

COFFS HARBOUR HIGH SCHOOL

Cnr Edinburgh & Nile Streets, Coffs Harbour, NSW, 2450 Telephone: 02 6652 3466

QUALITY EDUCATION SINCE 1938

NEWSLETTER

TERM 4, WEEK 2

21 OCTOBER 2025

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome back to Term 4 for all of our staff and students. My apologies for the lack of newsletter at the end of Term 3, but parents and carers would understand that this was a difficult time for our staff, and so we have held it off until this term.

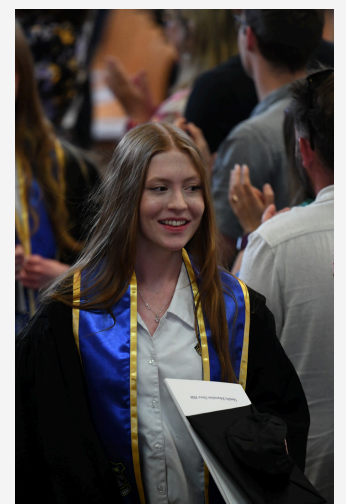
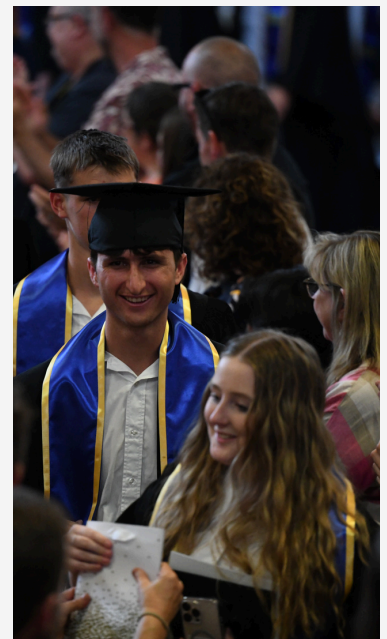
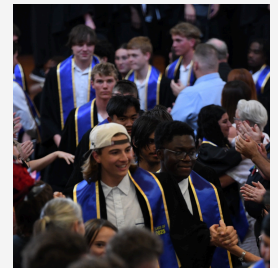
VALE JENELLE SMITH

I want to begin this newsletter by acknowledging the sudden passing of Jenelle Smith from our office admin staff. Many parents and carers would have interacted with Jenelle either during the transition of their child from Year 6 to 7 or when enrolling at the school. Jenelle had worked at the school since 2016 and had also been the Personal Assistant to the two principals during that time, myself and Mrs Kearns. Jenelle was the backbone of our office, always knowledgeable, hardworking and no-nonsense in relation to her work, but also underneath it all a very warm and friendly person with a mischievous sense of humour. The sudden loss of such a person is very saddening, not just to those who worked more closely with her, but to our school as a whole. I have ensured that the condolences of the whole school were passed on to Jenelle's family. The number of members of our school community who attended her memorial service was a testament to the sort of person she was and her lasting impact on our school.



Year 12 Graduation and HSC exams commence

I want to congratulate our Year 12 class of 2025 on their graduation from high school. As the photos in this newsletter demonstrate, we had a wonderful graduation ceremony at the very end of term to acknowledge this achievement. Of course, this was not quite the end of schooling for all our students, and so I want to wish all of our Year 12 students sitting the HSC exams all the best over the next few weeks. Unfortunately, I will be in Sydney on the evening of the Year 12 formal, but I hope that all of our students and families will be able to finally breathe a sigh of relief following the end of exams and truly celebrate their achievement. A reminder to our Year 12 students that we will be holding a breakfast BBQ at the school on the day that the HSC results are released, and so I look forward to catching up with students then.





Staffing changes

This is the start of the time of year within the Department of Education when the bulk of recruitment and movement of staff occurs across NSW schools. As such, I wanted to acknowledge the following appointments to the school and those staff who are moving on to other schools.

Staff Permanent Appointments:

- Congratulations to Ms Edmund, who has been permanently appointed as an Inclusive Education Student Learning and Support Officer at our school.
- Congratulations to Mr McVeigh, who has been permanently appointed as an Inclusive Education teacher at our school.
- Congratulations to Mr Ferguson, who has been permanently appointed as a Learning and Support teacher at our school.
- Congratulations to Mr Dominey on his appointment as a permanent TAS teacher at Woolgoolga High School starting 2026

Staff who will be leaving us:

- Congratulations to Ms Garrels, who has been successful on merit in being appointed to a Learning and Wellbeing consultancy role with the Department.
- Congratulations to Ms Guthrie on her appointment as an Assistant Principal – Inclusive Education at Induna School.
- Congratulations to Ms Smith on her appointment as a Head Teacher – Inclusive Education at Bellingen High School.

I want to wish all these staff all the best in their appointments and their future career.

Peter South
PRINCIPAL

IMPORTANT DATES

16 October - 7 November	HSC Exams
5 November	Year 7 2026 Parent Information Night
20-21 November	School Musical-Grease
13 November	Year 12 Formal
24 November to 12 December	Year 10 Work Experience (optional)
27 November	Year 7 2026 Small School Orientation
28 November	CAPA Performance Afternoon
2 December	Year 7 2026 Orientation Day
15 December	Year Assemblies
17 December	Presentation Assembly 9:35 to 11:25
18 December	Activities Day
19 December	Last Day for Students and Staff

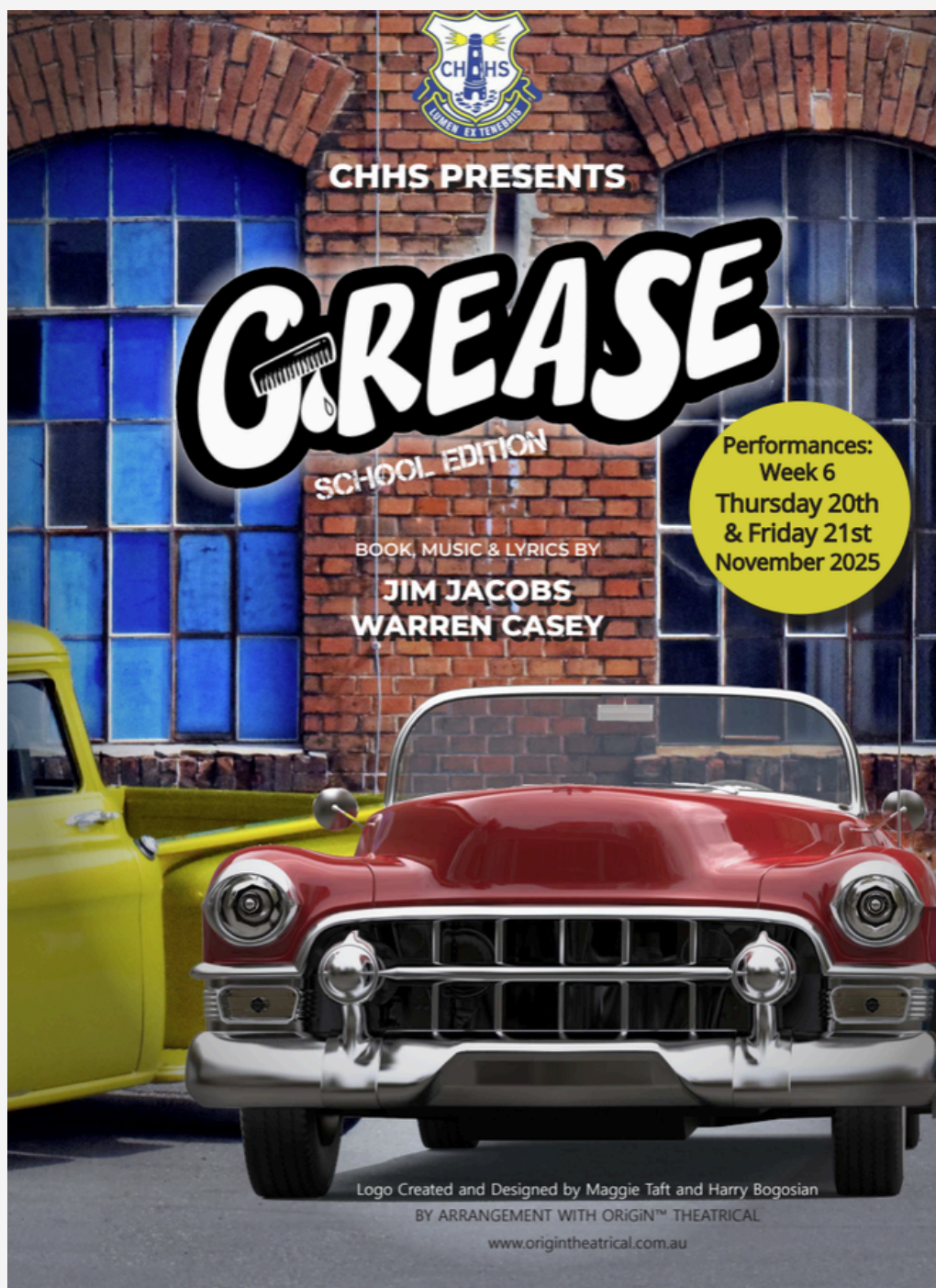
Coffs Harbour High School is thrilled to present our 2025 musical, GREASE: School Edition, live at the Coffs Harbour Conservatorium on Thursday 20th and Friday 21st November.

This year's production promises to be a fantastic showcase of our students' talent, creativity, and hard work. It's a show you won't want to miss!

Tickets (on sale soon!)

Keep an eye on the CHHS Facebook page for ticket release details (via School Bytes).

Come along, support our performers, and celebrate the incredible talent we have here at Coffs Harbour High School.



Jessica Rattenbury
ENGLISH/ DRAMA TEACHER

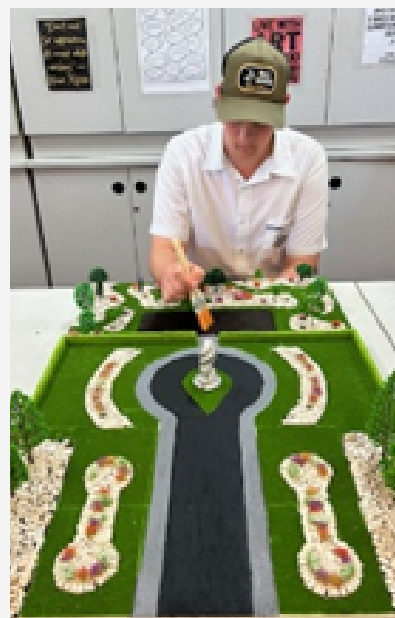
YEAR 12 ART AND DESIGN

We congratulate Annette Mercy, Kiarra-Lee Miles, and Sam Dahl on the successful completion of the Year 12 Art and Design course. Each student has demonstrated creativity and commitment, producing a broad range of fabulous designs. Annette created an impressive dress and accessories, Kiarra-Lee designed a beautiful ceramic birdbath, and Sam produced a striking ceramic car. Their hard work and achievements are to be celebrated as they complete this milestone in their creative journeys.



YEAR 12 VISUAL DESIGN

We would like to congratulate Year 12 Visual Design student Ty McLennan on his outstanding efforts and achievements in the subject. Over the past two years, Ty has applied both creative and technical skills to produce a wide range of successful 2D, 3D and digital works. His commitment, innovation and strong design practice are to be commended, and we wish him every success in his future creative pursuits.



Jennifer Margetts
VISUAL ARTS TEACHER

IN CONCERT EXCURSION

In August we had 16 Choir singers attend an excursion to Sydney to participate in a combined schools choir performance at the Opera House! The students packed a lot in to the excursion visiting galleries, the Botanic Gardens and of course the Opera House. A big congratulations to students involved and to Ms Montgomery, not only for the excursion but for the many break time choir rehearsals! What a fantastic experience.



Natasha Heinrich
HEAD TEACHER CAPA

COFFS HARBOUR PUBLIC SCHOOL ROCK GIG

On Tuesday the 5th of August, Coffs Harbour High School Music and Performance Group students from Year 9, 10 and 11 walked to Coffs Harbour Public School to create a mini 'Live Rock Music Festival'.

CHHS students were responsible for choosing songs, rehearsing, packing the correct equipment required, setting it up and performing a thirty-minute set for the students at Coffs Harbour Public School. They were also required to pack down the stage and return the equipment to our school. Our performers and technical team did a fantastic job, creating an exciting and successful performance. I am sure they have inspired some future Jetty High students to engage with the performing arts when they get to high school.

A big thank you to Ms Maryann Montgomery for supervising the students on their walk to and from the venue. Thank you to the teachers of Coffs Public, who supported and coordinated the concert. We hope this can become an annual event.



Simon Smith
MUSIC TEACHER



UNSERIOUS CAREERS WORKSHOP GUEST SPEAKER; ALANA KILMARTIN

'Unserious Careers' author Alana Kilmartin led an engaging interactive talk with select Year 10, 11 & 12 students in the school library on Tuesday the 6th of May. Alana shared her career pathway and experiences in her personal, school and sporting life (including unsuccessful work experience stories) with the students and encouraged them to "take risks" and "say 'yes' to opportunities" to be successful in life. Alana discussed the differences between school and work life with students and encouraged them to pursue careers that are led by their personal likes and dislikes in a job environment. Students were also encouraged to use their 'Career Support Team', including parents/carers and school Careers staff to help them with their career pathway and choices.

Year 10 students Carissa Power & Annika Tyrrell enjoyed Alana's talk and said it was "really enjoyable and engaging" helping students think positively about their career options.

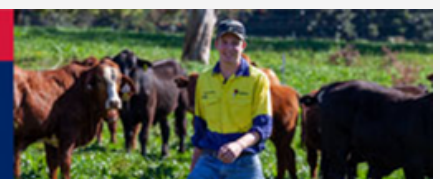
Year 12 student Ahmed Yahya approach Alana at the end of the presentation and discussed with her his plans to own his own business and had a target to earn a million dollars.

Alana spoke to the Coffs Harbour High School students as part of a Roadshow which saw her also visit Grafton High School, South Grafton High School and Woolgoolga High School, speaking with Year 10, 11 & 12 students. The Roadshow was organised by our school's Educational Pathways Program to improve educational and career outcomes for students.



Go.Forward

Educational Pathways Program



YEAR 8 EALD GIRLS GROUP

Last term at Coffs Harbour High School a selected group of Year 8 EALD students took part in an eight week girls group program facilitated by STARTTS. The group explored wellbeing and life stories through the Tree of Life Program where students drew and spoke about where they came from and their experiences living between two cultures. Students also discussed their hopes and dreams for their futures. The girls were also lucky enough to go on an excursion on beautiful Gumbaynggirr country to Sealy Lookout where they went for a bush walk and had morning tea. A huge thank you to STARTTS workers Monique Buggy, Naomi Steinborner and Zozik Abdo for this wonderful opportunity and collaboration with Coffs Harbour High School.



On September 9th students from Coffs Harbour High School and Orara High School attended the Multicultural Youth Forum at The Coffs Harbour Racing Club. The Forum was presented by the Department of Community Justice, providing students with a chance to speak up and learn about the issues impacting young adults today from diverse backgrounds. The day began with Acknowledgement of Country by our very own Kaine Belcher, followed by another fine performance on his didgeridoo. A huge thank you to Kaine!

It was then followed by an inspiring day of presenters, Dr Racheal Jacobs from the University of Western Sydney spoke on racism and how to be content with the skin you're in as well as some Bollywood basics. There were dancing performances from both schools and Bahin and Tileva Al Hassan led everyone in an Ezidi festive dance where presenters, teachers and both schools were up dancing. A big thanks to Bahin and Tileva. Then presenters from the Department of Health spoke about vaping and mental health, followed by a discussion panel from Headspace which provided lots of networking. There was also a pop-up art exhibition, which included a Franz Marc inspired installation titled "Peace Surrounds Us" which was created by Ms Margett's Year 9/10 Painting Class. The day concluded with an African drumming session with dancing (teachers included!). A fun day for everyone!



Lucy Mason
ENGLISH/EALD TEACHER

BOOK WEEK

We had a wonderful time celebrating Book Week recently and sharing the joy of reading with the school community. We particularly enjoyed our Book Character Dress-Up Day, with lots of staff and students getting involved and dressing up as the book character of their choice. Thank you to everyone who made the effort!

THE BENEFITS OF READING - What does the research say?

- Children who are given time for independent reading at school are more likely to enjoy reading books for fun.
- Reading is four times more influential on intellectual progress in teens than having a parent with a university degree.
- Across the general population, a 20% reduction in mortality was observed for those who read books (30 mins a day), compared to those who did not read books.
- Adults who read books, magazines, and newspapers almost every day had a substantially lower risk of being diagnosed with depression. They also scored lower on the loneliness scale.
- Reading for just 30 minutes a week means you're 57% more likely to have a greater awareness of other cultures.

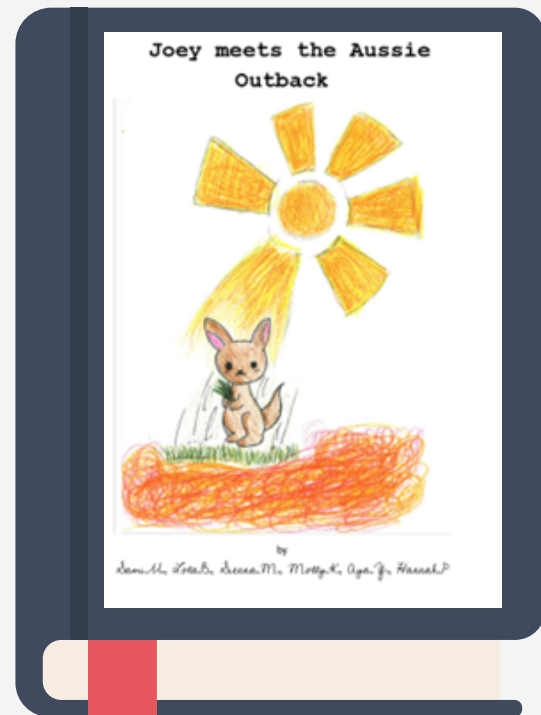
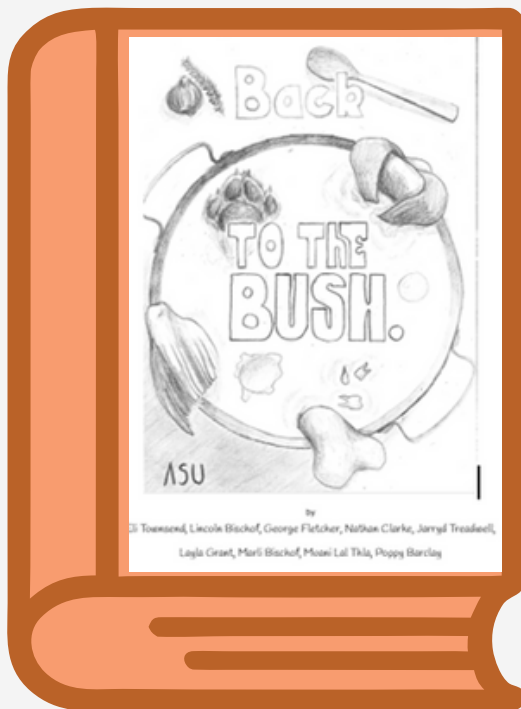
For more information, or references, please see the full report from Australia Reads: <https://australiareads.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Australia-Reads-Research-Review-Snapshot-August-2023.pdf>





WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Recently, almost 40 students from Years 7 -9 participated in the Write a Book in a Day competition. This is a nationwide competition which challenges students to write and illustrate a book in a day, based around a specific set of prompts. Students worked incredibly well on their books, which will be printed and sent to children's hospitals for patients to read. The competition aims to raise money for The Kid's Cancer Project, and this year the competition raised an amazing \$1,233,282 which will contribute to childhood cancer research. A massive congratulations to all participating students for their fundraising efforts, which contributed to this total, and for their fabulous writing, illustrating and team work on the day.



Anika Montgomery
TEACHER LIBRARIAN

AGSTRAVAGANZA

The Science Staff have been busy again! In Week 7 Term 3 we held the school's annual "Agstravaganza". This event has been running at CHHS since 2009!

All students in Year 8 Science are currently doing an Agriculture unit, and this event was conducted especially for them. The Agstravaganza supports many components of the Stage 4 Science Curriculum.

The school farm was a hive of activity with all students involved in various fun and educational activities including:

- Camp fire and damper cooking with Mr Mackay
- Farm Games with Practicum Teacher Ms Callingham
- Animals presented by Miss Joyce (rabbits, chickens, calves)
- Working in their plots with Mr. Hundle
- Free BBQ catered for by Ms King, Ms Creighton, and Mr Austin
- Farm Trivia with Mr MacDonald





It was wonderful to see so many family members come and join in on the day, thank you so much to all those who were able to come. A special thank you to the Year 9 and Year 10 Agriculture students who assisted on the day.

Finally, thank you to all of the teachers involved, especially our farm assistant Mr Roder, acting farm assistants Mr Hope and Mr Smith, and science assistant Ms King, who both supported all the activities on the day. Also thanks to our presenters and the students themselves for all the work they did to make the Agstravaganza such a huge success. Congratulations!

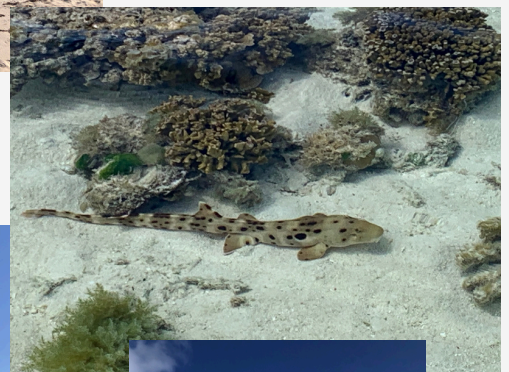
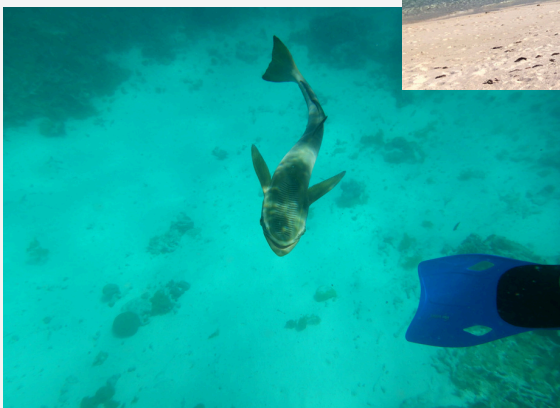
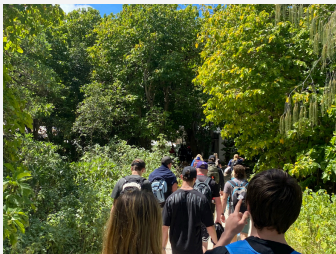
Amanda Joyce
SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE, & MARINE STUDIES TEACHER

YEAR 11 HERON ISLAND EXCURSION

There are school trips... and then there are Heron Island trips. This September, our Year 11 students were lucky enough to experience five unforgettable days on one of Australia's most spectacular reef islands, blessed with near-perfect weather and some of the clearest snorkeling conditions imaginable.

The adventure began on Sunday evening, when we boarded the coach bound for Gladstone Marina. After a long overnight drive with varying degrees of "bus-sleep," students stretched their legs on the marina playground and grassy flats before boarding the Nancy Wake ferry (the regular CAT was out of service). The crossing delivered its fair share of confused seas, a few queasy stomachs, and a new appreciation for the "three points of contact" rule. Spirits remained high as Heron Island came into view under blue skies and protected waters.

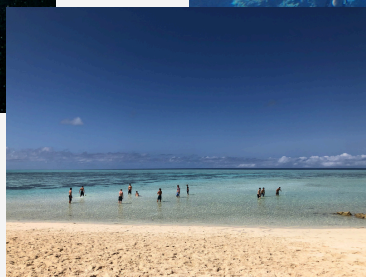
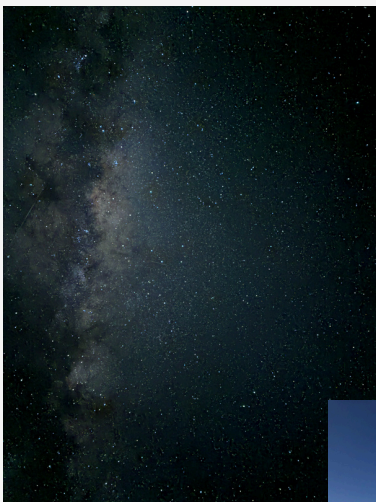
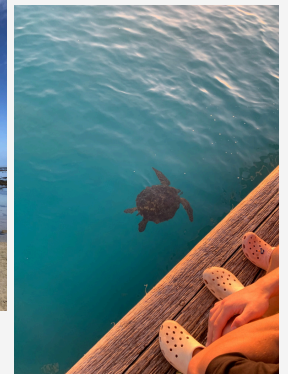
From then on, the island delivered day after day of magic. Our mornings began with the option of fitness on the sand followed by snorkels in the harbour, where students swam out to the wreck, often finding turtles, fish, and reef sharks resting in the shadows. One afternoon snorkel produced an unforgettable scene with nine sharks circling together in what will forever be remembered (and retold many times over) as the great "Sharknado."



The boat snorkels were even more spectacular. At Wistari, the current drift carried us across coral gardens alive with parrotfish, angelfish, and clouds of tiny damselfish. At Hero Bommie, students floated above towering coral outcrops, spotting turtles and rays weaving between the bommies. Viv's provided dazzling reef walls where white-tip reef sharks and eagle rays cruised in the blue. One lucky group even had a manta ray spiral past them, a truly breathtaking moment.

At Canyons, we drifted over deep trenches and shallower coral ridges teeming with marine life. The snorkels were like swimming through a living documentary. Schools of trevally flashed past, blue-spotted rays were half-buried in the sand, green turtles glided alongside us, and the occasional loggerhead surfaced for air. Every snorkel was different, every drift revealed something new, and the crystal-clear visibility made it easy to take it all in.

One of the boat trips back held an extra surprise. Our boatie, Fabio, suddenly spotted a whale tail in the distance. With a grin, he opened up the throttle and zipped us across the water to investigate. What followed was nothing short of magical: a mother humpback patiently guiding her calf as it practised tail slaps. The calf's smaller, clumsy attempts reminded us that even in nature, learning takes time, patience and practice. It was a rare glimpse of the reef's wild classroom in action.



Afternoons offered the perfect balance of science and leisure. After collecting plankton samples on the boat, students examined them under microscopes and were amazed at the tiny, alien-like creatures that fuel the entire reef ecosystem. We also had coral and turtle lectures that deepened our appreciation of everything we were experiencing. Down at Shark Bay and North Beach, students had free time where they kicked a footy on the sand, swam in the shallows, or simply lay back to watch rays glide along what quickly became known as the “ray expressway.”

Just when we thought the adventure was over, we found ourselves stranded for an extra day when the return ferry was declared out of action. Disappointment quickly turned into delight at bonus snorkels, including another epic drift from Pam’s Point, across Hero Bommie, past Viv’s and all the way to the Coral Garden.

Our rescue came courtesy of a passing barge, which collected us at 10pm Saturday night and delivered us safely back to Gladstone at 4am, chugging along at a steady 12 knots for those wondering. From there it was straight onto the coach and the long road home.

This trip gave our students more than just stunning snorkels and sunshine. It offered moments of connection and wonder that will stay with them for life. We are so proud of the way they embraced every challenge, bonded as a group, and represented our school in such a positive way.

Heron Island reminded us all of the beauty and fragility of our reef, and just how lucky we are to experience it so closely.



Amy Kay
VET COORDINATOR
YEAR 11 ADVISOR
TAS TEACHER

BOYS' NETBALL

Our Year 9/10 boys netball team proudly represented the school at the NSW Netball Schools Cup Regional Final in Port Macquarie after securing first place at the local carnival.

The boys faced strong competition on the day, narrowly going down in two of their round games but claiming a convincing win in another. Throughout the tournament, they displayed great determination and teamwork, improving with each game they played.

A big thank you to our umpire Olivia Gerke who travelled to Port for the day.

Congratulations to all players on an excellent achievement.



Emma Orton
TEACHER - SUPPORT UNIT

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

2025-2026 INDUCTION CEREMONY

On Tuesday 23rd September we had our 2025/2026 Induction Ceremony. At this assembly we were very excited to induct our School Prefect body which includes Captains and Vice Captains, Our Student Representative Council (SRC) and our House Captains. Family and friends joined in the celebration and our leadership team were presented with their badges.

Our 2025/26 Team are:



Vice Captains – Mesera Getahun and Gabriella Keza,
Captains - Indy Miller and Deegan Tomlinson



Prefects Body – Mesera Getahun and Gabriella Keza (VC's), Indy Miller (C), Haneya Zaghlal, Marlis Connie – Goldhahn (Prefects), Deegan Tomlinson (C), Shone Sojo and Winner Dagle (Prefects)



STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL



Year 7 into 8

Lewis Cole (absent), Aya Yahya, Hannah Perez and Yudin Tamang



Year 8 into 9 – Nate Waddell, Hayden Booth, Layla

Cunningham, Zianna Welsh, Ava Betland, Mia Veitch absent
Okuba Getahun and Eliette Munn-Power



Year 9 into 10

Arwa Qasim, Eli Townsend and
Zoe Tarlinton



Year 10 into 11 – Rana Omer, Selma Nayif, Cindy Yao, Bahin
Al-Hassan and absent Nadyar Kenjo



House Captains

Sapphire Blue A-E : Noah Cadman and Harry Bourne

Emerald Green F-L : Milla Keegan, Milan Knjo and Maddison Grenfell

McCauleys Red M-R: Ricardo Moncada, Tyler Mitchell and Evie Rullis

Gallows White S-Z: Tawi Vung Tawi Cing, Lara Thompson and Alexandra Strainic

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Once again, the SRC and Prefect Body have had a busy Term 3.

Last term, we conducted our annual elections to appoint the school leaders for 2025/2026. Our Induction Ceremony was held on Tuesday, 23 September, and was proudly watched by students, staff, family, and friends.

Family members of our Prefects were introduced by Ms Castor, our Prefect Coordinator, and were invited onto the stage to pin the Prefects badges on. Mrs Guthrie and Mrs Austin, SRC Coordinators introduced our incoming Student Representative Council members from Year 7 to 10, and Mr Henry announced our new House Captains. All students received a badge.

A big thank you to Mr Hardy and Year 11 Hospitality students for catering for this event. Congratulations to all these students on being selected to lead our school for 2025/2026.

SRC have held a few events to continue to raise money for our chosen charities. Due to the cooler months we have run a few hot chocolate Days and a BBQ.

On the 11th September Coffs Harbour High School was proud to support and participate in R U Okay Day. It was a great day celebrating and encouraging to do every day not just today – Check on your Mates!



A massive thank you goes out to Woolworths Park Avenue Coffs for their ongoing support in providing fresh bananas for students and a super massive thank you to Wesley Mission Coffs Harbour who provided a sausage sandwich for every student, teacher and support worker on the day – almost 800!



Don't Forget to ALEC – Ask, Listen, Encourage and Check in.



Janet Austin
SCHOOL LEARNING SUPPORT OFFICER
SRC COORDINATOR



WELLBEING PROGRAM FOR HSC STUDENTS

De-stress and study better

Join us every Wednesday in October from 1–2pm for De-Stress Sessions; think gentle neck and shoulder stretches, calming guided relaxation and easy techniques to manage stress anytime.

- ✓ Quiet study zones
- ✓ Weekly chill-out sessions
- ✓ Simple stress hacks you can actually use

Let's get you feeling ready, relaxed and confident for the HSC.

De-stress Program: Book via Eventbrite to secure your place or turn up on the day and we will try to fit you in. Numbers are limited.

Date: Every Wednesday (1,8,15,22,29) in October.

Time: 1-2pm

Location: Story space, Harry Bailey Memorial Library, Ground Floor, Yarrila Pl.

**COFFS HARBOUR
LIBRARIES**



Scan the QR
code to book
your spot



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