

# HBHS BUSH BULLETIN



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*Year 7 Camp Images*





## Principal Mr Kevin Elgood



Welcome back to our first Bush Bulletin for 2021. A special welcome to all our new Homebush Boys High School families. After a challenging 2020 we are looking forward to a much better 2021. The year has commenced at a hectic pace, with many changes inside and around the school. There are many staff changes with a number of staff promotions and retirements recently, I look forward to introducing these new staff members in the next edition of the Bush Bulletin. We also welcomed our new support unit, a wonderful addition to Homebush Boys High School.

Some of our operations are still affected by COVID restrictions but learning in our classrooms continues as our priority as normal. We remain ready to revert to online learning if we must but we certainly hope that this does not become necessary again. Unfortunately, our swimming carnival was restricted to serious competitors only but our Year 7 camp was able to proceed and the boys had a wonderful time. I was fortunate to attend the camp and spend a night and the best part of two days with them, it was fun and extremely exhausting. I did have to have a go at the activities. Mrs Sahay and I were the only staff game to attempt the giant swing in the session below but as you can see the kids loved it.



Our links with Strathfield Girls High School continue to expand and strengthen. Last year, Ms Melinda Wong worked across both schools during the second semester to help support and grow these links. We have gone one step further this year with a Deputy swap for 2021, Mrs Anna Paleothodoros has gone to work at Strathfield Girls High School this year and Ms Jennie Dalamagas has come over to Homebush Boys High School. This partnership between the schools provides great opportunities for students and staff in both schools. This year we have boys attending Music classes at Strathfield Girls High School and we have girls coming over to study Engineering Studies at Homebush Boys High School and I look forward to increasing these options in the future.

Our enrolment cap has seen a reduction in the number of out of area students in Year 7 and this year our overall student population has fallen marginally from 1080 to 1065. We still have a larger out-of-area population than in-area and the Department has approved an expansion of our local drawing area for the next few years. We welcome four new feeder Primary Schools for 2022, with our local area being expanded to share part of Concord High Schools local area. Boys from Newington Public School, Wentworth Point Public School, Victoria Avenue Public School and Concord West Public School who live in the local area will have the option of choosing Homebush Boys High School or Concord High School for Year 7 2022.

We held our first P&C meeting in over a year this week and it was great to have parents back onsite to discuss the amazing things happening in and around the school. Please look out for the next P&C meeting later this term which will also be the AGM.

I am pleased that you have taken the time to read our newsletter to see the many amazing activities and learning experiences across the school. I look forward to a challenging but very successful and rewarding 2021 for Homebush Boys High School.





## Ms Catherine Player Deputy Principal (Year 8 & 11)

The new school year has been an exciting start, with the school welcoming new staff members and a new group of Year 7's. Many of the Covid restrictions have been lifted, even though our swimming carnival was competitors only. I am looking forward to an exciting new year with many opportunities for both students and staff. As always, we will continue to post snapshots of the school day on Facebook so you can see the wonderful things that happen throughout the day, so keep a lookout for those little windows into daily life at HBHS.



I would like to welcome Ms Leila Achmad to the staff as our new Head Teacher Teaching and Learning. Ms Achmad's role is to lead Professional Learning within the school and she comes with a wealth of experience. One of her first main projects is looking at Gifted and Talented Learning within the school and she will lead a team to create an enrichment program. Stay tuned for more announcements about this. Ms Achmad will be a wonderful asset to our staff at HBHS.

### Year 8:

Our energetic Year 8's have made a great start to the school year. They are a year older and a year wiser after surviving their first year of high school under difficult circumstances last year. They are putting the lessons of last year, in terms of what it means to be a Bushy Boy, into practice inside and outside the classroom and creating new learning opportunities for themselves. This year they are studying a language for the first time in High School. The boys could choose between Chinese or Korean and they are loving it. They are also enjoying the opportunity to be junior MasterChef's in the kitchen, creating amazing and yummy treats. I am looking forward to sharing their achievements, watching them develop their talents and take on new and exciting roles throughout the year.



Year 11:

Year 11 are embarking on their senior studies and their final two years of school. They are actively pursuing different pathways including Academic ATAR, SBAT which combines school, TAFE and work, Languages through the NSW School of Languages and Saturday school and TAFE. They have all started the year off in fine fashion, jumping into leadership roles with the SRC where they have the chance to meet regularly with the Principal to discuss issues that are important to the students. Congratulations to the new SRC President Anargyos, Vice President Vasanth and Treasure Diluxan. I know they will be great leaders for our student body.



This Year, the students of Year 11 have fortnightly Year meetings where guest speakers and opportunities for learning experiences of different kinds can take place. One of our first guest speakers was from the University of NSW. They spoke about the world of opportunities at UNSW for students and gave some invaluable advice about university life. I look forward to leading these fortnightly meetings with Ms Cuneen and providing valuable information for our students and their learning pathways.



I am looking forward to a productive year with Years 8 and 11, with exciting learning opportunities and opportunities for them to be involved in student voice projects.

## Ms Jennie Dalamagas

### Deputy Principal (Year 7 & 10)



My introduction to Homebush Boys High was one of astonishment. I was greatly impressed with our students at the commencement of this year and hope to get to know them as the year progresses. This year, I am privileged to be the Deputy Principal for Year 7 and Year 10. As the Deputy Principal, I will endeavour to ensure their commitment to learning is in line with the Homebush Boys High school policy.

Term 1 has been a very wonderful and productive start to 2021 at Homebush Boys High School. It has been wonderful to see how our new Year 7 students have quickly settled and embraced the transition from Primary to High School. I would like to acknowledge our Year Advisers and current students who enabled this introduction to high school to be a very smooth one.

#### ***Year 7 Peer Support Camp***

Year 7 had an exciting three days at Nepean Adventure Centre in Douglas Park during Week 4 of this Term. I was very impressed with our student's behaviour and willingness to participate in all the activities.

This camp was one that not only challenged our Year 7 students and Year 10 Peer Support leaders, but it helped to build relationships and strengthen their leadership skills. I was astounded to see how all students and staff were having a great time with the challenges of the high ropes, leap of faith, mud world, high drop and team building activities. I would especially like to thank Mr Elie Kisso and Mr Suthangan Thanabalasingam for coordinating the camp, as well as the teachers who supervised the students for the three days of the camp. I look forward, as Deputy Principal, in seeing Year 7 utilise some of these skills through the coming years.

The camp also enabled the formation of new friendships, as well as, being mentored by our Year 10 Peer Support leaders. The collection of photos I have included clearly identify the success of this event.









## Ms Kate Fitzsimmons Rel. Deputy Principal (Year 9 & 12)



Firstly, thank you everyone who has supported me as Deputy Principal over the past six weeks. It is a team effort every day and I certainly had an incredible team around me.

### **Year 12**

Year 12 are entering their assessment period and will undoubtedly have assessments due in the coming days. This is a period where all students should be organised, managing their time and taking care of their mental health. Parents, it would be great to be checking in with your son's mental health and offering them support during this period. Ensuring they have a quiet space to work and time to do so. Below is the Google classroom code to our Study Skills resources, resources include, Managing your workload, Time Management, Weekly and term planners, Study skills tips, Exam skills And more. These resources can assist the boys in preparation for a busy time in their HSC

Year 11 and 12 Study skills Google Classroom Code: Waebu7q

### **Year 9**

Selected Year 9 students have been participating in a 'Unite Harmony Program' with the West Tigers. This is a 6-week social cohesion program and aims to achieve several social learning outcomes such as emotional control; improved relationships; and increased leadership skills. Many skills that are imperative to young men and boy's education.

I am visiting classes and setting high expectations for classroom learning. Ensuring all our Year 9 students are prepared and focused for the tasks that are presented to them each lesson. We must always been striving to improve and be better than yesterday.





## Mr Sam Widmer

### Rel. Head Teacher Support Unit



Students in the Support Unit have had a very busy start to life at Homebush Boys High School. They have engaged across all Key Learning Areas such as English, Science, Mathematics, CAPA and TAS. In particular, the boys have enjoyed learning new skills and recipes in cooking each week and participating in their first Science practical lesson in the lab. A safety lesson and demonstration was given before the boys were given a chance to apply their knowledge to a practical experiment that involved using a Bunsen burner and discovering the properties of magnesium.

The boys attended the year 7 Wellbeing camp in week 4 and absolutely loved it. Staff and students were forced to face their fears on some activities like the giant swing that propelled you over a massive gorge. The boys enjoyed zip-lining, being inside giant vortex balls and archery. The camp staff were very accommodating and provided milkshakes and doughnuts on arrival as well as a classic camp lunch.

We had a support dog visit our students whilst attending a presentation in the hall about the benefits support dogs can provide to students in schools. The boys were captivated by the skills and demeanour that Lo, the chocolate Labrador displayed. We hope to see Lo back soon!

In addition to their academic start to high school, the boys have relished the opportunities they have been given to involve themselves in extra-curricular activities. This has included boys participating in the chess club at lunch, volleyball after school on Monday and preparation for SRC applications.

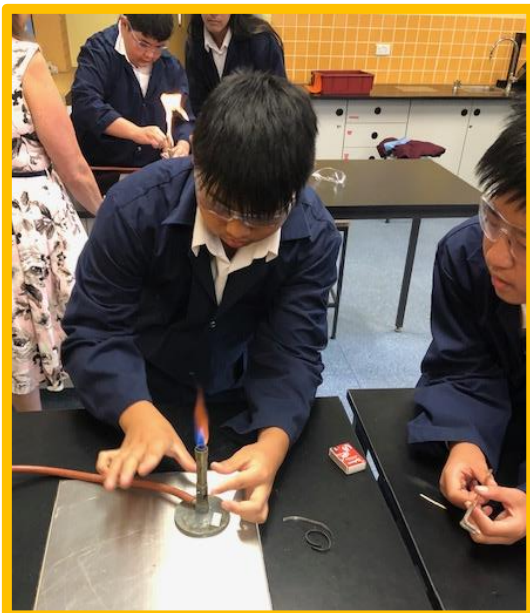
The boys said goodbye to one of their SLSOs Nick Toms and cooked a BBQ to say thank you for all his great work. Nick heads back to university now and we thank him very much for the role he played in setting up the Support Unit from day one. He will be very much missed by the students and staff.

We are looking forward to the external completion of the new Support Unit this term and what that will bring. A large deck has now been completed that joins the classrooms together whilst we await the roof that will cover the whole space. It will also comprise of stairs down from the decking and into the large garden space which have seating and tables that can be utilised during break times.

Sam Widmer – Acting Head Teacher Support Unit









## Ms Georgia Anton Career Adviser



### Breakfast Club and Coffee Club 2021

We are pleased to say that both Breakfast and Coffee Clubs are up and running. This will be the 10th anniversary of the Breakfast Club. A great student initiative that has successfully operated throughout the years. The reason for this is that we have been fortunate to have support from the community, that is funding from alumni such as John Symonds who has been very generous throughout the years and this is phenomenal as a public school we are quite often limited with the funds that we receive. Most importantly we have very committed staff such as Mrs Houvardas, Mrs Holmes and Ms Di Biasi who are so passionate about keeping these initiatives alive. Week in, week out the shopping, the preparation, the ability to adapt to challenging circumstances including organising food which complies with the current Covid climate. Their dedication is second to none, and I am excited to work with these wonderful people. Having said that, it is through our selfless and driven student volunteers that enables these programs to thrive. Great job gentlemen!



Coffee Club is in the process of re-branding to the **Fig Tree Cafe**. We are looking at extending the range of products available. This is the second year of operation and we'd like to pay homage to Mr Stinson who was our trained Barista and had the kids organised like clockwork. He has taken leave from Homebush Boys HS and look forward to his return in 2022. In the meantime, a number of our senior students have taken on the role of mentor / trainer which we are very grateful for. Also welcoming new students who are passionate to learn the art of making great coffee. Once again, I'd like to encourage colleagues to take part in this fabulous program and appreciate the support of staff who are willing to lend a helping hand such as Mr Alexander, Ms Gudgeon, Ms Di Biasi, Mr Lee and Mrs Holmes. Once again it is through the hard work and enthusiasm of our young leaders who embrace opportunities and make dreams come to fruition. Furthermore, we'd like to publicly thank Mr Julian Vaccari, former mayor of Strathfield, for his generous donation and Mr Peter Smith our honorary Rotarian who is constantly looking at ways to support us. We'd like to encourage all staff and students to support these wonderful initiatives and thank everyone involved.

*Written by Georgia Anton*

*Volunteering (Breakfast Club and Coffee Club) Coordinator*





**Figtree Cafe**

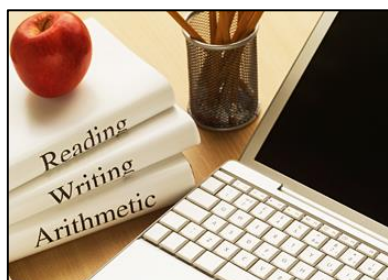




## Martyn Bawden Literacy Program



### Literacy/numeracy program:



Parents - welcome back to the 2021 school year!

#### Year 7 students:

The Accelerated Reader program is now under way. As the Term progresses, please make sure your son is completing his at-home reading. At least 20 minutes per evening is needed.

Year 7 parents have also been sent a letter outlining Year 7 involvement in the Best Start reading and numeracy assessment, scheduled for Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February.

#### Year 7 & 9 students:

Year 7 & 9 students have a Term of readiness for the upcoming NAPLAN tests (11<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May). This year, again at this school, all NAPLAN tests will be on-line, so it is important that students be prepared for this. Year 9 students should be especially diligent this Term in completing weekly Google Classroom literacy/numeracy quizzes.

#### Year 10 students:

The NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) has stated that students need to achieve minimum literacy & numeracy standards in order to gain an HSC. Year 10 students will all need to sit for three on-line tests this year (in reading, writing and numeracy), in order to demonstrate these standards. A letter has been sent, to provide more details to parents.



#### All students:

Homework Help commenced in Week 3 of this Term, on Mondays and Tuesdays, after school for one hour in the library. Assistance, especially in literacy, is available at these times. Make use of this valuable time!

If there are further enquiries, please ring Mr Bawden (Literacy/numeracy Support) at the school (Tuesdays and Thursdays). Thank you to all parents for their support of their sons' literacy and numeracy skills!

# Mr Cheiban Elaro

## Head Teacher English



### Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 Homebush Blue and Maroon

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February, students in Years 8 to 11 finally received their 2020 Blue and Maroon Awards in 4 separate formal assemblies in the school Hall.

These assemblies were cancelled last year due to the COVID restrictions at the time.

Years 8 and 10 assemblies were held on the Tuesday and the Year 9 and 11 assemblies were held on the Thursday. Each assembly was chaired by a student from the cohort, with the respective Year Advisers and their assistants in attendance, as well as the Principal and the relevant Deputy Principals.



The aim of the assemblies included distributing the many, many certificates, as well as reminding all the students that a consistent effort in all subjects in every lesson is crucial in the educational development of the individual.

We also reminded students that a strong and consistent effort in EVERY subject achieved a Blue Award. Whilst a Maroon Award was for a strong and consistent effort in all but one subject. The data is collated from the half-yearly and yearly reports. And if a student receives a tick in the 'Never' box in his learning behaviours section, he will not be eligible for an award.

Hundreds of certificates were awarded and many students received multiple certificates for their efforts in 2020. And there are too many names to list here, so I have included some data below as an indication of the enormous amount of effort and application by most of the students in 2020.

#### Year 8

Total Students received awards: 124 Students  
Total Blue and Maroon Awards: 177  
Students who earned 2 Blues: 19 Students  
Students who earned 2 Maroons: 14 Students  
Students who were awarded 1 Blue and 1 Maroon: 24 Students  
Students who received 1 Blue: 29 Students  
Students with 1 Maroon: 38 Students

#### Year 9

Total Students received awards: 122 Students  
Total Blue and Maroon Awards: 175  
Students who earned 2 Blues: 29 Students  
Students who earned 2 Maroons: 8 Students  
Students who were awarded 1 Blue and 1 Maroon: 15 Students  
Students who received 1 Blue: 31 Students  
Students with 1 Maroon: 40 Students

#### Year 10

Total Students received awards: 78 Students  
Total Blue and Maroon Awards: 117  
Students who earned 2 Blues: 15 Students  
Students who earned 2 Maroons: 18 Students  
Students who were awarded 1 Blue and 1 Maroon: 12 Students  
Students who received 1 Blue: 6 Students  
Students with 1 Maroon: 21 Students





### **A Full-House for our new Debating Coach**

On Friday 19 February, an hour before school began, a room full of debaters hung on every word uttered by our new debating coach.



Our school has 5 teams, with students from Years 7 to 11. The five teams will compete against other schools in the Premiers Debating Competitions which will commence in the last 3 weeks of term.

It was great to see so many enthusiastic students, firstly, interested in debating, and secondly, waking up an hour earlier on Fridays to attend the coaching sessions. The coaching sessions begin 7.45 AM every Friday.

The coach is an Old Bushy Boy who was part of various debating teams as a student at

Homebush. He was also brilliant at public speaking. Ibrahim was the School Vice-Captain in 2017. We are very lucky to have his expertise assisting the current debaters.

A big thanks to Ms Sofy (Year 11 coach) for continuing to be a coach and a mentor to the debaters. I also would to thank Ms Karas (Year 10), Ms Khan (Year 7) and Mr Lee (Year 8) for agreeing to coach teams this year.

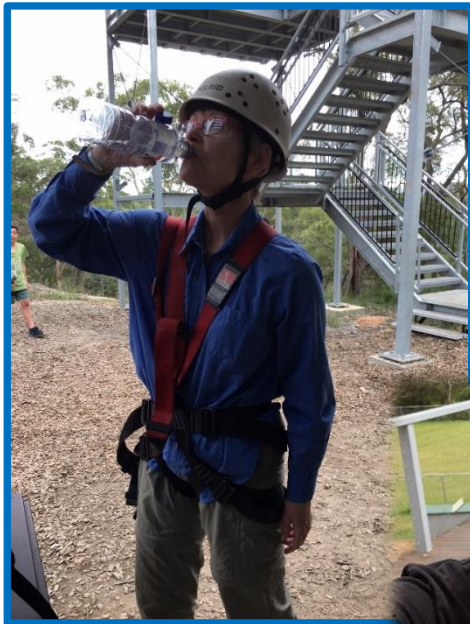
Chabes Elaro  
HT English



## Ms Judith Edwards Literacy Support



Year 7 camp, held at the Nepean Adventure Camp, was a great success. The crew only endured a few sprinkles of rain on three perfect days. Students enjoyed a variety of activities including high ropes, sky bikes, abseiling, giant swing, zip lines, archery and a very messy Survival challenge. Teachers joined in the fun. The students and teachers were assisted by capable Year 10 Peer Leaders who did a great job helping with those pesky harnesses. Let's hope all participants got enough sleep over the weekend so they could meet the challenges of a regular day at school!





## **Ms Christina Papavramidis**

### **Head Teacher HSIE & Prefect Coordinator**



#### **Domestic violence against women**

On the 9th of February 2021, Homebush Boys High School took the initiative of raising awareness and encouraging young men to stand up for positive change by hosting a White Ribbon Day Assembly. During the assembly, guest speakers, such as Ms Diana Humphries (President of ZONTA) spoke about the alarming rate of domestic violence and strategies of how the school community can unite and prevent this type of violence against women. Ishu Rawat, School Captain, led the boys in a pledge of allegiance to stop acts of violence that affect women. The prefects from Strathfield Girls provided an insight into their struggles and experiences of violence perpetrated against women in society. Below is the speech presented by Stephen Wilcox raising awareness on the matter of domestic violence.

#### **Speech** **By Stephen Wilcox**

Before I begin, I'd like for you to think about the following question:

"What is domestic violence against women? And how does it affect me?"

The harsh reality is that 87% of domestic violence victims are women. Boys, the message of today must be taken to every heart and put into practice in our everyday lives. Our generation is the one that needs to make a change, our message is about breaking the cycle. In particular the social cycle of domestic violence. It is not a phenomenon which appeared out of thin air, its existence today is a reflection of a social environment where violence against women was once tolerated and was the accepted norm.

When tackling problems there are three types of people, those who are part of the problem, those who stand by, or those who actually do something about it. We, the Bushy Boys, need to be those who stand up and speak out on this pressing issue.

Violence against women occurs anywhere and everywhere. It destroys the wellbeing, and self-worth of our mothers, sisters, aunties, nieces, girlfriends and our colleagues. As young men, it is important that we understand this problem and agree to never commit violence against women. I'm sure many of you don't see this issue as big as it truly is because nobody in your life has been affected by it, but the truth is you never actually know that. My perspective truly changed when our former Deputy Principal, Mr Achmad gave a confronting speech sharing his experiences and showing how prevalent this issue actually is and by taking the oath, you are sending a positive message of hope to the community.

The statistics on domestic violence are staggering:

- 1 woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.
- 1 in 4 women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner since the age of 15.
- 1 in 2 women have experienced sexual harassment during her lifetime.
- Almost 40% of women continued to experience violence from their partner while temporarily separated.

Australia may be a great country, but these statistics prove it's not great, in fact, it's nothing to be proud of. We all have women as role models. There is nothing more sickening than abusing or hearing about someone you love being abused. As current brothers, sons, nephews and future fathers and uncles, it

is our responsibility to ensure we build a safe and supportive environment for all the women in this world. Because after all, they are the ones who guide us through most of our lives.

So the question is, what can we do? Well, it's about recognising the line, the line where banter becomes harassment, the line where a simple dispute becomes abuse and standing up to do something about it. So, when you take the pledge, like you have done so every year or do so for the first time. Remember it's not a hollow statement, those words mean you are part of something bigger, part of a group who is taking a stand to break the cycle. Being a part of something which saves lives.

Domestic violence has for too long been hidden behind the closed doors of the home. Change happens with us.

There is nothing tough about letting your anger and frustration overcome you?

There is nothing strong about going after someone's dignity and self-worth?

A wise man once said: "The strong man is not the one who wrestles others; the strong man is in fact the person who controls himself at the time of anger."

If only we could all live by the life lesson taught in all scriptures, in every faith:

"Do to others as you would have them do to you".

Thank you



***Ms Diana Humphries President of Zonta***



***Stephen Wilcox Year 12***



**Ms Lucy Napoli**  
**Teacher HSIE, Sport Co-ordinator,**  
**Duke of Ed Co-ordinator**



**A Reflection about Duke of Edinburgh activities from our students**

***Item from Mayavan Rathanthas Year 9***

My experience with Bushcare although I only experienced doing Bushcare four times, it was an experience that I'll never forget. For some context, I'm doing the Duke of Ed, and Bushcare is the service that I chose. Now, back to my experience, it was great! On my first day, I met up with tons of new people, who had all done Bushcare for many years, so I practically learned from them. I learned how to differentiate weeds and plants, and use the correct tools to destroy them. It was quite hard, because the weeds were mixed with normal plants, which shouldn't be destroyed. After a lot of mistakes, and a lot of dead weeds, I finally got the hang of it. Now you might be wondering, why on earth did I pick Bushcare, out of everything else in the entire world? Well, most of it is because I've always been interested in helping out nature as a kid, so this service stood out to me.

My second day at Bushcare was a bit different. Instead of removing weeds, we moved on to planting. I learned how to plant a very fragile plant (that I forgot the name of) in large amounts. Not only that, but they taught me how to plant things using chopsticks! Unlike the first day, I caught onto this weird skill in a few minutes, and got three boxes worth of plants finished. On the third day, we were at another park, but we're back to taking out the weeds. But this time, I barely had any troubles. I managed to get through two full bags of weeds, and also learned more about different kinds of plants in the area.

On the fourth day, which is the latest session of Bushcare up to this point, my dad and I were indirectly helping marine life. Since we were in a park, of course there was no aquatic animals, but by cleaning up all the waste and rubbish on the ground, we were preventing it from being washed into the drain by stormwater, and we indirectly prevented it from killing them! And of course, this was the easiest thing to do by far as rubbish cleaning is something we all know how to do. So up to this point, even though I only had four sessions, it was a blast! I chose to do a service that directly paired up with my interests, and I ended up enjoying it far more than almost any other activity I have ever done. Since the world is realising the devastating effects of climate change, and what it could do to our world, I'm not asking you guys to do this exact service, but try cleaning up rubbish in your area. It could have a major impact if we all did it!



## Ms Michelle Degney Teacher/Librarian



Welcome back everyone.

The library has continued its reputation as the place to be. Thanks to the amazing donations of chessboards by parents, before school, recess and lunchtimes the library is buzzing with players from Years 7 to 12.

It is still a place to find exciting fiction works and nonfiction resources for assessment tasks and extending our knowledge. Many students find it a great place to sit quietly and read.

Years 11 and 12 use the library as a study space, where they can work quietly, share knowledge or just recharge their batteries. We are constantly updating our senior resources so that our students are provided with study guides, topic tests and revision notes. Junior students also crowd the library to prepare for assessment tasks or tests. If they need assistance we try and match them up with another students who can clarify concepts and assist them.



New books are arriving on a regular basis and our borrowing statistics reflect that reading by young men is far from dead. Each week we try to celebrate events and different genre to broaden our knowledge, understanding, worlds and reading tastes (including the library staff's - as one student rightly pointed out you cannot recommend if you don't read it. Miss you need to broaden your horizons too.) We continue to provide long term laptop options for students who for a variety of reasons do not have a device of their own. We were very fortunate last year and one of our students kindly donated many books that we were able to incorporate onto our shelves and start to create a library in the new support unit. We are seeking further generous donations of appropriate books to expand not only our library but the support unit library shelves as well.







## **Mr Elie Kisso**

### **Year 7 Adviser**



#### **Year 7 Transition Program**

In 2021, Homebush Boys High School implemented a transition program for all Year 7's to participate in during their first week of high school. The aim of this program was to ensure that all Year 7's get a taste of what is to come in High School. There was also a key focus on learning skills such as study skills sessions, Google Classroom functions, Literacy and Mindfulness.

The week allowed students a greater insight into the 21st century world of learning. Our hard working staff developed lessons which focused on high levels of creativity and engagement. The week was a great opportunity for all students to feel as though high school is not the scariest place in the world.

Within the first couple of days in the program we saw relationships between students and their teachers flourish. The eagerness was extremely evident and by the end of the week students had a fantastic experience transitioning into being a Bushy Boy.

Based on the feedback received from Year 7 they thoroughly enjoyed the week and provided suggestions on how it could be improved for future years.

We would like to thank all those involved in making the week possible as without their hard work and dedication this would not be possible.

#### **Year 7 Camp 2021**

Wow what a start to the 2021 Year! The Year 7 cohort were graced with the opportunity to attend the Nepean Adventure Wellbeing Camp. For many students this may have been their first opportunity attending a camp so it was exciting times ahead. The camp lasted three days and two nights in Douglas Park, NSW where students were given the opportunity to work in groups and accomplish individual and team goals. The goal of this camp was to build all students' levels of confidence and to feel welcome amongst their peers, many made new friends and many faced their fears by plunging off the quick drop for the first time in their lives! Nevertheless, all students had an amazing time at the camp and all staff who attended (A big



thank you!) definitely could see the boys mature over the three days and really develop a connection with the school and their peers.

This will be the first of many opportunities Year 7 will have as we are always looking for ways



to continually develop students' connections to the school and placing them into environments to continually succeed and thrive.



Here below are a recount from Year 7 students, **Aydin Yuksel** and a collaboration by **Nomaan Patel, Harsha Mahendran and Hayden Cox** on their experiences with camp.

### **Aydin Yuksel's experience**

When I got the note to go camp I didn't think it was going to be a good idea, nor did my parents for obvious safety reasons. My dad and I talked and I ended up paying and on the bus on Monday. While I was on the bus I was talking to my mates and telling jokes to each other. Not only was the actual camp fun but the bus ride was as well.

When we arrived at camp I was so excited, seeing all those fun activities for the first time was indeed very exciting. The first thing that happened there was roll call and announcements on which room you have to go to, I was in room B3 with all my mates, I mean, after all, I do have about 10-20 of them. We were there for 3 days and 2 nights and that was the best 3 days and 2 nights of my life.

The first activity was survivor, basically, there are 2 teams and you have to make it to the other side with 3 pieces of metal and wood. Keep in mind we were doing this over a 1.5-meter deep pond that had ducks in it, and unfortunately, duck poop, and also I found it pretty annoying when I got a sunburn from it. We also did the Flying Fox which was a zip line, sky cycle, Quick drop, Trampoline, and my favourite of all time, the one and only giant swing.





**Nomaan Patel, Harsha Mahendran and Hayden Cox**



Nepean Adventure Centre was genuinely astonishing. In a sentence that could explain it all. It was so fantastic because of all the adventurous things that we did. We thank our teachers and staff, for having arranged this extraordinary experience. Circling back, it was on Monday the 15th of February. We all grouped together in our school hall, marked our names off and that was it. Unlimited amount of fun was about to be unleashed.

First, we went into the coach bus, having been split into five different smaller groups, about to travel to one of NSW's largest adventure centres. With the most amazing activities ever!!

To mention some of it there was a zipline, a ginormous swing and they were many more. On the zipline basically you would have to put on a harness and a helmet. Then you had to climb the stairs up to a tall tower. They would then attach a safety line to you, you can now go through the first safety gate. When you are there they will make you stand on a stool so they can clip you onto the zipline and unclip the safety line. Now comes the best part you can just walk or do anything you wish except jumping. After you walk off it is fundamentally a zipline with no seat then you are now 30 feet off the ground and you are zooming.



The camp was astounding, one great activity we did was the gorge swing. First we had to get into a group of 3 and put on our harnesses. When it was your turn you had to go through a gate and wait at a cone until called. After a few gruelling seconds you were called to the swing and clipped on to a bumblebee log that you had to hold on for the first 2 swings. Once you were clipped onto the swing you were raised and you could pick how high you went and I went to the top. Once you were at the top a lever and you swung so high over a cliff and you could see the gorge river 100 ft. below and it was so fantastic.

The camp food was excellent, especially breakfast. We had cereal, sausages and delicious toast with eggs. Another activity that was exhilarating was the expeditious drop where you were harnessed with a helmet and then you walked up an 18m tower of stairs. When you got to the top you had to stand at a white gate until you were called, you were harnessed to a motor and then there was another white gate, you were given sanction to jump off the tower and it was the best thing we have ever seen. At the end of camp we didn't want to leave at all but we had to. We thanked all of the staff another for this amazing at camp

In conclusion, it was the most thrilling, excellent, amazing and sickening experience ever.



## Ms Michelle Continho

### Year 9 Adviser/Acting Head Teacher Wellbeing



It has been a great start to 2021 for Year 9 students. We started the year on a positive note and conducted an assembly for the Blue and Maroon awards. The special thing about the Blue and Maroon awards are that students are recognised for their efforts and I can definitely say that the Year 9 have definitely put in consistent effort across all of their subjects. One third of the year group received awards for their consistent effort in 2020. I wish to again congratulate all the award recipients for taking a stronghold of the opportunities at Homebush Boys High School. I hope that 2021 will continue to provide some more exciting opportunities and successes for all students. Below is a snapshot of the term so far.

### West Tiger Unite Harmony Program



The Unite Harmony program is a 6-week social cohesion program that will work with a small group of targeted Year 9 students. The program will be delivered in conjunction with Homebush Boys High School and the Wests Tigers. Unite Harmony aims to encourage and unite high school students to be leaders in their community and focuses on key community outcomes, aimed to shape individuals' behaviours, relationships, decision making and overall health and wellbeing.

The program focuses on themes such as Respect, Identity, Healthy Relationships and Celebrating unique differences and similarities as a community. Over the 6 week course, each week will focus on a central theme and students will be involved in various activities to help achieve several social learning outcomes such as emotional control; improved relationships; and increased leadership skills. All of which are important skills in successfully building one's future and being part of their own and the wider community. Students have had a great start to the program and always look forward to each week.





### **The life of a Year 9 student**

*"Year 9 so far has been quite fun and exhilarating. My whole family is working and studying from home so I thought I would find it harder to come back to school after the holidays knowing that they are still all together at home. But I was wrong! The interesting subjects and experiences at school make my walk to and from school each day definitely worthwhile. As I am in Year 9, I got to choose two electives for Stage 5 (Year 9 and 10). So far, it has been a pleasure doing the subjects. I enjoy my subjects each day which includes the fun experiments in Science each lesson, learning the skills of a metal worker in Metalwork and finally getting multiple P.E practical lessons each fortnight."*

*Around two weeks ago, the school held a Blue and Maroon award ceremony for everyone who put in lots of effort throughout 2020. I was so happy and proud to see that more than two thirds of my cohort received an award. It really showed me what a great year group that I am part of, and made me feel grateful to be surrounded by so many hardworking students. I am looking forward to a wonderful year ahead and hope to continue these exciting learning experiences."* - **Shanmukh Dokka - Year 9**

### **Environment Club**

*"The Environment Club had a great start this year as our Executive Team's roles were elected and our goals for 2021 were set. Our first task this year was to elect students for various roles such as an Environment Club Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, Administrative Coordinator, Social Media Manager and many more. We received many expressions of interest for these roles and were pleased to know our dedicated members were already so keen and committed after the holidays. These roles are vital to the club as they help us monitor environmental issues at school and run programs efficiently. The Executive Team will also be playing a major role in the club this year and provides us with vital skills such as: leadership qualities, time management and problem solving."*

*Our first few meetings in 2021 have allowed us to reflect on the past year and set our goals for this year. Out of the many issues that were raised, the most concerning issue was the running of our 'Return and Earn' program. This program was started by the Environment Club to participate in the 'Return and Earn' NSW government scheme. We have had great progress since the introduction of the scheme and a vast majority of classrooms have been equipped with a bottle collection bin. Our goal this term is to have bins all around the school to ensure we have every student on board and recycling. The money earned by this scheme also generates the revenue for the Environment club which influences our spending on factors such as better bins, participation in competitions and long-term solutions for environmental issues."*



*Some significant goals listed by the club members and Ms Coutinho for 2021 are:*

- *More active involvement in the community via various platforms, social media and clean-ups.*
- *Conducting environmental fundraising events.*
- *Minimise plastic in the canteen.*
- *Frequent updates to the school and members of the community via social media and Bush Bulletins.*
- *Active participation in competitions.*
- *Applying for local environmental grants.*

*These goals will be reviewed and further developed into a plan with a scope and sequence which will be followed throughout the year and parents will be provided with updates via the Bush Bulletin and social media.*

*One event that has already been scheduled is the Clean-up Australia day on the 5th of March. This day reflects on our rubbish disposal which is a huge concerning issue for everybody across Australia and worldwide. A recent speech to the UN by Sir David Attenborough showed the devastating effects of climate change which can be put into consideration as over 79% of our waste is plastic and is made using fossil fuels. This year our school is contributing to this day by conducting a whole school clean-up with more than 7 classes, including the Environment Club, dedicating 1 hour of their time to clean up the school premises. This activity is to show our commitment to make HBHS a better place for both students and staff". - Rishik Vinnakota - Year 9 - Environment Club Administration Coordinator*

## **HT Wellbeing Report - Ms Coutinho**

Peer Support has been running at Homebush Boys High School for the past 3 years to support student wellbeing. The student voice at Homebush Boys High School has suggested that they feel a strong sense of belonging when they have positive experiences and good relationships with their peers at school. The Peer Support Program aims to accomplish this by providing students with the opportunity to broaden their connections across the school community and also allows Year 10 students to take on a leadership role. The Peer Support leaders have been running weekly sessions with the new Year 7 students through fun activities and discussions that have improved positive social engagement in school and helped the Year 7 students settle into High School life.



*"Peer support lessons are probably the best hours I have had with younger students of Homebush Boys. Although our sessions aim to connect Year 7 students together and provide more insight about high school, it has also magnificently improved and benefited my leadership skills, as well as the way we guide everyone to reach the same goals in life. Peer Support involves one hour lessons where year 10's provide knowledge, experience and assistance to new students of high school. We provide influential tips about making the most of high school and strategies to adapt whilst taking a big*

*stepping stone in life. Year 10's, along with several teachers as a helping hand, aim to comfort Year 7's into a safe and healthy environment, to collaborate and to make Homebush Boys feel like home. After numerous lessons with younger boys, I have felt as if the Year 7's are my close friends. Providing beneficial guidance is an honour to me for those who take my advice and continue to succeed in high school life. At the end of the day, younger generations of Homebush Boys should be carrying a smile on their face, and I'm sure we've accomplished that". - Aryan Rodrigues - Year 10 Peer Support Mentor*

*"Peer Support utilises a strengths based approach to build social and emotional skills for adolescent development. This term, students have the opportunity to explore the positive things in their lives. They identify their strengths and achievements and also the people who support them. Peer Leaders work through a range of activities that focus on building connections and addressing a range of behaviours including the prevention of bullying. Meeting in small groups allows meaningful connections to form, assisting students with the transition to secondary school. As Peer Support leaders, we try to teach the students how to behave and learn effectively in the classroom and we take time out of our classes to support these students.*



*Consideration of their character strengths helps to build a strong sense of self. Some boys may, at times, feel overwhelmed, by the expectations and broad array of relationships and situations at high school. Sharing some of the topics that they are doing at school can build a supportive connection between home and school. Students will acknowledge their strengths and learn skills to build resilience, identify*



*how to develop, maintain and repair friendships, develop understanding of a range of behaviours including bullying and learn strategies in order to respond appropriately in a variety of situations.*

*After each session we discuss with the Year 7's what they have learnt during Peer Support and encourage and reinforce their character strengths. Some of these may include happiness, kindness, patience, perseverance, honesty and good judgement".* **Marc Garcia - Year 10 Peer Support Mentor**



## Ms Rashmi Singh Year 10 Adviser



### Year 10 - Term 1, 2021 – Building Future

Welcome everyone to a brand new Year, the Year of the Ox, 2021. I hope everyone is well rested and recharged for another new year of learning, meeting new challenges, and expanding our horizons.

Year 10 have a very interesting year ahead. They have already spent three good years in a high school setting. In these formative years, they have experienced a rich pool of knowledge while studying a wide spectrum of subjects such as – Hospitality, Electronics, Timber and Woodwork, Science and Commerce to name a few. By now, most of the cohort is well aware of their personal capabilities and their own aspirations for their future.

This year, during term 3, they are going to select the subjects for themselves to study during Year 11 and 12 at the school. Very likely, the choice of these subjects would align with the courses they wish to pursue either in universities, TAFE or trade apprenticeships, post HSC.

On 10<sup>th</sup> February, the Year 10 cohort had their first assembly of the year. The official party included Deputy Principal Ms J Dalamagas, Careers Adviser Ms G Anton, Year Adviser Ms R Singh and Assistant Year Adviser Ms M Kaur. Ayrán Rodrigues was very diligent as the Master of ceremonies.

Ms Dalamagas, welcomed the cohort and while introducing herself, presented her expectations very succinctly. Ms Anton discussed various opportunities available at local TAFEs and requirements to get a personal TFN. Ms Singh talked about using Google classroom as a common communication platform and emphasised seeking help from teachers and the school counsellors when needed.

The highlight of the assembly was the talk given by ex-school captain 2020 - Zain Ousmand and ex school vice-captain Tom Neisser. They discussed their own HSC journey, the reasons behind choice of their subjects, their challenges, goals and study regimes that helped them to achieve an ATAR of 83 and 84 respectively. There was a Q and A session at the end and I am very pleased to say that Year 10 asked some very clever questions.







Good Morning,

Now the 2021 school year has begun we are asking all schools to remind their students of requirements when travelling on public transport.

As I'm sure you are aware wearing a mask on public transport is now mandatory for all passengers aged 12 and over, I understand students are not required to wear a mask at school but if you could take the time to remind any students who travel to and from school to always wear a mask on and around our trains and stations, NSW police officers are currently patrolling our trains and stations to enforce this.

All students who have applied for a school OPAL card should have been issued, it is a requirement that all students tap on and off when travelling on trains, please remind your students if they do not have a OPAL card to speak to a staff member to gain access students should not attempt to jump barriers for their own safety and the safety of other.

We wish you the best for the 2021 school year and if we can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

**Kylie Neville**  
Community Engagement Officer  
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