



# lightsout

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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## “MONEY ON THE FRIDGE, WOG”

In today's World, blatantly racist statements like this would cause uproar if uttered in public. In the early 1980's however, it was the catchcry of racist Sitcom character Ted Bullpit, on the sitcom “Kingswood Country”.

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## POWERFUL ANSWERS TO IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL QUESTIONS

How do we really know if motivation enhances achievement? How do we really know if good teacher-student relationships improve motivation?

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## LITTLE MISS BAYSIDE

On Wednesday April 7th of this year, I nearly choked on my Wheaties when reading the morning paper to discover that a beauty pageant for children called Little Miss Bayside will be held in Brighton in the next few months.

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ABSA NATIONAL BOARDING CONFERENCE

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

26 SEPTEMBER - 29 SEPTEMBER 2010



## A Boarding House Fire - *Lessons Learnt*

Ben Manifold,

Deputy Principal, The SCOTS PGC College, Warwick Qld



A fire may well be the worst nightmare that anyone who lives or works in boarding can face. When one occurs at 2.50am on a cold winter's night you really do have a recipe for recurring nightmares! This is the situation SCOTS PGC staff and 38 junior boy boarders (Year 6–9) faced in June, last year. Rehearsals, preparation and quick thinking prevented a disaster that would have changed the lives of many and the College Community forever. The sight witnessed on arrival on campus can only be described as horrendous. To witness a brick and tile building that was only 10 years old with flames leaping from the roof makes one realise why it is so important to have good procedures and policies in place. The boarding house was burnt to the ground in 30 minutes with nothing retrievable.

The P's of Pedagogy - “**Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance**” could not have been more true on this day and it was this that saved the lives of all the boys who lived in the house. There were **some key lessons learnt**

from our experience that are highly likely to be of use to other boarding school staff to ensure that, should this ever occur at your school, you too can walk away with all lives intact. There are a number of factors to consider to ensure that your boarders are ready for such an event. These lessons are broken down into two areas for you to consider.

1. Prevention
2. After A Fire

### PREVENTION

The old adage “*Prevention is Better than Cure*” must be a priority.

Ensure from the first day, all students and staff are aware of, and understand your evacuation procedures. In our busy schedules, it is all too easy to forget to practice your rehearsals, or go through procedures. This must be first priority.

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### Would You Like Your Boarding School Featured in Lights Out?

We plan to feature two schools each edition. All you need to do, is write a brief article and send us some high resolution photos.

For further information, go to page 28 of this newsletter or contact ABSA.

# Our New Training Course

## *Duty of Care*

By Dr Tim Hawkes

A new training course for boarding staff has been written and published by ABSA. The course is called *Duty of Care* and represents a unique training experience for Principals, Boarding Coordinators, Matrons, Tutors, House Parents, Teachers, GAP students and any involved with the residential care of children of school age.

The new *Duty of Care* course builds upon the old course written in 2001, but is nearly three times the length and much more up-to-date. For this reason, the new *Duty of Care* course would be an essential acquisition not only for those who have not done any training in looking after boarders, but also for any who have completed the old version of *Duty of Care*.

The new course comprises two books which make up a certificate course in residential care which can be accredited at university level, the boarding institution level, or by ABSA. Book One of *Duty of Care* contains material which is considered essential knowledge for boarding staff. Book Two contains material which is considered highly desirable knowledge for boarding staff.

Those undertaking the *Duty of Care* course will need a suitable super-ordinate who will act as a mentor that can verify the completion of tasks and competency. This is a new feature of the course and enriches the knowledge base of the course with an evaluation of competency. Another feature is the requirement to record prior learning and experience in the boarding industry.

Each book is made up of a number of units of work, each of which will typically take between one to four hours to complete. Tasks are linked to each unit. A supervisor will be needed to whom staff can show their responses and who can verify staff competency in specified areas.

Much has changed since 2001 when the old *Duty of Care* course was written. The new course includes updated information on such things as:

- Appraisal
- Contracts of Employment
- Employer Responsibilities

- Grievance Resolution
- Educational Services General Staff Award 2010
- Child Protection Laws
- Camps, billets, excursions
- Infection Control.

There is also extensive advice on how to help boarders with their academic learning and in their management of contemporary technologies. Dealing with pastoral issues and wellbeing has also been extended significantly in the new course.

New units of work have also been added such as meeting the needs of isolated children and on the work of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA), and of the National Association for Rural Student Accommodation (NARSA). Other chapters have been expanded significantly such as those dealing with Indigenous boarders and those from overseas.

Accreditation of *Duty of Care* can occur of three different levels.

### Level 1 University Accreditation

*Duty of Care* may be accredited through the Australian Catholic University (ACU). Being one of Australia's most prominent universities and because the ACU is one of the leading tertiary institutions in terms of its work in residential care, ACU has become the university of choice to accredit students who wish to have tertiary recognition for their completion of *Duty of Care*.

Those wishing for accreditation through ACU have to pay more money, but there are some significant advantages. The completion of *Duty of Care* contributes towards the completion of a diploma or even degree in residential care at the ACU.

### Level 2 ABSA Accreditation

The maturity of a profession lies, in part, with its capacity to accredit and professionally develop its own members. ABSA will accredit those who have successfully completed *Duty of Care* and will issue a Certificate to verify that the course has been properly completed. The



costs associated with this service are much less than for ACU accreditation.

### Level 3 School/Hostel Accreditation

Some employers are quite comfortable to have their colleagues complete *Duty of Care* and manage the whole process themselves. Although lacking the integrity of external assessment, self-accreditation by a school or hostel might be all that is required.

*Duty of Care* is the main training course for boarding staff within Australia. A New Zealand version of *Duty of Care* is currently being prepared, and a moderated version of *Duty of Care* has also been adapted for use by the British Boarding Schools' Association (BSA). It is a credit to ABSA that it has had such a positive impact on increasing the professionalism of those who care for boarders of school age in Australasia.

Those who would like to purchase copies of the two books which make up the new *Duty of Care* course should contact ABSA at:

- [www.boarding.org.au](http://www.boarding.org.au)
- PO Box 279, Virginia 4014 Queensland, Australia

A differential pricing system is in place which favours ABSA members, with the recommended retail price of individual books \$55 each, or both books for \$88.

### THE CONTENT FOR BOOK ONE INCLUDES:

- The Philosophy of Residential Care.
- Roles and Responsibilities.
- Emergency Procedures.
- Child Protection.
- Security and Supervision.
- Occupational Health and Safety.

### THE CONTENT FOR BOOK TWO INCLUDES:

- The Growing Child.
- Meeting Pastoral Needs.
- Guiding Students in Academic Work.
- Guiding Students in Play.
- Dealing with Bullying.
- Dealing with Disciplinary Matters.
- International Students.
- Indigenous Students.
- Meeting the Needs of Isolated Children.
- Prior Learning.

Each of the two books are about 230 pages long. *Duty of Care* is designed not only to facilitate the acquisition of a Certificate in Residential Care, but also to guide boarding staff in the proper exercise of their duties.

Tim Hawkes  
ABSA Chairman  
June 2010



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## Square of Care *Bridges the Gap*

Christ Church Grammar School



As Christ Church Grammar School in Perth celebrates its 100th birthday, the School reflects on moments of change throughout its rich history of educating boys. One of the most significant achievements of Headmaster Garth Wynne's tenure has been the restructuring the School's boarding community.

When Garth began at Christ Church in 2001, he recognised a need for greater integration between boarders and day students. Prior to his appointment, Garth had a varied career in education working as a Boarding Housemaster and in a range of pastoral care-related roles in independent schools throughout Australia and

the United Kingdom. "The School needed a new structure to better serve the needs of the boys by allowing them to become more involved with the wider school community," he said.

In 2004, the School began a two-year integration process in which boarders were allocated to the School's tutorial and organisational groups. During this time, the School's two separate boarding houses were unified and became known as the Residential Community.

Today, the Residential Community's pastoral care system, known as the Square of Care, is one of the riverside school's strongest draw cards. The Square of Care is comprised of

four staff members, who are responsible for a boarder's welfare – the Director of the Residential Community, Residential Year Group Co-ordinator, Head of House and Tutor.

Students are allocated to one of eight School Houses for the school day and for all inter-house competitions. "The House is a 'home base' for each boy during his time at Christ Church. Here, he has an opportunity to form close friendships with day boys in his Tutorials and Houses," Garth said.

While the Head of House and Tutor monitor each boy's academic and co-curricular programme, the Residential Year Group Co-ordinator, who lives in the Residential Community and



## As Christ Church Grammar School in Perth celebrates its 100th birthday, the School reflects on moments of change throughout its rich history of educating boys.

is an academic staff member, is responsible for supporting and nurturing boarders in a particular year group. The year co-ordinators and Director of the Residential Community deal with residential issues while facilitating team building and communication across year groups to give boarders a sense of identity.

Director of the Residential Community Shane McGurk said it was important for boys to have a sense of separation between school and boarding life. "This separation, albeit subtle, creates a more home-like atmosphere. It allows them to feel like they are not always under the microscope," Shane said. However, he reiterated there was always communication between Tutors, Heads of House and residential staff when required. While an all boys' school, Shane said the Square of Care extended to

Housemothers and Health Centre nurses, who provide a maternal influence throughout the boys' time at Christ Church.

Boys also play a role in supporting their fellow peers within the Residential Community. As part of the School's Peer Support Programme, each Year 11 boy lives amongst Years 6 to 8 boarders for a term. "When these older boys are provided with a mandate for care, it is very rewarding to watch them walk in and take on such a responsible role in a caring and compassionate way. We just need to give them permission, softly coach them and watch the magic unfold. Friendships form where you least expect them and when the Year 11s return from their stay they have helped bridge that gap between the younger and older boys," Shane said.

For more information on the Residential Community at Christ Church Grammar School, go to [www.ccgswa.edu.au](http://www.ccgswa.edu.au)



## “Money on the Fridge, Wog”

By David Pyman

**In today’s World, blatantly racist statements like this would cause uproar if uttered in public. In the early 1980’s however, it was the catch-cry of racist Sitcom character Ted Bullpit, on the highly successful Australian sitcom “Kingswood Country”.**

Kingswood Country, like many Sitcoms, was a product of its time. The early 1980’s saw the beginning of a change in Australian tolerance of racism. Kingswood Country played on this and, in its typical sledge-hammer style, presented a character that’s traditional and narrow minded views caused discomfort for those beginning to see the folly of Racism.

Whilst often criticised for being racist itself, Kingswood Country actually helped to demonstrate how many of the beliefs underpinning racism have no basis and Ted Bullpit himself was clearly used to demonstrate the thoughts and actions of someone behind the times.

In recent times, comedic genius Chris Lilley has presented Australia with a new character and in doing so has shone the light on a new class of discrimination.

In Chris Lilley’s wonderfully acted and biting satirical “Summer Heights High”, we are introduced to stereotypical Islander Jonah Takalua. Amongst the great and often hilarious work of Jonah are the oddly brilliant graffiti tag ‘dick-tation’ – a tag that during the airing of the series became the bane of many teachers existence, and the catch-cry ‘Ranga’.

Consider the following exchange from the show:

**Teacher:** *How is it okay for you to bully Ben?*

**Jonah:** *‘Cause he’s a Ranga.*

**Teacher:** *A what!?*

**Jonah:** *A Ranga, sir. ‘Cause he’s got red hair, Orangatan. That’s what we call them!*

**Teacher:** *And does that make it okay for him to be bullied? Because he has red hair.*

**Jonah:** *Well people are Racist to us, so we can be Racist to Rangas!*

**Teacher:** *But ‘Red heads’ aren’t a race Jonah.*

**Leon:** *But Sir!! There’s heaps of them They’re everywhere!*

Like the ‘Dick-tation’ tag, the term ‘Ranga’ quickly caught on and made its way into the general vernacular of our students. Unlike the graffiti tag, which is mercifully rarely seen now, ‘Ranga’ has become part of society and it is only in recent times that we have begun to consider the impact it is having on those in the community with red hair.

On the 1st February this year, the Herald Sun Newspaper brought us the story of a 14 year old student from Booragul, whose school had suspended her for failure to adhere to the dress code. This particular student had returned to school from the Summer holidays sporting a crimson red dye to her hair, a colour that has been made popular by the Vampire themed movie Twilight. In defending her decision to dye her hair in this ‘extreme’ manner, the student revealed that as a true red-head, she had suffered months of teasing. The newly acquired hair colour had been met with approval by her school friends and she has vowed to keep it.

Is it a stretch to conclude that this young person’s education has been disrupted due to the harassment she has received over her natural hair colour? Do we really think this is a lone case?

In November 2008, 13 students were arrested in Calgary, Canada after a fellow class member was beaten over the colour of his hair.

In January 2009, Former Celtic captain Neil Lennon suffered a violent assault after an argument with two men which saw them mock him for having ginger hair. The 37-year-old Northern Irishman, now a coach with the Glasgow giants, was punched to the

ground and then kicked repeatedly as he lay unconscious.

In November 2009, a group of Middle school students in Calabasas, California followed the advice of a Facebook group suggesting that a selected Friday was in fact “Kick a Ginger day”. At least 3 red haired students were seriously assaulted after arriving for school that day.

In December 2009, a major UK based department store was forced to withdraw a

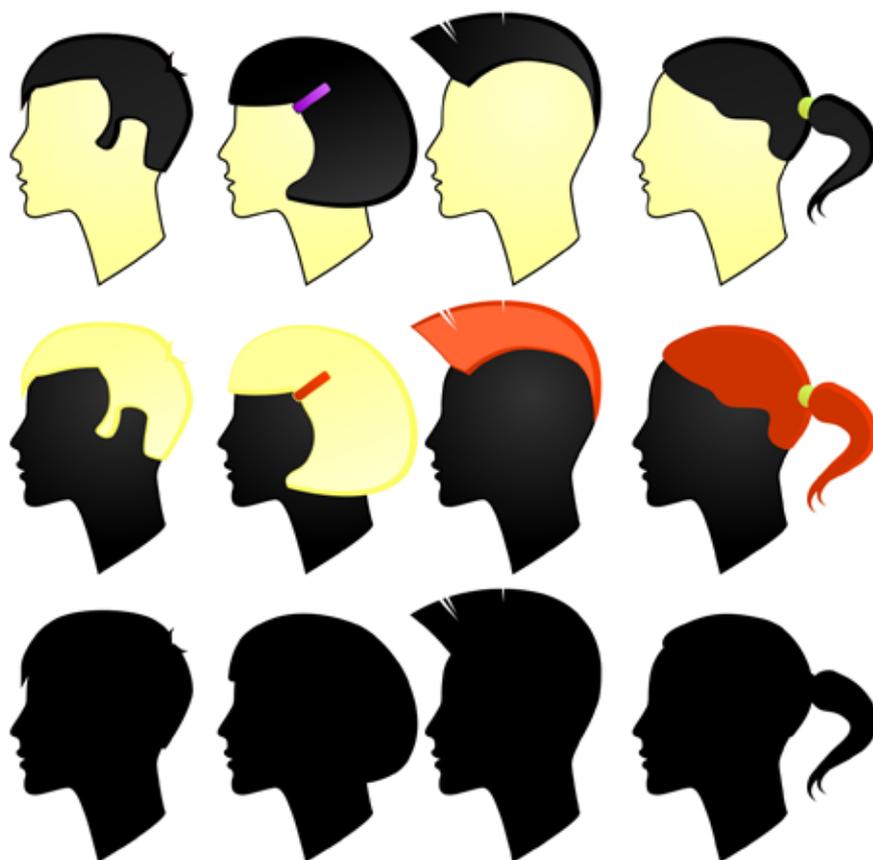


**In November 2008,  
13 students were  
arrested in Calgary,  
Canada after a  
fellow class member  
was beaten over the  
colour of his hair.**

I wonder how many people, teachers included, have heard the 'Ranga' jibe thrown around without once stopping to consider its impact. It is a frightening thought.

It does pose the question however, what have you or your school done to eradicate this type of discrimination from your Boarding House? Have you tackled the issue head on and put an end to what truly is harassment?

David Pyman  
Assistant Head of Boarding  
St. Peter's College, Adelaide



Christmas card that declared "Santa loves all kids. Even GINGER ones".

In Australia we are much more circumspect and aware of this type of harassment, aren't we? Perhaps not.

The May 2008 Bulli High school newsletter contains a report on the activities of their Rugby team. In the report are descriptions of their student players, including this description of the team Captain; "sure he suffers a little bit of 'ranga rage' occasionally." Oh well, as long as it's only occasionally...

In Adelaide, Captain of the NBL's Adelaide 36'ers, Adam Ballinger is often referred to in media as 'Captain Ranga', or 'the popular Ranga'.

Can you imagine our society tolerating one of Greek or Italian heritaged A-League players being publicly described in our papers the way Ted Bullpit would have? What if one of our African-American imports in the NBL were described as a 'popular N.....'

Have we simply replaced the racism of the 1970's and early 80's with harassment based on genetic characteristics. Is 'Gingerism' (as it is called in the U.K) the racism of the new millennium?

## Towards the **Light**

By Daniel Kuhn

**Leftover pizza and Coke constitute the ultimate teen breakfast. Or so I thought when I was fourteen and knew everything.**

I even had qualitative, statistical data to prove it: in Year 9 I trained hard and ate well before placing 66th at the GPS Cross Country Championships but when my Year 10 preparations were lean and my breakfast, questionable, I placed 12th. I swore by the pizza – I don't even remember reheating it – and Coke theory for years, even beguiling myself to the point that I proclaimed my newfound knowledge to all and sundry, and then I began teaching boys. I realise now that I was no genius delivering a powerful boost to athletes the world over. I was merely a typical teenager who would sooner fill up on trans fats and sugar than omega 3 and H2O.

Any Google – yes, it is an official word in the latest dictionaries – on teen eating habits will

throw-up, poor pun intended, a plethora of substandard, teen eating choices, including, to name but a few: skipping breakfast; drinking too much soft drink; and eating too much fast food and products from the minute 'other' peak of the culinary pyramid. With this in mind, let us consider the March Q&A question:

***How do we, the boarding community of Australia, responsible for the nourishment of thousands of teens on a daily basis, prepare, perfect and present dishes that are appealing, nutritious, and, ultimately, eaten by our growing charges?***

I do not have teenage children; however, my six-year-old, I believe, is schooling me for the teen years with her outbursts at the table. Delicacies such as, "Dad - I didn't want you to cook that tonight," are commonplace. A regular main dish: "Dad - I wanted scrambled eggs instead of cereal this morning." And my favourite dessert: "Why don't we ever have anything that I want to eat?" From these inauspicious, six-year-old murmurings, is it any wonder that, seven years down the track, and with the dreaded teen-tag attached, boarders thumb their noses at well-prepared meals in favour of the ultimate MSG hit: two-minute-noodles?

Are we surprised, as we research the depths of eating habits on the net, that teens prefer

a trans fat-laden pizza, washed down with 1.25litres of Coke, to a pine-nut salad and watermelon for dessert? Probably not. But what do we do about it? How do we ensure that the dietician-approved menus end up fuelling the bodies of those in our care? The media debate continues to rage regarding 'green and red' foods at tuck-shops; vending machines are constantly calling, offering their insalubrious contents to all and sundry and two-minute noodles and soft drink are often preferred to the wholemeal bread and water bubblers. Couple these calamities with rising obesity levels and we understand the importance; indeed, the necessity of boarding schools not only preparing healthy meals but educating students regarding the health risks of choosing the 'other' too frequently.

I am sure that nobody in boarding-world would proclaim their menu as fool-proof, given the gulf that exists between the tastebuds of little Johnny and little Jane, and the dilemma as to what to serve is oft-repeated. I have seen many dining halls – all markedly different – which, at their core, have people making decisions which affect the quality, quantity and presentation of the food. Are we considering the changing dynamics of teen and adult activities in these choices? Do we consider healthy eating education as being just as important as the food that is served? Are sugar-filled desserts routine or do your students enjoy a tasty fruit salad instead of ice-cream? As the market place continues to change, so do our boarding schools and, consequently, our kitchens. Many schools proclaim their menus to a worldwide audience through the medium of their websites so, don't be shy - let me know what your school does well in keeping the charges happy, healthy and well fed.

Please email all responses to [drk@twgs.qld.edu.au](mailto:drk@twgs.qld.edu.au) I look forward to your correspondence.

Daniel Kuhn  
Toowoomba Grammar School



# Drugs for Diary

NOTICE BOARD MATERIAL

**Often we find it difficult to believe we can die ... and accordingly, we take unacceptable risks with our lives.**

## SMOKING

Why do we do it? Why do we smoke when evidence is overwhelming in terms of its harmful effects? It not only yellows fingers, and wallpapers lungs with tar, it can give the smoker an ashtray breath, a thin wallet and a cancerous wheeze. Even more appalling is the preparedness of smokers to allow themselves to be enslaved. Whilst laughing at wowsers and speaking of freedom, the shackles of addiction snap tight around their lives.

Some do it to experiment. This is vaguely defensible, for it has a nice educational ring to it. Unfortunately some experiments are dangerous, and before the smoke has cleared another has surrendered control of their lives to a cigarette company.

Others do it to grow up. The socially fragile feel they must add to their maturity by sticking white sticks in their mouth. It often takes some years to realise that true maturity is not found in the decision to smoke. Indeed there is evidence to suggest that the more mature will probably say: "No thanks ... I don't need it."

Many smoke because of peer pressure. The desire to be accepted by friends is so strong it will dictate what you wear, what you speak, and even what you breathe. Control is given to the group, who then determine the chemical you should live with.

Some smoke out of rebellion or daring. There is a thrill factor – will I get caught and get suspension? Will I get caught and get cancer?

Too many of our young are sending smoke signals asking for help, smoke signals that confess some personal inadequacy, smoke signals that they don't like society or themselves.

Tragically, smokers are dying out ... sometimes painfully and slowly. The pathetic



emaciated features of those in the hospitals are reminders that the final days of a smoker are not filled with careless abandon, fun and devilment, but rather in wrestling with gurgling tubes, pain killers and bitter regrets.

Often we find it difficult to believe we can die ... and accordingly, we take unacceptable risks with our lives. There is a need to blow the smoke away and give a clear indication that smoking may kill us.

## CANNABIS

Some choose to smoke cannabis out of curiosity, daring or peer pressure. Some choose to smoke cannabis to self-medicate because they have suffered some social or emotional harm or because they want to relax. Others might want to make some sort of gesture of independence or rebellion. Most choose to smoke cannabis because they like it and/or are addicted to it.

Users of cannabis, marijuana or hashish, will often suggest that it is no more dangerous than alcohol or cigarettes. This may or may not be true, but it is an illegal substance and smoking cannabis is breaking the law.

There is mounting evidence to suggest that cannabis is linked to schizophrenia and psychosis. It has also been linked to depression, low self-esteem and violence. Unlike alcohol, which is generally removed

from the body within twenty four hours, cannabis is attracted to the fatty tissues in the body such as the brain and can remain there for up to five years. It is interesting that Sweden, which has a strong tradition of liberalism, has dramatically altered its policy towards cannabis from that of a very relaxed attitude to one of strong opposition. This is because studies undertaken using over fifty thousand military conscripts indicated a strong link between cannabis consumption and schizophrenia, suicide, intravenous drug use and violent crime.

A further problem with marijuana is that it is generally packaged in an anti-establishment culture, in an alternative values system which can be damaging to the individual and to society.

Cannabis in its many forms is likely to have an adverse affect on learning. Use of cannabis has been linked to poor short-term memory, tiredness, poor concentration and losing track of time. This is in addition to the risk of psychotic episodes where an individual becomes delusional and scared.

Those who sell their illegal packages of dope, and the means to smoke it, are usually not the sort of individuals who deserve our support, for they are usually predators. They distribute drug dependency. There is no place for them in or around our schools.

## ALCOHOL

Alcohol kills more teenagers in Australia than any other drug. There is no safe level of drinking for teenagers, yet about 73% of teenagers in Australia have drunk alcohol. The teenage body absorbs alcohol more quickly than the adult body, but processes it more slowly resulting in a greater frequency of drunkenness and acetaldehyde poisoning. More than 7 standard drinks at a time (for him) and 5 standard drinks a time (for her) means you are binge drinking and poisoning your brain.

**There is no safe level of drinking for teenagers, yet about 73% of teenagers in Australia have drunk alcohol.**



Cerebellar atrophy, frontal lobe dysfunction, hepatic encephalopathy, Korsakoff's amnesic syndrome, peripheral neuropathy and Wernicke's encephalopathy may mean nothing to most people, but they are just some of the brain disorders which can happen to those who drink excessively. In short, too much alcohol prevents the brain working properly, it can waste brain cells, particularly those in the frontal lobe and hippocampus which control judgement, impulse control, motivation, short term memory and navigation.

Drowning in vomit and getting injured in a brawl are just some of the other risks. To this must be added drink-driving deaths, and the increased likelihood of engaging in unsafe sex. Date rape, pregnancy, catching sexually transmitted diseases are a few of the secondary risks associated with heavy drinking.

Any person serving drinks to, or buying drinks for, anyone under 18 years of age is breaking the law. Parents should not be pressured to serve alcohol to those under 18 for you are inviting them to be arrested.

For those of an age to drink alcohol, here are a few guidelines:

- Do not drink and drive. Appoint a designated driver.
- Be wary of drinks when you do not know what is in them.
- Beware of drink-spiking. Watch your drink, trust no-one. 80% of drink-spiking is done by someone the victim knows.
- Do not mix drinks.
- Observe a one drink an hour rule.
- Match each drink of alcohol with one glass of water or soft-drink.
- Develop a "buddy" system whereby a small group undertakes to look after each other.
- Do not be too proud to drink light beer.
- Have an emergency plan in place in case something goes wrong.
- Do not mix alcohol with drugs for the effects can be very dangerous. Marijuana, for example, can suppress the body's natural defence for over indulgence by making vomiting less frequent. This can allow the alcohol

to stay in the body when it would be otherwise be expelled.

- Do not drink on an empty stomach.
- Pre-determine a limit to the number of drinks you will have beforehand.
- Be careful of sweet alcoholic drinks. The sugar content can disguise the alcoholic content.
- Never arrive at a party thirsty. Drink plenty of water before arriving at a function.
- When returning from a function, rehydrate by drinking plenty of water.

Reprinted from The Kings Herald



Powerful & Practical  
**7**  
 Tips for Kicking Goals This Year!

By Dr Happy  
 (Prof. Tim Sharp)

The Happiness Institute wants to make sure 2010 is a year full of happiness and success.

To help with this Prof. Sharp ([www.drhappy.com.au](http://www.drhappy.com.au)) has put together the following tips:

- 1. Review your goals and make sure they really are realistic.**  
 You may well have already considered this but now that your a few week's into things, have a re-think and determine whether or not your goals are valid ones
- 2. Review your motivation for setting and working towards your goals.**  
 Are they really things that you want to achieve, or are they really goals other people (e.g. your partner, colleagues, parents, children etc) would like you to achieve. It's one thing to clarify "the what" but if you're not fully committed to "the why" then you won't have the motivation you'll need to work hard and to persevere
- 3. Find a buddy to help you stick to your plan and to share in your success and achievement.**  
 Ideally, find someone who shares your passion for a specific goal and meet with or talk to them regularly about your progress
- 4. Don't forget that there's no such thing as a straight line in nature**  
 ...that is, few meaningful and important goals will be achieved without some problems or without having to overcome some obstacles. Be realistic about this so that you won't be so surprised when you face your first hurdle
- 5. Break your goals down into small, manageable and achievable chunks.**  
 Success and happiness come one step, one day, one moment at a time. So aim high and set ambitious goals but work out also, what you need to do this month, this week, today and even...in the next hour
- 6. Track your progress;**  
 Find a way to measure whatever it is you're trying to achieve and monitor how you're going. What doesn't get measured doesn't get done so chart what you do and then...
- 7. Reward yourself;**  
 Often and in a way that works for you. Rewards can be tangible (such as buying yourself something nice when you hit a milestone) or intangible (such as giving yourself a pat on the back or receiving praise from others). Either way, rewarding yourself regularly will boost your motivation and help you to keep going...which is what we all need to do!

So there they are - 7 practical tips for kicking goals and finding more happiness and success in 2010. We hope you find them helpful and we look forward to hearing your success stories (feel free to email in your achievements to [drhappy@thehappinessinstitute.com](mailto:drhappy@thehappinessinstitute.com))

Professor Tim Sharp

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Letz Live

## Powerful Answers to Important Educational Questions

by Andrew Martin (University of Sydney), Paul Ginns  
(University of Sydney) and Brad Papworth (ABSA)

**How do we really know if motivation enhances achievement? How do we really know if good teacher-student relationships improve motivation? How can we be sure that improved teaching leads to improved student engagement?**

### INADEQUATE ANSWERS TO TOUGH QUESTIONS

How do we really know if motivation enhances achievement? How do we really know if good teacher-student relationships improve motivation? How can we be sure that improved teaching leads to improved student engagement?

Much educational research is not properly designed to answer these fundamental questions. Much educational research collects data at one point in time and so researchers and educators can never be sure if A affects B or if B affects A – or if both affect each other. For example, in the classroom context, we can never be sure if good teacher-student relationships enhance student engagement or if student engagement improves teacher-student relationships – or if both mutually enhance each other.

Why is it important to know whether A affects B or vice versa? Because our educational practice profoundly relies on us knowing what precedes what – then we know where to better direct our efforts and our resources. How do we really know if teaching is

improving achievement beyond students' prior achievement? How do we know that improving students' motivation improves performance beyond students' prior performance? How do we know that a self-esteem program improves self-esteem beyond students' prior self-esteem? How can we be sure that a social skills program has actually enhanced social skills beyond social skill development that would have happened anyway?

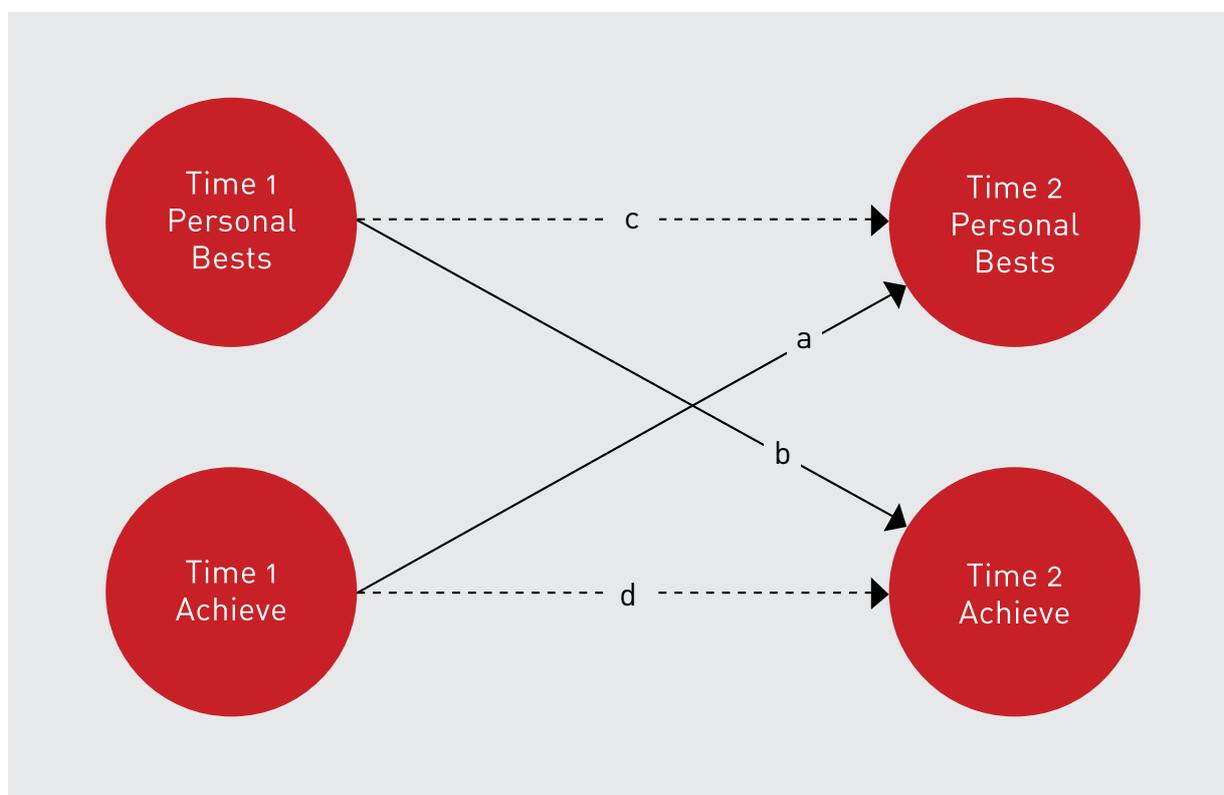
Much educational research is not properly constructed to adequately answer these questions. Much educational research does not look at the effects of A on B after accounting for previous levels of B. For example, much educational research does not look at the impact of self-concept on achievement after accounting for prior achievement; if we do not account for prior achievement we do not really know if self-concept makes a difference.

Why is it important to know whether A affects B after accounting for prior levels of B? Because our educational practice profoundly relies on us knowing what really makes a difference – again, then we know where better to direct our efforts and our resources.

### ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATORS

On a daily, weekly and yearly basis, educators are asked to bring about positive change in students' lives – that is, positively develop students' achievement, motivation, engagement, resilience, self-esteem, social skills, etc. However, one of the greatest challenges in this is the fact that the strongest predictor of a factor is often that same factor at a prior time. For example, all things being equal, the strongest predictor of achievement is usually prior achievement. That is, if the ordinary course of business plays out, how a student does on next week's test is likely to be most strongly affected by how he or she did on last week's test.

The task for educators is to have an effect on outcomes beyond prior outcomes – to bring about greater achievement than would be explained simply by a student's prior achievement. To truly add value, if you like. An important way to explore this is to conduct longitudinal research. In longitudinal research, for example, we can account for prior achievement to know how much educational practice is contributing to subsequent achievement.



### THE IMPACT OF PERSONAL BESTS (PBS) ON ACHIEVEMENT

A useful way of considering this is shown in the diagram below. This was a study by the first author looking at the effects of a Personal Best (PB) focus on achievement across a period of one year. Path 'a' tests the effect of Time 1 achievement on Time 2 PBs. Path 'b' tests the effect of Time 1 PBs on Time 2 achievement. Because prior PBs and achievement are accounted for, these tests allow us to see the effects of PBs on subsequent achievement, beyond prior achievement – and the effects of achievement on subsequent PBs, beyond prior PBs.

The results showed, unsurprisingly, that the best predictor of subsequent achievement was prior achievement (path 'd') and the best predictor of subsequent PBs was prior PBs (path 'c'). Most importantly, however, Time 1 PBs also significantly predicted subsequent achievement (path 'b') – and because this was after accounting for prior achievement ('d') we can say that PBs add to achievement, beyond prior achievement. Interestingly also, path 'a' was not significant – leading to the conclusion that PBs affect achievement more

than achievement affects PBs. This has big implications for educational practice because it shows that there is real value in educators promoting a PB focus.

### LONGITUDINAL BOARDING SCHOOL RESEARCH

Thus, longitudinal educational research dramatically elevates and amplifies the quality of answers educational researchers can provide to educational practitioners. Longitudinal educational research provides much clearer direction on what factors are really worth attending to and which will provide greatest 'bang for buck' at school. Participating in educational research that is longitudinal can give educators, students, and parents confidence that important and substantial insights will be gained from their involvement.

In a previous column in Lights Out, we introduced a collaborative research project between ABSA and the University of Sydney. This project seeks to understand the effects of boarding school on academic and non-academic outcomes. A vital feature of that study is its longitudinal design. Because it is

longitudinal we can address very important educational questions around what adds value to students' lives. The boarding school study, then, has vital scope for providing powerful answers to important educational questions.

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For further information about this study, contact Brad Papworth: [b.papworth@edfac.usyd.edu.au](mailto:b.papworth@edfac.usyd.edu.au) or (02) 9683 8490.

## Offering International Life and Teaching Experiences to *Timor Leste's Finest!*

by Mike Gregory (Director of Learning - Timbertop, Geelong Grammar School)



Above: José Viegas – Timbertop Assistant, Opposite Page: His Excellency, Dr José Ramos-Horta President of Timor Leste

When José Viegas arrived in Australia in January this year to take up a twelve month teaching assistant placement at Geelong Grammar School's Timbertop campus, it was the first time the young Timorese Leste had ever been outside his country of birth. José is the first graduate teacher to be selected under a new scheme called Mestre Estajásim which in Tetum, the language of Timor Leste, simply means gap teacher. This scheme's purpose is to provide young Timorese student teachers, or recent graduates, with international life experiences that would ordinarily be impossible for them to attain.

Australian boarding schools are ideally suited to providing placement opportunities under this scheme. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly many boarding schools already have many years experience accommodating gap students into their programmes. José's role and conditions at Timbertop mirror closely the role that gap students, which at Timbertop we call Assistants, have filled for many decades.

His duties include general jobs around the campus, assisting teachers, supervising dormitories and participating in the hiking and running programmes (the latter two duties might be unique to Timbertop). José works closely with all teachers and lives on campus with the other Assistants who come from all corners of the earth.

**"For Timor-Leste to develop a holistic approach is needed. We believe that education is the best place to invest our human resources. To achieve this, we will have to learn not just inside the country but also from outside world. Australia is one among many countries that is very strong in terms of education and is very valuable for Timor-Leste to learn from."**

*José Viegas – Timbertop Assistant*

Secondly it is central to a boarding school's mission that they be a warm, embracing and inclusive place to live for all types of people, with a ready supply of avuncular teachers and residential staff willing to mentor young men

and women. This provides an appropriate living environment for a young person who has never before experienced a developed country.

### IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE SCHEME

- The purpose of Mestre Estajásim is to provide Timorese Leste student teachers with a twelve month long gap Teaching Assistant placement in an Australian boarding school.
- Teaching Assistants are remunerated in the same way as other gap students. Accommodation and board are also provided by the school.
- The opportunity is provided at little or no expense to the successful candidate.
- Mestre Estajásim facilitates the placement on behalf of the school, but schools retain the authority to appoint the candidate that best suits their needs.
- Placements are usually for 12 months, although shorter placements might also be possible.
- Organisers are seeking to partner with an established and recognised international organisation, which will be able to lend its expertise and experience to further establish and support Mestre Estajásim

Internationalism is at the heart of the genesis of this scheme. President Jose Ramos-Horta, the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, believes that the factor most limiting to effective teaching in Timor Leste is the lack of experiences its teachers have in the world outside Timor. The President argues that for Timorese children to be prepared for their countries rapid emergence into a modern, global world, its teachers must be able to offer an international perspective to students. President Ramos-Horta, who visited the Timbertop campus last year, spent much of the 24 years he was in exile travelling the world bringing the world's attention to events in Timor whilst it was occupied.



**“As someone who has travelled the world, over 100 countries, Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe, having learned about so many different cultures and shared so many we experiences, I believe that each of us become a more learned person, more sensitive and humble, by spending some time outside our own village, town, city or country, and study abroad. For a teacher, an educator, a pedagogue, this is even more important, a great chance, to learn even more and to teach even better those under our care.”**

*Dr José Ramos-Horta  
President of Timor Leste*

Despite the significant achievements that have been made across all aspects of Timorese government and society in the ten years following its destructive transition to independence from Indonesian occupation, Timor Leste remains one of the poorest nations on earth. This makes international travel and work virtually impossible for the vast majority of Timorese. The Mestre Estajiasim scheme aims to overcome this barrier for a small number of Timor’s finest prospective teachers. José excelled at all levels of school and university, despite two extended periods as a refugee. He was recommended to us by his university. The successful candidates participate at little or no personal financial expense.

Collegiality is also central to this scheme. For example, relationships forged between the Timbertop teachers and José, and those who follow him, will continue for decades. Many of the Timbertop and Geelong Grammar School teaching staff have already expressed an interest to travel to Timor Leste. The development of a broader network of Australian and Timorese

teachers has countless other benefits including a higher level of cultural understanding and a more informed and connected relationship between the two nations. Perhaps one day the scheme could even operate in reverse.

There are, of course, equally important lessons for Australian teachers and their students to learn from the Timorese. Fostering resilience amongst students is increasingly becoming a core aim of all schools. Few people are better references to the profound power of resilience, optimism and forgiveness than the Timorese Leste. During the brutal 24 year Indonesian occupation of Timor Leste as many as 200 000 people perished.

Only 30 years before the Indonesian invasion 40 000 Timorese died during the forward defence of Australia in 1941-1942. Although the past decade has not been free of violence and instability, the Timorese are using their immense sense of optimism to drive them into a stable, free and prosperous future. In order to do this they have had to reconcile their past so as not to be shackled by it. This is a valuable lesson for us all.

**“The incredible richness experienced by students when exposed to a group of educators, assistants and fellow students who come from all over the world promotes acceptance, acknowledges difference and encourages diversity. The inclusion of an East Timorese Assistant into the Timbertop programme has greatly strengthened our international outlook. I hope that this two-way relationship between Geelong Grammar School and Timor Leste lasts well into the future.”**

*Roger Herbert – Head of Timbertop*

José, who lost several family members during the horrors and had his house burnt to the ground twice, calls the Indonesian students at Timbertop Maun, which in English is brother. He notes that the elements of the Indonesian military responsible for brutalities in Timor inflicted the same brand of oppression to many, many Indonesians. It was, after all, the Indonesian people who overthrew the military regime responsible. Furthermore, he accepts that the Timorese prospects of prosperity are truly entwined with those of the Indonesians.

### FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION IN TIMOR LESTE

- The Timorese Leste are generally very highly motivated for education.
- There are currently two very good teacher training institutions in Timor Leste
- In the destruction that followed the independence ballot in 1999, 95% of all school buildings were destroyed, 80% of all primary school teachers and almost all secondary school teachers returned to Indonesia. At that point schooling collapse entirely.
- Timor Leste has a booming population. The need for good teachers with an international perspective is vital for the country’s development.
- As with all countries Timor’s peace, stability and prosperity are directly reliant on quality teaching.

Increasingly Australian schools are exploring ways that they can engage their schools’ communities in acts of service that also further fosters a sense of internationalism, kindness and responsibility amongst their students. Mestre Estajiasim offers boarding schools one pathway to achieving these aims in a way that utilises existing programmes. This scheme allows schools to help others by doing what they do best, teaching and caring for students. The Geelong Grammar School is set to offer another annual placement to a young Timorese from 2011.



If you would like to learn more about Mestre Estajiasim with a view to creating a similar placement at your own school please email at [mgregory@ggs.vic.edu.au](mailto:mgregory@ggs.vic.edu.au) or call me on 03 5733 6777.  
Mike Gregory (Director of Learning – Timbertop, Geelong Grammar School)

## St Judes Tanzania

By Sarah Henry



Its 5pm and I am sitting at my office, in the administration block of a school. Early next week, the boarders will start to arrive back from their Christmas holiday break. The school will once again become a place of routine activity.

I look out my window across a modest, yet well kept school quadrangle. Across the quadrangle, I can see the doors to the uniform shop are open. Staff are busy finalising uniforms, ready for that start of the school year. Inside this uniform shop you won't find any school blazers or Panama hats. Instead, there are meters and meters of blue fabric. At two basic sewing machines sit two women; at last count they had sewn around 800 school uniforms.

Next to the uniform shop are the stairs that lead to the library. This year there are 1300 students enrolled. In a few weeks the text book hire process takes place. But there will be no need to remind the students of the

importance not to deface or damage the books. These students know Mum and Dad simply can't afford to pay the fee. They'll take care of the books.

Just within my view is the entrance to the kitchen. The school has three kitchens. This one alone prepares around 4000 meals a week.

Hundreds of plastic plates and mugs are packed ready to be used. In the first week back at school, you won't hear comments of "being back to boarding school food." These warm, filling meals, of beans and rice will be truly appreciated. For many of the day students, this school lunch may be the only meal they have all day.

And so I bring my attention to whats going on in my office. My colleague is delighted. She has received a parcel in the mail. A 'care package' from home; Australia. Inside are photos of a new family member, a copy of the Melbourne newspaper and a packet of Twisties.

Another colleague, from Western Australia, convinces me that we really should get out and do some exercises. As two white girls (Wazungus), we will be safe out walking together. And, so I leave the office, go to my unit and grab my sneakers.

We walk towards the school gates. At the gates are three guard (as there are 24 hours a day). They let us out of the large, steel framed door. We leave the school grounds, and walk around the local village. The village is called Moshono. Moshone is an outer village of the city Arusha. Arusha is close to Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Tanzania is in East Africa. And here I am, working at the School of St Jude, a school founded eight years ago, by a young country girl from NSW. Her name was Gemma Rice.

Eight years later, the three students has turned into 1300 student (of which the eldest are about to enter form two (grade nine). Gemma is know married with three children and is Gemma Sisia. And I, along with around twenty other international staff, mainly Australians



## **The students are from the poorest of poor families and the education they receive at St Jude's is aiming to do one thing: Fight Poverty through Education.**

work in administration roles at the school. It is a school, that has almost everything you would expect from an Australian school. Except one thing. The students are from the poorest of poor families and the education they receive at St Jude's is aiming to do one thing: Fight Poverty through Education.

On our walk through the village, about 10 minutes from the St Jude's gates, we walk past the schools main boarding campus, Movairo. Planning for this campus started around five years ago. At the time, the oldest children in the school were in grade four and they were about to sit crucial national exams. Basically, if the student failed the test, they would not be able to continue to attend school.

Everything needed to be done to ensure that the students were given the best chance at passing. The solution? Build a boarding house. By doing this, the kids would be provided with three things. One, an opportunity to study (as opposed to sitting on a bus for up to two hours a day, as well as a potential one hour walk to the bus stop).

Two, a good nights sleep (at home they probably share one thin mattress with the whole family). Three, and most vitally, they would be provided with breakfast, lunch and dinner. At St Jude's, all students from grade four to seven are offered weekly boarding- there is a 100% acceptance rate of this offer! All secondary students, who currently are in grade eight and nine, are full time boarders.

Looking through the Movairo gates, there is still a hive of activity. Approximately 300 labourers ('fundeers') are working on site, as more dorms are being built to accommodate the schools growing numbers. This campus in 2010 will house 500 students (an hour away is the schools Usa River Campus, where another 400 students board). Inside, the dorms are immaculately kept. They are cleaned by the students each morning at 5:30am. This place

is pure luxury for the students. Its warm, safe, dry and clean. There is clean drinking water. There is electricity. There are blankets and pillows. There are showers and towels. Everything in this boarding house represents to the children, what they can provide for themselves, and their family, if they commit to their education.

After we finish walking, we return to St Jude's. I meet up with some visitors we have at the school. The couple, visiting from Australia, are travelling around East Africa. They have included a two day stop over at the school. This couple join the 3000 (how many has Julie got on her database) others who sponsor a student (or teacher) at the school. It is these private sponsorships and general donations that fund the school. 90% (Julie) of these sponsors/donors are Australian.

The couple have spent the afternoon visiting their sponsored students home. This home would have had no electricity, would have consisted of only one room and the floor would have been dirt. The family would have been genuinely poor- that's the only reason their child is at St Jude's.

In ten days, I am leaving Tanzania. For three months I will criss- cross Australia on the 2010 St Jude's promotional tour. I will accompany Gemma and assist with the logistics of each day. For around 90 days, Gemma will present each morning, day and evening.

Presentations will be to school assemblies, church congregations, business groups, Rotary clubs and general community meetings. It is from the annual promotional tour that people hear of the school. It is also a chance for current sponsors and donors to hear an update on the school.

It will enjoy returning to Australia for three months. I grew up on the family property near Warwick, Queensland. For secondary school I

was a day-student at The Scots PGC College. I then went to uni in Brisbane, during which time I worked in the boarding house at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School. Also, during my study years, I worked at Fairholme College, Toowoomba (also in the boarding house).

It was actually through my time at St Margarets that I heard of St Jude's. In 2005, St Margarets had a stand at the Tamworth Ag show.

Next to our stand was the New England Girls School (NEGS). As Gemma grew up near Armidale, and also taught at NEGS, the NEGS staff were discussing St Jude's. From there, the idea was planted for me. It wasn't until a few years later that I was in a position to move to Tanzania.

The School of St Judes is a world away from the Australian private schooling system. The backgrounds of the students are even further apart. If the students of your school could learn of St Jude's, it will mean the next generations of Australians, may one day chose to support the school.

It is a pleasure to be involved in a school that is offering so much more than an education. Nor, is it merely offering a bandaid solution to the issues facing a developing country. Instead, it is providing genuine hope for the future of its students (and there is a distinctly proud Australian feel to it all)!

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Sarah Henry  
Marketing Manager  
The School of St Jude's

## How Good is *Our School*?

By Simon Shepherd

**It can be argued that effective self evaluation lies at the heart of effective education. Students and staff who effectively evaluate their own performance can improve it. Likewise a school or boarding house that is effectively self evaluating can improve its performance.**

The Scottish Education system has been a leader in self evaluation since 1996 when they first published "How Good is Our School" (HIGIOS). This document has been further refined in 2002 when a new edition of HIGIOS was published and again in 2007. Having worked in the Scotland from 1998 through to 2005 and been involved in a number of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education Inspections of both an academic and care and welfare nature my exposure to self evaluation through HIGIOS has been enlightening. It is essential to note that the Scottish system has long been concerned with putting students at the centre of all school activity and assessment. Publications such as "More than feelings of Concern" from the 1980s and "The Heart of the Matter" in the mid 1990's reinforce this.

Currently in Australia we do not have national standards for provision of care and welfare in boarding. There is very little inspection of the facilities and care provided to boarding students and no minimum standards for the boarding schools to attain and surpass at a national unified level.

However, the notion of self evaluation does not enter into the debate over national standards.

Self evaluation merely provides facility to ensure that your school is moving forward and taking the time to think reflectively about the service it is providing and ways to further improve it. As a Director of Boarding or Boarding House Supervisor you can effectively develop your own self evaluation tools that will provide you and your school with meaningful reflective

data to ensure that the students in your school are receiving the best care they can.

According to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education : *"Self-evaluation is not a bureaucratic or mechanistic process. It is a reflective professional process through which schools get to know themselves well and identify the best way forward for their pupils. It will, therefore, promote considered innovation. ....It is about change and improvement, whether gradual or transformational, and is based on professional reflection, challenge and support. It involves taking considered decisions about actions which result in clear benefits for young people."* [HMIE 2007]

They go on to state that :

At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions:

- *How* are we doing?
  - *How* do we know?
  - *What* are we going to do now?
- [HMIE 2007]

Each criteria for evaluation is measured on a six point Likert scale with 1 being the worst, 3 being satisfactory and 6 being the best. Professional development in boarding this year at Kinross Wolaroi School has seen the boarding team working through a number of the National Standards for boarding generated in the UK and applying them to our school using the self evaluation model provided by HIGIOS.

### WORKING AN EXEMPLAR

One of the UK National Standards for boarding refers to the residential accommodation being appropriate for the age of each student. In examining this as using the HIGIOS model we would consider the;

- sufficiency, range and appropriateness of the residential accommodation and,
- the arrangements to ensure the health and safety of the students in boarding

In our evaluation we would be looking at the key three questions. How are we doing? How do we know? And, what are we going to do now?

This process requires reflective thinking on current accommodation. Finding evidence to support the thinking, the evidence must be capable of being physically proved. Finally looking for the way ahead to either rectify the problem or reinforce the level of provision.

Kinross Wolaroi has seven boarding houses, each boarding house staff team worked through this together the results were discussed at a Head of House meeting and then relayed up to the Principal. This process means that evaluation has occurred, hard evidence has been found to support the evaluation and a solution to whatever problems have been found have occurred.

Each boarding house is different and the following are examples of the information gathered as a part of the self evaluation procedure.



## LEVEL 5 EXAMPLE

### Sufficiency, range and appropriateness

The accommodation and facilities provide a safe, pleasant and stimulating environment, well suited to supporting the activities of pupils, the work of staff, and social and leisure activities, where applicable. Appropriate living space is available for the number of boarders in each boarding house or dormitory. There are suitable work areas for pupils. Storage provision and facilities for display are plentiful and convenient. Accommodation is very well maintained. Fixtures, fittings, and furniture match educational needs, are of high quality and are in very good condition. Access is suitable to the needs of all users. Staff accommodation is well maintained and suitable for the purpose it is used for.

### Arrangements to ensure Health and Safety

The school has very effective arrangements for ensuring appropriate security of buildings and for ensuring that health and safety aspects of accommodation and facilities are identified and addressed.

## LEVEL 2 EXAMPLE

### Sufficiency, range and appropriateness

The accommodation and facilities provide a safe environment but some adaptations are needed to support academic, social and leisure activities. Although the majority of dormitories and studies are of an appropriate size, restricted space in some limits can create uncomfortable living conditions. Storage and display facilities need improvement. Accommodation is in need of decoration in places. Fixtures, fittings and furniture are functional but they do not fully match student needs or are in only fair condition. A number of aspects of maintenance require review. Access may be difficult for some

### Arrangements to ensure Health and Safety

Arrangements for monitoring the security of school buildings are not sufficiently rigorous. Whilst some health and safety issues relating to accommodation have been identified, they have not always been addressed effectively.

process a very clear picture of your schools performance can be gauged through a proven process. Using the standards as a key questions for your evaluations

Given that this system has been proven to effective in improving the academic outcomes and quality of care provided to students in Scotland it seems reasonable to expect it would do the same here. It would certainly ensure that we are all working towards a common goal of providing the best level of care that we can for the boarders in our schools.

The National Conference in Canberra this year will have a workshop on using self evaluation in your boarding school. If you would like find out more about these tools and help further develop a series of evaluation tools for use in all our boarding schools it would be fantastic to see you. The full documents of both the HGIOS can be found at:

[www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgiosjte3.pdf](http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgiosjte3.pdf)

[www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_4069192.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4069192.pdf)

Simon Shepherd is a board member of ABSA and Director of Boarding at Kinross Wolaroi School

*These exemplars have been adapted for use from HMI HGIOS material.*

The how do we know components of these exemplars were covered by Boarding House staff teams working through the evaluators and providing examples of practice and infrastructure in their respective houses.

the process becomes more complex. Most boarding staff would follow the ancient piece of Oriental Wisdom; *'When you wheel you barrow to the foot of the mountain, suddenly a path will appear'*

The what are we going to do now? Component is for many boarding staff the hardest part of this process. Policy and procedure can be changed rapidly to ensure that the level of care provided improves. However, where change needs to occur that incurs capital expenditure

## THE WAY AHEAD

The National Boarding Standards of the UK were produced in 2002 and there are 52 standards that you can use to evaluate your boarding facilities against. Through this

## Road to Building Academic Achievement

By David Anderson

**Underachievement among American youth is often blamed on inadequate teachers, boring textbooks, and large class sizes. We suggest another reason for students falling short of their intellectual potential: their failure to exercise self discipline. As McClure (1986) has speculated, 'Our society's emphasis on instant gratification may mean that young students are unable to delay gratification long enough to achieve academic competence'(p.20). We believe that many of America's children have trouble making choices that require them to sacrifice short-term pleasure for long term gain, and that programs that build self-discipline may be the royal road to building academic achievement.**

**Self Discipline Predicts Academic Achievement**  
Angela L. Duckworth and Martin E.P. Seligman

The paragraph above contains powerful words for educators to reflect upon. My thoughts immediately focussed on the advantages of a boarding education for students allowing them to gain a higher level of self discipline and develop improved organisational skills enhancing overall academic achievement.

Today the boarding campus protects children from many of the distractions that exist in the wider community. These distractions present some conflict to students as they attempt to proportion their time navigating between academic and modern technological challenges/distractions! The young student is unable to delay the need for instant self gratification and does not focus on the bigger picture of academic advancement.

The boarder lives in a community that is designed to give a special opportunity and introduce strict priorities which allows each boy and girl to grow and develop physically, emotionally, socially and academically. Most of the boarding activities are shared with other

students allowing respect and patience to become strong influences across all phases of childhood and adolescent development. The constant stress and pace of the outside 'world' and the busy modern family unit are replaced in the boarding school by routine and orderly activities that constantly provide the boarders with positive experiences, peer cooperation and role modelling.

The mere fact that students do not have the immediate assistance of their parents results in the large majority of boarders to become independent, self discipline and self-organised. The most successful academic students are fortunate to possess these qualities and many parents now look to a boarding education to nurture these virtues in their children. Self discipline in the classroom and in periods of consistent academic study each evening is indeed a potent tool contributing to academic competence.

When a boarder is sharing his life with many other students and teachers instant

gratification cannot be expected and is not always forthcoming. Recognition and support from the boarding community may be as close as the student can expect in a shared environment but this is not necessarily damaging to the individual in the long term and possibly contributes to character building.

Adolescents must also realise that the relationship between teacher and pupil is a two way process and the student should also reciprocate with gratitude to the efforts of the instructor.

Once students have left school in Year 12 and attend university or during their early years in the workforce they may commonly face correction and pressure in the 'outside' world to perform. This attitude is in contrast to the more protective family environment offering instant recognition and reward.

By providing a happy, cooperative boarding house atmosphere based upon kindness, personal interest and fairness boarding



house staff can help satisfy the child's need for affection. The basic feeling of acceptance in the boarding community and with persons in authority may be fostered through sharing with boarders the planning of boarding activities, the formulation of rules and through encouraging boarders to accept varying measures of responsibilities on campus. By encouraging initiative and self-reliance in the life of the boarder it is possible to assist all students in the satisfaction of their needs for independence and self discipline. In particular providing experiences demanding self-direction and self-control, such as student leadership, can be very helpful in satisfying this need.

The student's feeling of personal worthiness may be cultivated when opportunities are provided for boarders to experience a feeling of being wanted and accepted by boarding house staff and peers. A feeling of being wanted may be fostered when the teacher respects the sanctity of the personality of the boarder respecting their feelings, their needs,

their loyalties, and the student's developing intellect all contributing to reducing the need for undeserved instant gratification. It would be tragic, from the point of view of character formation alone, if reward were to become the object of every achievement in the success of a boarders living on campus.

The boarding staff in helping the boarder set realistic work and social targets must encourage the students to modify their aspirations in light of success and failures. This implies the necessity to keep the pupil aware of their performances therefore correction and evaluation of performance, commendation and encouragement are important.

It is important that the teacher's corrections and criticism of the boarder's performance, when found necessary, be positive and calculated to preserve the student's self respect. This means for example, that the boarder success and progress should be highlighted and receive favourable comment, whilst the pathway to improvement should be suggested as a challenge.

Many of these strategies may assist the carer in a boarding community to raise the student's academic performance based upon an enhanced self-discipline and improved order in their lives without the expectation or constant need for instant fulfilment.

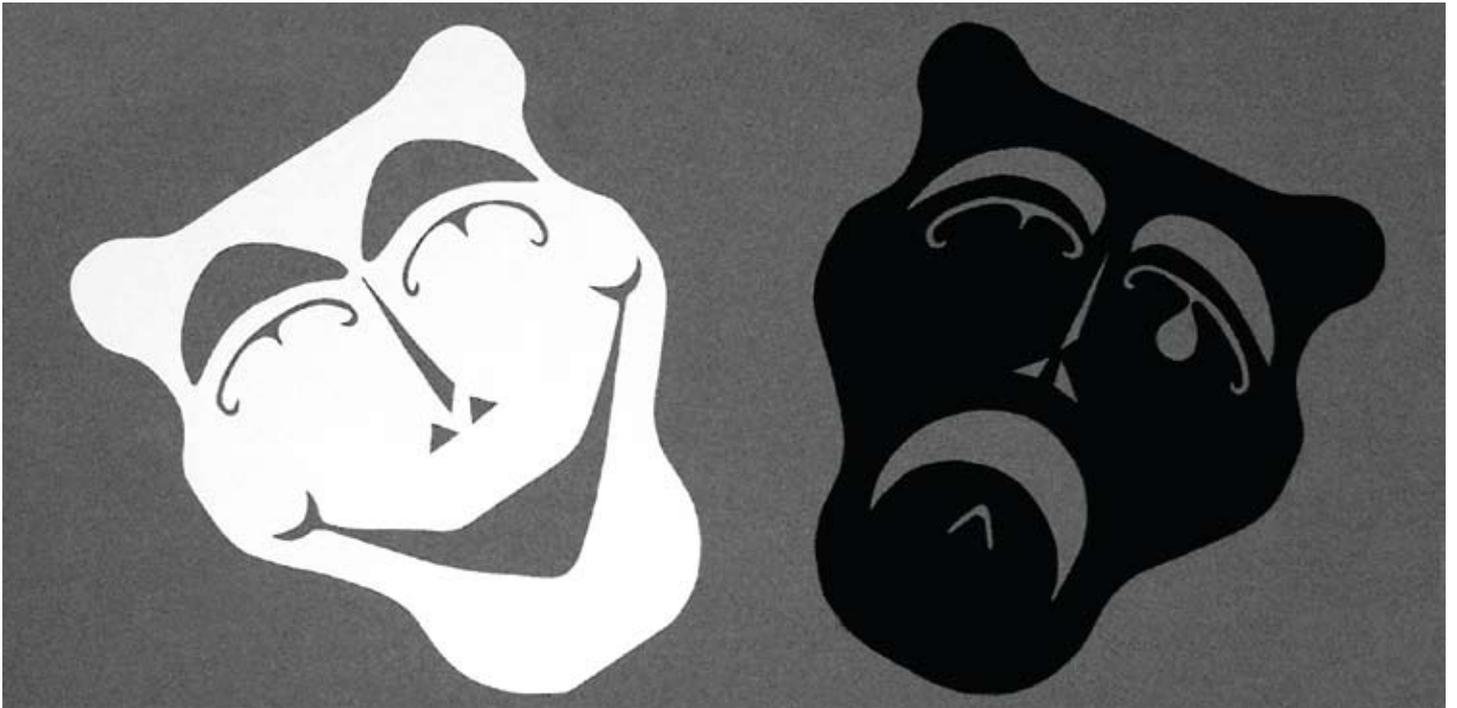
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David Anderson  
Shore School

Humour *in*

## Boys Boarding

By Conrad Mathias



**It's almost a truism to state that humour in boarding is like humour anywhere else – unless you've a bit of a gift for it, then you should not overreach yourself. There's a wonderful cameo in *Good Morning Vietnam* about the Lieutenant and humour.**

Boys like humour. They are surrounded by their peers and others who are often better at the one liner than they are. Being competitive, they aspire to being witty, and some of them are. So if you as a boarding person have got a gift for being funny, then chances are that the boys will listen and pick up on it.

You need a bit of care. One shouldn't confuse adolescent humour with being humorous with adolescents. Very different things. Unless you are very careful and very measured, the boys won't thank you for moving into their word space and mimicking their adolescent humour. It's best not to try it.

What you can do though, is raise the bar and give them opportunities to test out adult humour, adult repartee, and adult banter. They'll occasionally get it wrong – they'll either go too far, be too obtuse, or just not be funny. But part of what we do is to provide boundaries in all sorts of life skills and we should give them the chance to muscle up to all the boundaries and check them for stability and genuineness.

There are a few things to watch out for. Sometimes nick names are very good, very witty, and crushingly apt. But, by and large you shouldn't use them. It is part of our craft now that we understand that nicknames often

have etymologies which the nick named lad would rather forget, or would have rathered that it didn't start in the first place. I took over a boarding community some years ago and ran into a character whose nickname was 'frog'. Inter alia, some felt he looked a little frog-like. When I challenged the use of the nick name (by everyone, including the staff), there was general bewilderment – "he doesn't mind". Well, he did, actually, but it gone on for too long and turning that ship around took an age.

Smut is out. So is the double entendre. Apart from the bad taste of it all, there are child



**There are a few things to watch out for. Sometimes nick names are very good, very witty, and crushingly apt. But, by and large you shouldn't use them.**

protection issues now which quite rightly (and somewhat overdue) preclude any trespass into sexual humour, or humour associated with intimacy. Boys will stray into it, and it is then that you need to have the electric current turned on at the boundary fence.

Finally, there's the competitive thing. There doesn't have to be a winner, and it is often an opportunity to let boys know that they don't have to have the last word, but can go out with a flourish instead of a bang.

Don't be afraid to put a bit of humour up around the boarding home. A daily "Farside" cartoon, a good editorial cartoon from one of the dailies, or just something in the comic strips which takes your fancy. It is good for

students to see us laughing – they'll watch and learn about what to laugh at and what to ignore.

Finally, we need to look after ourselves. Humour helps. If you cannot find half a dozen funny things which will give you a belly laugh in each week of the term, then you probably either are not watching very carefully, or you're in the wrong job.

An absence of humour, no matter how imperfect, can be a cautionary tale in a boarding community.

Conrad Mathias  
St Augustine's College, Cairns

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*Continued from page 1*

Evacuation assembly points, how students will be accounted for, key contact numbers (e.g. fire, police, electrician, plumbers, security, College Doctor, counsellor) for example, must be understood clearly by all staff and students and form a central part of the student and staff induction programmes.

Ensure that parents have appropriate insurance to cover their child's items. As a rule, most schools' insurance policies will not cover personal items should they be lost in a fire. While our insurance company was collaborative and most helpful in this regard, our post-fire procedures to explicitly inform

both help them and us prepare for the worst. This type of structured preparation takes considerable time and commitment from both school staff, in our case from Senior College staff and the fire chief to ensure appropriate benefit can be gained from the exercises.

I am sure that boarders throughout the world sometimes do not take evacuation rehearsals seriously. I suspect the photo included with this article would be a good starting point to get the message through!

While it is highly likely that readers will be aware of the necessity to ensure that curtains are made from fire retardant materials, mattresses might not be so obvious. While fire retardant mattresses do cost more, the chemicals released by burning mattresses that are not made of such materials are toxic enough to render building occupants unconscious in a matter of minutes.

Similarly, many boarding houses in Australia have made use of timber paneling in student areas rather than plaster board or other materials, due to its durability. This paneling is often sealed with a highly flammable varnish which acts as an accelerant that pushes fire to the ceiling very quickly. Fire retardant paint is available and is worth considering.

At our College we have "Fire Bags" strategically placed around the houses which contain student rolls, torches, and key contact numbers. Students are aware of these bags and our Boarding Captains are responsible for taking these bags as they leave the house in an evacuation. This allows the Captains to begin taking an initial roll while staff are doing a final sweep of the house.

Ensure that a system is in place to cater for any students who may have conditions that prevent them from hearing or responding to the evacuation siren. On the night of our fire, a hearing impaired student in our boarding community who does not wear hearing aids while asleep at night, was close to the ignition point. A buddy system worked well to ensure that this boy was not left asleep in his bed.

A Critical Incident Policy that is subject to regular review is also essential. Note that, of course, such policies are not worth the paper they are written on unless they are clearly understood by the key staff who are responsible for implementing them. In our case presenting and working through fictional situations with this committee in terms prior to the actual emergency paid high dividends.

## **Ensure from the first day, all students and staff are aware of, and understand your evacuation procedures.**

Clear policies or statements about students bringing electrical equipment into the boarding houses are also essential. In our case, the cause of the fire was traced back to an electrical item (heater) that, while "tested and tagged", and perfectly "legal" in the boarding context, might also have reasonably been anticipated to be a potential problem. Boarding staff need to ask the "worst case scenario" questions. Are all electrical items, particularly, personal heaters and electric blankets, allowed? Is there a requirement that all items are tested and tagged? Are all items appropriate in a boarding context in which immature minds (and this term is used here without insult) are interacting with electrical appliances? In our case, it is likely that the fire originated from a heater, in front of which a student had placed wet sports clothing ("skins") to dry.

parents about insurance requirements have most certainly been clarified. Given that in most cases, much of a child's life comes with them to boarding school, it is important for computers, ipods, mobile phones and clothing to be insured. The cost of replacing a school uniform is considerable.

At the College we make a point of rehearsing our emergency procedures at a variety of times, including after "lights out". While students may grumble, we all understand that their safety is paramount. We also invite the Fire Brigade to visit all of our boarding houses on an annual basis. This involves walking them through the whole house to ensure that they are familiar with the lay out. The Fire Brigade also play an active part in drills, advising and occasionally setting up scenarios with smoke machines and "lost" students to





## AFTER A FIRE

The following points are provided for you to consider and are learnt from our experience. While it is highly likely that readers will be aware of a number of these (and for that matter there are probably more that could be added to this list), it is important to give the following consideration in your planning.

Communication is vital. We have a College SMS Service that allowed us to send a message to all parents of the boys in the house to let them know that their son was safe. This was completed within 45 minutes of the fire starting. Further SMSs were sent to the whole College community throughout the day of the fire. This service allowed us to efficiently and effectively get the message we wanted to our parents without incorrect information and a rumour mill starting. The feedback that we received from our community was overwhelmingly positive as they knew what was happening and how they could help out. A note to remember is that it is important to have backup data available off site that can be accessed. It is likely that all power will be cut from campus initially preventing access to parent contact numbers that are located on a school server.

The police and arson squads will arrive quickly and want to interview students and staff. We found this quite confronting as students were in shock. It was important to

have a staff member with these students to provide the necessary support and guidance.

While obvious, it is essential the Critical Incident Team meets as soon as possible. Our team had our first meeting at 6am. As highlighted, rehearsals in this area paid off. This was the first of a number of meetings that occurred that day. It was important to focus on the key issues and not to worry about issues that could be attended to at a later stage. The well being of the students and staff was our overriding focus throughout the first day.

The engagement of a professional security company to manage traffic around the campus (the general public, media and members of the school community) was essential. Despite our regional location (two hours from Brisbane) we had media on campus by 6.30am seeking statements from students, staff and parents. Do not underestimate how quickly the media will arrive and ensure that only one person (the College Principal or delegate) makes any statements to the press. Staff and students need to be briefed / reminded that this is the case. We found that media followed students to their cars wanting statements.

Counselors were obviously required to work with students and staff affected by the fire. The importance of beginning this process immediately cannot be underestimated. Early contact allowed the initial foundation for

relationships to be developed with counselors who were accepted by the boys because they had been a part of this incident right from the beginning. This was, and still is, an ongoing process. The students in our situation involved still discuss the night with clarity. Quite often this event appears as a part of their literature written in English classes. It is important to recognise that an event like a fire will affect individuals in very different ways and be prepared to accommodate difficulties as they arise. It is also important to realise that events such as the boarding house fire could have long lasting effects on the students over a lengthy period of time that do not manifest themselves immediately following the event. We found that it was useful to have debriefing sessions with staff and students in the weeks after the event. This included a lunch a week after the event for all people involved in the fire (students and their families, staff, firemen, counselors, builders).

In our case, all occupants of the boarding house lost everything. They were left with only the pyjamas that they were wearing as they fled the boarding house. Consideration needs to be given to how students will be clothed in the short term. As with all boarding communities, other students were only too willing to provide clothes to their fellow boarders, yet the support we received from the College and wider community was overwhelming. Our Library became a central point to keep all the

boys together and to provide essential clothes and toiletries to the students.

While students knew, and could see the extent of the destruction from a distance, it was possible in our case and important to let students see the site from close range in daylight with their parents present. This could not occur until nearly a week after the fire due to insurance/safety issues and the all clear had been given by the necessary authorities. It did however allow students some closure and the ability to process that fact that nothing was left of their personal possessions, and that it would be a waste of time sifting through their areas. That students were keen to get back to their areas to see if they could find any of their personal possessions was an unexpected key reason for having 24-hour security on site in the days following the fire..

It is also our experience that serious thought should be given to engaging a Fire Engineer to review boarding houses on a relatively regular (perhaps five yearly) basis. As a result of our fire, we engaged a Fire Engineer to evaluate all our boarding facilities. In our case, three of these have been traditional homes for boarders for many (up to 90) years and subject to a series of improvements and modifications. This type of relatively unplanned, evolutionary development inevitably leads to less than ideal physical conditions. The reviews resulted in both changes to the layout of sleeping arrangements in some boarding houses, and urgent complete master planning and renovation of others. The fire engineers have the ability, for example, to determine which way and how fast smoke will travel should there be a fire in the house. For those of us charged with the responsibility of boarder safety in our school, this computer modeling was greatly sobering. Stair wells in double storey boarding houses used as escape routes were of particular concern in our case.

In our new and rebuilt boarding facilities great care is being taken to reduce the availability and necessity for power in sleeping areas. "C-bus" systems are being utilised to turn off power in sleeping areas overnight. This is made possible by designing secure, personalised



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study areas in which mobile phones, laptops can be charged overnight in areas away from sleeping students.

In summary, through sharing our experiences it is hoped that the readers of this article will avoid having to go through the situation we faced twelve months ago and/or at least will be better prepared about what to expect. While it may be obvious to state that "buildings can be replaced, lives cannot", this simple statement really must be at the core of work to ensure positive outcomes from such an incident.

A final point... It will come as no surprise to you that, while students by definition lack life experience. In our case they clearly demonstrated a wonderful ability to think clearly, and act decisively and positively in a

life threatening situation. In a couple of notable case, their actions could even be described as heroic. One 13 year old boy, for example took time to ensure his mate (an international student with profound hearing impairment) was woken and stopped to help him find his hearing aids before making their escape. This, combined with clear policies and procedures that were in place, and, of course high quality staff, allowed our community to rebuild a boarding house without the disaster involving the loss of human life.

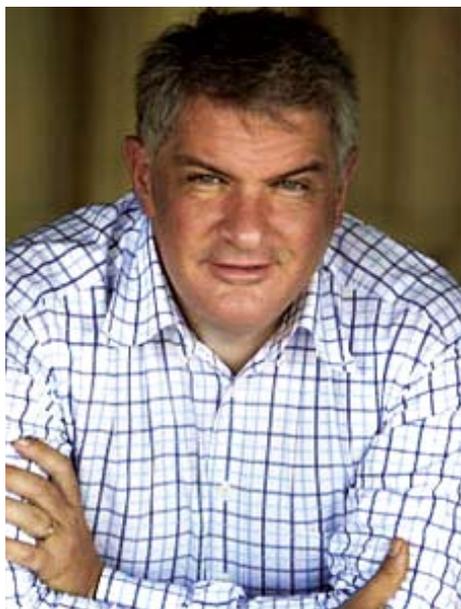
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Ben Manifold : Deputy Principal,  
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# Little Miss Bayside

By Michael Carr-Gregg



**“This is a good recipe for how to predispose your daughter into having an eating disorder...the risk is that they suddenly fear that their body shape is more important than their intellect.”**

On Wednesday April 7th of this year, I nearly choked on my Wheaties when reading the morning paper to discover that a beauty pageant for children (inspired by US TV shows) called Little Miss Bayside will be held in Brighton in the next few months. This antediluvian throwback of a competition, which costs \$100 will see tiny tots model swimwear and be judged on their smile and posture.

Organiser Laura Buik was reported in the Herald Sun as saying that US shows Toddlers & Tiaras and Baby Beauty Queens had sparked interest here and said that the Melbourne winners would get a tiara, but the main prizes would be a modeling contract and a three-day workshop. The news sparked great reactions from some Psychologists like Andrew Fuller who told the media that pageants such as these could lead to competition, anxiety and embarrassment. He said “...This is a good recipe for how to predispose your daughter into having an eating disorder...the risk is that they suddenly fear that their body shape is more important than their intellect.” Also prominent was Psychologist Dr Janet Hall who said pageants taught children that looks were more important than a good heart. It makes a competition out of being more grown up than you are.”

Julie Gale (Kids Free to be Kids), Dr Joe Tucci (the Australian Childhood Foundation) and I have called for a ban on such pageants for under 14 year olds, which was immediately dismissed by the State government.

This inaction is puzzling given the long-standing and current overwhelming opinion in the psychology community concerning children’s beauty pageants. Namely, that they are not in the best interests of healthy child development. There is enough undue, exaggerated focus on superficial beauty in this culture without children being pitted against each other in a contest of looks.

I have heard all the arguments defending these contests and they all appear to be self-serving defences with no apparent regard to the considerable body of research that demonstrates why they are harmful to kids. I know that people say, “There are other things they’re judged on besides their looks; it teaches them poise, it gives them confidence.” But the hard fact remains they are called BEAUTY pageants and they have been and always will be based on using arbitrary standards of “beauty” to make one contestant better than all the rest.

If you sense considerable passion and concern you are correct. 1 in 5 young people

have a psychological problem in schools, mood and anxiety disorders are increasing, and I see the pain of adolescents (and their parents) struggling with eating disorders, not to mention the young woman in my office last week pleading with me to convince her parents to let her get plastic surgery because she can’t continue living looking so ugly (always compared to the popular media’s presentation of what is beautiful), I think that children’s beauty pageants (and this is mostly a girl’s/women’s issue) do a great disservice to the winners, the losers, and all children.

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Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is the author of “When to really Worry”(Penguin 2010) an Adolescent Psychologist and sits on the Victorian Minister of Roads Psychology Advisory Group.

## Coming Events

### Australia

26 to 29 September 2010

ABSA National Boarding Conference:  
POINT OF DIFFERENCE  
Recognising Diversity in Our Communities  
Hotel Realm, Canberra

### UK

12 July 2010 - 14 July 2010

Annual Conference for Matrons  
and Medical Staff  
Britannia Hotel, Coventry

### USA

23 - 29 June 2010

TABS Risk Management Seminar  
Wilmington, Delaware

20 - 23 July 2010

TABS Residential Life Academy  
and TABS Admission Academy  
Boston, Massachusetts

2 - 4 December 2010

TABS Annual Conference  
Chicago, Illinois

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