



THE Normanhurst News

The weekly newsletter of Normanhurst Boys High School

Celebrating 50 years of quality education for boys

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Principal: Mr N.G. Warren Deputy Principals: Mr F. Johnson and Mr J.E. Fielding

Friday 15 February 2008

Volume 17 Number 3

From the Principal

On Tuesday night of this week the first P&C meeting for the year was held in the school library. Our guest speaker was Ms Levy, Year 7 Adviser, 2008, who spoke about her role as Year Adviser. This was followed by a short question time from parents and an information sheet, developed by Ms Levy, was distributed to parents. This sheet provides information on who to contact in the school for various issues that may arise. I wish to thank Ms Levy for her attendance at the meeting. She is the latest in a long line of student advisers at our school who work diligently on behalf of the students in our care. We are fortunate in having such dedicated people in such an important role and I wish to thank them all: Ms Levy Year 7, Mr Pico Year 8, Mrs James Year 9, Mr Bennett Year 10, Mr Ridley Year 11, and Mr Rumbelow Year 12. A special thanks also to the assistant Year Advisers.

At the same meeting the P&C kindly agreed to provide funds to assist the school. This included such things as money to assist in teacher relief for debating and public speaking, support with additional grounds personnel and funds to assist with student welfare initiatives. Not all schools are as fortunate as we are in having such a supportive group of people as we have in our P&C. Much of the money has come from our P&C operated canteen and P&C operated clothing pool. On behalf of the staff and students I wish to express my appreciation to the P&C for their hard work on behalf of the school. Faculty requests for P&C funding will be dealt with at the next meeting.

Graeme McIntyre (Year 11) has been selected to be master of ceremonies at the *RSL and Schools Remember ANZAC Commemoration Service* to be held in April. Congratulations Graeme! This is a great honour and we know that you will do an outstanding job.

Swipe card photographs for students in Years 7, 9 and 11 were taken on Monday and the immunisation program for Year 7 students was conducted on Wednesday. Thanks go to Mr Randall for his excellent organisation of both of these activities.

As you would all be aware, on Wednesday morning our Prime Minister Mr. Kevin Rudd, apologised to the stolen generations of Indigenous Australians. We were very pleased that students took such a great interest in the broadcast and, in the future, will remember where they

were when this historic event took place. Sadly our school, like most high schools, is not set up for television broadcasts and, with our small internet bandwidth, some students were able only to hear the broadcast.

Attached to this newsletter is a copy of a publication from *Reconciliation Australia*, "Apology to the stolen generations - questions and answers". This publication, which was sent via e-mail to teachers from the Director-General of Education and Training, provides some relevant information and background to the apology.

Mr Warren's retirement function has been set down for Wednesday 19 March at Avondale Golf Club from 6.30 pm. The cost is \$45 per person including a contribution for a gift. More information can be obtained by contacting Mrs Phillips at the school front office.

I remind parents that our school office hours are from 8.00am to 3.30pm. I would also ask that a note explaining student absences be sent to school with your son on the day of his return to school. It should be given to his roll call teacher and is required even if you have phoned the school to inform us of the absence. All students who arrive late must report to the front office on arrival at school and swipe in. A late note will be provided to students who are late. If your son receives a late note please complete the required details and return it to school via your son.

The list of penalties for traffic infringements around schools was inadvertently left out the previous newsletter. It is included in this newsletter for your information.

There have been some issues arise in regard to payments to the school which are lodged at the front office. Could you please note the required procedures to be followed which are outlined later in this newsletter. Adherence to these procedures is greatly appreciated.

Our website at www.normanhurb-h.schools.nsw.edu.au provides a great deal of important information about our school. I encourage you to visit the site to find out more about our school.

F Johnson
Acting Principal

P & C NEWS

First Meeting for 2008: 12 Feb 08

The first meeting was a great success with information

on Year 7 provided by Ms Blae Levy, and an insight into last year's HSC results by Mr Frank Johnson. Many questions from parents were answered and parents were able to meet each other over supper.

Approvals Made:

The meeting approved funding for two important items that could not be delayed:

1. school accident insurance and ambulance cover to ensure any health or injury emergency at school or on an excursion can be managed effectively by the staff, and
2. a part-payment to the school to enable initial budget commitments to be met.

More details on the school's requests will be provided at the next meeting. A number of requests have been submitted by teachers and the most pressing proposals will also be dealt with at the next meeting.

New Committee Members

Two new parents 'answered the call' and were readily elected. I take great pleasure in announcing Ganesh Luharuka as Treasurer and Sandeep Dharni as Secretary. Well done!

Minutes

It is intended that Minutes of meetings will be available within a fortnight on the school website and copies will also be available at the following month's meeting.

Canteen and Clothing Pool Volunteers

We are in need of more volunteers, especially for the canteen. Please consider offering up some time when convenient and discuss your availability with the canteen – call the Canteen during the day on 9489 4122. Apart from it being a great way to meet the boys and teachers it will greatly assist in reducing the length of queues at recess and lunch. The boys will all testify that their break time is precious!

School 'fridge' calendars

These handy items should arrive home shortly and were funded by the P&C last year.

P&C Contributions

A letter will be sent home shortly regarding the annual payment to be made to the P&C. This payment is best made at the same time as sending in school/subject fees. Both the school and P&C contributions are critical for providing the learning environment and opportunities you and your son expect. Please support the school in this way even if not able to attend P&C activities.

Committee Work

Your committee is investigating:

- Fundraising options
- Guest speakers
- Improvements to the grounds (in collaboration with the school plan)
- Sending meeting minutes/Normo News by email (only to those requesting it)

If you have any ideas or views on these or other issues and cannot make it to a meeting please send a note to us at school. There is a P&C 'mail box' at the Admin Office where messages and mail are collected.

Next General Meeting

The next P&C General Meeting will be held in the School Library from 8:00pm on Tuesday 11 March. The agenda (and the topic for the presentation) will be

notified next week.

Best wishes,
Pevlin Price
P&C President

MUSIC NEWS

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE FOR MUSICAL ENSEMBLES TERM 1 2008

TIMES	MONDAY	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
BEFORE SCHOOL	7.30AM Stage Band Rm 46	8.00am String Ensemble Rm 46	7.30am Concert Band Rm 33

New Ensemble Members

Hordes of new players arrived yesterday to join the band. We are particularly well provided with alto saxophones again this year and that is marvellous. If you are a flute or clarinet player and you have still not turned up to band we would love to see you there.

The String Ensemble is now rehearsing in Rm. 46 on a Tuesday morning at 8.00am. We are getting ready for our first gig so please come along and join us on a Tuesday morning. We are always on the lookout for cellos and double basses, or even a viola.

The Stage Band is for students who have reached a high level of skills and play saxophone, trombone, trumpet, bass guitar, electric guitar, drum kit or piano. They play jazz pieces which require some knowledge of jazz chords for anyone wishing to join on guitar, bass or piano. At present the Stage Band is scheduled for Mondays at 7.30am in Rm. 46 as we have so many seniors with morning classes.

Proposed Performance Dates For 2008

May 2 **FEST!!!!** A combined drama/ music concert featuring all ensembles and **all** elective classes. School Hall 7.00pm.

April 29 Anzac Ceremony - full concert band.

June 24th -27th *Grease* – our school musical for 2008.

Term 3 MEAD a combined English/Drama/Music evening featuring Yr 12 works eg films, short stories, monologues.

December 8-10th Music Camp at Collaroy

December 16th Presentation Night. Concert Band and Stage Band

Ensemble Contributions

In order to purchase things like music, instruments, coaches to various venues etc. we need students to pay a **\$50 ensemble contribution** to the school. This needs to be in an envelope marked "band contribution" and handed in to the front office as soon as possible. Students who are in **stage band will be billed** each term for the fees as we have an outside tutor for this ensemble – Mr Paul Murchison (an ex student who is currently studying Jazz at the Conservatorium of Music). This is about \$4.00 a rehearsal. **If you cannot afford the stage band fees as well as the band contribution then please just pay the stage band fees.**

Commitment

Every year a small but significant number of boys

appear to have trouble deciding whether or not they wish to be in the band. Obviously it is more attractive to attend camps and tours but it is unfair on those students who put in the hard work and attend all the rehearsals in between these events. If you are encouraging your son to join any ensemble, please stress to them that they are making a commitment to attend all rehearsals and performances.

Mrs. M. Johnson and Mrs. S Cousins

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SCHOOL EVENTS

Photographs of NBHS Presentation Night 2007 and NBHS Swimming Carnival 2008, along with photos of many other school events, are now available at: www.rosswillis.eventpix.com.au/nbhs. The full photographer's commission will be paid to NBHS P&C.

NEWS FROM THE YEAR 7 ADVISER

Thank you to the P&C for inviting me to speak to the meeting on Tuesday night this week. I'm sorry that more

Year 7 parents weren't able to come to the meeting, however the following points are relevant:

- A contact sheet should have come home with your son on Thursday this week
- Parents are encouraged to be on the P&C database, to help in the canteen if you have the time (it's a good way to find out about what's happening in the school!) or in other ways such as washing the sheets from sick bay, covering books in the library, coming to P&C meetings.
- Most bus passes have now been issued – Hillsbus will require payment of the fare from Monday February 18, by any students not in possession of a pass. Train passes will be issued as soon as they have been processed – fares will need to be paid from February 29 if students don't have a pass.

Ms Levy
Year 7 Adviser

PROCEDURE FOR LODGING PAYMENTS AT THE FRONT OFFICE

We wish to remind you of the following requests in regard to payments:

- All payments must be placed securely in the locked wooden brown money box located on the Front Office counter AFTER 8.00 am and PRIOR TO the end of recess. Money will not be accepted after this time.
- Please do not hand money to teachers at all.
- Official school receipts are placed in rolls and distributed by the Roll Call Teacher the day following payment.
- Students must ensure they collect their receipts as receipts CANNOT be reprinted at all.
- Change CANNOT BE PROVIDED by the Front Office. Please ensure EXACT money is submitted. No foreign currency is accepted.
- All payments must be submitted in a sealed envelope. (Envelopes can be purchased from the Front Office at a charge of 5 cents each.)
- Details on the front of the envelope MUST include:
 - ❖ Full student name (given names and family name)
 - ❖ Roll Class including School Year
 - ❖ Reason for payment
 - ❖ Amount of payment
 - ❖ Method of payment (cash, cheque, credit card authority)

F Johnson
Principal (Acting)

STATE GOVERNMENT PENALTIES FOR PARKING OFFENCES IN SCHOOL ZONES

Offence	Penalty	Demerit Points
Disobey no stopping sign	\$238	2
Disobey no parking sign	\$132	2
Stop on/near children's crossing	\$318	2
Stop on/near pedestrian crossing	\$318	2
Stop on/near marked foot crossing	\$318	2
Stop on path/strip in built up area	\$132	2
Stop on/across driveway/other access to/from land	\$132	2
Stop in Bus Zone	\$238	2
Stop at/near Bus zone	\$238	2
Double park	\$185	2

<i>Normanhurst Boys' High School</i>			<i>Term 1, 2008</i>		
<i>Wk</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
4	18 Feb Yr9 Vis Arts/PDM Exc	19 Yr11 Visual Arts Exc Yr12 MU Debating Cup	20	21 Yr11 Teachers' Mtg	22
5	25 Feb Yr8 Visual Arts Exc	26 Yr 11 Ex.-Live Theatre	27	28 Year Assembly Yr12 exams for typing Yr12 Theatre Exc (e'ning)	29 Yr7 Geog Field Study School Clean-Up Day
	Yr12 Chemistry	Yr12 Legal Studies			Yr12 Biology
6	3 Mar Yr7/8 French Incursion Staff Meeting	4 Yr7 Teachers' Meeting Yr 11 Exc. Theatre	5	6 Zone Swimming	7 Yr7 Geog Field Study Yr9 Commerce Field Study Battle of the Bands
	Yr12 Physics	Yr12 English Ext1		Yr12 Software Design Yr12 English Adv	

SPORTS RESULTS

SPORT	OPPOSITION	WINNER	SCORE
1st Cricket	North Sydney	Draw	Wash Out
2nd Cricket	Epping	Draw	Wash Out
15a Cricket	Bye	-	-
14a Cricket	North Sydney	Normanhurst	NH 1/71 def NS 9/70
14b Cricket	H'bush	Normanhurst	NH 85 def HB 53
Senior Baseball	Bye	-	-
Junior Baseball	Homebush	Homebush	8-10
1st Basketball	Homebush	Normanhurst	57-42
2nd Basketball	Homebush	Normanhurst	38-27
15 Basketball	Homebush	Homebush	21-39
14 Basketball	Homebush	Normanhurst	39-25
1st Volleyball	Homebush	Homebush	0-2
2nd Volleyball	Homebush	Homebush	0-2
15 Volleyball	Homebush	Homebush	0-2
14 Volleyball	Homebush	Homebush	0-2
1st Tennis	Homebush	Normanhurst	5-3
2nd Tennis	Homebush	Normanhurst	5-1
15 Tennis	Homebush	Normanhurst	5-1
14 Tennis	Homebush	Normanhurst	4-2
Senior OzTag	Homebush	Homebush	8-9
Junior Oz Tag	Homebush	Homebush	3-11
1st Waterpolo	Spare Rd	-	-
15 Waterpolo	Spare Rd	-	-
14 Waterpolo	Spare Rd	-	-
Senior Futsal	Homebush	Draw	4-4
Junior Futsal	Homebush	Normanhurst	4-2



of the children were placed and discussed the negative impact this has had on individuals, their families and the broader Indigenous community.

The Inquiry took evidence from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, government and church representatives, former mission staff, foster and adoptive parents, doctors and health professionals, academics, police and others. It received over 777 submissions, including 535 from Indigenous individuals and organisations, 49 from church organisations and 7 from governments.

Apology to stolen generations – questions and answers

This material has been prepared by Reconciliation Australia to help Australians understand the background to the apology that will be made to the stolen generations by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

1. Who are the stolen generations?
2. How do we know these people's stories are true?
3. Why is it important to apologise to the stolen generations?
4. Why should Australians today apologise for something we aren't responsible for?
5. What does an apology mean to me as a non-Indigenous Australian?
6. Why should we apologise when many Aboriginal people are actually better off because they were removed from dysfunctional families?
7. Will an apology lead to claims for compensation from members of the stolen generations?
8. Why is the word 'sorry' important as part of the apology?

1. Who are the stolen generations?

The term 'stolen generations' refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were forcibly removed from their families and communities by government, welfare or church authorities as children and placed into institutional care or with non-Indigenous foster families. The forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children began as early as the mid 1800s and continued until 1970.

This removal occurred as the result of official laws and policies aimed at assimilating the Indigenous population into the wider community.

The 1997 *Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission found that between 1 in 10 and 3 in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from their families and communities in the period from 1910 to 1970.

The Western Australian and Queensland governments have confirmed that in that period all Indigenous families in their States were affected by the forced removal of children. It's not possible to know precisely how many children were taken because government records of these removals are poor and many government files are inaccurate.

The stolen generation should not be confused with other government policies which aimed to help Aboriginal children from remote areas to go to school with their parents full consent. It should also not be confused with the removal of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children from dysfunctional families under welfare policies that continue to apply today.

2. How do we know these people's stories are true?

All State and Territory governments have acknowledged past practices and policies of forced removal of Indigenous children on the basis of race. As part of this formal acknowledgement, all State and Territory governments have apologised for the trauma these policies have caused.

The report of the *Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, called the *Bringing them Home* report, contains extensive evidence of past practices and policies which resulted in the removal of children. It also details the conditions into which many

3. Why is it important to apologise to the stolen generations?

The *Bringing Them Home* report found that the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families and communities has had life-long and profoundly disabling consequences for those taken and has negatively affected the Indigenous community. For many of the children, removal meant that they lost all connection to family, traditional land, culture and language.

It never goes away. Just 'cause we're not walking around on crutches or with bandages or plasters on our legs and arms, doesn't mean we're not hurting. Just 'cause you can't see it doesn't mean I suspect I'll carry these sorts of wounds til I the day I die. I'd just like it to be not quite as intense, that's all. Confidential evidence 580, Queensland. Bringing Them Home Report

The reality of Australia's stolen generations is not a thing of the distant past. Children were being inappropriately removed from their families by Australian authorities until 1969. Many people affected by the tragedy of the stolen generations are still alive today and live with its effects.

The *Bringing Them Home* report recommended that the first step in healing is the acknowledgment of truth and the delivery of an apology. It is the responsibility of the Australian Government, on behalf of previous Australian governments that administered this wrongful policy to acknowledge what was done and apologise for it.

This issue is a 'blank spot' in the history of Australia. The damage and trauma these policies caused are felt everyday by Aboriginal people. They internalise their grief, guilt and confusion, inflicting further pain on themselves and others around them. It is about time the Australian Government openly accepted responsibility for their actions and compensate those affected. Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter (In Buti A, Bringing them home the ALSA way)

4. Why should Australians today apologise for something we aren't responsible for?

Individual Australians are not providing the apology. The apology is being provided by the Australian Government in recognition of policies of past governments. Similarly, the former Australian Government apologised to Vietnam veterans for the policies of previous governments. The current Government is apologising for wrongful policies of governments. No individual Australian is being asked to take personal responsibility for actions of past governments.

5. What does an apology mean to me as a non-Indigenous Australian?

Following on from apologies already made by all State and Territory governments and the churches, an official apology to members of the stolen generations by the Australian Government is an important step towards building a respectful new relationship between us as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Respectful relationships are essential if we are to solve persistent problems.

In this way, the apology will allow us to work together more effectively towards closing the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children - the starkest evidence of how government policies have failed. It is an important starting point in healing the wounds and an historic step forward for our nation that we can be proud of.

The apology is not an expression of personal responsibility or guilt by individual Australians. But it does reflect our Australian values of compassion and a fair go, and allows the victims of bad policy to feel that their pain and suffering has been acknowledged. It's important that Australians

understand the background to the apology so they understand why it's a good thing for the nation – it is this understanding that will realise the great potential of this historic moment to move our nation forward.

These days I don't understand why it should be such a big deal to say sorry for the injustices that have been done to Indigenous people. I know some people feel differently but, to me, saying sorry just feels necessary as a first step towards moving forward together. Daniel Johns, lead singer of Silverchair

6. Why should we apologise when many Aboriginal people are actually better off because they were removed from dysfunctional families?

It is true that some Indigenous children were removed from their families on genuine welfare grounds. It is also true that some children who were removed received some advantages, for example in education, but the overwhelming impact of the forced removal policy was damaging.

People involved in the removal of children genuinely believed they were doing the right thing. But as we now know, they were not.

It's important to understand that the "stolen generations" refer to those children who were removed on the basis of their race alone. In contrast with the removal of non-Indigenous children, proof of neglect was not always required to remove Indigenous children. That one of their parents was of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent was enough.

The predominant aim of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families was to absorb or assimilate children with mixed ancestry into the non-Indigenous community. As Brisbane's *Telegraph* newspaper reported in May 1937:

Mr Neville [the Chief Protector of WA] holds the view that within one hundred years the pure black will be extinct. But the half-caste problem is increasing every year. Therefore their idea is to keep the pure blacks segregated and absorb the half-castes into the white population. Perhaps it will take one hundred years, perhaps longer, but the race is dying.

The *Bringing Them Home* report found that many children were removed solely on the basis of skin colour. Because of this, siblings from the one family who were considered to be of lighter skin colour would be removed when others were left.

The suggestion that stolen generations children were better off is untrue on any reasonable assessment of the cases where they were placed in situations of deprivation, neglect and abuse. People who were removed gave evidence to the Inquiry of their mistreatment under State care - this ranged from inadequate food and clothing, to physical, sexual and psychological abuse.

Almost a quarter of witnesses to the Inquiry who were fostered or adopted reported being physically abused. One in five reported being sexually abused. One in six children sent to institutions reported physical abuse and one in ten reported sexual abuse.

7. Will an apology lead to claims for compensation from members of the stolen generations?

The *Bringing Them Home* report recommended the establishment of a national compensation fund for people affected by the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The aim of the fund would be to offer reparation to those affected and avoid the courts having to deal with costly individual litigation.

An official apology is not directly related to compensation. All State and Territory governments have apologised and this has not triggered any rush of compensation claims.

The Tasmanian Government has chosen to set up a compensation fund for members of the stolen generations in that State. It has provided \$5 million in capped payments to be divided among eligible people and their families. <http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/psa/ches/stolen.html>

The Government of South Australia is also considering establishing a fund.

Queensland and New South Wales have ruled out stolen generations compensation funds, although both States are providing reparations for policies under which Aboriginal people could be put to work but not paid.

The West Australian Government announced in late 2007 the 'Redress WA' program to provide monetary and emotional support to people who were abused as children in State care, including members of the stolen generations. <http://www.redress.wa.gov.au/>

The Australia Government has said it will not establish a fund at the national level but will direct funds to counselling services for members of the stolen generations and services that help people who were removed as children to find their families and communities.

Reconciliation for me is about recognising the past. Acting in the present. And building a better future. The Hon. Paul Lennon MP, Premier of Tasmania

8. Why is the word 'sorry' important as part of the apology?

The word 'sorry' holds special meaning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. In many Aboriginal communities, sorry is an adapted English word used to describe the rituals surrounding death (Sorry Business). Sorry, in these contexts, is also often used to express empathy or sympathy rather than responsibility.

During the 2007 election campaign, then Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd also recognised the significance of the word sorry.

... simply saying that you're sorry is such a powerful symbol. Powerful not because it represents some expiation of guilt. Powerful not because it represents any form of legal requirement. But powerful simply because it restores respect