



This week at Heywood & District Secondary College

*A part of your community.....*

**From the Principal**

Dear Parents, Carers and Community Members,

We wish the Year 12 all the best in their final examinations which start today. These examinations are very important for the students who have chosen to complete the Victorian Certificate of Education, or the VCE as it is more commonly known. The VCE is usually the pathway chosen by students who wish to continue tertiary study at a university as the results give the students their Tertiary Entrance Result or ENTER score. Last year, Isaac Barr from Heywood and District Secondary College, for example, received the highest ENTER score in this area. Isaac will be studying at Melbourne University doing Science in 2010.

Not all Year 12 are doing final examinations. Many of our students chose to do the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning or VCAL. This choice is a better option for students who prefer to learn in a different way, and it incorporates learning in the work place. This pathway can lead to further study at a TAFE Institute or apprenticeship. In fact, some students begin their School-Based Apprenticeship (SBA) while doing their VCAL. Some students also enter the workforce, often building on the experience and contacts that they made during their study. At times this is not the case – it is for students who prefer to learn in a different way and is no less rigorous than the VCE in achieving high outcomes. At previous schools I have had students use the VCAL pathway to establish their own businesses

and create their own employment opportunities before they leave school. It suits highly motivated and independent learners too.

Students also have the option of doing the Vocational and Educational Training (VET) subjects which are certificated courses often desired by many employers. **Steven Aldridge** has already begun his Certificate in Automotive Studies at the Trade Training College in Hamilton. He attends one day per week. On Tuesday he was selected for the top student award for first year students in automotive. Next year Steven will continue his studies and by the time he completes his Year 12 he will already have completed a significant part of his apprenticeship. Well done, Steven.

**Strategic Review Report**

The state reviewer, Mrs Bronwyn van Amerongen, delivered her report to the staff and School Council on Monday. The report clearly indicated those areas where the College had been successful and the areas where there could be improvement. The upper levels of the school, Years 10-12, were clearly meeting student needs with a strong feeling among the students that they felt supported and challenged. The number of students successfully completing their twelve years, going into fulltime study, further education or apprenticeships, was above the state. The news, however, was not as favourable for the Years 7-9, and this is the area that we have been recommended to improve. We are currently reassessing where our staff will be placed in light of these findings. Our Year 7 program is undergoing reflection to determine if, and where,

modifications are needed. This is an ongoing process. We will also be focussing on the **teaching and learning** in all classes across the school. A full-time literacy coach will join the staff next year to help in this regard. Our decisions are based on what will develop the best learning outcomes for our students.

Of grave concern was the **absenteeism** among certain areas of the student body. One year level had an average of 30 days per student. This equates to an alarming six weeks of schooling missed in one year! Absenteeism is a symptom of many things – student disengagement, lack of relationships with students and teachers, education not held in high regard by parents, illness, etc. Studies have found that missing school makes it hard on the students when they return as they have missed some of the learning which, in turn, puts them behind. As a result they feel that they are not coping, fall behind, do not enjoy the classes and do not want to come to school. It becomes very easy to fall into this vicious circle. Although teachers attempt to catch the student up, repeated absences make this very difficult.

I have some parents report their concerns to me and I thank them for letting me know. In this way I can take appropriate action and ensure that we are all working towards providing the best education and environment for our students.

**Patricia Nunan**  
**Principal.**

## From the Assistant Principal

The weather this week indicates that spring is well and truly here. It is great to see most students are wearing their sunhats. We ask that parents support us by ensuring that hats are not left at home.

Congratulations to Steven Aldridge who this week has been named the most outstanding first year student at the ATC in Hamilton.



On Tuesday it was my absolute pleasure to accompany Ms Borowiecki's Year 9/10 Ag. and Hort. students on an excursion to Coleraine to visit several farms to learn something of farm history and changed practices as well as operations involving stud sheep breeding, prime lamb and cattle production, pasture management and innovative farm practices.



We as a school use a staged response in order to ensure that students are given every opportunity to engage in their work, perform to their personal best, as well as reflect on, and change, behaviours that are preventing them from engaging in their studies here at school. Appropriate behaviour will be recognised through: Celebration assemblies; Reports; References; Newsletters; Leadership opportunities; Scholarships; Positive feedback; The right to represent the school; Awards night. Inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with through: Use of the restorative script; Talking to the student and referring them to the shared expectations; Discussing appropriate behaviours in the classroom; Referral to the Thinking Spot; Restorative Conference; Action to 'make it right' agreed to; Referral to Time Out; Contact with parents; Student Support Group meeting; Student behaviour

card; Changes to the student's learning program to better equip him/her to engage in activities/ behave positively; Counselling; Appropriate behaviours taught and agreed to; Payment for damage sought; Withdrawal of privileges; Lunchtime or after-school detention; Negotiation for alternative pathways or settings for student; or as a matter of last resort, suspension or expulsion.

**Robyn Sutherland  
Assistant Principal.**

## Coming Events

### November

Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Melbourne Cup Holiday

Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> – Yr. 11 Exam  
Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> week.

Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> – Yr. 10  
Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> Exams.  
Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> – Last Day  
Yr. 11's.

Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> – Yr. 12 Formal

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> – Yr. 10  
Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> Outdoor Camp

Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> - G.V.B.R.  
Friday, Dec., 4<sup>th</sup>

### December

Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> - Gr. 6  
Orientation  
Day

Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> – Last Day  
2009, 2.30  
p.m. finish.

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