and they did us proud.

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#### **Year 3-4**

This week Year 3 are sitting for NAPLAN. Please make sure your children have had breakfast each morning. Please reassure your child that all they have to do is try their best and if they don't know an answer all will be fine. This will only be for the morning session, regular classes will commence after recess.

Year 4 will be with Year 6 completing literacy activities during the NAPLAN testing.

#### **Year 5-6**

Congratulations to all of the Zone Cross Country representatives that competed last Friday. I've heard that you all made us very proud with your achievements.

Projects have been marked finally (sorry) and marks have been given to each child. They ranged from A+ to C. Special mention goes to Tia Tanner for a most improved effort.

NAPLAN starts today. Please make sure all of the Year 5 students get a good night's sleep and that they have a good breakfast each morning. NAPLAN testing is a stressful time for the children. Their results are not used when I write reports. They are one-off tests and that is how I treat them. Good luck boys and girls, just do your best.

Free hot chip lunch is Thursday for students sitting NAPLAN tests!

### **School News**

#### **Coming Up...**

#### **NAPLAN**

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday this week, we will be holding the NAPLAN tests for Year 3 and 5. The tests will be held in the Year 5-6 building and Years 4 and 6 will be in the Year 3-4 building. These tests are held annually and provide data to assist in directing learning program development.

#### **PSSA Soccer v Paterson**

We have been informed that this Friday we will be playing our first round boys' soccer match against Paterson Public School. The game will be held at Gresford Sporting Complex at 10:00am and is part of the PSSA knockout competition. Good luck to the boys for the game.

#### **Small School Principals' Meeting**

This Friday I will be attending the small school principals' meeting at Maitland District Office. At these meetings we 'crunch the numbers' regarding school performance and improvement and find out a

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little more about what is planned in the Department over the next few months. It is a compulsory meeting but a valuable one.

### School Disco

We will be hosting a school disco on the evening of Friday May 13 and the theme is the theme of the night as well (we will leave that open to interpretation). The disco will go from 6:30pm to 8:00pm and the entry cost of \$5 includes a packet of chips and a poppa. It should be a good night. Many thanks to Ms. Fay for organising it all for us. Only parents are able to pick up students – not siblings. Also, we have been asked about guns and swords for props – unfortunately they are not allowed under student welfare provisions.

### Debating v Paterson Next Monday

Our team has been selected for our first debate against Paterson at 2:15pm next Monday on the topic 'that recycling should be compulsory in government buildings'. We are the affirmative. The adjudicator is Steve Richard, principal of Dungog Public School. Our team will change over the course of the competition but it will be a great experience for them.

### State AFL

Next week I will be away in Sydney for the state AFL championships as I coach the Hunter team. We have had a great time preparing and it should be a good week.

### P&C News

A very big thanks to Bunnings Maitland for allowing us to have a fund raising BBQ

Also a huge thanks to M. Grainger, F. Wysel, B. Jordan, R. Hancock, N. Carter, A. Rowles & T. Ney who manned the BBQ at the Bunnings store in Maitland, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May. Cooking began at 8.30am and by 4pm we had sold approximately 650 sandwiches & 275 cans of drink. The BBQ raised **around \$1200**, maybe a little more after accounts are finalised.

A big thanks to Vacy students Taylor Hack and Sophie Jordan who helped wrap bread and Toby and Mitchell Carter who were a great help serving drinks.

I understand that a lot of families had sporting commitments but it was disappointing that only 9 parents volunteered to help. We had the barest number of helpers, with those helping putting in long shifts.

The P&C will need to discuss at the next meeting if we request a Bunnings BBQ next year.

### Canteen

#### Thursday May 12

Kirsty Eyb and Julie Jessop

#### Monday May 16

Kristi Roberti and Carrie Butler



*Have your say in shaping Dungog Shire for the next 20 years!*

Dungog Shire Council is changing the way it undertakes its long term planning to provide a blueprint for our community and Council activities which will ensure a more sustainable future.

The first and most important step in this process is to develop a 20 year Community Strategic Plan—Dungog Shire 2030. This plan will identify your, the community's, main priorities and aspirations for the future and will target social, environmental and economic issues.

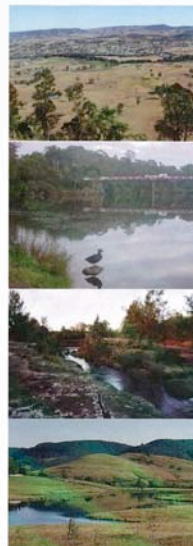
This is your opportunity to engage with the Council and have a voice in shaping the Dungog Shire that you want to see in 2030 and beyond.

See over for details

To ensure that as many voices as possible are heard, Council will be holding four public forums in early May. These forums will be open to all members of the community, but numbers are limited by venue size so RSVP's are essential.

The forums will not be focussed on issues affecting the location where they are held, but will instead look at the Dungog Shire Local Government Area as a whole. Each forum will be identical in format and content so it doesn't matter which forum you attend. Each will run for about 3 hours with a light dinner provided.

We would love to see you at one of the venues below, but if you can't make it in person don't feel left out. There will be a number of other ways that you can contribute to Dungog Shire 2030, particularly for those with mobility or access issues. Keep an eye on our website ([www.dungog.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dungog.nsw.gov.au)), the Dungog Chronicle or you can register your interest by phoning Council on 4995 7777 or sending an email to [shirecouncil@dungog.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shirecouncil@dungog.nsw.gov.au) and we will contact you with the details in mid May.



Please join us at one of these forums (a light dinner will be provided):

- 9 May 2011      Gresford School of Arts Hall at 6pm
- 10 May 2011    Clarence Town Primary School Hall at 6pm
- 11 May 2011    Dungog High School MPC at 6pm
- 12 May 2011    Paterson School of Arts Hall at 6pm

Don't forget to RSVP by Wednesday 4 May 2011 to Council on 4995 7777 or [shirecouncil@dungog.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shirecouncil@dungog.nsw.gov.au)

## EXPERIENCE ANOTHER CULTURE - HOST FAMILY REQUEST

In June/July 2011 Student Exchange Australia New Zealand Ltd will be receiving exchange students from Europe, the USA and Latin America. Our new arrivals will live with a host family and attend a local school for 2-10 months.

As we plan for their arrival, we are keen to hear from suitable families who might be interested to host a student. Host families come in all shapes and sizes, backgrounds and ages. To this end, we would be grateful if you would place a notice in your newsletter/bulletin or mention it on your website. Please note that all our host families are interviewed in their homes and carefully checked for suitability.

You can download the newsletter notice here in [Word format](#), as a [JPG](#) or in [PDF format](#).

All students have at least basic levels of English, would attend a school in your local area and live the life of a local. Our group of students cover a wide variety of interests and hobbies. If you would like to provide your students, parents or language teachers with further information on our inbound students you can also download some student profiles in either [Word](#) or [PDF Format](#). This is just a small sample of all the students who will be arriving. Our staff members will be happy to discuss which student might be best suited to a family.

Hosting an exchange student can be a truly rewarding experience. It allows a family to experience a foreign culture first hand, be exposed to a new language and pass on a bit of our own culture. They might even make a friend for life!

Student Exchange Australia New Zealand is a not-for-profit secondary exchange organisation which is registered with education & regulatory authorities in each State and Territory. You can find out more about our organisation by visiting [www.studentexchange.org.au](http://www.studentexchange.org.au).

If you have any questions about hosting an exchange student or would like to view profiles of students arriving from other countries, you can either respond to this email or call our office on 1300 135 331. No obligation.

## Parenting Children With Eczema

### ARE YOU CHALLENGED BY YOUR CHILD'S ECZEMA?

The University of Queensland is conducting research into parenting children with eczema. Parenting a child with eczema presents many challenges (everything from the daily application of creams and avoiding eczema triggers, to more general parenting tasks). The aim of this study is to understand the factors that make the management of childhood eczema particularly difficult, and to use this information to develop strategies that might assist parents in managing their child's eczema.

**If you are a parent of a 3 to 10-year-old child with eczema, we would love to hear from you!**

By sharing your experiences (confidentially), you will be making a valuable contribution to the development of much-needed childhood eczema management strategies for parents. Results of this study will be made available to all participants.

To complete the online survey, please log on to: <http://exp.psy.uq.edu.au/eczema>

For further information about the project or to request a survey to be posted to you, please email Katie Sillar ([katie.sillar@uqconnect.edu.au](mailto:katie.sillar@uqconnect.edu.au)) or phone Amy Mitchell (07 3365 7305) at the Parenting and Family Support Centre in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland, St Lucia QLD 4072 (Fax: 07 3365 6724).

Thank you for your time and participation.

Alina Morawska, Amy Mitchell and Katie Sillar

UQ Parenting and Family Support Centre