PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

The highlights of Term 1 are the successful transition of 235 Year 7 students moving across into Secondary school, while we also had higher than expected enrolments in Year 8 with 139 students starting in January. Added to the new students, we also have over 20 new teaching staff, due to growing enrolments, replacements for some retired staff and replacements for others. These new staff have been transitioned into the High Performance culture, effective relationships and Quality Teaching framework applied across the school. These new staff have brought with them a new range of skills that will provide further opportunities to our students.

I am pleased to report a major improvement in student attendance during Term 1, currently 91.3% across the whole school, improving on 85.1% in 2014. We will continue to reward those who have excellent attendance and follow-up with those who need to improve. This has a major impact on the learning outcomes of all of the students.

I look forward to seeing the outcomes from the Mid-Semester reports that will be distributed in the first week of next term, recognising the work of the students, the preparation and efforts by the teachers and the support staff. Interviews for parents to discuss student progress with teachers will be convene in Week 2.

I also recognise the great contribution of Marg Brown and the Office team, whose organisation and management of the “front desk” contacts for parents and students, financial management and records organisation is of very high quality. This was recognised in the Audit process during Term 1, showing the overall high standard in their work practices.

Our Student Leaders have made a positive start to 2015 and these students will be enhanced with the appointment of the Junior Secondary Leaders for 2015 at the start of Term 2. With ANZAC Day commemorations held early next term. We will have both our School Ceremony as well as having a large contingent of students and staff in the Mackay City ceremony.

On behalf of the staff of the school, I wish all members of our wonderful school community, a Happy and safe Easter season and a relaxing break. School will recommence for all students and staff on Monday 20th April.

HARMONY DAY

On Monday 23rd March, in D Block, a Morning Tea to celebrate Harmony Day was held in a Year 10 English and Year 11 English for ESL Learners’ class. This is hoped to become an annual event, and develop into a school-wide celebration in years to come. The many cultures present at our school were evident in the food and quizzes on the day, and even some singing.

Many thanks to parents and students who provided such delicious and varied food for the morning tea.

A committee will be formed in Term 4 this year to start planning for 2016. If you are interested in being on this committee please contact

Mrs Catriona McGuire (EAL/D teacher)
cmgu53@eq.edu.au

SCHOOL CLEAN UP

7D1 and their Year 12 Buddy recently spent a period cleaning up a section of our school yard following our discussions on how each of us can make a contribution / difference to our school. We all agreed we can do things as individuals, but we also recognised the effectiveness of working together. We cleared rubbish, broken trees and branches and made the area much more attractive.
AUSTRALIAN BRAIN BEE CHALLENGE

Last week the extension Year 10 science students were given the chance to participate in round one of the Brain Bee Challenge. The Brain Bee is a competition open to year 10 science students about the brain functions, neuroscience and careers in this field.

The students completed an online exam for round one and if they successfully proceed to round two they have the opportunity to travel to the Queensland Brain Institute at the University of Queensland for round two.

Good luck to the students and well done on participating in this science challenge.

EARTH HOUR

On Thursday the new environmental team for Mackay State High School held an earth hour event to raise awareness of Earth Hour which was held on Saturday 28th March at 8:30 pm.

Earth hour occurs yearly where people can participate in a worldwide lights out event where nonessential lights are turned off for one hour. This event has grown from a single earth hour in Sydney in 2007 to over 162 countries in over 7000 cities participating with over 7 million lights out events in Australia alone in 2014.

Our school had a lights out time where staff and students were asked to switch off any non-essential lights and air-conditioning and then invited to gather for a bake sale and to record why they would participate in earth hour.

Student responses to “I’m going to participate in earth hour because...” included:

“We all have to participate and take part to save our world” - Natasha
“I want future generations to see and experience what great aspects our natural environment has to offer e.g. great barrier reef and the amazon” - Lachlan
“Our world is precious and we need to act now if we want a better future” - Isla
“Hoping someone else will do something isn’t working anymore. We have to do something before its too late” - Kate
“The great barrier reef must be protected and saved from pollution” - Kaleb
“It will help save our fantastic earth for future generations” - Alicia

This year’s Australian focus is to support Australian food and farmers as they are already being affected by global warming. Proceeds made from our bake sale will be donated to the World Wildlife fund.

ENGLISH

Tutoring

Every Monday 3- 4pm in A08

Students can get help with assignments, exam preparation, oral presentations etc.

PLAGIARISM

Teachers in the English and Humanities Departments have identified that there has been a significant rise in the amount of plagiarism occurring in assignments that have been submitted – particularly by students in Years 7 and 8.

Plagiarism involves students submitting the work of others as their own, without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing of the original work. It includes word for word copying of sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources without identifying their origin by appropriate referencing. It also involves students closely paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs and/or using other people’s ideas without appropriate acknowledgement.

Penalties for plagiarism include a fail result recorded and the student being required to resubmit the assessment instrument.

Teachers have clearly outlined to students what plagiarism is and how to avoid it in classes however, some students have been continuing to submit sections of plagiarised work within their assignments.

Ways that you can help your student can avoid plagiarism:

- Ensuring that your child submits a full rough draft to his/her teacher for checking
- Asking your student to explain their ideas fully in their own words when discussing his/her assignment
- Encouraging students to note take from sources not copy out reams of information
- Encourage students to cite sources and use quotes in their assignments
- Reinforce the consequences of plagiarising other people’s work.
THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS BOOK HIRE SCHEME

The English Departments Book hire scheme has commenced. This scheme gives students access to a wide range of novels that are used within the classroom. Each English class is given a specific novel to read and study.

This is how the system works:

- Each student has their own copy of the book loaned electronically to their loan account.
- Students are required to bring their book to every English class.
- We do not recommend that students leave the book in their English classroom, as it can be easily misplaced or taken.
- The book is the student’s responsibility at all times while on loan.
- When the class is finished using the novel, the books MUST be returned promptly to their teacher OR the English Staffroom (A6).
- Verbal reminders will be given to students during their English class, asking for the return of novels.
- Failing the return of books, written reminders will be sent to the student’s home.
- If a student still fails to return their copy of the novel, they will be invoiced and charged for the replacement of the book.

Unreturned books are a great expense to the English Department and that is why we have a very strict policy in place. We appreciate your assistance with our book hire scheme and look forward to enriching your child’s learning experience.

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn the more places you’ll go!” Dr Seuss

A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE

Hi All!

Student Personal Details

Thank you very much parents and carers who have your students’ personal details forms, we are currently updating any changes ie address, phone numbers, contact details, emergency contacts and medical conditions. All students were given a copy of their details. If you still have the form, please return it to the office – even if details are correct

Student Fee Discount

The 2015 Student Resource Scheme Discount fee of $205 expires at the end of Term 1. If your school fees remain unpaid the charge will be increased to $225. Should you wish to discuss a Payment Plan to assist the clearance of fees please call 4957 9179 and we can arrange this with you.

Messages to Staff

Should you need to contact a teacher you are welcome to send your email to admin@mackayshs.eq.edu.au and we will forward it on your behalf to the specific teacher or year coordinator.

Easter Spring Vacation

The Mackay SHS office will be closed during the vacation period.

We resume at 8:00am on Monday 20 April – when students return to school.

We wish you a safe and enjoyable break from school routines and look forward to seeing everyone rejuvenated for Term 2.

Until next time .... Marg Brown

HEALTH NURSE

Many people get up in the morning and rush out the door without eating breakfast. The problem with that is, you start the day on an empty stomach without the nutrients and energy your body needs to get through a working day. This can cause over eating later in the day or snacking on sweet unhealthy foods.

Breakfast sets you up for making smart decisions, and learning. It gives you the energy to fuel your brain and muscles. A healthy breakfast will satisfy your appetite for longer. The old saying you are what you eat is especially true for children and young people because their brain is not fully developed. Parents can set a good example for their children by making sure they have breakfast.

Suggestions for a quick and healthy breakfast include: A boiled egg on toast, avocado on toast, cereal and fruit, porridge, yogurt with fruit, or how about a smoothie made with seasonal fruit. Check out the library notice board for other healthy breakfast ideas.

ATTENDANCE OFFICER

Term 2 we will be commencing SMS (Short Message Service) messaging for Student absences to your provided mobile number. In preparation for this service we have sent home with all Year 9 – 12 students their Personal Details form which includes all contact details, addresses and mobile numbers. This form needs to be returned to the general office urgently, even if details are correct please return the form.
Kick start your day and improve school performance by grabbing some breakfast before heading out the door each morning. Don’t forget our school Breakfast Club which operates in the hall Kitchen Monday to Thursday.

**BREAKFAST CLUB**

The Tag You’re It program together with the Breakfast Club put on Breakfast for Teacher and Staff.

**VENUE** - At the Hall Canteen  
**TIME** - 8.00am – 8.45am (Monday –Thursday)  
**MENU** -  
Monday - Toast and spreads with Milo on Mondays  
Tuesday - Scrambled egg, toast, cereal on Tuesdays  
Wednesday - Pancakes, toast, cereal on Wednesdays  
Thursday - Fruit Smoothies, toast, cereal on Thursdays

Everyone is welcome to come along for a bite to eat and a friendly chat to start the day. Eating breakfast gives us more energy to get through the day and it’s a good way to make friends at the school. We look forward to seeing new and familiar faces.

A special thanks to Sydney Street Brumbies Bakery who have supported Breakfast Club every day for 7 years with their delicious Bread.

**MACKAY DISTRICT SPORTS TRIALS**