

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2009

2009 has been a significant year in the history of our school. The event of the world financial crisis and its subsequent impact on the economy of Australia has translated into many positive improvements in our school. The Building Education Revolution (BER), the Digital Education Revolution (DER-NSW), the National Solar Schools program (NSSSP), the Connected Classroom program, the Investing in our Schools program (ISOP) as well as the state government minor capital works program under the National Partnerships program being responsible for the security fence and the science laboratory and canteen upgrades has delivered many positive improvements to enhance the capacity and quality of the learning environment at Whitebridge High School. The staff, students and parent community are appreciative of these programs and the benefits they bring to our school. Special thanks go to the students and staff that have endured some small disruptions to school routines and to staff members, the school council and P&C who have ably assisted and guided the decision making around the rollout of the programs.

Of course there are other dimensions that make up our school.....our school is more than just the physical environment.

With the retirements of Mrs Parker and Mr Lawson we have seen new deputy principals take up the role as members of a new senior management team for our school. I would like to welcome Mr Ron Hughes and Mrs Joanne Gray to the senior management team of our school and look forward to working with them to ensure that Whitebridge continues to meet the needs of its students and pushes new boundaries in terms of being a leading comprehensive high school in NSW. I thank Mrs Parker and Mr Lawson for their contribution to the school and to Mrs Gledhill and Mr Hughes who relieved in the positions until they were filled substantively.

Our school has worked hard to build community relationships and to develop students who are inclusive of others and active as members of their local community. To this end we have focused student initiative and creativity in the area of service learning. Initially this has been the domain of the stage 4 program in Year 7 and the end of year program in Year 10. The 2008 program received very positive evaluations from the organisations that were involved that the service learning initiative has been expanded to include Year 9 in 2009.

Our school has been selected to be part of a state wide program called the Triple T program. Talents Treasures and Time is aimed at having students identify an area in their local community that they believe is a need for development. The students then work closely with the particular organization, researching the needs and developing areas and initiatives where they can assist to address the needs. Then over a school term during school time carry out their agreed action plan.

The Year 9 students chose to work closely with the Amaroo Lodge Nursing Home. They gave up their time to research a number of ways that they could assist with the residents. As a result of their program our school has a group

of students that use their sport time to assist weekly at a nursing home. This is a great example of how our students are contributing in a positive way to their local community as well as building many skills as caring and concerned developing adults. Mrs Arms and Mrs Taylor and the students have done a fantastic job in ensuring the success of this program. Well done students and teachers.

I am always impressed by the level of talent and skills of our students. In particular, our Year 11 Metals and Engineering students were placed first, third and fourth in the Hunter region Workskills competition. Alex Kirkby is off to the state competition in 2010. Our Year 10 Science and Engineering Challenge team won their category at the state level and were placed third in the national finals in Bendigo. Callum Jan was selected for the Board of Studies HSC Music performance Encore performance and Ayesha Graham for HSC Dance.

Our MADD night was a great display of student talents in music, dance and drama as well as student leadership in event organisation and management. I understand that staff are planning a musical for 2010. This will be a first for a large number of years at our school and reflects the improving performance capacity and musical skills of our students.

2009 is a significant year for Year 9 students because of the introduction of the national digital education revolution program. Each student has been given their own laptop computer for use in their learning. Alongside this program Year 9 teachers have been given a laptop device. The device is used in class lessons. We have developed "mylearningspace" a link on the school website where students access online class resources and use the technology to submit class tasks and school work. These are significant changes to the traditional methods of teaching. Our students and teachers are working together to ensure the success of the digital education revolution at Whitebridge.

I am appreciative of the contributions of staff, both teaching and non-teaching who provide the large variety and diversity of experiences available for students at our school. I am also appreciative of the parents who have assisted to support the school and the students across the programs that we offer. Your collective efforts are valued.

I would like to thank Mrs Geraldine Freihaut who is retiring this year. Mrs Freihaut has been on the clerical staff at our school for the past 30 years.

Our school values: learning, respect and responsibility are part of the way of life at our school. Each student is encouraged to value their learning, respect others and to take responsibility for their actions and themselves. These values embody the school motto 'seek the way of life.' 2009 has been another year where together, the staff, students and school community has worked together to live our school motto 'seek the way of life.'

Ian Wilson.