PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Dear Parents,

Athletics Carnival
The school’s Athletics Carnival held at The Crest at Georges Hall on Thursday 29 May was a great success. We had a good level of attendance and terrific participation from staff and students.

Congratulations to all of our Age Champion athletes:
12 years – Skye Casacchia
13 years – Monique Steel
14 years – Leyla Elcheikh
15 years – Amar Khassouk
16 years – Isabella Johnston Araujo
17 years – Amira Hamid

Special thanks to Ms Boyle and her team of enthusiastic teachers for such a well organised and enjoyable day.

Attendance at our carnivals is a mandatory and important aspect of school life. It is part of the ethos of our school: to support one another; to attend every day; and “reach for the stars” (Ad astra). Unfortunately, some students view attendance at these events as optional and choose not to attend because they do not view themselves as good swimmers or athletes. By failing to attend these events students not only show a lack of school spirit, but they deny themselves extremely valuable opportunities to become involved, to have a go and to cheer on their friends and peers who are prepared to participate to the best of their ability.

Term 2 Reports
All students will have received their reports in time for parents to have read them before the Parent/Teacher afternoon on Tuesday 24 June. Parents are encouraged to carefully review their daughter’s report and focus on the teachers’ comments, rather than the marks or grades, as they provide advice, strategies and guidance to support students to improve.

It is important too that parents take careful note of their daughter’s attendance as every day of school missed interrupts her learning. Participation in extra-curricular activities such as debating and sporting teams as well as school clubs should be encouraged also. Well documented evidence demonstrates that those students who have excellent attendance records and participate in extra-curricular activities are highly engaged with their learning and achieve outstanding results.

I remind all parents to make an appointment to see your daughter’s teachers so that we can work together to support her learning.

Congratulations to:
- The 45 Years 7-10 students who participated in the Battle of the Brains, our regular general knowledge competition against the young men from Homebush Boys High School on Monday 12 May. Our teams scored decisive wins at the boys’ school and on home turf!
● The seven Year 10 students: Amy Ye, Fatima Al-Helly, Afnaa Alkakouni, Sharon Phan, Narelle Scerri, Michelle Truong and Felicity Lam who attended the Youth Environmental Network Forum with the famous animal behavioural scientist, Dr Jane Goodall, at the zoo on Friday 30 May.
● Valeria Uifa, Pete Moungatonga, Christine He and Hareem Abbasi (Year 11 SRC) who represented our school at the World Vision Global Leadership Convention at Luna Park on Wednesday 21 May.
● The eight Year 11 student leaders who were selected to participate in the Australian Business Communities Network’s FOCUS program promoting women in leadership on 16 and 30 May.
● Isabella Johnston Araujo (Year 11) who became the SW Sydney Age Champion in Gymnastics at the competition held at Westfields Sports High School on Monday 2 June.
● The talented creative writers from Year 9 who enthusiastically grasped the opportunity to extend their skills by participating in the Poetry Workshop with Ms Helen Thurloe on Tuesday 3 June.
● Nour Salama (Year 11) who received her Zonta Citizenship Award on Tuesday 27 May.

Coming Events
● The school’s P&C will meet in the Common Room at 5pm on Wednesday 18 June. All parents are invited to attend and show their support for their daughter’s education by getting involved in the P&C.
● Parents make sure you book a time with your daughter’s teachers and learn about her achievements at school by attending our Parent/Teacher afternoon on Tuesday 24 June, 2-6pm. Semester 1 reports will have been issued to all students by this time so bring your daughter’s report along to discuss her progress with her highly committed and dedicated teachers.
● The PDHPE Display on Thursday 26 June in the school hall will be a great opportunity for girls from our local primary schools to get a glimpse of life in high school by watching the dance routines that our students have prepared throughout Term 2.

I invite you to contact the school to make an appointment with me (Tel: 9644 5057) if you have any issues that you wish to discuss about your daughter’s education. I hope you enjoy reading about the achievements and activities of the school in the following pages.

Best wishes.

Jenni Wilkins
Principal
Technology
Technology has an important role in supporting student learning. At Birrong, students enjoy a fast, efficient network and have access to the internet through the DEC portal which filters information for student suitability.

It is important that our students continue to exercise responsibility in their use of technology, both at school and at home. Students should not post anything online that they would not want their parents or teachers to read. Students need to be particularly careful when accessing Facebook, Kik, You Tube, Instagram and a number of other social media sites. While these sites provide an opportunity to connect and interact with friends, problems arise when students start to share their thoughts, photos and personal information online. This information can become public very quickly and stay on the internet indefinitely. In some cases such information can damage reputations and have implications far into the future.

Parents can assist their child's involvement in social media in a number of ways:
- **be involved in your daughter's use of technology** - Set up your own account and learn about privacy settings so you can understand how to best protect your daughter. Monitor your daughter’s use of technology and ensure that her accounts are set to private so that access is limited to family and friends
- **encourage responsible use of technology** - Tell your daughter that anything she posts or sends online can be difficult or impossible to remove and can have a long term impact on her digital reputation. Remind her that once something is sent, it is impossible to retrieve and may remain as a permanent electronic record. Hurtful and humiliating messages cause unnecessary grief to oneself and others and should not be communicated.
- **report any abuse or inappropriate content to the social networking site** and show your daughter how to do this
- **learn how to keep a copy of online conversations and how to block people prior to an issue occurring**


PDHPE Display
This is always a special time of the year as students prepare for the PDHPE Display. Students always embrace the event with great enthusiasm and commitment, every spare minute being devoted to practising routines. The final products are always creative, energetic and of a high standard; a fusion of physical and imaginative talent. We look forward to seeing how the mix of creativity and dance skills unfolds at the PDHPE Display.

Ad Astra!
Congratulations to the Ad Astra rock band, to the Year 10 Commerce students who raised funds for a variety of charities with their highly successful Mother’s Day stalls, to the students who successfully participated in Field Day and the Athletics Carnival, to the students who have represented our school in community forums and inter school debating competitions; and to every girl who has contributed to a positive school culture through her commitment to learning in and beyond the classroom.

The message to every Birrong Girl is embrace every opportunity to challenge and extend yourself, participate in the rich experiences the school offers and your rewards will be tenfold.

Ms Fletcher and Ms Crossan
Deputy Principals

ATTENDANCE REPORT

I am very pleased to report that over the past few weeks I have been writing the Semester 1 ‘Attendance’ and ‘No Late Arrival’ awards. In total I have written close to 700 merit awards for students across Years 7-12. Another important fact is that just over 60% of the student population across Years 7-12 has not been late to school this year which is very impressive.

Reports will be issued towards the end of this term and provide attendance information. There are many students who will be receiving a report that indicates that they have unexplained absences. I seek the support of all parents to reply to the text message the school sends every time a student is absent; this will avoid the recording of unexplained absences on reports. The text message reply means that a note is not required to explain absence.

Attendance mottos to live by:
- ‘ARRIVE ON TIME AND ALL WILL BE FINE’
- ‘MISSING SCHOOL LEAVES HOLES IN YOUR LEARNING’.

Hope to see you at the Parent/Teacher afternoon on Tuesday 24 June from 2pm.

Mrs George
Head Teacher Administration
WELFARE REPORT

Student of the Month Awards

Congratulations to Priya Gauchan of Year 12 who has been awarded the Student of the Month award for February 2014. She has demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment to the school community. She is a mature and diligent student who has a positive attitude in all aspects of schooling.

Priya has carried out valuable school service through her commitment and active involvement as an enthusiastic and motivated member of the Environment Team, Amnesty Team and Literacy and Numeracy Team. She has volunteered her time to various school events such as the Welcome BBQ, Parent/Teacher afternoon and Harmony Day.

Congratulations to Isabella Johnston Araujo of Year 11 who has been awarded the Student of the Month award for March 2014. She has carried out valuable service for the school community through her commitment and active involvement in the Peer Tutor Program and as a Peer Support Leader supporting our Year 7 students. She is also a trained peer mediator for the Peer Mediation program and has worked as a sound room crew member for assemblies and special events.

Isabella has excelled in various sporting fields. She achieved as the School Age Champion in swimming and represented the school at district and regional levels in swimming, cross country, soccer and gymnastics. She has also attained state level representation in the Cross Country and attained a silver medal at the State Gymnastics Championships.

Congratulations to Anna Ung of Year 11 who has been awarded the Student of the Month award for April 2014. She is a mature and diligent student who has demonstrated dedication and commitment to the school community and a positive attitude in all aspects of schooling.

Anna has carried out purposeful and valuable school service through her commitment and active involvement as a leader in the Year 7 Peer Support Program and as a peer tutor in the Peer Reading Program. She has volunteered at several school events and she participated in the “Back Me Up” short film project against cyber-bullying.

Year 11 and Year 12 Blood Service Presentation

The school’s Red Cross Youth Ambassadors, Taylor Baker, Monica Do, Angela Pak and Dalena Tran presented an informative slideshow to our Year 11 and Year 12 students to raise awareness about the benefits of donating blood. Donating blood saves the lives of many people in emergencies and it also maintains the lives of many people in our families and community who require regular blood transfusions to stay alive.

Nancy Lucich from the Thalassemia Society NSW spoke about her own struggles with the blood disorder, Thalassemia, and how she relies on monthly blood transfusions to keep her alive.

Elissa King from the Australian Red Cross Blood Service supported the message from our students’ slideshow and encouraged our students to donate blood.

The presentation was very effective as 120 students have signed up wanting to donate blood.

Mrs Salvagio
Head Teacher Welfare

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Mrs Salvagio
Head Teacher Welfare

BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Parents are invited to attend the
P & C MEETING
on Wednesday, 18 June 2014
at 5pm in the Common Room
CAREERS NEWS

Year 10
Congratulations to Year 10 who have completed their first Work Experience placement. The week was a huge success and feedback from employers and students has been very positive. Don’t forget to return your Employer’s Assessment Report (yellow form) to the Careers office. Our second Work Experience placement is in Term 4, 17 November – 21 November, and I suggest that students start thinking about potential workplaces now. The Workplace Learning Guide for Parents and all related materials is available at https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/worklearn/worklearnpolicy.html.

Walaa Houssein at Work Experience

Parents/caregivers of Year 10 students are invited to attend the Course Selection Information Session in Week 1, Term 3 on Thursday 17 July at 1:30pm. The session is for Year 10 students preparing to enter Year 11 (Preliminary) in 2015. Students will be given a note in Week 8 with more information and details.

Useful Links for Parents
• Myfuture.edu.au is Australia’s national online career information and exploration service. Features include the ‘Assist your Child’ portal, careers facts and videos, education and training requirements, labour market information and much more.
• My University is a searchable website that can be accessed from mobile devices. The website includes a broad range of information about Australian universities and other higher education providers. Visit www.myuniversity.gov.au for more information.
• My Skills provides online information about vocational education and training options. Go to www.myskills.gov.au for more information.

Mrs Wailes
Careers Adviser

MOTHER’S DAY STALLS

Congratulations to the Year 10 Commerce students who raised $1,890 for charity from their highly successful Mother’s Day stalls held on Friday 9 May. This was an outstanding achievement. Clearly, Birrong girls are great entrepreneurs and businesswomen and we love to shop!

The charities they have donated to are:
• Birthing Kits Foundation (through Birrong Girls’ Amnesty Team) - $1,513
• Breast Cancer Research Foundation - $159
• Make a Wish Foundation - $136
• UNHCR Syrian Civil War Appeal - $82

Mr Mohan and Mr Sarna
Social Sciences
Mother’s Day Stalls... On Friday 9 May during lunchtime two very enthusiastic Year 10 Commerce classes went head to head in a battle to determine who could raise the most money. Eight groups put their innovative ideas to the test by running Mother’s Day stalls. A variety of goods were sold on the day such as perfumes, jewellery, mugs, flowers, chocolate muffins and chicken burgers. The Commerce students provided the whole Birrong community with a chance to purchase the perfect Mother’s Day gift as well as a chance to celebrate the all-girl nature of our school. Sausages were sold on the day to celebrate the mama’s of tomorrow which boosted the Birrong spirit. Overall both classes performed exceptionally well with the best performing group earning a profit of over $300, which was the best we have ever achieved since the launch of this remarkable yearly event.

We believe that the Mother’s Day fundraising challenge was the perfect opportunity for students to broaden their business skills and translate theory into classroom practice. The importance of money and time management were also explored as we realised that these were the foundations of a successful business.

After recuperating their costs, students decided to donate all profits to the following charities: Birthing Kits Foundation (to run a birthing kits workshop at our school), Breast Cancer Research Foundation, Make a Wish Foundation and UNHCR Syrian Civil War Appeal.

We would like to thank Mr Mohan and Mr Sarna for making this event happen and all the teachers who contributed to this event to truly make it an enriching and prosperous experience for us.

By: Hamna Ahmad and Amar Hamed (Year 10)

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS IN SIERRA LEONE

Students and staff at Birrong Girls High School have been amazing supporters of schools in Sierra Leone and disadvantaged students there. They have generously donated books, resources and computers. There is a great community spirit in this school which spreads to people on the other side of the world!

Athena Tselepi
School Counsellor

Year 12 students helped load materials collected this year to support impoverished schools in Sierra Leone

A volunteer collected the donated materials
HAPPINESS CYCLE PROGRAM

Our school’s Year 10 PASS classes were offered the opportunity of a lifetime to participate in Bankstown City Council’s Bicycle Network program. Selected students attended ‘The Happiness Cycle Program’ at Dunc Gray Velodrome, Bass Hill on 6 March. The program centred on bicycle safety and was a rewarding experience. Each student learnt how to build their own bicycle; after several adjustments, moans and groans, whinging and whining, we were all able to complete the challenging task. We were very appreciative of Mr Thomas and Mrs George’s assistance in this process. At the end of the day we were able to take home our bicycles as well as a helmet, flashing bike lights and a great bike lock up chain.

The program aimed to encourage the local community to participate in cycling in local parks as well as on bike tracks to benefit their health. As a sign of their commitment to the program, students were asked to take a bike riding pledge, whether it be to ride once a week or even 5 times a week. We came back to school where we were met by a pleased Ms Wilkins, who took a bike for a spin down the teacher’s car park. The program was definitely a worthwhile experience we will cherish.

By: Aleyna Celik and Helay Zarmati, Year 10

JENOLAN CAVES EXCURSION

On 23 May Year 8 students of Birrong Girls woke up bright and early in the crisp morning air to attend an excursion to Jenolan Caves.

To start the day, students met their teachers at school at 7am. Many of the girls were jumping with joy while others were still getting over the morning drowsiness. On the way to the caves we made a quick stop at the renowned Three Sisters where we took pictures and enjoyed the stunning views.

The drive into the caves involved navigating a very narrow road. While we trusted our drivers, we still felt a little fearful as we looked out of our windows to see nothing but a sheer cliff face; thankfully we made it in one piece!

Then came the exciting part, we finally got to enter the cave, but not before our tour guides gave us the ground rules. The cave we entered was named Lucas Cave and the first thing we noticed were the massive limestone rock formations. The most breathtaking part of the caves was the Cathedral. We also saw stalactites, stalagmites and columns formed over millions of years. The caves had many narrow walkways and an amazing light show.

At the end of the day we were all very tired yet very happy and content. This was an amazing experience that will not be forgotten any time soon.

By: Moana-Kia Tagaloa, 8S
ATHLETICS CARNIVAL

Congratulations to all students that competed at the school’s Athletics Carnival on Thursday 29 May. It was a fantastic day for all concerned with excellent team spirit and skill displayed!

We would also like to thank Ms Boyle for her work organising the carnival and all the teachers that worked to ensure an organised and well run carnival.

We would like to officially congratulate the Athletics Age Champions who competed in several events throughout the day and achieved the highest standard of competition for their chosen age group:

- 12 years - Skye Casacchia
- 13 years - Monique Steel
- 14 years - Leyla Elcheikh
- 15 years - Amar Khassouk
- 16 years - Isabella Johnston Araujo
- 17 years - Amira Hamid

Several of our students will be competing at the Zone Athletics Carnival on Tuesday 17 June. We wish them good luck on behalf of the school!

Mrs Lord
Head Teacher PDHPE

[Photos courtesy of the school’s Media Team]
VISUAL ARTS REPORT

It has been a busy but inspiring time in the CAPA Faculty, with students involved in a number of really exciting excursions.

Art Express at the Art Gallery of NSW
In Week 9 last term, our elective Year 10 and 11 Visual Art students travelled to the city to see the Art Express exhibition. This annual exhibition showcases exemplary artworks created by NSW Visual Art students for the Higher School Certificate. After viewing the exhibition, our students attended an informative one hour study workshop that was linked to the artmaking component of particular Art Express artworks.

Year 10 Visual Art Camp
The Year 10 elective Visual Art students had the opportunity to camp on the heritage listed Cockatoo Island for 3 days during the 2014 Biennale exhibition. The Biennale of Sydney is Australia’s largest contemporary, visual arts festival and displays works in a number of venues, so it was particularly exciting to be on the island, being one of the venues for the display. The camp, which took place in Week 10 last term, provided an invaluable opportunity to improve the students’ artmaking skills, inform them of artist practice and develop ideas for critical and historical perspectives in their studies.

Year 9 Visual Art Camp
The annual camp for the Year 9 elective Visual Art classes was again held at the picturesque and tranquil location of Bundanon, on the Shoalhaven River, south of Sydney. This year the camp took place during Week 2 of this term. It felt much longer than 2 days because of the inspiring artmaking activities and whole group bonding over art, exploration and food. Ms Winchcombe, Mrs Anthony and Year 9 Visual Art students set off early one Wednesday morning rugged up with warm gear and backpacks full of treats, ready for the trip ahead. The camp is always enjoyed by all and this year the group had the opportunity to make some amazing drawings; convert their drawings into fabulous coloured prints; participate in a discussion group and guided tour of the property and artist studio of Australian artist, Arthur Boyd; and meet some native animals that wander the property where we stayed. The group returned to school the following afternoon armed with new artmaking skills and wishing the camp was longer.

The group, along with Ms Winchcombe, set out on a Wednesday morning with their backpacks full and expectations high. The jam packed 3 days included magical early morning ferry trips across Sydney harbour; a stimulating interactive tour of the Biennale around the historic site of Cockatoo Island; an awe-inspiring involvement in a discussion group at the White Rabbit Gallery in Chippendale, which houses one of the world’s largest and most significant collections of Chinese contemporary art; a 2 hour drawing and collage workshop at the Brett Whiteley Studio in Surry Hills, the workplace and home of Australian artist, Brett Whiteley; a self-guided viewing at the Ray Hughes Gallery in Surry Hills; and an educator led tour of the Museum of Contemporary Art at Circular Quay. It was a fantastic experience with lots and lots of laughter, yummy food and a few shared scary ghost stories around the tent site at night. The group returned to school on the Friday afternoon, a little weary but still high in spirits and bursting with many new ideas about art and where our Year 11 camp might take us.
Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures at the Art Gallery of NSW

During Week 3 this term, the Year 10 and 11 elective Visual Art students went to the Art Gallery of NSW to view the Afghanistan Hidden Treasures exhibition from the National Museum, Kabul. The students participated in a discussion group and educator led tour of the ancient artefacts that were believed to have been lost but in fact survived war and looting. The students came away from the tour with an informed understanding and appreciation of the valuable history of the pieces on display.

Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) Extravaganza

This year’s CAPA Extravaganza will take place on Tuesday 19 August during Week 6 of Term 3. Please remember to mark this date on your calendar as it is always a wonderful afternoon when parents, students and members of our community can come together to view our amazing Visual Art students’ artworks as well as listen to our talented Music students perform. All staff, students, families and friends are welcome to attend.

Upcoming Excursions

Year 8 Visual Art students will have the opportunity to attend our annual Beachside Tour during Week 4 next term. The coach trip takes in Coogee Beach and Watson’s Bay and the students get to make pen and ink drawings on handmade paper. The tour takes in vantage points previously visited by renowned artists that the students have been studying in class. The excursion provides the students with the opportunity to replicate some of these viewpoints, as well as enjoy making art in the plein air style, creating drawings in the outdoor landscape.

Towards the end of the year, the Year 7 Visual Art students will travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art for a day of artmaking and educator led tours. The date for this proposed excursion will be advised soon.

By: CAPA Faculty

PARENT TIPS

Teenagers seeking more independence

Knowing how much freedom and responsibility to give your teenager is difficult, especially if they’re your eldest or only child. To become capable adults, teenagers need to learn to make good decisions on their own and have opportunities to show they can. The Raising Children Network website has a wealth of expert information and guidance for parents of teens and younger children. If your child is testing the boundaries and pushing for more independence, you may find the article ‘Shifting responsibility to your child’ worth reading. Go to www.bit.ly/1JxKhe

QuickSmart RETAIL EXCURSION

On 27 May, 22 of our school’s QuickSmart students were given an opportunity to use the skills that they had practiced during their QuickSmart sessions into real life situations.

Students were given a worksheet to complete on the strategies that they used when shopping and dealing with money at various outlets in Westfield Burwood.

Having lunch at Westfield Burwood

QuickSmart Awards Term 1 2014

Champion Term 1
Ranya Aldhaher

Outstanding Efforts in QuickSmart
Rianne Hamdan
Jamal Sankari
Sarah El Haddad
Fayza Soliman

Special Achievement Award
Joumana Issa – 100% attendance at all her QuickSmart sessions

By: The QuickSmart Team

FREE SCHOOL HOLIDAY FILM MAKING WORKSHOPS FOR 13 – 16 YEAR OLDS

Would you like to get involved with creating and launching a new YouTube channel for young people? Learn about script writing, producing, filming, editing, event management, PR and media work from film, TV and media professionals. Get work experience and make friends.

Join us for a free set of workshops running in the July school holidays and be part of this exciting project! Workshops will be run 30 June – 4 July 2014 from 10am to 4pm at Bankstown Arts Centre. Lunch is provided.

Registrations are essential, so if you’re interested get your parent or guardian to call Karen Craigie on 9797 8139 to register you.
BIRRONG GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL CALENDAR
For your diary / noticeboard

**June:**
- Monday, 16th: ICAS Writing Competition
- Tuesday, 17th: ICAS Spelling Competition (Year 7 only) • Zone Athletics Carnival
- Wednesday, 18th: P&C Meeting, Common Room, 5pm
- Tuesday, 24th: Parent/Teacher sessions, 2-6pm
- Thursday, 26th: PDHPE Display
- Friday, 27th: Last day of Term 2

Enjoy the School Holidays!

**July:**
- Monday, 14th: School Development Day – staff return to school
- Tuesday, 15th: All students return to school
- Wednesday, 16th: Year 10 Subject Selection Market
- Thursday, 17th: Year 10 Subject Selection Information Session, 1:30pm
- Monday, 28th to Thursday, 31st: Year 11 Hospitality Work Placement
- Tuesday, 29th: ICAS English Competition

**August:**
- Friday, 1st to Friday, 8th: Year 11 Hospitality Work Placement
- Thursday, 7th: Australian Mathematics Competition
- Monday, 11th to Friday, 22nd: Year 12 Trial Exams
- Monday, 25th to Friday, 29th: Year 11 Exams

**September:**
- Monday, 1st to Friday, 5th: Year 11 Exams
- Wednesday, 3rd: Year 8 Field Day • P&C Meeting, Common Room, 5pm