



lightsout

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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Dr Phil may be our saviour

By Michael Carr-Gregg

What is the collective noun for a group of psychologists? Apparently it is a 'complex' of psychologists and there were a few of us in the audience at Rod Laver Arena on Wednesday August 5th to listen to arguably the most famous psychologist in the world – none other than Dr Phil McGraw.

While there is no doubt that Dr Phil polarises many of his colleagues, no living person has done more to take psychology to the masses, a fact recognised by the American Psychological Association in 2006, which gave him one of the organisation's highest awards - a Presidential citation.

Dr Phil's visit could not be more timely. All boarding staff live in an environment of unprecedented social change, world turmoil, exposure to violent and sexual media images, high levels of family breakdown and an increasingly secular and disconnected society and they would do well to listen to Dr Phil's message that a key to a happy life is to take more control of our lives and to pay more attention to communication with the important people in our lives. A lot of us make assumptions about what other people know about our feelings or our preferences and we don't communicate, especially with the people we care about most.

Psychologists have discovered that what separates happy people from the rest of us is that they have a rich repertoire of friends. All of us benefit from finding ways of linking to other people, it doesn't have to be a one on one intimate relationship, although that is great, but psychological health seems to go hand in hand with ensuring you have connections with other people that are real and whole. There is a tendency for Australians to compartmentalise their

relationships, so that they have a separate relationship with their work colleagues, football club, neighbours, or our kids' friends - not realising that we also need someone who knows all of you, someone who connects with you at a deeper level.

My hope in particular, is that Australians in their twenties and thirties pay attention to some of Dr Phil's key messages. This is a group who think they are being clever playing hard, but really they are just battering themselves with drugs and alcohol and they think that's play, but sometimes they overdo it. Just witness the violence and mayhem on our city streets of late.

To be able to acknowledge that there can be something bigger than us, helps gives us a sense of where we fit in the world.

Australians need to get to know the other, to stop being so frightened of differences. If we start to connect to other people, who are not like us – we'll be less frightened generally, of the world. Often in relationships, people are looking for people like them with whom they resonate and I think Australia's biggest psychological problem is a fear of the other, which can be very damaging to the community as a whole and the individual.

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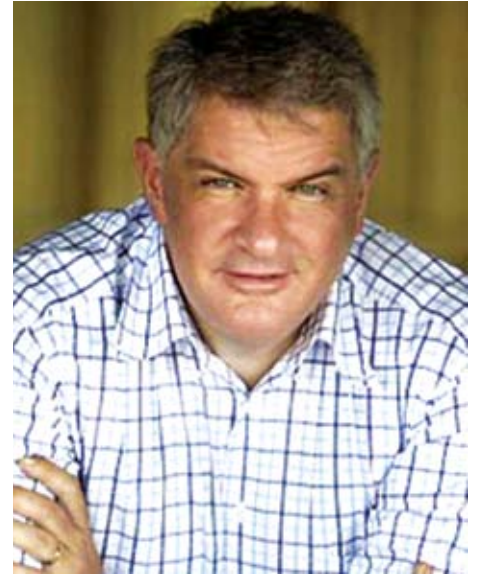
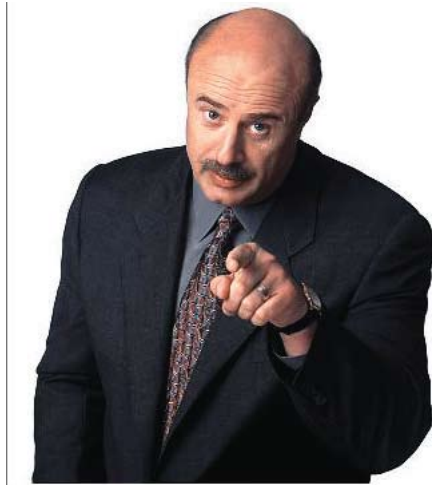
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Would You Like **Your Boarding School Featured** in Lights Out?

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 24 of this newsletter or contact ABSA.



if the intensity of the discomfort in your psychological life is just overwhelming, recognise it and find someone to talk to.

Dr Phil is a man of faith and finds that is a very important and useful part of mental health. To be able to acknowledge that there can be something bigger than us, helps gives us a sense of where we fit in the world. Many Australians side step altogether the idea of a connection with a greater universe, transcending the material world, and that is to their cost. Sometimes when you reflect on that bigger picture, it also helps you plan strategies for managing the smaller things and reminds you that you can't live as an island, you have to connect with the other.

Dr Phil, like many psychologists, is forever urging Australians to do a self assessment on a daily basis and to ask inside their head, in a private moment, what's bothering me? Am I happy in my job, in my family life, what are the things that are discontinuities or sources of stress, and then how can I do something about these things? In many of his excellent self help books, Dr Phil argues that the person we have to stand up most is ourselves – having identified an issue, he urges us to make up our minds that this is an area that we have to work on.

While many scoff at Dr Phil and his books – the truth is that they are invaluable sources of information to those who may never darken the door of a psychologist's office.

His overall message is that you can't change what you don't acknowledge, in other words, if the intensity of the discomfort in your psychological life is just overwhelming, recognise it and find someone to talk to. This is particularly true if the problem stems from what happens within the family - because if you don't get an outside opinion - then there's less of a chance of a resolution.

Boarding staff have one of the most difficult jobs in education, and my view has always been that if you don't wake up most mornings looking forward to most of what you are going to do that day, then you are doing something wrong, and you owe it to yourself to pinpoint what it is and fix it. Whether you can do that for yourself or with the help of family or friends, or whether you need some help from some properly trained psychologist - fix it! Dr Phil and his message was most welcome in our country and if he can add his considerable voice to the "complex" of psychologists urging Australians to examine the quality of their lives on a regular basis, then all the better.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is an adolescent psychologist and is honorary psychologist to the Australian Boarding Schools Association



Educational Services (Schools) General Staff Award 2010

by Dr Tim Hawkes

The Educational Services (Schools) General Staff Award (ESGSA) will come into force on 1 January 2010 and serves as an example of the perpetual change that occurs in the conditions of employment for boarding staff.

This Award will be superseded by other awards in coming years. Therefore, it is important for boarding staff to be up to date in their knowledge about the current award that covers them.

The ESGSA is an award that covers employers in the school education industry throughout Australia and includes the employee whose principal duties are to support the operation of a school's boarding house in relation to the supervision of students.

The ESGSA covers many relevant things such as:

1. What is deemed to be part-time employment.
 2. What is deemed to be casual employment.
 3. How to calculate the annual salary for an employee on leave without pay.
 4. What the minimum wages should be.
 5. Dispute resolution procedure.
- It indicates rates of pay for those who are under 21 years of age and who qualify as "Junior Employees".
 - It gives an indication of the extra pay available to those designated to perform first aid duty.
 - It clarifies such things as a sleepover allowance, uniform allowance and vehicle allowance.

Hours of work are also specified in the Award. It is interesting to note that in the case of boarding supervision services, an employee may have their hours of work averaged over a period of up to 12 months.

Normal working hours are specified as are penalty rates and rates for Saturday and Sunday work.

BOARDING SUPERVISION SERVICES GRADE 1

- Performing basic duties to assist the person in charge of the boarding house in the daily routines involving the care of students and general functions of the boarding house.
- Applying domestic and interpersonal skills.
- Occupational equivalent: boarding house assistant.

BOARDING SUPERVISION SERVICES GRADE 2

- Deputising from time to time for the person in charge of the boarding house, while undertaking basic duties.
- Occupational equivalent: senior boarding house assistant.

BOARDING SUPERVISION SERVICES GRADE 3

- Managing a boarding house, with significant responsibility for the welfare of students, which includes the maintenance of effective communication with the parents of students and the supervision of other boarding supervision employees.
- Occupational equivalent: boarding house supervisor, manager or coordinator.

BOARDING SUPERVISION SERVICES GRADE 4

- Responsibility to the principal of a school for the overall supervision of the recreational and personal welfare of all students and has overall responsibility for the administration of two or more boarding houses or a very large boarding house.
- Occupational equivalent: head of boarding (large school).

The contents of the ESGSA detailed above cover only a part of the conditions of employment in the Award, but they serve to show something of the diversity of information characteristically found in an award.

Of particular interest in the ESGSA are the four grades of boarding supervision that have been identified, with each grade having a different remuneration.



Dr Tim Hawkes
Chairman
ABSA

Parents in Partnership

by John Andrich

In writing this article I would like to acknowledge the work presented by Simon Shepherd, Director of Boarding at Kinross Wolaroi School in New South Wales at the ABSA Conference held in Melbourne this year. His excellent presentation provided the ideas to trial this forum. I would also like to acknowledge the work of our Headmaster Stuart Marquardt who planned, prepared and hosted the evening for parents.

I came away totally exhausted from the conference but enthused about the information presented throughout the two days. While attempting to sleep on the plane back to Western Australia I continued to reflect on the ways parents as a major stakeholder could be more actively involved in the boarding community. Whilst most boarding houses have already implemented a Boarding Parents Association and keep in regular contact with parents, I continue to believe that we need to examine the effectiveness of our level of communication.

Great Southern Grammar is presently building a separate senior wing exclusively for Year 11 and 12 students. Our first Parents Forum was held on August 25th to review the effectiveness of boarding and to present the plans and possible decor of the new boarding house. The response from the parents was excellent and the feedback on holding this forum was extremely positive. Plans were also made to invite the parents back for dinner along with the senior students who were given an opportunity to provide feedback about the decor.

The first part of the evening provided an opportunity for parents to collaboratively express their opinions in three areas. What's good about boarding?, 2. What can we do better? and 3. In an ideal world what would you like to see in the future? The responses were listed under each of these headings. My suggestion during this part would be to have a facilitator to ensure that all sections have a voice, to ensure that this stage keeps on track and is relevant and finally outline a time limit to ensure that we do not run over time. The majority of our parents are from a

farming back ground and had a distance to drive home. As the Head of Boarding the positives are easy to listen to but certainly the areas that we can improve on can realistically dent the pride. However, these can also be seen as a chance for an opportunity to address concerns and improve the quality of service even more.

The next stage of the night involved ten senior students joining the forum. We were extremely lucky to have Tony DeRossi from De Rossi & Co Design Studio (Architect) and from Danielle Fler and Maria Scamozzi from Brocks in Albany who had been assigned the interior design. Mr DeRossi firstly presented the building plans which had been displayed in the foyer of the school for perusal over several weeks prior to the forum. A detailed presentation involved many relevant questions about the internal and external structures of the building. Security, amenities and internal noise were three of the dominant features of the discussion. As a result of this presentation there were minor changes made to the original plan. The internal colours, floor coverings and window treatments were then presented to the forum. This provided an excellent opportunity for the students to give their feedback. The discussion with students also extended to Mr DeRossi visiting Anchorage House (Boys House) to be shown present design concerns from the students.

Our final stage of the evening involved joining the parents for dinner. This provided an excellent opportunity to socialise and discuss the effectiveness of the evening. Comments from parents and students reassured us that the evening was a complete success. Parents had expressed a concern that this may be a "one off" and a commitment was made that the forum would be held on an annual basis.

The next stage in this process is for parents to complete our survey on-line. The survey encompasses all aspects of boarding. The results of the forum and the survey will be presented back to parents, students and staff. This provides us with a clear vision of our objectives in moving forward.



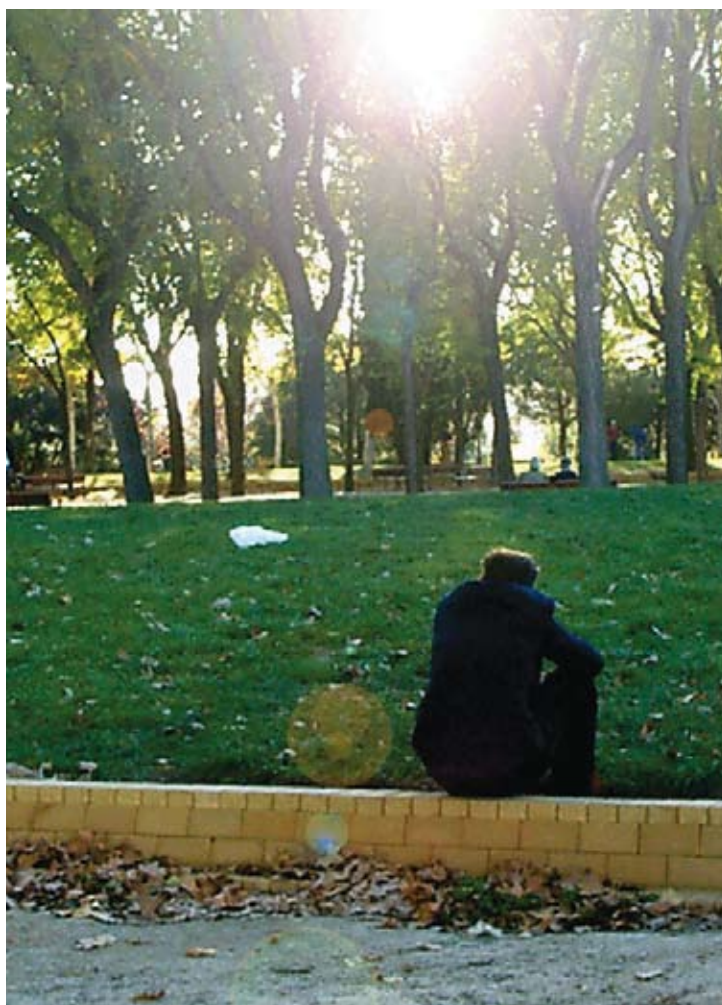
John Andrich
Head of Boarding
Great Southern Grammar
Albany WA



The importance of *doing nothing...*

by Conrad Mathias

'Tis said of shearing, and shoeing horses, that it's not hard work but it's busy work. There are some who believe that boarding is busy work and there are some who see it as hard work. Probably neither word usefully describes the craft, but the one description which probably shouldn't describe our work is 'busy'.



If we are too busy, then it means we are not doing enough of doing nothing.

The experience of just sitting with your boarders and doing something neutral such as reading the paper or completing a crossword cannot be underestimated in our armoury of skills. Contact time in the school (day school) is not neutral by definition. The business of teaching and learning is often busy, sometimes hard, but seldom neutral.

The youngster who is looking for the right time and place to ask a difficult or sensitive question. The opportunity for the student to get to know the person who cares for them for forty weeks of the year. The opportunity for our boarder to test their social skills – to learn where borders are and to learn about how to develop what used to be called in the sixties – social stimulus value.

If we are always busy, we can sometimes be judged to be very successful. We may accomplish a lot. Dotting the vowel and crossing the consonant are valuable and often critical aspects of our work – but a

story they do not make. The Romanticism of the Industrial Revolution poets and writers constantly reminds us of the nature and beauty of creation. The nature and beauty of our charges, and their response to God's creation and guidance in us, can only be experienced by spending that neutral time – doing nothing.

The urges to move away and write a report, collate a roll, check the dormitory or residence, evaluate the fire drill, and consider the intricate sub texts of applications for leave are often compelling. We must do these things. But if our day is too full of the nitty gritty, the nuts and bolts, then the child in his or her simplicity and innocence recedes and they sometimes miss out on the most important thing we do for our boarders. To make a difference in their lives.

So, everything in moderation – but set aside time for doing nothing. For just sitting there. For the stroll. The look-in on dinner when you don't have to be there. Not only are there rewards, but excellence will grow in the child because of the sunshine of our interest.

Conrad Mathias
Saint Augustine's College, Cairns.

BULLYING

Bullying is a non-trivial problem in our schools. Figures suggest that about 1 in 6 children are bullied in Australian secondary schools each week. This is an appalling statistic. We need to stamp out bullying in our schools.

DEFINITION

Bullying is uninvited behaviour which causes harm to another. It is an abuse of power which causes hurt. It can be:

- *Physical* such as fighting, making intimidating gestures and invading personal space.
- *Social* such as isolating the victim and rejecting them from the group. It includes racial and religious taunts.
- *Sexual* such as touching in a sexual manner, making unwanted sexual advances, sexual name calling, telling sexual jokes about someone and commenting on their sexual orientation in a way that causes distress.
- *Verbal* such as name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking and leaving foul messages on the victim's phone.
- *Written* such as offensive notes, harmful graffiti, hurtful text messages and offensive e-mails.
- *Indirect* such as trashing a person's locker, hiding their belongings or stirring up another to do the bullying.
- *Collective* where each individual does not do much bullying but the collective effect of each little bit of bullying is devastating.

The bully can be the unpopular child who has been a victim of bullying themselves, and it can be the bright and popular student who abuses their position of strength to cause misery for others.

Bullying is often excused as just messing around, as horse-play and high-jinks. It has been excused because the victim "asked for it for they were such a loser". Others have

excused bullying as being a "pay-back" for what the victim did to them.

Most bullying in schools involves bullying between students of a similar age. However, there are inexcusable instances of an abuse of power where senior students bully junior students. It is even possible for junior students to bully senior students. When the senior student goes to take action against the young irritants, the young run away and claim they are the ones being bullied. This sort of bullying is called "bullying up".

The typical defence made by the bully is denial, "I didn't do anything" and trivialisation "we didn't really do very much...a mountain is being made out of a molehill".

ADVICE TO THE BULLY

- Stop your bullying at once and do not try and excuse or trivialise what you are doing.
- Seek professional advice on how to deal properly with anger and those who are annoying you.
- Apologise to your victims, or at least, stay well out of their way.
- Remember that bullying is a crime that can lead to charges such as assault, assault in company, malicious damage and defamation charges.

ADVICE TO THE VICTIM

- Tell the bully to stop.
- Walk away from the situation and try not to respond aggressively.
- Try not to show hurt for this can give even greater satisfaction to the bully.
- Tell some-one and seek immediate help.

- Avoid "trouble spots" if you can.
- Surround yourself with good friends.
- Review what you might be doing that is attracting the bullying and, if possible or appropriate, change that behaviour.
- Do not assume it is your fault or that no-one cares. Talk to a responsible adult about the bullying.
- Remember that there are outside agencies that can help such as:
 - Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
 - Lifeline 131 114
 - Salvo youth Line 9360 3000

ADVICE TO THE BYSTANDERS

- Don't protect bullies.
- If you see bullying happening, try and stop it, and/or report it.
- Do not be a passive bystander.

CONCLUSION

Do not think you are without the capacity to do a great deal of harm to another, but also remember, you are not without the capacity to do a great deal of good.



Rules

by Robyn Pearce

Some time ago a delightful list of life rules for graduating students passed across my desk, attributed to Bill Gates. Considering that a deluge of ex-students are hitting our workforce right now I thought it would be a fun (and useful) list to share with you. However, I had a tiny intuitive nudge this morning just before I slapped willing fingers to waiting keyboard, to check if it really was written by the amazing Mr Gates. The results of a few minutes' web investigation have given me another, and just as delightful, angle to share with you.

Here's a shortened version of what our boy Bill is supposed to have said.

RULE 1: Life is not fair - get used to it!

RULE 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

RULE 3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

RULE 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait 'til you get a boss.

RULE 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it opportunity.

RULE 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault so don't whine about your mistakes. Learn from them.

RULE 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were.

So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parents' generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

RULE 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as



MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

RULE 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

RULE 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

RULE 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

I liked what I read. It fitted with the child-raising philosophy I applied with my own six kids as well as my own life experience. I was all ready to expand on this delightful bit of home-spun wisdom.

But - I've just had a life lesson of my own reinforced and it's given a whole new slant to this article. It takes nothing away from the value of the rules above. Instead, I want to add two of my own rules.

Robyn's Rule No 1:

Don't believe everything you read in print. You could be dreadfully embarrassed.

If you take a look at <http://www.snopes.com/language/document/liferule.asp> you'll find a very interesting overview of how the authorship of this list has morphed. Bill Gates has never claimed it as his; presumably someone other than the original author

foolishly thought it added extra credibility. The true author is Charles J Sykes, author of the 1996 book 'Dumbing down our kids: why American children feel good about themselves but can't read, write or add'.

In this day of instant information at our fingertips it's way too easy to take something off the internet and, because it's reproduced by a reputable source, assume it's correct. Even the most experienced journalists and editors can get it wrong. (Just recently there have been several cases of journalistic plagiarism from normally very impeccable sources.) In my case I first saw the list above in a very reputable industry journal. (I won't embarrass the usually very professional editors by mentioning which one!) I've chuckled over the list, shared it with friends, and was about to pass it on to you.

And quite aside from this list, how many of us have passed on something that's popped up on our computers, only to be embarrassed by a note back from a more cautious friend who took the time to check, alerting us that the story or warning was a scam or hoax? I know I certainly have. If in doubt, check <http://www.snopes.com/> or any other of the urban legend sites.

Robyn's Rule No. 2:

Listen to your intuition. It could not only save you embarrassment but also time!

3 Simple Steps to *Happiness*

by Prof. Sharp



In my coaching and consulting work with individuals and organisations over the last few months I've noticed (and this, I'm sure, won't come as a huge surprise to many of you) that a lot of people are feeling somewhat distracted at the moment.

- If they've lost their jobs they're worried and upset.
- If they still have their jobs they're worried and apprehensive.
- If their savings have lost value they're angry and frustrated.
- If they've been affected by fires or floods they're grieving & stressed.
- If...well, I think you get the idea.

What ever the cause, stress and anxiety are distracting and ultimately, in addition to being unpleasant in and of themselves they negatively impact on daily functioning and happiness. In simple terms, it's not good for these normal but damaging negative emotions to persist for too long.

Previously, I've written about the importance of identifying stress and depression and then appropriately managing it or seeking professional help. Today, I offer you a simple three-step approach to stay focused and happy during difficult and distracting times. I'll preface what's to come with an acknowledgement that I know it's not always easy; but it is, nevertheless, possible and as long as we're all trying to do our best then we'll all benefit in the end.



Step One

start your day with a focus on the positive

Begin every day by asking yourself something like, "What's going to go well today?" or "If everything worked out great today, what would that look like?" In your mind, run through all of your meetings, appointments, tasks and duties and imagine, just for 5 minutes, that each and every one of these is a fantastic success.



Step Two

monitor your day with a focus on the positive

Set aside a time in the middle of the day (e.g. when you're having lunch) and ask yourself something like "Am I on track so far? If so, what's going well; if not, what do I need to get back on track and achieve what I want to achieve today?"



Step Three

finish your day with a focus on the positive

Finally, finish off each and every day by focusing on at least three good things. That is, ask yourself "What are three good things that have happened today?" These don't have to be world changing or enormously significant events (although they could be) but regardless of the size of the achievement or success it's worth celebrating and savoring achievements on a regular basis.



So there it is – a simple three-step process to stay focused on the positives and to stay focused on what's important. I've used this myself, and I've recommended it to many clients and I can guarantee that if you engage in this simple practice on a regular basis you reap the rewards in no time! Let me know what you think and also, let me know if you use any other strategies that work for you.

Prof. Sharp
(aka Dr. Happy - www.drhappy.com.au)

Boarding Schools - *Where to for the future?*

by Richard Stokes



Let me start off by stating that this article won't be trying to answer all of the questions boarding schools face – in fact it will probably raise more questions than it could possibly answer.

However there is a need for individual schools to measure themselves and see how they are responding to the changing nature of society, our boarding clientele and the demands of parents. Just because we have always done something in a particular way doesn't mean that it is the only way, or the best way, but it also just might be, so it is critical that those working in boarding houses strive to continually look at their structures, routines, goals and aims and see how they are doing.

There is a creative tension between the vision of where we want to go and the perceived reality. Our greatest asset in boarding is that we do retain a community, and that there

is no better structure for our young people in which to build their social skilling. Those involved in boarding schools are posed with the need to plan to plan, and finding positive ways of going about the day-to-day work. But each and every one of the staff in boarding schools needs to be challenged to look at themselves and see what they are doing, to look at others and see what they are doing, and to make some plans to take us forward. Boarding schools should be looking toward Innovation rather than Stagnation as the direction for the future of boarding in their school or they will face extinction.

The job of helping individuals in their most formative years of development away from their primary families is special. Many boarding staff give life-long gifts to their boarders. They will shape and nudge lives in ways that they will not see, but the boarders will live. At the same time, staff need to stand proud with this calling, seek ways to

renew enthusiasm, and courageously speak out for better opportunities to grow, develop and have fun.”

The staff who are working in boarding houses are part of the reason parents choose that school. They are the ones who have the day to day contact with the boarders, and with the parents, and they have the challenge of doing their absolute best when it comes to providing a positive and successful environment for the boarders to enjoy their lives and grow. Staff need to listen to their clients. The boarding school challenge is to open up the channels of communication so that parents not only can easily and comfortably say what is on their minds, but WANT to say it! This means that they must perceive that there is a real partnership in which mutual respect and dignity prevail. Every complaint should be considered as a gift. Boarding schools need to think not what is primarily convenient for the staff or what is primarily convenient for the parents. The challenge is to think through what constitutes an appropriate service for all stakeholders.

When challenged to look at how boarding schools are changing going into the next century the routine of the daily grind of running a boarding school and the paper work that comes across the desk day-by-day often means it is difficult to find time to do some dreaming. What about the different types of boys and girls becoming boarders with the ever decreasing rural population, the single parent families, the working parents, the kids out of control, and those looking for the status of being a boarder amongst other reasons for becoming boarders. What about the changing nature of the staff, the legal issues arising nowadays, what we provide for boarders, orientation and farewell programmes and the changes being made in facilities. But we all need to dream even harder about what it might be like, or what we could make it like.



House staff who have the best morale in the boarding houses are those who have a considerable degree of optimism that boarders will succeed in their houses. They are, in other words, optimistic about the possibility that happiness will take place in the boarding house in spite of occasional setbacks or failures.

Those in leadership of boarding schools should be asking themselves what is the worst thing that can happen if we do something.

In terms of the work being done, and how boarding schools are viewed, it is important that positive, achievable aims and goals are set, ones which are centred on the needs of the boarders in the schools' care. After all in general terms, boarding houses are about creating community and relationships.

The specific job of working in boarding is most certainly a difficult one, and there is no manual written about how they should go about the day-to-day routine of the job. These staff face the changing nature of the tasks at hand, including all or some of the following:

- Schooling options and Homework. Boarding House staff must support active promotion of non-traditional areas of learning allowing their pupils to have a full and satisfying time as school.
- Facilities - Furniture / privacy, common rooms etc
- Activities – Recreation
- Year 12's
- Leave from the school
- Jobs – part time etc
- Staffing – professional - Part time vs full time



- Pastoral care – support / parenting: Vertical vs horizontal, Small groups, Discipline

Many Heads of boarding houses are very skilled in their positive reinforcement of individual students by acknowledging student attainments as they greet them in the boarding house or pass them by on the school campus. It can be assumed that the house groups that are operating effectively probably have a good morale as well. The cultivation of morale, like any other dimension, cannot be based on a formula.

House staff who have the best morale in the boarding houses are those who have a considerable degree of optimism that boarders will succeed in their houses. They are, in other words, optimistic about the possibility that happiness will take place in the boarding house in spite of occasional setbacks or failures. Under the guidance of such house staff, boarders get the feeling that success is possible and those goals of learning can be obtained. Good communication, cohesiveness, and morale are all causes and effects of positive group activity.

The role of a staff member in a boarding school is a vital one – whether they are the Principal, the Business Manager, the head of boarding, a supervisor, the people who prepare the meals or the ones looking after the boarders health. In all of these jobs they must realise the role they have in developing these young people into young adults. Everyone can make changes, and needs to look at what they are doing and what they are dreaming of doing, and take some steps forward to making this happen!

Richard Stokes
Executive Director
Australian Boarding Schools Association

Career Refocusing *Replaces Retirement*

By Dr Linda Vining

By 2040 the over 60s will make up 25 percent of the national population, but many retiring baby boomers are still feeling effective, motivated and ready to go - they are a human capital resource that is just waiting to re-engage.



For over a decade, Vivien Skior faithfully served her school as the coordinator of boarding, but when the school announced its boarding school would close, Vivien had to make a life-changing decision. Should she retire or should she restructure her career?

She, like many others who are reaching retirement age, felt far too young to retire; she felt youthful, active and engaged. She did not aspire to a post-retirement nirvana of gardening, reading, travel, and grandchildren. She decided to shun the word 'retirement' altogether and replace it with 'career refocusing'.

She had always been involved in the pastoral care of students and helped many students and parents deal successfully with conflict and bullying, so she decided to set up her own consultancy in this area.

She studied for a diploma in welfare plus she enrolled in a business course, and, at the age of 56 she was ready to embark on a career change. The front room of her house was converted into a consulting room and an upstairs bedroom into her office. Equipped with suitable qualifications, a lifetime of experience in schools, a marketing plan and a business plan she was ready to restructure her life.

Avril Carpenter, a former principal of a boarding school was always interested in fashion jewellery, so when retirement loomed she did a course in jewellery design, bought a boutique and transferred the skills she used as an educational leader to her own organisation. "The planning skills, financial management and organisational skills I developed as a principal are responsible for my success in business today," she said.

Not all educators leave the profession, many move sideways, as I did. I was a teacher at St Catherine's School Waverley NSW for many years, during which time I was a supervisor in the boarding school. The community relations aspects of school life always attracted me and this eventually opened doors to a new career. Today, I am the founding director of an international business, the Centre for Marketing Schools, and the convener of the very successful Education Expo™. It was my sensitivity to educational culture, coupled with foresight about the changing needs and expectations of parents that catapulted me into a career that is closely aligned with the teaching profession.

But, not all baby boomers want to carry on at full speed. The social commentator Bernard Salt talks about "portfolio retirement". This is a lifestyle that combines work, golf,



Linda Vining and Alan Peucker have opted out of retirement by refocusing their careers.

The social commentator Bernard Salt talks about “portfolio retirement”. This is a lifestyle that combines work, golf, volunteering and family time

volunteering and family time. When he was a principal, Alan Peucker spent much of his career establishing new schools and building community connections. As soon as he announced his retirement, Lend Lease Property Developers asked him to join their team as an educational adviser for their urban development projects. Alan said, “I found the skills I developed building infrastructure for schools are highly valued in corporate world.”

A marketing plan will tell you the best way to sell yourself. This is essential, because no matter how good your product or service, nothing happens until you make the sale; and that involves marketing. You need to identify your target audience, design your marketing tools (business cards, stationery, website, brochures), develop a promotional strategy that includes advertising, a website, media releases and referrals. As well as attracting new business you need a retention strategy which is part of a relationship marketing strategy.

Marketing *YOU*

If you are thinking of a career change the first thing to decide is what you are good at and where your interests lie. You may need additional qualifications in order to set up your own business or become a consultant. Once you have decided on the product or service you have to offer, you need two more elements in your armoury – a marketing plan and a business plan.

Equipped with a sound product, a marketing plan and a business plan you are well on your way to a new career.

Dr Linda Vining, FACE, is the Director of the Centre for Marketing Schools. She assists former educators refocus their careers by helping them develop a personal marketing plan. Her contact is 08 8260 7077

Flight Zone

by David L Anderson

Queensland graziers have been advocating that stockmen should understand and respect the 'flight zone' of cattle when close to the herd or moving a mob of cattle. They suggest that there is valuable saving to both cattleman and beast if cattle are moved from place to place slowly and quietly without stress. Whip cracking and shouting to move cattle from one place to another should be replaced by a quieter and more relaxed form of management. The Queensland graziers believe the results have been noticeable that animals seem less anxious and cattle go forward in better condition!

The Queensland graziers explain that at times you have to get close or inside the 'flight zone' to shift cattle however the majority of contact with the animals can be made from a distance, respecting the animal's private space.

The team responsible for the management and care of school boarders can gain knowledge from this practical example of controlling live stock. If the supervision of boarders by staff is erratic and without the appreciation that boarders need a good deal of 'space' it will create a negative response by the students and an unsettled atmosphere in boarding houses. Boarders will feel much more secure and comfortable if they know boarding staff are taking care of them and maintaining a keen interest in their development from a sensitive distance. Boarders do not need staff who are absent from their watch for long periods of time and then suddenly penetrate their 'flight zone' when things become unsettled.

A consistent living environment and they thrive and routine provides the opportunity for a boarder to thrive. Residential students will feel comfortable if they are constantly supported by well trained, friendly boarding staff who can be relied upon twenty - four hours a day. Boarders who are left without stable supervision will develop

less consistent standards of behaviour (especially over weekends) and will react poorly to supervisors who are not reliable. I have noticed cattle reacting in the same way. Cattle that are isolated for months on end without human contact that suddenly have horses, bikes and dogs racing around them will take fright and behave badly.

Boarders benefit from a boarding program that is carefully designed and well organised. Organisation and discipline should be clearly understood by the boarders and administered by competent staff. Decades ago boarders suffered largely under the control of inexperienced senior students who had permission to discipline younger boarders. Boarding staff were also quick to revert to corporal punishment for incidents viewed today as minor matters! The atmosphere and environment in boarding houses often lacked trust and security between boarders and staff.

Today the well-being of all boarders can be achieved in a quieter more relaxed and caring environment. Certainly there are times when staff have to make urgent corrections to an adolescent's behaviour and intervene their 'flight zone', however most boarders will grow and develop in a caring and supportive environment where there is no sign of panic, raised voices or severe punishment!

Boarders today live in an relationship of friendship with peers of their own age and fellow boarders older and younger. Respect for senior students is earned by the leader by their performance as a fair and supportive role model, not gained through fear. Boarders will thrive in a secure, well organised and compassionate environment.

If the correct atmosphere prevails in boarding houses boarders will respect the boarding staff and also display respect for fellow boarder's privacy and space. The





allegiance of staff and boarders will be based upon co-operation and trust. If boarders living in the boarding community feel comfortable they will treat their fellow boarders with admiration and help each other to cope with the many physical and emotional demands of teenage years. They will also have confidence in the boarding house management team.

I have no idea how cattle think but if cattle are approached with respect and have more time to understand what a stockman is trying to do with them they may do what the stockman wants then to do! Good communication and timing by House supervisors are also paramount in giving boarders the chance of comprehending and understanding daily routine. Early and regular information from House staff regarding boarding house rules, personal expectations of behaviour and performance will provide boarders with greater opportunity to do the right thing. Boarding House staff must give the boarders plenty of notice regarding their responsibilities by meeting with them daily and displaying news of coming events on notice boards and internet portals well in advance of deadlines. If boarding supervisors do detect problems with an individual they should discuss the matter with the boarder and seek as much

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specialist help as is available. If everyone has a clear understanding of what is happening on campus the boarding community will be more relaxed, comfortable and it will result in a more successful place.

The administration and organisation of a boarding house is not rocket science. It can be compared to the needs of a family unit. All groups need a sympathetic understanding by their managers and an understanding every child have their own God given talents. It is the responsibility of carers to discover those talents and allow the individual to shine in the community by being able to demonstrate those talents providing the individual with self esteem and confidence.

Boarding house supervisors must be attentive at all times yet not be too obtrusive. There are no short cuts when caring for boarders especially in regard to the time and interest that must be devoted to their care. The flight zone must be kept on the radar at all times but not always penetrated!

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Coming Events

UK

02 January 2010 - 04 January 2010
Annual Conference For
Housemasters' & Housemistress'

17 January 2010 - 18 January 2010
State Boarding Schools' Association
Annual Conference 2010

28 January 2010 - 30 January 2010
Annual Conference For Deputy Heads

04 May 2010 - 06 May 2010
Annual Conference For Headteachers

12 July 2010 - 14 July 2010
Annual Conference For Matrons
and Medical Staff

USA

3 - 5 December 2009
TABS Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois

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 (400 to 500 words) and send us some high resolution photos.

Send all files to; lightsout@boarding.org.au by the first week in October.

What *Really* Matters

by Dr Tim Hawkes

A teacher stood up in class and wordlessly, picked up a large empty jar and filled it with golf balls. He then enquired of the class, when he could fit no more golf balls under the lid, if the jar was full. The class agreed it was.

Then the teacher took some sand and poured it into the jar. Encouraged by some shaking of the jar, the sand settled in the gaps between the golf balls. "Is the jar filled now?" enquired the teacher. Smiling, the class agreed that the jar was totally full.

Unscrewing the lid of the jar, the teacher then poured in two cups of hot chocolate. The students, now laughing outright, recognised that finally, the jar was completely full.

The teacher then explained to the class that the jar was their life. "The golf balls represent the very important things - your faith, your family, your friends, your health, your education, your character, things that, if everything else was lost, would mean that your life would still be rich. The sand is everything else, good to have in your life but not nearly as important as the other things. This includes what sporting team you are in, the TV and computer games, the latest in fashion, and even your mobile phone and MP3 player.

"If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you may never leave room in your life for the things that are really important to you. Do not fail to pay attention to the things that are critical to your life.

"Thank your parents and honour them in the language used when you talk to them and by giving them unrequested acts of service. Strengthen your friendships with kindness and consideration. Do not take them for granted. Neither take for granted



that there might be a loving God who wants a relationship with you. Take time to pray and explore the possibility of spiritual relationship. Look after your health, eat right, sleep right and avoid the entrapment of drugs, however much the social pressure to experiment with them.

"When you have done this, pay attention to your learning. Each day at school should be seen as an important opportunity to grow. Do not drift through school without exploring the true limits of your potential. Neither should you underestimate the importance of a good reputation. Seek to be known for your honesty, thoughtfulness and kindness. Do not become an unreliable, untrustworthy or a self-absorbed individual.

"Take care of the golf balls first, then the sand. Do not fill your life up with the small stuff. Sport is important but keep it in perspective. Good looks are not as important as good character. Possessions should be owned by you, you should not be "owned" by your possessions.

It was then a student asked what the hot chocolate represented. The teacher answered, "the hot chocolate is important for it illustrates that no matter how full your life, there is always room for a hot chocolate with a friend".

Tim Hawkes
(Adapted from an unknown source on the internet)



AUSTRALIAN
BOARDING
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION