

CYBERBULLYING...

WHAT AUSTRALIA HAS TO DO

John is feeling Happy
Loved that science lesson today... was so cool!

OMG...
Dweeb!
#nerdoftheyear

@prettygirl
Total nerd!

Jane is feeling Angry!
Leave my brother alone... he doesn't mean to be uncool.



AUSTRALIAN
BOARDING
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION



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ON THE COVER

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CONTACT US

Australian Boarding Schools Association Ltd.
Postal: PO Box 5569, Brendale DC, Qld, 4500
Office: Unit 6, 3 Hinkler Court, Brendale, Qld, 4500
P + 61 7 3205 4940
F + 61 7 3205 6567
E absa@boarding.org.au
www.boarding.org.au

EDITOR

Richard Stokes, Executive Director,
Australian Boarding Schools Association

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Infusion Promotions
www.infusionpromotions.com.au

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Boarders' Valete Liturgy

Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview

AUTHOR

Father Ross Jones SJ
Rector, Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview

Boarding here is a wonderful experience. Even for those, like me, who look in from the outside. Yet there is one aspect of Boarding life at Riverview which saddens me year by year. It is to watch the Year 12 boarder ranks thin day by day as the Higher School Certificate progresses. We begin with the full cohort in Kevin Fagan, that Year 12 family, eighty brothers together facing those hoops and hurdles of the HSC. Then after a week or so, maybe twenty of the band finish up and quietly leave. Over the next week, another slow trickle. Then more, in their tens and twenties. A bleeding of Kevin Fagan House's core, its vibrancy and its life. By the final fourth week, a handful remain, then they, in their turn, pack and leave. Relationships that have been nurtured and tested, refined and strengthened – over a third of your lives for some of you – take on a new configuration. Proximity gives way to distance. A regular familiarity will yield to new studies and varied career paths. The Year 12 House becomes a shell. A building, no longer a home. That is the cycle of boarding life.

It reflects the innate tension within any school: That is, to make the school community so attractive that students want to come here to be educated. Then to educate them so that they will desire greater things and bid farewell.

Boarders feel that tension more keenly than most in a school which is also both their home and their second family. But you will come to learn that such landfalls and leave-takings, those comings and goings, constitute the pattern of all our lives. Yet if they tug at the heart, they also fashion the heart. They shape us. They inform us about who we are. They nudge us towards who we want to be. I know if I asked you, every Year 12 boy here could attest to that experience in their own way.

Even though we are always arriving and departing, it is also true that we are forever grounded. Our destination is never a place like a Gap Year, or work, or further studies. No. Rather it is a new way of looking at things. A new way to engage with life. Grounded, we hope, in the many ways this home, this school, this Riverview, sought to mould you.

That is why the liturgy tonight is framed the way it is. It is not a Mass but more like what our Anglican brethren call "Evensong". And if it were Evensong, they would call our Read-



Boarders' Valete Liturgy

Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview

ings "Lessons". Lesson is a good word. We might say these are your last Lessons tonight as Boarders. So harken to them well. Pack them away and muse over them sometime in the weeks or months ahead when a little space permits. See what they are pointing to. Take in the reference points and the bearings. Consider the qualities and actions they speak of and by which we will all be judged.

Then notice what those Lessons are not saying. The booklet is not a prospectus to take you to the big end of town. It is not a "how to" manual for settling into an all-too-comfortable mainstream. It is not a Me Generation Guide for looking after Number One.

No, it's all about the other. Small "o" other and capital "O" Other. It is about a life of love, service and justice outside yourself. It is about finding and naming God in the least likely places. It is reminding you that Riverview is not a school of privilege but rather a school of obligation. These are counter-cultural Lessons. And that should not surprise you.

Within two months or so you will have tidied up your room. Taken down the posters and photos from your notice board. You will have collected a final bag of laundry and rolled up your Driza-Bone. The name on your door will be put away for posterity. You will have packed your bags and be waiting for a pick-up at the Kevin Fagan door for the last time.

"Goodbye"
comes
from
the Old
English
"God be with
you"

Most of us will not see that quiet farewell, but that will be the journey we have prepared you for. If Riverview has made a difference to you, that departure will be your first step in your making a difference in a bigger world beyond this cherished peninsula. In a curious way, we took you in those years ago just so we could make that goodbye. Because "Goodbye" comes from the Old English "God be with you". We mean that as we say it. We believe it will be so. And that is precisely why you will be able to make a difference.

So God be with you.



In the eye of The STORM

Self-harm mitigation, suicide prevention and safety planning

AUTHOR
Steven Montgomery
REACHBoarding.com
@REACHBoarding

During the National Conference Dr Michael Carr-Gregg (@MCG58) spoke about “Building resilient boarders and parents,” Michael also presented some alarming statistic on teenage depression and suicide. As Michael was showing the slide on how the gender gap between teenage suicide and depression has collided with late teenagers, it was hard not to remember my experience with STORM.

STORM is a skills-based self-harm risk assessment and management program which began as a research project at the University of Manchester. It helps participants to develop their ability to identify and assess students at risk, to increase skills in self-harm mitigation, suicide prevention and safety planning.

Professional Development (PD) can sometimes carry negative connotations for educators, only because our experiences at times can be only marginally beneficial for the valuable time invested. It's Wednesday afternoon, Week Eight, Term Three, 3:30pm and we have to listen to an outside presenter on you know what I am talking about!

STORM was anything but a negative experience for me, one that I am pleased to share with other educators. One that I encourage all other educators to consider for its relevance and significance, for its ability to empower you to make a difference when it most counts.

A number of our school staff had attended the STORM training program during the previous year. The overwhelming support and enthusiasm for what they had learned and discussed lead to the program being repeated for others. Thankfully that included myself.

“There is now a general consensus among clinicians and researchers that there is a distinct type of self-harming behaviour, termed non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI).”
When this is the opening line from your facilitator, you become aware that you are in for a life changing experience.

STORM training was delivered in a small group environment over two days. Heads of Year, Heads of Department plus two Duty Principals took part with a further opportunity to refresh and add to skills learned at a later date.

Unlike other PD I have participated in, STORM training takes you out of your comfort zone with role-playing being a large part of the in-

structional process. When the facilitator produced a camera to record our role plays you could feel the mood of the room changed to one of shock, horror, even fear. However, through outstanding delivery and facilitation, two members of our group participated in a compelling video role-play session which was powerful, confronting and extremely worthwhile.

We learned of Headspace (@headspace_au), the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, who until I had participated in STORM training, I had not heard off.

Within boarding, staff will at some stage come into contact with a student who is going through a hard time. How confident are you that they will recognise this and know what to say, or what NOT to say?

Whilst you may not become trained mental health professionals, STORM helps participants to build the observation skills and confidence to ask difficult questions in the right way. It teaches participants how to assess a distressed young person's needs and what to say in those circumstances.

For staff with no personal experience in this field STORM training gives you the ability and confidence to become, at the very least, a primary point of contact for students at risk. Most of all it provides the skills to recognise signs and symptoms shown by a student which may have been previously overlooked.

“Although many young people might try to hide their self-harming behaviour, there are some obvious and less obvious signs that someone might be self-harming.”

Self-harm: Australian treatment guide for consumers and carers. 2009 Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

For me personally, understanding the myths behind self-harm or suicidal tendencies was revealing and one of the most valuable sessions within the program.

What I take away from STORM is a clear management plan. One where I am more able to assess a student's immediate safety. I also take away the enhanced skills and confidence to know the best way to act upon my observations to mitigate self-harm or suicidal risks in students.



In the eye of The STORM

Self-harm mitigation, suicide prevention and safety planning

“Although many young people might try to hide their self-harming behaviour, there are some obvious and less obvious signs that someone might be self-harming.”

In boarding you are in part a mother, father, friend, teacher and counsellor in any one day. Being armed with many different tools, skills and confidence can only be a good thing.

Truly an outstanding opportunity to make a difference was provided to myself and others through STORM and I hope that I have given this excellent program some justice in this article.

At the very least I hope that this article encourages you to ask your school counselling services if they have a management plan, how many of your staff know of this and how many feel confident to know what to ask for and what to look for?

For more information on **headspace**, including **headspace** centres and **eheadspace**, please check out www.headspace.org.au. This webpage also includes information for professionals on a range of youth mental health issues. To find out more about how headspace school support can assist you and your school or to download relevant resource material go to the school support page at <http://www.headspace.org.au/what-works/school-support>.



What Australia has to do about Cyberbullying

AUTHOR

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg
Child and Adolescent Psychologist

“Putting
social
media giants
on notice”

Most people working in a boarding school would agree that bullying and cyberbullying is a form of anti-social behavior and most, if not all, would agree that as part of the role of acting ‘in loco parentis’ it is essential to have reasonable limits, boundaries and sanctions around this type of behaviour.

The problem is that many parents and teachers faced with cyberbullying often don’t know who to report this to and even when they do, more often than not – nothing happens. Parents and teachers report a long and frustrating wait to have material removed and while Facebook have improved dramatically in this regard, other social media sites have been less responsive.

Putting social media giants on notice, the Australian Government – under the leadership of Paul Fletcher MP, has rejected the industry argument that it can regulate itself and the government has quite rightly insisted that parents and schools need tough legal sanctions to prevent children and students from being bullied online. On 26th January this year in the United Kingdom, Maria Miller, the Culture Secretary, challenged social media companies to proactively police their sites and remove offensive and potentially dangerous material immediately.

This appeal came after 15-year-old Tallulah Wilson threw herself in front of a train after swapping self-harm photographs on the photo-sharing website Tumblr. One of Tallulah’s followers sent her a picture before she died of a noose with a message reading “here is your new necklace, try it on.”

There is, without doubt, a public appetite for a speedy complaints system which schools and parents can utilise - which may not just reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying but hopefully might also eventually make inroads into more adult forms of cyberbullying - especially in the workplace.

Advising the Australian Government on this is the Online Safety Consultative Working Group which provides counsel to government on online safety issues. The group has the important role of providing advice on measures to protect Australian children from online risks including cyberbullying, exposure to illegal content and privacy breaches. The group meets twice a year and has members drawn from community groups, internet service pro-

viders, industry associations, business and government.

The proposals now on the table are moves:

- To establish a Children’s E-Safety Commissioner – a single point of contact for online safety issues for children, parents and carers, teachers and industry;
- To develop an effective complaints handling system, backed by legislation, to get harmful material down fast from large social media sites; and
- To examine existing Commonwealth legislation to determine whether to create a new, simplified cyberbullying offence to make it clearer to Australians that bullying over the internet is against the law.

The corporations who owned these sites are, by and large, based in America and argue that they already have policies to prohibit bullying and harassment. The problem is that social media companies have very different ideas about what is harmful.

Facebook, for example, had previously operated a ban on images such as beheadings, but in June last year inexplicably overturned it. They released a statement that said:

“People share videos of these events on Facebook to condemn them. If they were being celebrated or the actions in them encouraged, our approach would be different. We want to draw a distinction between users who want to share events that are important to them and videos that are being celebrated and shared for sadistic pleasure”.

Facebook’s rationale seems to be that if people were watching beheadings in the right spirit – to condemn it - “isn’t that appalling?” rather than “lets try this at home!” – then it is acceptable. Even if this torturous logic held up for adults - and of course it doesn’t - we need to remember that Facebook actively solicits 13 year olds, who lack the cognitive capacity to make such distinctions.

The reality is that children aged 13 might be seriously traumatised not just by cyberbullying but also by watching such material and could go on to develop serious psychological problems, such as anxiety, depression and PTSD.



What Australia has to do about Cyberbullying

After prominent child safety groups and politicians including UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, voiced their disquiet over the policy, Facebook ended up with a woolly policy that appears to involve warnings and a meaningless edict that only adults should view footage of actual beheadings. Such warnings, as any adolescent psychologist will attest, are more likely to attract 13 year olds than deter them.

Almost every worthwhile public health initiative, from mandatory seat belt wearing and random breath testing to bicycle helmets,



was initially fought tooth and nail in the name of civil liberties and free speech, before being eventually accepted as being in the public interest. Opponents of this legislation will also claim that these proposals are an infringement of free speech, which is important, but so is protecting our children. The proposed legislation only applies to children and only cyberbullying and should be supported by all in the boarding community.

Premier Leaders Award

Awarded to Kim Walters from Worawa Aboriginal College



During Kim's time as Head of Boarding she has transformed the boarding program at Worawa Aboriginal College. Prior to her arrival the boarding program was struggling with numbers, staff morale and the challenge to make it a safe place for their boarders. Kim is pivotal in ensuring the continuation of learning outside of the classroom. She has been a key part in the provision of sporting, cultural and artistic activities for the girls, ensuring their time outside of the classroom is active and engaging.

Most Innovative Idea in a Boarding School

Awarded to Michael Holland

Michael Holland was awarded this for his role in developing the Reach School Boarding House System and was nominated by Reach. Michael's expertise and experience have assisted in the continued development of REACH Boarding System. He saw a need for a tool that could manage the multitude of functions necessary in the operation of a successful boarding house and gave up his time selflessly, attending weekly developmental meetings and has encouraged others to take up the system to achieve a "best practice" model.



The Royal Commission Interim Report Out Now

AUTHOR
Andrew Knott
Special Counsel
TressCox Lawyers

“the
importance
of training,
removing
barriers and the
importance of
culture.”

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse is now well advanced in its work (though far from complete). The Commission has published an interim report on its website www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au. Clearly responses by institutions to the work of the Royal Commission are likely to have significant impacts upon the work of boarding house staff, not least the elevated importance of sophisticated efficient child protection practices.

The interim report was released on 30 June 2014. It runs to nearly 400 pages and it appears on the website under ‘About Us – Our Reports’. Volume 1 is well worth reading. Obviously we cannot do justice to the document but it is important to flag a few matters as set out below. In relation to the importance of organisational culture, the following appears at page 8:

“It is apparent that perpetrators are more likely to offend when an institution lacks the appropriate culture and is not managed with the protection of children as a high priority. They will manipulate people, processes and situations to create opportunities for abuse. Everyone in a responsible role in an institution must be able to recognise when perpetrators are manipulating or ‘grooming children’. This requires education and training and the development of an appropriate institutional culture”.

On both the importance, and difficulty, of identifying grooming (as distinct from innocent) behaviour, the Commission says at page 8:

“Grooming behaviours can be difficult to recognise or distinguish from seemingly innocent actions. However, observable signs include increasingly more intimate and intrusive behaviours, creating ‘special’ relationships with particular children, or seeking to spend time with children alone or outside the work role.

Parents and those caring for children need to understand the characteristics of grooming behaviours”.

Useful comments on this topic also appear at pages 124 and 125.

On the vital topic of identification, the Commission emphasises at page 155 and following, the importance of training, removing barriers and (again, and vitally) the importance of culture.

In its discussion of reporting, the Commission reviews at pages 164 and 165 the “range of barriers” to adults reporting child sexual abuse.

The second point worth making in this article is in relation to the width of the research projects. Published research on the website as at 3 September 2014 comprises the following, which are extremely useful references:

- Brief review of contemporary sexual offence and child sexual abuse legislation in Australia
- Find out more about planned research under this theme: Government responses
- Historical review of sexual offence and child sexual abuse legislation in Australia 1978-2013
- Find out more about planned research under this theme: Government responses
- Mandatory reporting laws for child sexual abuse in Australia: A legislative history
- Find out more about planned research under this theme: Identification
- Child Exploitation Material in the Context of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse”

Those managing, or working in, boarding houses need to be vigilant as new standards are developed.



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Two **23** Year Old 'Punks' Solve Massive Pain For Boarding School Industry



Above: Co-Founders of Boardingware Kurt (left) and Paul (right) at the annual 2014 ABSA National Conference

Today we're here with Kurt and Paul from Boardingware - the software for boarding schools. After dropping out of university and leaving their career in Architecture behind they set out to innovate, but it was the memories of being a boarder that helped them to decide where to start. A year later they have transformed boarding schools all around the world.

Q. Firstly, what is Boardingware?

P. Boardingware is a student management system for boarding schools. It allows you to manage leave, catering, pastoral and much more for each of your boarders in one easy-to-use solution. It can be accessed via a tablet, smart phone or computer as it is a cloud-based Software as a service (SaaS).

Q. Is it true you dropped out of university to start Boardingware?

K. In short yes. However we had already received our Bachelors of Architecture and had been accepted into the Masters of Architecture program at The University of Auckland. It was once we started the Masters program that we both decided it wasn't as fulfilling as we'd hoped.

Q. What gave you the idea for the product?

K. I was a boarder at Mount Albert Grammar School in Auckland, so I remembered the amount of paper pushing that went on and Paul went to Auckland Grammar which also had a boarding school. So instead of coming up with an idea and hoping like heck that people would like it we went back to the Directors of Boarding from our respective schools and asked them about their day-to-day pains.

P. Yeah, and both of them came back with - the same problems which were the issues around recording leave, pastoral information, catering...basically just piles of paper flooding their offices.

Q. If you studied Architecture how did you end up with a software company?

P. We get asked that a lot! Throughout our time at university we learnt how to code and in our final year we received a research scholarship which explored how computer programming could improve the architectural design process. So it was really then that the interest in software began.

K. Yeah so it was during this time that we saw the possibilities that software could offer. And now that we have software engineers taking care of the code we get to spend a lot of our time in the product design and user-experience side of the development.

P. We also have a strong support team around us with experience in the industry, one of which is the CEO of a global software company so we have the blueprint already there.

Q. So are most of your customers from New Zealand?

K. At the moment the majority of our customers are from New Zealand however we have schools in Australia, USA, Korea, South Africa and more.

Q. How has the response been so far?

P. It's been really good. I mean we'd be lying if there weren't some teething problems when we first implemented the system but that's normal in this industry.

But I think (without giving too much away) the reason people value our system most is because of the time we take in crafting our product and the way it works. You can see some testimonials from some of our schools at www.boardingware.com/happycustomers

Q. What's the plan from here?

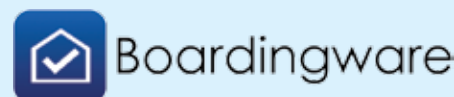
K. I want to see Boardingware being used by as many Boarding Schools around the world as possible. I get a real sense of fulfilment when a school says we've helped them. So I just want to continue working with them to create the ultimate boarding solution and promote it to every school that's desperately in need for something like this.

P. Like Kurt said, we're just aiming to have as many schools as we can using the system and to continue to innovate and solve painful problems. Most people would think that 'boarding school software' would be awfully boring and incumbent but we want to make dealing with administration not only easier but rather something to enjoy.

If you would like to see Boardingware in action send an email to demo@boardingware.com or go visit www.boardingware.com/demo and fill out your details.

The guys at Boardingware realise that the idea of having a software run your entire boarding school can be intimidating so they have kindly provided an information pack to ABSA members which you can get at:

www.australianboardingschoolsoftware.com/info-pack



91. St. George's Bay Road, Office 2.6,
Axis Building, Parnell, Auckland 1052,
New Zealand
www.boardingware.com
Boardingware

Are you making these same mistakes on Social Media?

AUTHOR
Simon Noakes
Managing Director
Interactive Schools

In our experience of social media, we have seen a lot of mistakes! Some are minor, some are major. But there are a few mistakes that we see cropping up frequently. Here are the four most frequent mistakes we see schools making:

1. Starting a tweet with an @ sign

A mistake that nearly everybody has made on Twitter at some point is beginning a tweet with an @username. The problem with this is that only people who follow yourself and the person you are mentioning will see that tweet.

For example, if you tweet "@intSchools share lots of great school marketing articles. Check some of them out here - blog.interactive-schools.co.uk", only people who follow you and us would see that tweet. That is because beginning a tweet with @intSchools would be a reply.

What you can do, and you have probably seen people use this, is start your tweet with a full stop. This would share your tweet to the feed of everybody who follows you.

".@intSchools share lots of great school marketing articles. Check some of them out here - blog.interactive-schools.co.uk"

This would go out to all of your followers.

2. Sharing everything at once

You must have experienced it before: an explosion of posts from somebody you follow. And how often are they interesting? Rarely. Unless it is a thread that offers a debate, do not share everything at once.

Don't bombard people with tweets, photos, posts, links - think of social as a marathon, not a sprint.



3. Using hashtags unnecessarily

Overuse of hashtag is annoying, and offers no added benefit to the poster. Some people believe using lots of hashtags will mean your post is likely to reach a larger audience, and therefore pick up more interactions and followers.

Two hashtags per post - maximum!

4. Auto-posting to other channels

Each channel your school uses will be for a specific reason. No channel will be used for the exact same reason. That means that each of your posts should be tailored for that channel - each channel has its own 'slang'.

Tailor your content for each specific channel you use. Yes, it takes time. But the rewards will be there for you to see.

Have you fallen foul to any of these mistakes? Don't be embarrassed!



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AUTHOR
Ron Armstrong
Assistant Principal – Residential
The Cathedral College

“This is a time when there are many people inputting ideas and a fertile time for planning and development.”



It is always an exciting time in any school or college when building projects are underway and you can see the results of the combined efforts of the team coming to fruition. Seeing the results of the long meetings and planning sessions and the benefits for staff and students slowly growing out of the ground is rewarding. I have been around in teaching for too many years to mention and lived and worked in boarding for over a decade and feel that I do possess some understanding of the needs and demands of this environment upon all involved.

Firstly, we are a Catholic, co-educational College composed of two separate boarding campuses and our day campus, forming a type of College ‘triangle’ (all around 1.5 kilometres apart). This has had its advantages and disadvantages (that type of distance between Boys and Girls Residentials can only be a positive, most of the time).

Our College (and boarding) numbers have been steadily increasing over the past several years and enjoy a strong support base from our diocese and feeder areas. Our existing Boys Residential is located in an area where expansion was impossible and there was limited outside space for our boys to play, run and generally, be boys. Accompanying this we had reached a point where we had waiting lists for each Residential and were losing potential boarders to other Colleges and High Schools because we could not cater to the demand. The decision was taken to apply for grants to fund a new Boys Residential. We applied annually and found, despite proffered support, we were declined the funding. After several years of applying, and as we were at the decision point of funding the project ourselves, we were notified that our last submission had been successful and that the opportunity to build a larger Residential was possible. Our current Boys’ facility holds approximately 55 – 58 boys and we have converted “spaces” to accommodate. Our new facility caters also for Year 7 into Secondary and will house 80 boys. The site was pre-determined (on our Day Campus) and the building leant itself to a two storey structure overlooking our sports field.

Armed with this we turned to the plans that were submitted for funding applications and began the review process to make it a “workable”, modern, thoughtfully planned Residential. Obviously, in the submission process, plans submitted can be some way from the

reality of what will be eventually built. The review process took in many consultative meetings with the aim of building the best we possibly could with the budget we had to work within.

This is a time when there are many people inputting ideas and a fertile time for planning and development. I must warn that it is also a time when extraneous ideas and concepts can also find their way into the conceptualisation of a viable and efficient product.

Architects generally plan for functionality but also aesthetics. The first sets of plans were aesthetically pleasing but somewhat impractical in their ability to meet our immediate needs and provide appropriate supervision. This becomes a problem when attempting to explain to an architect the need for a unique functionality, as well as aesthetics, and a high degree of “robustness” to cater for eighty teenage boys.

The first feedback session was quite interesting in that we (myself in consultation with my boys boarding staff) produced several pages of “suggestions”. It was a task to sort the real “Needs” from the “Wants” and the “Would be Nice” elements. Our architects took this advice on board and developed an alternate set of plans. There continued some to and fro (with a modicum of frustration building) until an idea was developed to get the draftsman to an afternoon tea with my Head of Boys Boarding, Mr Chris Lyons, and myself.

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to create an understanding of boarding in someone else’s thoughts if they have never “lived” or spent substantive time in a boarding environment. During this time we reviewed plans and also told anecdotal stories of boys’ behaviours, adventures and misadventures in boarding. I believe that this was pivotal in assisting the designers to develop a building more sympathetic with the needs of the boarders and boarding staff. I also realise that this concept was environmentally particular to our needs and the specific needs of our boarders.

The other decisions we had to consider were the types of rooms (single, share etc.). We have opted to go for twin-share rooms for our younger grade(s) with the addition of Year 7 into secondary schooling in Queensland in 2015. Twin-share rooms will service our Year 7 boys and some of our Year 8 boys. The



The House that Jack (or Jill or John...) Built

Building the “purpose-built” facility for your College/School



remainder of the Residential houses single rooms for our Years 9 – 12 boys. These single rooms are further divided in “pods”. The pods comprise eight or twelve rooms, off a central hallway – each pod being serviced by its own lounge/recreation area (built-in lounge, kitchenette and television) as well as each pod being serviced by its own bathroom (the ratio of one toilet/shower to four boarders has been used as per local regulations). The rooms are compact, providing a huge amount of storage – floor to ceiling robes/cupboards, shelving and built-in beds with under-bed storage. The building is air-conditioned throughout to meet the needs of the Central Queensland humidity and summer temperatures.

The provision of lounge/rec areas for each pod also enabled our architect to reduce the ‘Common’ room space a little. We still gained a substantial General Common Room attached to our dining area, divided by a folding wall, enabling us to open this to a grand room when required. The seven or eight lounge areas gave us the flexibility to create more general storage areas throughout the Residence (always something that is scant in most older buildings).

The second major consideration (and more controversial) was the provision of supervisor accommodation within the Residence. I am a firm believer that the creation of a “family” atmosphere in boarding is integral to the creation of happy boarders. One method of achieving this is to have families living within the Residences. In this case we developed a three bedroom unit, a two bedroom unit and a self-contained one bedroom unit (to serve as a sleepover room). Each unit has its own office area attached. The one bedroom unit

has visibility panes in the office, with a dedicated wet area and large bench space, and will double as a treatment and medication room. The incorporation of staff accommodation also provides the opportunity for greater “ownership” of the facility by the residing staff. It becomes their home as well as workplace and they are integral to the building. It also provides the younger boys with that additional security and comfort of knowing that there are families living with them in boarding and only a corridor away.

Supervisor stations are incorporated in the hallways – that is – a substantial work station but not enclosed nor out of sight and line-of-sight. Each of these workstations has adequate securable storage and room for a boarder or two to sit and chat with a staff member. Each station also has large windows allowing a wide field of vision out to the central courtyard of the Residential. Our main reception area, too, has glass walls for visibility and supervision of the central courtyard area. I felt that it was important to have “public” supervisor stations, not enclosed in

an office, as this also encourages greater mobility by our staff and deters from the potential to lock oneself away in an office, missing opportunities to build stronger relationships with the boarders.

At the same time we are also undertaking a substantial refurbishment of our Senior School Girls Boarding, located off campus. It will remain at its current site but is enjoying a complete refurbishment, air-conditioning fitted, an overall modernisation and the addition of ten more single rooms to accommodate our growing numbers and the Year 7s. This, in itself, is a wonderful opportunity for us to re-design some rooms and again, provide single rooms for all of our Year 9, 10, 11 and 12 girls.

The benefits of the new accommodation, other than the obvious, are yet to be measured but, I am sure, will unfold to many areas we have not yet even considered. We are about to take possession of the new Boys Residential building in approximately three weeks from the time of writing. It has been an amazing, complex and exciting journey but one worthwhile when we saw the looks on the faces of our Year 12 boys, given a sneak preview of the residence last week. Given the facility they are moving from and its now somewhat cramped conditions and high maintenance needs to this new residence, they were literally jumping like kindergarten kids with excitement. The additional bonus of perhaps a later wake-up time due to the re-locating of this new residence to the College campus and the removal of the need to bus them to school each day was almost overwhelming for them. Now that the physical structures are tangible and ready we have the task of reviewing routines and procedures to reflect the modernity of the facility and approach to a rejuvenated boys boarding facility.



Product. People. Purpose.

Reflections of a First Time ABSA Conference Delegate

AUTHOR
Simon Walker
Assistant Head of Boarding
Barker College, Sydney

“It wasn’t
just a new
umbrella that I
was taking home
with me”

Warm weather, ocean breezes and a complimentary ABSA umbrella – a great start to the 2014 ABSA National Conference.

As an impending Acting Head of Boarding I was thrilled to attend this conference. Unsure of what to expect, I navigated my way through the streets of Surfers Paradise and into the foyer of QT hotel.

Greeted by the ABSA staff as I entered the welcome cocktail function, wonderfully catered and alive with chatter, it was clear that this was no ‘run of the mill’ conference. Indeed, it was the high class, professional **product** that grabbed me from day one. The program overflowed with relevant and motivating communicators interspersed by opportunities for collaboration, engaging functions and even a tour of the Corrigan Walk hosted by Bond University.

The conference theme ‘It’s not what you do, it’s why you do it’ inspired by the TED talk from Simon Sinek, set an early precedent for the importance of reflection and analysis of why we do what we do in the boarding realm. This formed the foundation for topical discussions around the use of social media, corporate partnerships and leadership in boarding.

It was the diversity of **people** who gave this conference its fervency. This was clearly a community of boarding leaders with close ties and a genuine enjoyment for each other’s company. The opportunity was provided to meet and connect with people of all roles and responsibilities within the boarding context nationally and internationally. Their anecdotes, ideas and wisdom were a source of rich advice and a reminder that life in a boarding community is a lifestyle choice with many joys and challenges along the way.

Above all, the strength of this conference was found in the keynote speakers, concurrent sessions and panel discussions.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg emphasised the importance of developing resilient boarders, describing boarding schools as ‘petri dishes’ that can cultivate positive or negative mental health. Simon Noakes encouraged the use of social media to enhance each boarding school’s online domain authority and John Eales motivated delegates to “be agitated”, suggesting that “content people don’t make great leaders”.

The ‘BED talks’ focused on helping boarders achieve academic success, and allowed for new and innovative ideas to be shared amongst schools. The concurrent sessions covered an array of topics that stimulated thought and delved into the pragmatics of boarding house life. The value and usefulness of these sessions far exceeded my initial expectations. I hadn’t anticipated the multiplicity of strategies or the depth of insight that would be uncovered.

As I left the conference I couldn’t help but feel a genuine sense of confidence and **purpose** in seeking excellence in leadership, management and boarding house success. With a plethora of ideas at my disposal, new contacts, and renewed enthusiasm for boarding, it was clear that it wasn’t just a new umbrella that I was taking home with me.











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Understanding Rural and Remote Students

AUTHOR

Lesa Fowler
Head of Boarding
St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School, Brisbane

Transitioning to boarding school in an urban environment may be challenging for many of our boarders, particularly those from rural and remote contexts. The life experiences of many of the students are broad and wide ranging. At the commencement of the school year students bring all their experiences with them and a deep understanding of these experiences by staff is integral to the success of the boarding experience. Determining 'where to start' in transitioning these students into the successful engagement with life at school can be daunting within the Boarding House and for Day School staff members. We are dealing with a wide variety of educational experiences which results in differing degrees of 'school readiness'. In an environment that is foreign to students they need a 'shelter' where they can feel safe and secure, a space they can share. All students in boarding must be treated with respect by recognising and understanding their fears and insecurities.

One way of determining where our boarding girls come from is by the road distance from services, and this is the standard method to define remoteness for statistical purposes in Australia (aifs.gov.au). Over two thirds of Australians live in major cities, one in five live in inner regional areas, one in ten in outer regional centres and one in forty live in remote to very remote areas (ABS, 2010). The geographical remoteness of the area in which children live can have a significant impact upon their experiences and how they spend their time. Over half of all state schools in Queensland are in rural and remote locations with approximately a quarter of state school students enrolled in these schools. There is also a significant number of students who are educated through the distance education system. For both boarding and the day school it is essential to understand where the girls live, what type of education they have received but also to take into consideration all of the other experiences that these girls have in relation to the work they do at home. For many of the girls they are used to hands on work where there is a clear idea that everyone "gets in and helps".

Many of our boarders are education through distance education where they are tutored in their own homes by a governess or frequently by their mother. Many are not skilled or strained to be able to adapt and change materials to suit their students. With the new Australian Curriculum and the C2C materials available for Distance Education students

many problems are faced by the home tutors. It has been stated that the home tutor guides must contain all the information needed to 'teach' the lesson content and must be achievable for students and home tutors. Some of the issues faced by home tutors and students include unrealistic time allocations, unrealistic content and too many concepts to be taught at once. The materials also do not encourage independent learning in a multi-age classroom and this then results in a lack of student engagement. There are also concerns felt by many of rural Australia's small one or two teacher schools where teachers are expected to teach children from pre-prep to Year 7. These are issues that have been raised by the Queensland Isolated Childrens' Parents' Association (ICPA) and which need to be addressed to ensure equal opportunity for all students. Other issues raised by the ICPA Queensland include the number of grammatical errors, spelling and punctuation problems in printed and digital materials. Home tutors and small school staff have to use the heavily focused digital C2C and often it will not download. Home tutors and teachers from Distance Ed have raised the issue that current C2C distance education materials are missing a lot of the basic fundamentals to learning such as mental maths facts, creative writing, basic grammar and punctuation and reading comprehension. These are important issues for us in boarding schools to understand the circumstances where some students may have gaps in their basic knowledge. Important in transition is identifying these gaps and ensuring that we work towards understanding and teaching these students with this in mind.

As a result of the varying backgrounds of boarders, the transition program has the potential to facilitate student performance in secondary school, particularly when adults have a commitment to student success. Attending to developmental needs in relation to self-esteem, motivation, self-regulation, family support and a sense of belonging is vital to success in boarding. Midgley and Maehr (1998) found that boarding student in middle school who lacked confidence in their ability to do their work avoided seeking help most. This was particularly so in classes where students perceived an emphasis on competition and relative ability.

Research has shown that positive relations and a sense of belonging are strongly related to student's positive attitudes about school



Understanding Rural and Remote Students



“The transition program has the potential to facilitate student performance in secondary school”

and boarding (Midgley and Maehr, 1998, Midgley and Maehr, 2000). Importantly we need to have boarder involvement in sports, arts and other activities in school. Research has also shown that time spent on extra-curricular activities positively correlated with academic success in grades 8 and 10. Helping students develop a sense of self-regulation by providing limited choices between acceptable options, assisting with breaking large tasks down into manageable pieces, and providing guidelines for students to use in monitoring their own progress is instrumental to their success in boarding.

Good relationships with teachers are also a vital part of the student's transition to boarding school and school itself. Student's social adjustment to transition is closely connected to their relationship with their teachers. Cocklin (1999) found that the nature of the teacher and the type of teaching were the main issues noted by students about transition to secondary school. Boarding students reported a regression in their relationship with teachers at the secondary level. Gorwood (1994) found that it was difficult for secondary teachers to find a starting point for pupils with different kinds of educational backgrounds. Teachers need to communicate to students that what is valued in the classroom is understanding, effort, mastery and a willingness to take on challenging work.

Boarding students live and work in two worlds, the world of home and the world of school. Leong and Bedrora (2003) maintain that school readiness is not only about the characteristics of the children, but about the capacity and capability of the school to meet

the needs of children. At a time when friendships and social interaction are particularly important for young adolescents, transition into secondary school often serves to disrupt friendship networks and thereby interferes with a student's success in secondary school. Therefore, it is vital for a transition program to provide social support activities that give students the opportunity to get to know and develop positive relationships with other students and other incoming students. (Hertzog and Morgan, Maclver, 1990).

Boarding students work, play and sleep at school. Boarding life also involves an elaborate system of regulation and tight scheduling of student's daily routine, dictating when they have to wake up, sleep, eat meals, and participate in recreational activities. Students are told how, when, where they need to complete their homework, standards for keeping their accommodation neat and tidy, as well as access to phones and computers. Those living in boarding typically spend a great amount of time with teachers, coaches, and other school staff and have a greater opportunity to develop mentoring and personal relationships with them than day students. Boarding schools develop a collective identity, in addition to the formal structures, through traditions, rituals and symbols associated with the boarding house within the school. Boarding lends itself to self-discipline and independent thought. Those who look after boarders both in the boarding house and in the day school need to be attuned to their unbridled energy, limitless potential and moments of doubt. Quality relationships are the key to the success of our boarders.



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YOU DO

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WHY
YOU DO IT



ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Student Exchange: Rurality and Reflection

AUTHOR
Michael Symons
The King's School

“The trip to Molong gave me a true understanding of what Australia is all about.”

The concept of student exchanges is neither new, nor is it uncommon. There are several exchange programs being run both in Australia and abroad with the aim of offering cultural experiences for students to expand their horizons and truly become citizens of the ‘global village’.

I recently heard of a wonderful exchange among several schools in Northern Europe, where previous cultural divides would have prevented such experiences taking place. In scenes reminiscent of ‘Ping Pong Diplomacy’ in 1971, these student exchanges were offering young people the opportunity to judge the world for themselves, rather than continuing to propagate the opinions of those many years their senior.

Go West – Life is Peaceful There

At The King's School, our Leadership and Cultural Exchange Program has enjoyed a wonderful history and continues to expand its horizons. Young men from India, Japan, Singapore, China, Argentina, the USA, Canada, South Africa, England, Western Australia, Germany and France arrive on our doorstep, hoping to learn about Australian education and make lasting friendships.

One aspect which many of these overseas students experience is the opportunity to head west to the farms and properties of many of our boarding families. It is indeed true that many students arrive with the desire to see Bondi Beach, the Opera House and Harbour Bridge – yet what these boys leave with is a rich and memorable understanding of how Australia does indeed live “off the sheep's back”.

The overseas boys are provided with a brief account of the rural history of Australia; this notion affords them a new insight into the Australian values that so many of our schools teach. The concepts of determination, responsibility, resilience and comradeship are chief among them.

Federico Hojmann, a 2012 exchange student from St. Georges College in Argentina spent time with James Green, a TKS boarder from Molong.

“I had no idea about how pivotal the bush was to the Australian history. I knew a little about Australian history from the World Wars but in Argentina we are never taught about the Australian outback.”

Feddy, as he was affectionately known, spent a week shearing sheep, grading wool, milking cows, marking calves and even learned to drive the Green's infamous ‘Paddock Basher’.

“Learning to drive a manual in the middle of a barren field was pretty thrilling. Even going shooting in the middle of the night was an experience I'll never forget. I've never seen a kangaroo move so fast!”

But for Federico, the real lessons have only recently been understood.

“I think spending time in a classroom or on the Rugby field were obviously very important for me. But looking back now three years after the event, the trip to Molong gave me a true understanding of what Australia is all about. It gave me an awareness of what goes on behind the scenes. Where the wool for our socks comes from, where the milk for our cheese comes from. It was all a very natural experience.”

See Your Own Reflection Looking Back At You

As many Australian boarding schools are currently doing, we are making reflection a big part of the education we provide for our boys. As famed Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard said, “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”

In order to help our boys move forward by looking backwards, we have had each exchange student from TKS complete an Exchange Reflection Portfolio. Combining a 5-10 minute audio-visual presentation and a speech in assembly to the entire school, students are forced not only to create a lasting memento of their time, but are also given time to muse on those memories which have shaped them. Once they look past the helicopter flights over Niagara Falls, the safari in Kruger National Park or the expedition around Ningaloo Reef, boys tend to realise that the true value of their exchange trips have been far more simple.

Fergus Ryan, a current Year 11 student at TKS remembers his time at St. Edwards in Oxford with fondness.

“I think my first real excitement came from the thought of playing Rugby in the UK, but when I was injured almost as soon as I stepped off the plane, I was forced to focus on other pursuits”.



Student Exchange: Rurality and Reflection

“Looking back now, my time at Teddies gave me more than just friendships and a bucketload of laughs; it gave me confidence that I could live in a world far outside my comfort zone. It helped me understand that I could add value in a social setting – with either boys my own age or people much older – and embody the Australian principles we’ve grown to see as the spine of our school.”

Like a veritable octopus, a school’s exchange program can reach in many directions, both literally and metaphorically. As with many things in life, it is what the students put in that will determine what they get out.

Mrs Wan, the mother of a boy from Raffles, recently emailed me about a TKS boy who spent six weeks in Singapore.

“Having Hamish stay with us was like having another son. He cleaned up after himself, he helped me cook and he even mastered the art of ordering food for us when we dined out”.

“When we said our goodbyes at the air-

port, my daughter cried and my husband became very quiet. We know we will see Hamish again but to have had a boy so full of life, so positive and so willing to give everything a try in our lives was mammoth; he left a huge void.”

In somewhat of a happy twist to that story, Hamish and his exchange partner, Ryu, spent a week near Bourke. Both boys, hosted by another TKS family, learned to ride a motorbike, both boys helped deliver a lamb and both boys learned that there are far more similarities between them than there are differences.



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How was it for you?

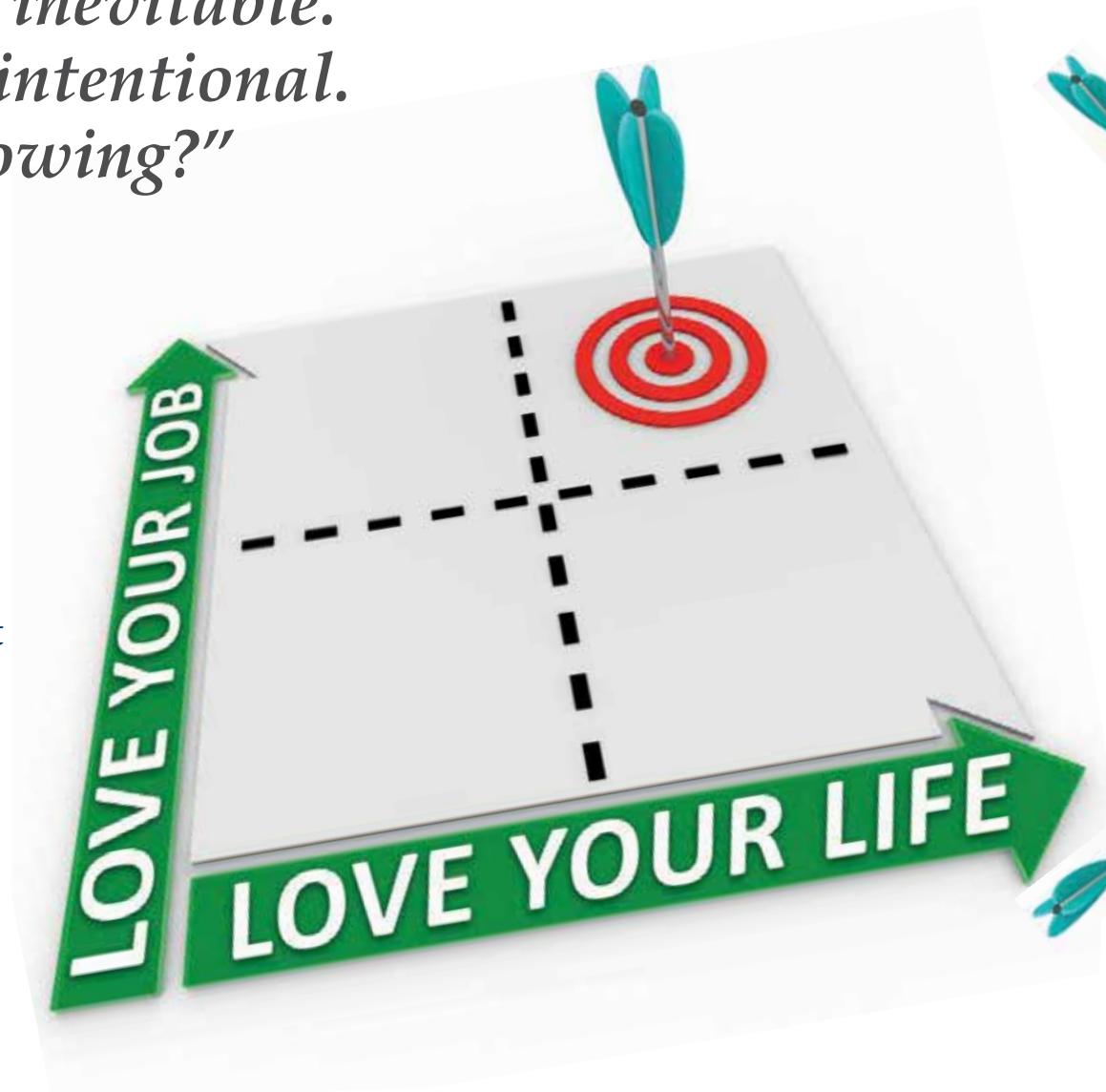
*“Change is inevitable.
Growth is intentional.
Are you growing?”*

J Maxwell

The end of a school year brings up lots of feelings for a lot of professionals working in boarding schools.

For some retirement is looming – they will close the boarding house door for the last time. For others new challenges await through promotion or even relocation to teach overseas.

For some people they are excited to join the boarding world for the first time. So, take a moment to see where you are now? Was this your plan at the start of the year? If you were to tell your story of the school year, what would you write?



If you have not taken time to do your own personal review of the year, I recommend that you schedule some time before August. You will only need a couple of hours so book it in now!

Working as a coach today, when I ask people what's worked well and what did not work so well, I often get a blank stare! It seems that lots of people today are not taking the time to step back and look at their year.

I used to be one of those people, but in 2008 I did a review for the first time and have never looked back.

Your review is based around these fundamental questions:

- What do you want to bring forward to the next school year?
- What do you want to leave behind? What kind of life are you creating?
- It is clear, reviewing your life in the last school year is the key to your success in the next one

Switch the phone off. Grab a cup of tea, lots of paper and pens. ARE YOU READY? LET US BEGIN...

1. What have you accomplished? What have you overcome?

Think over your school year – start in August, and consider month by month:

1. What you did
2. What you overcame
3. What real results you achieved in your life and career

Now take some time to look over your list, and consider:

1. What's the most important item on this list?
2. What are the top 3?
3. What word comes to mind?

2. What did you learn, and how have you changed?

Again, start in August and work forward.

While it sometimes feels like time in boarding goes by so fast, and that perhaps you haven't changed at all... when you take a moment to reflect on it you'll realize you have learned and grown in ways you could have never imagined throughout the year. We watch this every day with our boarders – what would they say?

We always remember the big changes, but have a think about the small ones. Every experience, big or small helps make you who you are - and gives you the wisdom to make choices as you go forward.

Again, look over your list, and consider:

1. What's the most important item on this list?
2. What are the top 3?
3. What words comes to mind?

3. How do you feel? How satisfied are you with everything?

Take a blank piece of paper and begin to write about 'My Year In Review'. If you keep a journal, take time to read it again and take out the main points. How has your year has really gone? How do you really feel about it? If you were to give yourself a score from 1 to 10 of how you would rate your year, what would it be? Honesty is key here!

Take time to write. With this exercise, it is also important to put it away for 24 hours and reread. You will have things to add.



4. What's next?

Taking everything into account, to make next school year better you need to have a plan. You have looked at what you have achieved, learnt and how you feel about everything. As feelings and thoughts influence behaviour- we need to look at a positive way forward.

So, ask yourself...

1. Whats missing from your lists?
2. What were you unable to spend time on because of boarding?

In fact, what would you like to be able to say in August 2015? What do you want to add to the list? What story do you want to be able to tell people? What can you do to make this happen? Use What if...? and What else...? to guide your thoughts and actions?

Whether you are aiming for a promotion in boarding, want to be in couple rather than single or just want have more work life balance working out where you are now is key. Now you know where you want to go, choose one aspect of your life and draw up a monthly plan to get there... put it on the wall and begin before term starts.

Good Luck !

Learnings from 2014

AUTHOR
Hayley Hall
Senior Residential Assistant
Prince Alfred College



2014 was my first year in the role as Senior Residential Assistant for International Students at Prince Alfred College (PAC). It has been a wonderful year! I've loved every minute of it and I have learnt a lot. As a result, I thought it might be useful to share five of my learnings with others who also work in boarding. If we share the learnings that we encounter, this will hopefully assist others to avoid the same mistakes and everyone then benefits. I hope you enjoy...

Learning 1:
“Boarding is a marathon, not a sprint”

At the beginning of the year Darren Roylett, our Head of Boarding, said to me, “boarding is a marathon not a sprint” and as we come to the end of the year I truly understand the value of this statement. Remembering to pace yourself is very important. Ensuring that you have enough energy in the tank to see you through the year is vital not only for your own wellbeing but that of the boarders you look after. At the beginning of the year, it is safe to say that I was sprinting my way through the terms. However, I am pleased to say I have definitely found my rhythm and a pace that I can sustain for years to come. So the learning is, remember to take care of yourself so you can take excellent care of your boarders and the way to do this is to pace yourself.

Learning 2:
“You eat an elephant one bite at a time”

My goal in term one was to create an even more unified boarding community, where international and local boys engaged in many positive interactions. With the introduction of days like New Mates Day (which was a day I designed where international and local boys

got to know each other through organised fun activities) we have made huge leaps in terms of unifying our global community. However, I now realize this goal will be something that I will be working on for many years to come. I now have an even deeper appreciation of how ingrained some behaviours and beliefs can be and how important it is to make change from within the community, to be truly effective. Therefore, the learning is, when approaching a massive project like changing a group mentality or established culture, don't try to do it all at once, instead take one bite at a time!

Learning 3:
“Celebrate the little successes”

I can't believe the academic year is nearly over and how quickly it has passed. At PAC we produce a newspaper in term 3 to reflect on everything we have done in boarding over the past year. This year, it was my job to put the newspaper together and one of the wonderful aspects of having this job was getting to read everything that we do as a boarding community. From sky diving, volunteering, visiting countries such as Nepal, New Zealand, America and our international boys holding Koalas for the first time! The experiences our boys have are wonderful and as a community it is great to reflect on all that we do throughout the year. As I think about the year, and everything that has been done, I see how quickly the year has gone and how important it was to celebrate all the successes, no matter how small some of them may have been. By celebrating the small achievements, it builds confidence and propels you to do even bigger and better things. If you haven't stopped yet to look at everything you have



Learnings from 2014



done within boarding this year, do so now and celebrate what a contribution you have made.

Learning 4: Reflect as you go

Anytime I made a mistake this year, or got something wrong, or didn't remember something, I wrote it down in a document called Learnings in 2014. The document was split into headings (term 1, term 2, term 3 and term 4) and below each I'd write down the learning. I didn't focus on what I hadn't got right, instead I focused on what I needed to do differently or better for next year. As I look at this document now, there are many things that I can improve upon for next year and this is a really exciting position to be in. I have celebrated what I've done well and I am also recognizing what I can improve upon. This document will now serve as a reminder of what I need to do differently next year and is a great tool to help me improve. If you've never done this, I would really recommend you try it. It is a great way to continually improve your own practice.

Learning 5: No failure only feedback

In term 4 we send out feedback surveys to all the international boarders. I surveyed them all last year and therefore term 4 results will be interesting to read a year later. What activities have they enjoyed? What has made a difference to their boarding experience? What do we still need to work on? These will all be questions I will be asking as I look at the feedback we receive. I will then use this feedback to structure what activities to introduce next year and areas I still need to work on. We also send out Year 12 Exit surveys, as we believe getting the feedback from those that are leaving you is invaluable. I truly believe that there is no failure, only feedback. No matter what the feedback says, I know that we can only improve. If you truly believe this, it empowers you to ask the questions in the first place (even if you may not like the answers!) and then have the confidence to act on them. So remember if something you tried this year didn't work, learn from it and move on. Equally, if something worked really well, learn from that too, build on it and do it even better next year.

I hope the learnings I have shared have helped you reflect on your own year in boarding. As I look forward to 2015, I am excited to do it all again and hopefully even better!

**“This will hopefully assist
others avoid the same mistakes”**





BOARDERS SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

Do you have students that require holiday accommodation and activities during the school holidays while the boarding houses are closed? Would you like to offer your student two week study tours to the Gold Coast during the school holidays? Seven, ten, twelve nights or two to four week study tour itineraries available. Hotel accommodation with Boarding Staff available until group arrival if required or early check in to homestay.



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Professional team who will liaise with agents on your behalf
Host family profiles available to comply with welfare arrangements





The Boarding Cycle

AUTHOR
Conrad Mathias
Boarding Staff
St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill

Most of us in schools would be familiar with the planning allegory of going to the filing cabinet (or downloading the file) and getting out the plans for last year's sports day. It can be an allegory because while we are portraying planning, we're actually replicating.

It must be several weeks ago now that we saw Christmas fare come into our supermarkets – and you can be sure that Easter eggs and buns will appear sometime in January. Christmas and Easter lose something when they are foisted upon us with such mind numbing commercial spontaneity.

The boarding year is governed by cycles – terms, semesters, exeats, exams, and the daily cycles which need to take place if large

something, we just want to put it away until next year. But a little extra time can be well spent asking the students, the staff, and if appropriate, the families, whether they would like to see things done in a different fashion. This may provide a platform for leavening some extra life into the activity next year. Such surveys are easy to do now and bring surprising rewards.

Interestingly enough, it is sometimes the students who resist change. They are often more conservative about change than they would give themselves credit for. I recall routing the lunch queue through an alternative door into the dining room some years ago. It provoked an extraordinary reaction – hilarious – but totally out of proportion to the issue. They can

“Interestingly enough, it is sometimes the students who resist change”



numbers of people are to get fed, schooled, rested, exercised, and recreated. These things must happen routinely if things are to get done.

But the best boarding communities demonstrate flashes of spontaneity. It is true that sometimes we have to look at the file from the cabinet or the computer storage and resign ourselves to the fact that that is how it has to happen. But there are opportunities to look at things differently – especially if we create those opportunities.

An important way of doing this is to survey the stakeholders immediately after the event. It's understandable that having got shot of

become creatures of habit, our students – but while we want them to do some things routinely, we are not setting them up for a sometimes volatile world if we don't teach them to deal with spontaneity, and rejoice in it.

So, maintain the boarding cycle – but perhaps keep a weather eye out for doing things differently where possible. It would be sad if the important things in our students' lives were crushed under the weight of doing things the same way year after year simply because it's easy. Supermarket chains have trivialised Christmas and Easter by simply getting out last year's file. Let's not fall into the same trap.

New Head of School

Toowoomba

Anglican College & Prep School



Simon Lees
Head of School
Toowoomba Anglican College
& Preparatory School, QLD

Our apologies to Simon Lees and Toowoomba Anglican College and Prep School for our error in the last edition. Printed below is the correct information and photo.

Toowoomba Anglican College and Preparatory School (TACAPS) is under the leadership of a new Head of School, Mr Simon Lees MEd (Leadership) (University of Qld), BA (Hons) (University of Lincoln, UK), P.G.C.E (University of Hull, UK), NPQH, MACEL.

Mr Lees' appointment to TACAPS comes at a particularly exciting time in the 103 year history of the school. It follows a significant decision, in 2013, to expand the Preparatory School into a College. TACAPS currently has students up to Year 8 and will incorporate its first cohort of Year 12's in 2018. Mr Lees was the former Deputy Principal and Head of Senior School at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School, Gippsland, Victoria and Head of Secondary School at Georgiana Molloy Anglican School, Busseton, Western Australia. His extensive experience with the nuances of country boarding was gained during his tenure as Director of Activities at Guildford Grammar School in Perth, where students attended from across the vast Western Australian wheat belt and Kimberley regions.

Born in the United Kingdom, Mr Lees also brings substantial international experience to his new role having been Head of Faculty at The Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, a British international school and Head of Faculty at Garden International School (an IB World School), a day and boarding international school in Thailand. His original teaching position in the UK was as a teacher of geography and PE in Yorkshire. Mr Lees is an old boy of Clevedon School, Somerset.

A keen sportsman, Mr Lees is currently involved in cycling and tennis and is a past participant in team sports including soccer and rugby. He has also been a major contributor to the Duke of Edinburgh programs throughout his career. Mr Lees has two sons, aged 7 and 9.

THE SCHOOL (PING PONG) TABLE



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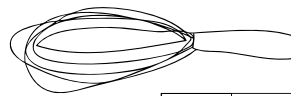
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LAPG EDUCATION



Smart Food

Ever seen your students yawning, looking tired or losing interest in the classroom? This could be a case of the missing 'smart food' link! Smart Food equals Smart Thinking and having the right food at student's fingertips can quite literally change their focus.

LAPG Education implements a 'Smart Food' program into all of our Independent Schools and Colleges menus and cultures. The program is based on time, size and age appropriate menu design underpinned by a commitment to prepare the freshest foods using quality, seasonal produce. This is critical to the process and that's why having the best chefs on site helps us to fulfil the Smart Food thinking way of life.

Mornings can be one of the toughest times of the day for a student if they have not started off with a healthy breakfast or, in some cases, any breakfast at all. Chia seeds sprinkled over natural muesli or yoghurt are full of the essential Omega 3 oils and add some-berries and you have additional fibre, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants to give you the best start to your day!

Not only that, these foods give longer lasting energy and improved concentration associated with learning and better school performance.

Across Australia we are helping students get the best out of their academic minds by following the Smart Food

Guidelines. These principles have been based primarily on the Australian Dietary Guidelines Eat for Health Standards, with further detail taken from nutrition principles recommended in the National Heart Foundation's Right ingredient guidelines for healthier recipes document... Not only is it benefiting the student's wellbeing, but the range and choice of foods are proving very popular.

Too many students today rely on 'energy drinks' and other quick energy fix snacks that are not sustaining. Instead we incorporate items such as our own 'energy slice', in to our menus, which contains chia seeds, sunflower seeds, cocoa powder and much much more. With a focus on the five core food groups to provide a healthy balanced diet our chefs are spoilt for choice with higher nutrition quality ingredients on hand such as whole grains, brown rice, quinoa, dark leafy greens, berries, olive oils, garlic, cocoa, to give our meals an extra boost of vitamins/antioxidants/minerals.

The use of Low GI ingredients also enable us to become creative and innovative in our sites, the following recipes are testament to this.

*“Smart Food
equals Smart Thinking”*

The Future of Boarding Schools

Is there one?

AUTHOR
Richard Stokes
Executive Director
Australian Boarding Schools Association

So many of the population involved in education today, especially those working in private schools, are wondering whether the traditional boarding school will survive. But what is a traditional boarding school? In Australian terms this is difficult to answer, as there are many different types of schools which offer boarding. Some aim mainly at the country market, providing education for 'kids from the bush'. Others aim at the overseas market, looking to provide an education for those students from non-English speaking countries, particularly those from Asia. Yet others aim at the short distance market – those from within 100km of the school but who need a boarding school for some reason or another.

So what are the challenges of the modern boarding school?

Firstly, the diminishing number of families sending their children away to boarding school to get an education. As Linda Vining, in her paper presented at the Australian Boarding Staff Association national conference in 2004 said, "As populations plummet and boarding fees increase, enrolments in Australia's non-government boarding schools have declined by 15 per cent over the last decade. According to figures from the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs the number of boarding students dropped nationally from 29,358 in 1990 to 21,000 in 2003." Interestingly boarding numbers have slightly risen in recent years, up nearly 3000 since 2012. These figures could, and in many cases do, quite rightly frighten those in the business of providing a boarding education. Whilst the vast areas of our country will continue to dictate to some the need to send their children off to the city to be educated, schools have had to look to new sources for boarders if they wish to continue with eco-

nomically viable boarding facilities.

Schools need to recognise the changing expectations of the market, and adapt, refocus and reconfigure their service to respond to these market forces. Boarding schools have to rethink their marketing tactics, respond to changing parent needs, train staff in public relations and look at a range of options, such as extended day, weekly boarding and short term stays. Schools intent on survival will need to undertake market research which helps understand the changing attitudes and needs of their customers to position themselves for the challenges of the future by grounding their marketing decisions on validly generated data, not hunches.

Where are these new boarders?

Research undertaken in the U.K. show that there are 9 potential boarders whose families can afford to send their children away for every 1 child already boarding. How can schools attract these potential boarders to the benefits of boarding? Firstly, by banding together using the resources provided by such association as ABSA and AHISA to publicise and advertise the positive aspects of boarding. A National Boarding Week will be held in 2015 where positive boarding experiences will be featured in newspapers, magazines and possibly on television. The 'Harry Potter' phenomenon has helped in this regard as well, showing the students living at school develop excellent friendships, have fun in their spare time and get a good education to boot – even though some of the activities Harry and his friends get up to would never happen in one of our present schools!

Schools need to provide different styles of boarding.

Many families are keen to have time together every weekend, so a Weekly Boarding option has become common in most schools in Australia. Such an option, coupled with the support and supervision provided whilst boarders undertake their homework, assignments and study, help many families who have struggled to provide a suitable environment for study. The structure provided by a boarding school is one in which adolescents can really excel, and coupled with the freedom offered by being able to be at home on weekends this provides an excellent choice for many families.

Casual boarding, where students stay for two or three nights a week, is becoming increas-

“Good
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schools
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The Future of Boarding Schools

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ingly common in many schools. Such an offering helps those students who are actively involved in the co-curricular programme of schools and helps save wasted travel time which can be transferred into study and social time together. Schools often offer this at a reduced rate, providing families with a real option to long hours on buses or trains or in cars.

Short stay boarding, where students stay for a week, two weeks or up to a term, is another slice of the market many boarding schools have begun to offer. Many parents have particularly busy times in their work schedule, or must travel interstate or overseas for short periods, and schools which allow students to stay in the boarding house during such periods have often picked up full time or weekly boarders as the children have enjoyed the time in boarding, and often have achieved excellent results with their studies.

Long day boarding is another of the new breed of offerings. Some schools have branched into offering their students the opportunity to stay at school longer, do homework, have dinner, participate in clubs and sports training, all before their parents pick them up on their way home from a long day at work. For those families living reasonably close to the school where the parents still want daily contact with their child, the long day option is very attractive.

But why would parents consider sending their child to a boarding school in the first place?

A boarding school provides a real community for those within. The opportunity to be a part of a group is one we all crave, and when young people live together they develop excellent relationships with those others in the community. It is often said that boarders develop 'friends for life', but this is never more evident than at school re-unions when those who boarded together share their memories of the good times, and sometimes also the bad times, of their life at school.

There is no better structure for our young people in which to build their social skilling. With the changing types of boys and girls becoming boarders with the ever decreasing rural population, the single parent families, the working parents, the kids out of control, and those looking for the status of being a boarder amongst others pose many challenges,

but the routines and structures provided by our boarding schools are second to none.

Many staff working in boarding houses are very skilled in their positive reinforcement of individual students by acknowledging student attainments as they greet them in the boarding house. It can be assumed that the house groups that are operating so effectively in boarding schools probably have a good morale as well. Boarding House staff most often have a considerable degree of optimism that boarders will succeed in their houses. They are, in other words, optimistic about the possibility that happiness will take place in the boarding house in spite of occasional setbacks or failures. Under the guidance of such house staff, boarders get the feeling that success is possible and those goals of learning can be obtained. Good communication, cohesiveness, and morale are all causes and effects of positive group activity.

Boarding Schools teach the students living within them a mixture of independence and dependence while they are away at school. Parents should not expect the child they sent away to be the same person when they return after two, three or more years in their boarding houses. They will most likely have become a young adult – hopefully an independent thinker who shows manners and self acceptance, but certainly one who can stand on their own two feet and look after themselves.

The answer is yes!

Good boarding schools do have a future. For all the reasons above, they will continue to provide an excellent educational and social opportunity which many families will utilize. Many will follow one of the more modern offerings rather than the traditional one of sending their child away for eight or nine week terms without much time out of school, and it will be the schools which embrace some or all of the options listed, or develop other new options, which will not only survive but thrive in providing one of the best educational options available.

Study Tours Queensland Introduces the Boarders School Holiday Programme

AUTHOR
Nicole Willoughby
Homestay Manager
Gold Coast Student Accommodation Centre
& Queensland Homestay

Are you left to find last minute accommodation for your international boarders not returning home for the holidays?

Here is your answer! **SAFE, FUN, AFFORDABLE** school holiday programmes that provide assurance for your school's welfare arrangements!

school while enjoying the Gold Coast's theme parks and living with a local Australian homestay family.

Homestay provides a 'home away from home' for your students and personalised care. It can lead to a new support network for students and repeat holiday visits when they are not travelling home and need the comfort of a familiar family.

Individual or group student pick-ups will be arranged from the airport and students will be delivered straight to their homestay families. The students will experience living with a Gold Coast family who will provide home-cooked meals and drive them to and from school or a designated meeting place every day. The students can enjoy their time with these local families, confident that each home has been inspected for suitability and families are experienced in hosting international students.

Study Tours Queensland currently handles the care of approximately 2000 international students per year who travel to Australia to improve their English whilst enjoying an educational holiday. Our sister companies Queensland Homestay and Gold Coast Student Accommodation centre currently have registered around 600 friendly, experienced homestay families. Families range from two parent families of all nationalities, to retirees and single hosts.

The Company Director has over ten years' experience in the international education and student accommodation industries, utilising invaluable first-hand experience as a Homestay parent. We ensure the success of the Homestay experience by offering flexible, customised services to satisfy the individual requirements of the students and education providers. Full 24 hour support is available to agents, parents, schools and Directors of Boarding to keep abreast of any student issues... or just to check on whether the students are enjoying themselves!



Our Boarders School Holiday Programmes incorporate homestay accommodation with fun daily activities fully supervised by male or female tour guides with boarding school experience. English Language classes are also available.

Study Tours Queensland has been providing successful short term tours for International students for over six years. International students get to experience English in an ELICOS



Study Tours Queensland

Introduces the Boarders School Holiday Programme



Our Study tours Manager Jacqueline has 10 years' experience in the boarding school industry, having worked for three different private schools in Sydney and on the Gold Coast. After years of taking boarders home with her for the school holidays, or dealing with the last minute panic to find a safe place for students to stay where they would be well supervised, she developed the Boarders School Holiday Programme for international students to have safe accommodation during the holidays... and not with the so called "uncle" who has an apartment on Sydney Harbour – which is a story that we all know far too well! And she understands that your staff need a holiday just as much as the students, especially after end of term pack up!

Jacqueline works closely with her colleague Nicole Willoughby, whom you will have met

at the 2014 ABSA conference, and between them ensure that the boarders' safety is paramount at all times with high levels of pastoral care. Recently Nicole assisted The Southport School (TSS) and St Hilda's School students with last minute school holiday homestay requirements.

Jacqueline and the ABSA office will send out holiday reminders prior to end of term and a sample program will be distributed based on student interest. Tours can be customised to suit the requirements of each Boarding School and their students.

Please contact Jacqueline with any enquiries on 07 5527 8688 or info@studytoursgold-coast.com.au



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A Word from the Chairman

AUTHOR
Garth Wynne
Chairman
Australian Boarding Schools Association



I write to you in the week following our very successful conference, 'It's not what you do, it's why you do it', on the Gold Coast. With over 200 delegates representing residential communities across Australasia, we should be proud of how this conference reflected the growing reach and enthusiasm for ABSA. I would like to particularly thank members of the ABSA community who made presentations and acknowledge the genuine camaraderie and goodwill that existed within the delegates as represented by the richness of conversations at breakouts and the quality of engagement in sessions. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible work of Mr Richard Stokes and Mr Tom Dunsmore, our ABSA staff, in bringing the events of these four days together with such great professionalism.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association conducted during the conference constitutional changes that had been previously

communicated to members were passed and a number of significant Board changes occurred. We said goodbye to Ms Madonna Hennessy who has been a member of the Board since its inception and during that time has acted as Honorary Treasurer. Madonna's vibrant and uncomplicated approach to all things associated with her role has been both stimulating and refreshing and we thank her for her service. We also farewelled Mrs Linda Evans who over the past two years has provided great wisdom and understanding to the Board from a perspective of the Head of one of Australia's leading Girls Boarding Schools. I am pleased to confirm that the newly appointed Principal of The SCOTS PGC College in Warwick Queensland, Mr Simon Shepherd has continued, at its invitation, on the Board. Simon's experience as an educational leader both nationally and internationally will continue to provide great support to this organisation.

Unsurprisingly the significant theme that came through the conference was one of leadership. Leadership based on purpose and principles within the context of schools and the residential communities that serve them. Might I suggest that given the conference theme was based on the work of Simon Sinek that a good Christmas read (I know it is still a fair way away) might well be his next book 'Leaders Eat Last – why some teams pull together and others don't'.

I wish all well for the final phase of the year which for many within residential communities is a time of sadness as you farewell boys and girls to whom you have committed a remarkable amount of emotional energy and care. Perhaps see your tears as ones of joy – you will have made a huge difference in the lives of these young people.

“Unsurprisingly the significant theme that came through the conference was one of leadership.”

Coming Events

AUS

March 2015

Taking the Reins Conference

August 2015

Leaders Symposium

Duty of Care Workshops

Check out www.boarding.org.au for details

NZ

May 2015

NZBSA National Conference
Wellington

USA

4-6 December 2014

TABS Annual Conference
Washington DC

UK

2-3 January 2015

Annual Conference for Boarding House Staff
Hampshire

28 - 30 January 2015

Annual Conference for Deputy Heads and Heads of Boarding
Bristol

5 - 7 May 2015

Annual Conference for Heads
London

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