

PRINCIPALS REPORT – 2011

We had a great year at Whitebridge High School this year. There have been some fantastic individual achievements by students and staff.

Every year we witness many outstanding individual achievements by students and ex students in a wide range of specific team or individual pursuits. These students and ex students continue to be ambassadors for Whitebridge High School and promote the reputation and name of the school well beyond the local, regional, state, national and international level.

We have witnessed some inevitable changes and modifications to the way the school operates to enable our school to remain a contemporary place of learning. The third year of the Federal Government's Digital Education Revolution has seen laptop computers issued to Year 9, 10, and 11 students over three years. 2012 is expected to be the last year of this program. This program has seen the greater use of technology by teachers in class room teaching and learning. Students too have participated in the use of the internet and real time learning in the classroom as the curriculum demands greater engagement by students in using technology in their learning.

We have experienced some sadness as long serving staff members have retired and left our school. Mr Hughes, Deputy principal and staff member for over twenty years, Mrs Cummings, English teacher and staff member for over twenty years, Mr Howland, English teacher and staff member for over ten years, Mr Locker, mathematics teacher and staff member for over twenty years, (Mr Locker is also a former student of our school). Mrs Owen, English teacher for over twenty years and Mrs Dunncliff, science assistant and also support staff for over fifteen years.

These staff members take with them very special memories of their time at Whitebridge High School. We thank them for their contribution to the school over the years and wish them all the best for long and healthy retirements.

We have experienced both great sadness and joy when we witnessed our senior students graduating with their Higher School Certificate after contributing so much to our school over the past six years. Special thanks go to Mrs Simpson, Year 12 Advisor, and the student leaders for their role in student governance this year. Overall, many staff members and parents have commented positively on the mature and sensible manner that all senior students undertook in their role as school leaders and senior learners this year.

As a staff we have worked with a sense of optimism and purpose as we have reflected on the organisation of our school this year. We have made some modifications to allow the introduction of a new Asian language for 2012 to implement the Federal agenda of an Asian focus for our nation. In 2012 we will begin Mandarin, as well as Japanese, as a language for Year 7.

We can look back on 2011 as a year of achievement and accomplishment for our school ... I am continually impressed by the great relationships that students form with their teachers to enable them to get the most from their learning at school.

The school received a grant to the value of \$40,000 to assist in this program to build Mandarin language across a K-12 continuum in the Whitebridge Community of Schools.

We have introduced a new student learning management system to streamline the many stand alone computer programs we previously have used to track student attendance and student wellbeing into one program that can be accessed by all staff through a portal. As this student management system is implemented we intend to allow access to parents to monitor attendance and other information about their child through the portal from home. We are also undertaking a review of the daily structure, lesson length with the view to better optimise the learning time for students.

We also had two great musical presentations at Lizotte's function centre. Each time these concerts have been sold out and strongly supported by the school community. Special thanks go to the music staff for their development of the musical and performance talents of our students and organising these two great evening's entertainment.

Of note in the list of achievements of our school this year was the partnership initiative and grant with the Lake Macquarie City Council, the Lake Macquarie Art Gallery, and the Aboriginal Education Unit and the local Awabakal community to produce some stunning ceramic art installations specific to our local area.

This initiative utilised the skills of local Aboriginal elders and the students of the partner primary schools to produce a unique display of artworks. Special mention needs to be made of the benefits of this program in developing our Aboriginal student's pride and knowledge of their heritage and a general feeling of togetherness and community as the Whitebridge mob. The final result is a fantastic addition to our school grounds.

We can look back on 2011 as a year of achievement and accomplishment for our school. I am continually impressed by the great relationships that students form with their teacher to enable them to get the most from their learning at school. We have some really pleasing achievements by students as they become more focused on their own progress in learning and in being well prepared to enter the workforce and further study at the tertiary level.

Best wishes for a safe and relaxing summer vacation. I look forward to working with you in 2012.

Ian Wilson