

Times @ VC

Term 4, 2025

Macleay Vocational College Newsletter



CELEBRATING WITH YEAR 12



THE SOCIAL NIGHT OF THE COLLEGE YEAR

It was the social event of the year for MVC. The annual formal graduation of our current Year 12 students, and in 2025, there were 25 students graduating. So appropriate! So amazing! All staff and students went above and beyond to make it a fantastic celebration at the intimate *Stables* venue in the historic river town of Gladstone.

Uncle Barry and Kieran started the evening's formalities with a powerful Welcome to Country in language to signify the importance of the occasion. This was followed by welcoming words from our newest principal, Megan and then the Chairperson of the Board, Narelle.

Emily, one of our graduates, commented, "Everyone was snazzy-looking. The big shopping days in the Port Macquarie op shops and fancy shops paid off. We were all looking sharp!" Emily enthused further, "It's a great venue and a big crowd was packed in there. I saw lots of families supporting students and everyone was enjoying the night, especially the food. Simone and her team had set up a very positive vibe so there were no dramas as we were entertained by Mel's and Pat's short stories about each student." In closing, Emily added, "The night was definitely more than I expected. After Atticus and Lilly cut the Year 12 cake I tried to get everyone to dance the macarena and a few of us even stayed on for the disco to dance the night away."

Many thanks to all those who made the night a success, especially Simone as lead organiser.

School returns: Tuesday 3rd February, 2026 Community Christmas Celebration: Monday 22nd December

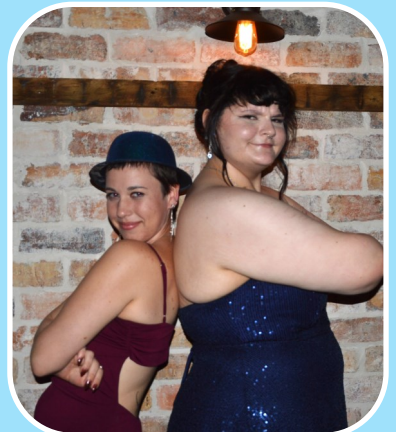
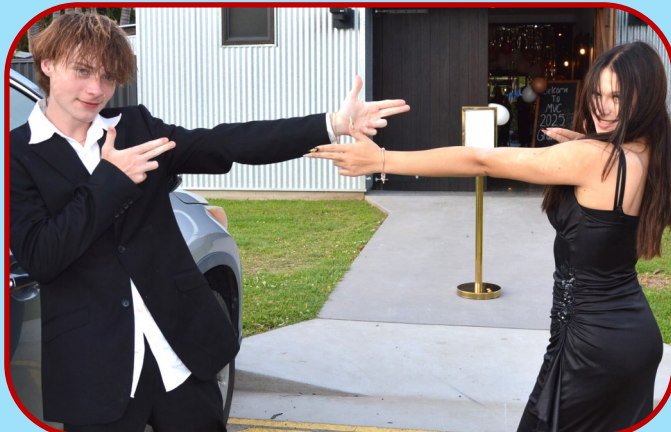
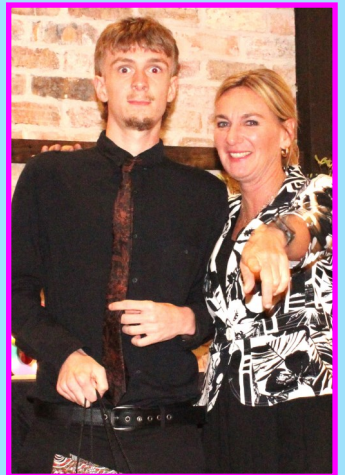
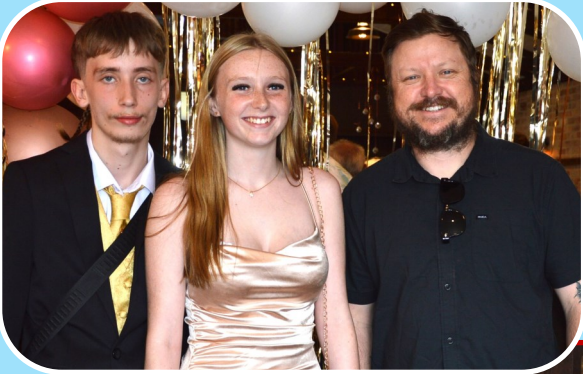
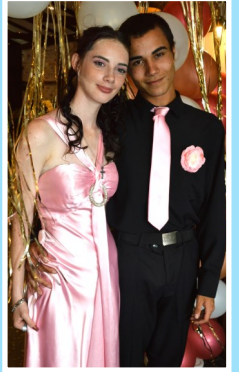
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YEAR 12 GRADUATION FORMAL





STAGE 5 'ON COUNTRY' OUTINGS

This term our Stage 5 students enjoyed 'On Country' outings, visiting various sites on Dunghutti Country. On one particular session we enjoyed a uniquely coastal adventure shucking oysters beneath the



Crescent Head bridge. The girls confidently took the lead, proudly teaching the proper technique—using rocks to crack open the shells and explaining how to spot the perfect oyster for shucking. It was hands-on learning at its finest, surrounded by salty air and plenty of excitement.

The afternoon ended with everyone wading into the ocean, toes sinking into the cool water. Laughter echoed along the shoreline as they chased one another through the shallows, kicking up splashes to cool off. It was a simple, joyful end to a memorable day.



Bush walk & light house

Another adventure was a bushwalk in Jerseyville, embracing the fresh air despite the strong winds sweeping through the area. To make the most of the day, we found a sheltered spot to explore, winding our way through the trees and taking in the sounds and shapes of the bush around us.



As we walked, we pointed out native trees and imagined which animals might make their homes within the different layers of the bush—high in the canopy, tucked among the shrubs, or down on the forest floor. The group shared ideas, asked questions and connected with the environment in a thoughtful, curious way.

After the walk, everyone gathered to enjoy hot chip sandwiches, the perfect warm treat on a windy day. The boys kicked a football around, adding laughter and energy to a relaxed, enjoyable afternoon. We then finished with a drive to the South West Rocks

lighthouse where some students played games or tips, while others took photos.

Point Plomer

We also headed out to Point Plomer for an 'On Country' walk across the headland, taking in the stunning coastline and learning from the land around them. As they walked, they were treated to an unforgettable sight—whales migrating north. The whales travelled so close to the headland that the group could actually hear their incredible calls echoing through the water.

Along the way, the group explored the landscape, stopping to investigate and pick beautiful paper daisies, appreciating their delicate texture and colours. It was a peaceful, powerful afternoon filled with connection to Country, nature, and each other.

Back Beach

Staff and students enjoyed a relaxing walk along back beach. They saw an Osprey fly over, investigated the rock pools for sea life, built sand sculptures and generally immersed themselves in nature. Emily pointed out some varieties of edible sea weed and native berries.



STAGE 5 'ON COUNTRY' OUTINGS continued

Big Hill

Fifteen students and staff from Stage 5 walked from SWR gaol, down the hill heading north to climb some rocks, then walked through the newly landscaped caravan park to the beach and back along the new pathway to the gaol.

The weather was amazing!!!! We saw a brown snake and a large goanna. All part of nature.



Hat Head

Thank you to Trent for coming on board with our on country outings and showing us the blowhole at Hat Head. It was a great experience.

Thank you for all who participated respectfully in these outings.

Courtney and Wendy



ON COUNTRY VISIT TO BELLBROOK

All of VC was invited to Bellbrook Aboriginal Reserve that is nestled beneath the sacred mountain of Burrell Bullai. Wendy, Uncle Tully and Uncle Barry were keen for it to be a great day and did plenty of forward planning. The night before the excursion Uncle Barry sent through a collection of photos of his family, and of himself as a youngster growing up in Bellbrook. He was excited to show his family connections to this special place on the upper Macleay River. Like Uncle Barry we were all drawn to the magnetic power of Burrell Bullai and to the magic waterway of Nulla Nulla Creek.



On arrival Gadan Barry performed a traditional Welcome to Country and then we were educated and entertained by stories from Gadan Barry, Gadan Tully and Gadan Lyle Quinlan about life on Bellbrook Reserve. It was inspiring listening to them share their memories, traditions and culture.



After a delicious lunch we went to the sandy banks of the magic Nulla Creek to enjoy its refreshing and rejuvenating waters. We all loved the experience of the day and it was great to see Uncle Barry and Uncle Tully wading and swimming in Nulla Creek like they did in their youth.

Patrick



(THE HIDDEN TRUTH) by Bella H

YEAR 10 WRITING TASK

Curiosity hit her like a train, the truth unknown. Old photos scattered amongst her desk, once-abandoned diaries reopened after years of darkness and dust under her bed. She couldn't understand, it was so obvious that she wasn't from here, she just couldn't figure out the truth behind it all. Frustration threatened to burst from its seams along with a headache forming from her temple. Maybe it was time for a break? But what if there was so much more to learn? She needed answers, she needed to know the secrets kept hidden from her. Right before she gave in and continued to study on her own detective work, she heard someone call out to her from downstairs. *"Tamelle !"*

Finally snapped out from her daze, her world of mysteries and problem solving slowly began to fade away into an unknown blur. Now back to Earth and back to being the normal fifteen year old she is, and not the problem solving detective she wished she was. *"Coming !"*

She yelled out, scrambling off her chair and onto her feet, then rushing over to the door to open it. As she started to make her way downstairs, conversation starters began to form in her mind: Is she really Swedish? Where is the rest of her family? And how come there was barely any evidence of them having Swedish heritage? These were all questions she knew her parents had answers to. The smell of her mothers homemade pasta put a pause to her thoughts, moving her current focus to what was on the table for dinner and away from the odd questions she made up inside her mind.

The soft hum of the radio filled the dining room with an oddly warm comfort and strong security. Opera was never her sort of music, she leaned more towards that new boy band *The Beatles*. *Every girl was swooning over the four men, and so was Tamelle. "Do we always have to listen to opera while we eat? Why can't we listen to The Beatles or the BeeGees?"*, Tamelle whined, tilting her head to the side as her mother served them their dinner.

"You kids and your boy bands nowadays, listen to some REAL music like your old man !"

Her father cheered, his speech odd and quiet due to that large scar overlapping his lips and cheek. He never seemed to talk about how or where he got it, but Tamelle could always see how uncomfortable and upset he'd get when someone asked out in public. The mood calmed down, the small family settling down to enjoy their dinner. Bullets of sweat began to form on Tamelle's forehead, did she ask her desired questions or leave it for another day? What if the mood immediately changed for the worse? She would have to explain herself quickly and explain why she needed answers. Tension began to build up, the room becoming too quiet without Tamelle talking about her day or her hobbies, she wasn't even touching her food due to being so deep in thought again. *"Tamelle?"* Her mother reached out to touch her daughter's shoulder, and once that simple contact was made it sparked something within Tamelle.

"Where are we from?", she blurted out quickly before slapping her hand over her mouth and holding her breath from the small gasp she let in. Her face turned a deep red from embarrassment and worry for what she had just said. The shock on her parents' faces was unreadable, the only thing you could hear was the opera on the radio. Her mother let out a small, nervous chuckle.

"What...do you mean? We're Swedish, dear."

"No." Tamelle quickly budged on before the topic could be changed. She took a deep breath before continuing her argument. *"I KNOW we're not Swedish, we sound different, and you both don't know what to say when I ask about our family !"* She accused, yet her parents didn't fight back and instead just looked at each other with worry, yet acceptance.

"Tamelle... we really tried to keep this from you, for your safety... but if you're really curious then it's probably time to tell you the truth," her father muttered, his hand finding its place on his scarred cheek. It amazed Tamelle at how easily they gave in to her wonders, she was so stunned that she did even notice her mother leave the table and soon return with a small box in her hands.

"You're right," her mother admitted, her voice soft, almost ashamed for what she now had to say to her daughter. *"No amount of homeschooling and protection will stop you from being German."*

German?", Tamelle perked up, the light in her eyes appearing brighter than before. *"Why'd you hide this from me? Is Germany bad?"*

"Yes," her father budged in, speaking in a low tone before softening again. "Well... It was once okay, but things have been ruined ever since the war."

A war? Tamelle has never heard of a war. Her face showed clear confusion. How didn't she know this? Even when she walked around in public she never saw any newspapers or evidence of a war... though, all the times her father pulled her away from newspaper stalls that seemed to always have customers began to make sense, he always made out that the news was boring, or there was gruesome things he didn't want his daughter to read at a young age. Her mind wondered again, her gaze glued on the now real, physical evidence on the table in front of her.

Newspapers celebrating the end of the war, some read "THE WAR IS OVER" and "HITLER IS DEAD". Just reading the description of this dictator made her want to turn around and hurl. Soon, the silence broke. *"We... pretend to be Swedish so people don't look down on us, after the war Germans were just... KNOWN for being bad. We're not bad Tamelle, we are not like Hitler, no matter what anyone tells you."* Anger seemed to lace her mother's tone, it wasn't aimed at Tamelle, it was aimed at something worse. Tamelle's gaze went to her father, who was holding an old, rusted knife.

"This was owned by one of the soldiers who tried to stop us from escaping. He came up and slashed my face - I didn't hesitate to attack, I didn't need him to hurt your mother. If I didn't attack, we wouldn't be here." Finally, after all these years, she knew who hurt her father, who scarred him for the rest of his life. Her heart began to pound harder than it ever has before. Hitler, war, concentration camps and death flooded her mind. The newspapers in front of her displayed images her parents hoped she would never have to see.

She shook her head, her eyebrows furrowing into a form of frustration and sympathy. But she knew none of it was her fault, she's just a kid... not some adult man causing death and destruction to everyone around him. *"We're so sorry Tamelle - we thought if we just... kept you safe, you wouldn't have to fear and worry about what others might think. We really hope you understand."*

"I do," Tamelle muttered, *"I do understand."* Despite the situation being tense and awkward, Tamelle was happy she finally had her answers - that light in her eyes was still visible, maybe it was even brighter than before. Her head began to raise, a smile slowly plastering onto her face. She knew her parents didn't realise how happy she was to finally have the truth, but this was only the start.

Dinner was long over, and the moon's glare dominated the night sky. With the evidence now sat in front of her on her bed, she could finally continue her studies. She soaked in her parents' words like a sponge, every bit of her parents' explanations could help her understand more about her history, her culture, her own identity. Tamelle had all the information she needed - her notebooks filled with notes, scribbles, and long paragraphs.

Finally, she grabbed her own diary and began to write.

"APRIL 20TH, 1962 - Mama and Papa actually decided to help me with my questions today, it was a bit awkward at first but it was good! I'm surprised, actually. This Hitler man just makes my blood boil, nothing but a greedy man who thought destroying lives was all he needed to do! Papa let me borrow a notebook he kept, he explained how he saw people walking into concentration camps and how he saw buildings being destroyed within seconds. I feel bad for Papa and Mama. They must've had their lives planned out so perfectly before the war, then they had to leave their home behind due to the fear of their safety. I wish I was there to help - but I know if I actually said that, Mama would panic and tell me otherwise"

She sighed as she finally closed her notebook, she felt odd from all of this information. Her fathers gruesome words within his journal made goosebumps shoot up her arms. Those paragraphs replaying through her mind. She had to keep reading, ...

If you would like to read more of Bella's captivating story, just ask her for a copy of the full story.

DIDGERIDOO-IN-A-DAY WORKSHOP

As part of the GRIT Boys program, our students recently took part in a hands-on Didgeridoo-in-a-Day Workshop, an engaging cultural and practical learning experience led by Alex, a highly experienced facilitator who has been delivering school-based workshops for over twenty years.

Throughout the day, students were guided through the history, cultural significance, and full creation process of making a didgeridoo—from selecting the wood to crafting a playable instrument. Alex shared valuable insights into traditional craftsmanship while teaching students a range of essential tool-making skills.



Students practiced techniques such as using a drawknife, chiselling, sanding, cutting with saws, and safely working with vices, gaining confidence and competence in each step. One of the most rewarding parts of the workshop was seeing students take home their very own handcrafted didgeridoo, each one unique and a testament to their effort and creativity.

In the afternoon, Alex led a breathing and playing workshop, helping students explore foundational didgeridoo playing techniques, rhythm, and breath control. This session allowed students to connect more deeply with the instrument they had created and

appreciate the skill involved in its traditional use.



The Didgeridoo-in-a-Day workshop was a powerful blend of cultural learning, practical skill-building, and teamwork. Our GRIT Boys represented Macleay Vocational College with respect and enthusiasm, embracing the opportunity to create, learn, and connect. **Sav**



Dulukun gaaralda.
(Lizard on the grass.)



Wayilaa mitayndha.

(Black Cockatoo in the tree.)



Dhalan gidjalga.
(Bush turkey is hungry.)



MVC'S PRESIDING OFFICER RETIRES

After four years of dedicated service, our long-standing Presiding Officer for the HSC exams, **Gai**, has decided to step down from her role. Since taking on the position in 2021, Gai has overseen a period of remarkable growth in our Year 12 cohort, culminating in the largest number of students sitting their exams this year.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Gai for her tireless



Students waiting to enter the exam room.

commitment and the invaluable support she and her team have provided to ensure smooth and successful exam periods.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to announce that **Maxine**, one of our experienced NESAs supervisors, will step into the role next year. We look forward to working with her as she continues this important responsibility. **Louise**



GINDA BARRI NEWS

Guardian Interest

Bec Lorrimer Assistant Picture Editor for *The Guardian Australia* visited Macleay Vocational College and The Ginda Barri Centre with a focus on documenting Trevanna and Deslie on their graduation day.

Bec first heard about The Ginda Barri Centre when previous students, Lilly, Sharlene and Neisha appeared on *The Project* and ABC. Bec wanted to document via photography, their continued story and a new story of Trevanna and Deslie's achievements in graduating Year 12 with Ezzard Jnr and Daniel by their side. We thank Bec for her work with all the Ginda Barri families over the three days and we are excited to see the final article published.



Swimming Lessons

The Ginda Barri Centre in collaboration with NSW Health First 2000 days program has begun a weekly Mum-and-Bub swimming group each Monday for 8 weeks. Jade Oliver, Aboriginal

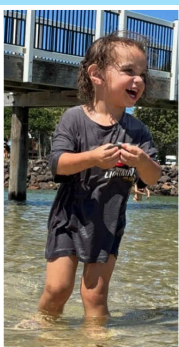


family worker from NSW Health and trained swimming instructor, has been assisting with teaching each of our children to be safe and confident around the water. This program gives the babies 30 minutes of water play each week plus other additional resources.



Greenhill Connections

Thank you to Aunty Nat from Greenhill Public School for her donations of toiletries to our centre. We have been invited next year for visits to the school which we are excited to start.



Fortnight of Fun

The Ginda Barri Centre headed off to Crescent Head on their Fortnight of Fun with the Mums and Bubs enjoying Killick Creek on a hot Wednesday. Nat and Sarah have recently completed their Bronze Medallion so we will be heading to the beach a lot more this Summer. **Gemma**



END OF TERM 3 BIG DAY OUT TREE TOPS IN PORT MACQUARIE



MVC RUGBY 9'S BOYS

VC boys combined with Kempsey High School to field a strong U/17s team at the Rugby League 9s held in Port Macquarie. The boys played with determination, resilience and grit, taking on schools from across the region and representing their communities with pride.

Congratulations to Jakyden, Zander, Bryce, Amari and Luke for their fantastic effort, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the day.

Sav

TERM 3 COMMUNITY BARBECUE

Photos by Jesse & Patrick



NEWINGTON SYDNEY EXPERIENCE



This term four of our students, James, Zander, Amari and Bryce, had the incredible opportunity to take part in the Newington College Sydney Immersion Experience - three days filled with learning, exploration, and real-world skill development.

Once we arrived in Sydney we spent the afternoon exploring some of the city's most iconic landmarks. From the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge to Circular Quay, The Rocks, Milsons Point, and Luna Park, students experienced the lively atmosphere of the CBD.

They also confidently navigated Sydney's public transport system, building important independence and social skills along the way.

On Day Two we were hosted by the welcoming community at Newington College. After a campus tour and morning recess, our group attended a moving Remembrance Day Service, led by Newington Cadets and distinguished guests. Then our students rolled up their sleeves in the kitchen during a Food Technology class, to prepare Pasta Carbonara with garlic bread, followed by chocolate chip cookies for dessert.



In the afternoon, our hosts treated us to a visit to Bondi Beach, including the scenic Bondi-to-Bronte coastal walk and a friendly game of touch footy by the sand. We wrapped up the evening with a quick shop at Bondi Westfield, dinner, and some fun at Timezone.



The final day was unforgettable as we completed a Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb. As they learned about the history of Sydney and its famous landmarks—including Bondi, Circular Quay, and the Opera House—students took in breathtaking panoramic views of the harbour, coastline, and city skyline.

Throughout the experience, our students represented MVC with pride, showing maturity, respect, and enthusiasm. This immersion not only broadened their understanding of life in a major city but helped them build confidence, teamwork, and real-world skills they will carry forward.

A huge thankyou to Newington College for their warm hospitality, to Steve for jumping on board with us literally at the last minute, and to our students for embracing every moment of this memorable journey. Sydney offered an incredible classroom—and our students truly shone. **Sav**



THE QUEENWOOD TRIP

Starting off with a quick but tiring drive to Sydney, Sally then cramped all twelve girls in two suites at the Meriton where Sally's room was stealing all the cosmetics and Wendy's room was exploring the pool. For the two nights that we enjoyed there, the dinner was a gorgeous Chinese restaurant with a robot serving us and Acai bowls after for a treat, then an Italian restaurant with a beautiful Darling Harbour view that might've been too fancy, with the only pasta dish being a squid flavour and again some ice-cream after as a treat.

Day Two was visiting Queenwood School for Girls and, although parking was terrible and Wendy got her driver, Sarah, lost, being greeted with warm smiles and excitement from the students gave joy to the experience. After three hours of sailing on the harbour from Balmoral Beach, connecting with the other school, and having lunch provided by the school, everyone was ready to get back and relax.

The last day, which was going to be just a normal drive home before Wendy told everyone

Sally's surprise, to go to Luna Park. The rides were definitely worth the headache and stomach ache afterwards, however it did make the drive back ten times slower, getting back at 8:30 and ready for bed. Despite the tiny coffee cups it was a beautiful and very fun time! **Mia**



LOADED BROWNIES

Students in R4 celebrated their boost in attendance with a delicious hands-on treat—loaded brownies! The hospitality room was filled with laughter as everyone rolled up their sleeves to mix, melt, and decorate. Our R4 students had a blast transforming simple brownies into epic creations, piling on M&Ms, Maltesers, lollies, fudge, and swirls of melted chocolate topped with gooey marshmallows. It was a fun, messy, and memorable reward that tasted just as good as the teamwork behind it! **Courtney**



NEW FACES AT MVC

2025 has seen many new staff come to join the fun at MVC throughout the year. We welcomed Rochelle and Laura to the Wellbeing team, Lorraine to the Administration team, Nyssa to the Canteen team, Kylie, Steve, Sarah and Sumah to the Classroom team, and Gemma to the Ginda Barri team.

Year 12 English Studies students have started interviewing these keen people to introduce them to our VC community. In this edition of Times @ VC, **Adam** introduces Steve.

Steve Hall is a new teacher at MVC, starting half-way through 2025. Now the primary subject he teaches is English but he said his favorite is values and ethics.

Steve has been married for 33 years and has four adult children. Steve spent his early childhood living in a place called Woy Woy on the Central Coast. Fast forward to today, he lives out in Crescent Head. Steve loves the beach so he takes his dog for walks along the beach and enjoys surfing. In fact he surfs every morning and never misses the opportunity to catch a wave.

“The reasoning behind coming to MVC is that I believe I will meet lots of interesting people,” explained Steve. He said that he thoroughly enjoys many things about MVC but if he had to pick one to be his favourite it’s that it is different to other schools. “Being allowed to be different gives VC its soul,” declared Steve.

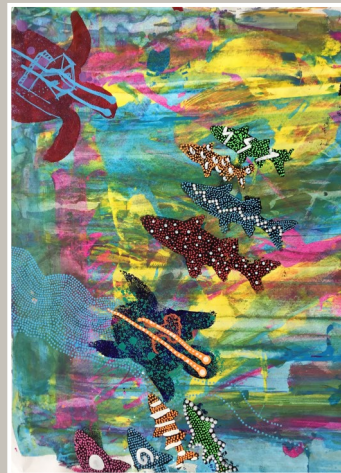


Term 4 Merits

Congratulations to these students who have worked consistently to earn at least ten merit awards.

Quade	Taleah
Seth	Sylvester
Dee-Jay	James
Harmony	Adam
Amari	Jakyden
Zander	Bianca

STAGE 5 ART
EXPLORING
INDIGENOUS
DESIGNS



FORTNIGHT OF FUN—CRAFTY CREATIONS

Thanks to Kylie and all her organizational skills, the students have been having an awesome time being creative. They completed projects in jewellery making (beading and weaving), bath bomb assembling, tie dying, pottery, pyrography, resin decorating, macrame, and printing with plant material. Kylie organised for the students to attend various workshops so they could learn from the experts and the students really appreciated the experiences. **Wendy**



Pottery was my favourite and we went to the pool afterwards to cool off because it was a really hot day. The resin workshop was great fun too and after it we had some time for Christmas shopping in Kmart. **Cailin**



The pyrography workshop decorating felt hats was good, except for the smell of the burning felt. I learnt how to add shading to my decoration with the flowpiece tool so that I made my mum a hat for Christmas. I also learnt how to make wall hangers and pot hangers with macrame, and then I taught Sarah how to make her own creations. **Mikayla**



FORTNIGHT OF FUN—FISHING SURFING FUN



Our group started the Fortnight of Fun by learning how to rig up the fishing rods with the correct sinkers and hooks, suitable for the type of fishing we would be doing. At the end of the fun fortnight these rods were presented to the five students who put in a consistent effort, always had a go and, of course, attended as much as possible. **Congratulations to Raz, Seth, Angel, Quade and Lyric.**



Next we had to find some bait for the hooks so we went worming on the beaches which was completely unsuccessful but fun, and we learnt about the beach erosion that occurs during winter, thus affecting the habitat of the beach worms. We successfully collected some pippies though.

The fun fortnight also included learning how to surf under the expert coaching of the people from Soul Surfing. The instructors were so patient, knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and motivating. They didn't give up on those learning



new skills which meant that the students didn't give up either and everyone learned to stand on their boards to ride the waves. The joy on the faces of the students was priceless!



We finished off the fortnight with kayaking at South West Rocks Back Beach and that was another perfect day on the water which included a bit of fishing as well.

"Surfing was pretty fun and swimming in the creek at Crescent was really fun." Kayden



"The best part was building closer relationships with my friends, and fish'n'chips." Jesse



"The best thing was standing up on the surf board!" Paul.



"Fishing and catching zero fish was not motivating but I'll eventually catch one." Quade



FORTNIGHT OF FUN—RETRO ARCADE GAME


As part of our Fortnight of Fun program, students launched an exciting project to build a retro arcade cabinet as a hands-on learning experience combining technology, design and creativity.

While the full build will now be completed with students in 2026, important groundwork has already been completed behind the scenes.

We would like to sincerely thank Sav, who has done an exceptional job preparing the cabinet so far. The quality of work and effort invested has created a fantastic platform for students to continue next year.



In 2026, students will complete the final build, install the gaming system, and bring the arcade cabinet to life as a lasting College feature for staff to reminisce and students to enjoy outside of class time.

 A huge thank you to Sav for the outstanding work and dedication to this project.

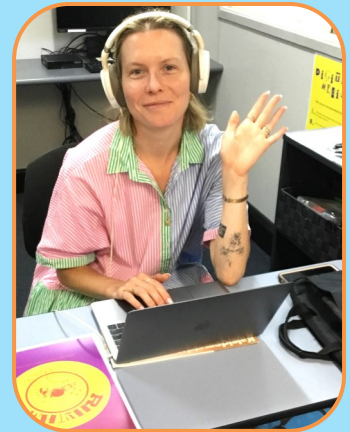


FORTNIGHT OF FUN—RHYTHM AND SOUND

The Rhythm and Sound project was a great introduction to sound recording, music production, instrument creation, and creative culture appreciation.



Students had the chance to experiment with creating their own music using computer software, and we even got to make ocarinas (a musical instrument) using clay! We had a listening and responding circle where we experimented with using a synthesiser and percussion instruments, and got to watch a beautiful film called August Rush.



One of the highlights was travelling to Bellingham. When we were there we ate some nice food, browsed the leather and craft store, and even spent some time by the river.



FORTNIGHT OF FUN—TRAIL BLAZING

Our group explored several valleys from Port Macquarie to Coffs Harbour through river trekking and white water rafting. This is my personal passion, something I practice with friends and family most weekends in different locations. The activity itself requires a menagerie of physical requirements from swimming, climbing, bushwalking, cliff jumping, snorkelling, treading water, teamwork, traversing ravine walls, swimming through gorges and simple resilience. The last requirement cannot be understated. The activity itself is a commitment. Once embarked on a river or creek exploration participants cannot just give up and opt out. They need to see it through.



This group of trekkers were lucky enough to take on a two-day whitewater rafting experience down the Nymboida River. This rafting journey is considered one of the best rafting/kayaking experiences in Australia due to its diverse conditions and geographic features. The river run is part of the longest mapped whitewater trail in Australia, taking in the Nymboida, Mann and Clarence rivers.

We experienced heavy Grade 3 and 4 whitewater rapids, cascades, spectacular gorges framed by thick Gondwana rainforest on either side and broken up by runs of tranquil pools. On day one we paddled down 120m of elevation along 9km of river where we took on many grade 3 rapids, two grade 4 rapids and heavy sunshine which resulted in the entire group getting sunburned.

We went through sheer cliffs and many sections where we had to jump from cliffs, portage the boats and navigate treacherous rock paths to earn our campground privileges.



Day two was a different beast entirely. The journey was comprised almost entirely of Grade 4 rapids, descended 200m of elevation and stretched for 13km. The journey took us through really isolated, rugged country and was physically punishing on the participants. We had to work together as a team, co-operate, anticipate and paddle hard. Some boats flipped, some members, including myself, went overboard and there were a lot of thrills and spills, but we conquered as a group. It was such an opportunity to explore a part of Australia that is rarely traversed and remains completely untouched. We witnessed nesting pairs of wedge tailed eagles, snakes, marsupials, goannas and friendly horseflies.

A big thank you to all of those staff and students who came along for the ride and made the whole venture possible. They should be proud of what they pulled together to accomplish as a group. These treks I do are for VC only. Our kids are worth it. **Brad**



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRIAL DAYS

Our Stage 5 students were given the opportunity to trial the three very different VET courses that the College has on offer for Years 11 and 12 students. Over three days the groups rotated through the courses so that they had a taste of Hospitality, Primary industries and Business Services.

Gavin and Trent took the students to a well-established local farm, allowing them to gain a valuable insight into the roles of working dogs, sheep, cattle and horses in everyday farm operations. Students observed the ear-tagging process on young calves and learned about calving and early animal care.



They then listened to Gavin explain the Primary Industries program, engaging thoughtfully and asking insightful questions. Throughout the visit, students were enthusiastic, hands-on, and willing to step confidently into every activity. It was a practical, meaningful learning experience that highlighted their curiosity and teamwork. **Courtney**



To experience Business Services students spent time in the Rotary Bookshop in Smith St where they learned about this community-based business. They learnt the importance of careful record keeping, especially in a business that spends all the money collected from the sale of books, magazines, games, CD's and DVD's back into the Macleay community through Rotary's donation program. The students were thrilled to leave with a book or games of their choosing. **Shannon**

In our Hospitality Centre students had some hands-on experience at cooking, plating and serving which are important parts of the Hospitality Course. Students made themselves milkshakes and cookies then calculated the needs to cater for staff and students of the Business Services group. They successfully planned, prepared and presented the luncheon—all important Hospitality Industry skills. **Simone**



WORKPLACE SUCCESS

Congratulations to all of our students who engaged in work placement this year. It can feel very challenging to go to a workplace that you have never been to before and to take the big step up to being a worker. The rewards for taking on this challenge are big increases in employability skills, personal confidence and realising that you can rise to meet a challenge. Work placement is hard work but worth it and a wonderful way to transition to paid work.

I am very proud of all our students who took the big step up and went to work this year. **Ann**

VC'S PUBLISHED AUTHOR—BRADLEY MAITLAND



Congratulations to Brad who has just published his horror fantasy novel called *The Gorgon Protocol*. If anyone is looking for a gift idea for Christmas or some holiday reading material it is available to buy online through Amazon. Well done Bradley!

Below is a brief taste from the back cover:

“... the decision to reopen the old Black Water mine doesn't bode well. Abandoned centuries ago the mines under the shadow of an ancient mountain. A dark place forbidden to all men. As ill-omened portents and eerie phenomena begin appearing throughout the quiet town of Jutland Falls, Declan Cobb can't shake the suspicion that something ancient and monstrous once more begins to stir within the heart of the mountain...”



YEAR 12 VISUAL ARTS



Dunghutti Designs (pictured above)

This painting respects my cultural connections to Bellbrook which is west of Kempsey. At Bellbrook is the famous Mount Sugar Loaf (Burrell Bullai), Nulla Nulla Creek and the first signs of white settlement in the Upper Macleay, the Bellbrook Pub.

Dunghutti/Thungutti people have lived in the upper Macleay for thousands of years and this place is a cultural home to me. Also incorporated into my design are the culturally important Diamond Patterns so often used in cultural art in NSW.

The sun is rising above the settlement. Each arm of the sun represents other areas of the Macleay Valley such as Kempsey, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point, Willawarrin and Crescent Head. **Benji**



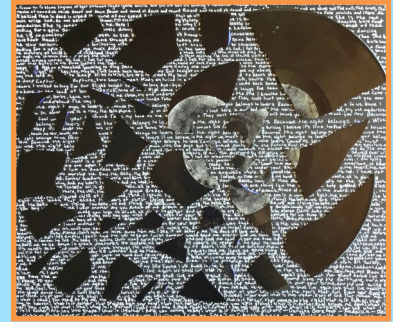
Days in the Saddle (pictured right)

A day in the saddle is all about feeling free and escaping reality. When I feel like life is too much, I love to go for a ride in the mountains of Lower Creek which is such a beautiful and isolated part of the world.

I have tried to share this beauty with my painting as well as depicting my serenity and escape into nature. My dad always said, "I'm not lost but just out of service." The true meaning of happiness is the joy I feel in the quiet natural environment. It is so quiet, no noise of town but just you and your thoughts.

Lea-Ann





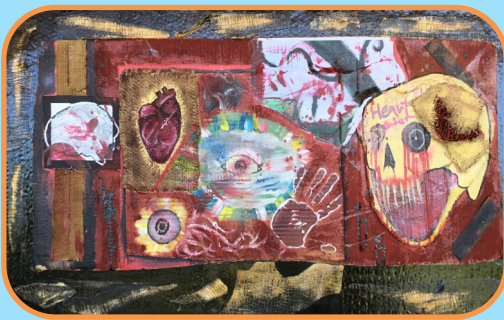
Forgotten (pictured above)

Forgotten animals. Forgotten records. Forgotten songs. These are the themes of my artwork. As the world rapidly changes, old records are forgotten like the extinct animals of the past. Only their retrieved bones and skulls still remain to remind us of their once proud existence. I have tried to skillfully and creatively tie these themes together along with a special song from Patti Smith. I have even written a poem to accompany the visual creativity.

Old records scratched and worn out like the lives of the listener.
Second hand, forgotten bands from distant lands
Two mediums explored, rotting skulls upon the floor.
Dusty secondhand store, forgotten records too good to ignore.
Forgotten records in boxes on shelves, forgotten records shops can't sell.
Forgotten artists on the turntable, forgotten artists, recording labels.
The bones: lyrics and tones and stories sometimes cloned.
For me no greater sound than the one that can be found.
As the vinyl spins one way with the sounds of yesterday. **Emily**



A Portal to My Mind (pictured left and below)



My artwork is a slow walk into the deep corners of my creative mind. Ghouls and ghosts aren't real, they say, yet walk amongst us every day!

My four-piece painting can be read in many ways, but the influence of horror movies and science fiction is evident. Halloween and haunting themes appear and reappear. A ghastly figure emerges from some time portal, and a door opens to lead the viewer to another dimension in time (please feel free to open the door).



A Frankenstein collection of human parts gazes upon the viewer to the sound of a lover's heartbeat. Also seen is a hard-wired brain, half insane, ready to reboot and be a robot. So, if you're looking for chaos and strife, roll up, roll up. View this work for the time of your life. Multiple ideas on multiple panels but connected by a theme of fantasy and chaos. **Tyler**

FAREWELLING HIGHLY RESPECTED STAFF

Israel joined the College in May 2024 and, after ruffling a few feathers, quickly became an essential part of our community. He worked as a regular bus driver and teacher's aide, as well as helping out with furniture moving and heavy lifting. While working here he was also training to be a teacher and after a very successful practice placement, he was offered a position as a teacher at another local school. It was great to see him attend our Year 12 formal and the students really appreciated seeing him there to share in their success.

Congratulations Israel and best wishes with your future teaching career.



Brian is an absolute legend. He has been at the College for the four years I have been here and he has helped me and many other students cope with their schooling, especially those who need after school lessons as part of the Period 7 program. I will miss his friendly banter, patience and persistence. **Kurt**

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work at MVC over the past five years. I have grown so much and truly loved my time here. Our students have been the reason I have looked forward to coming to work every day, and supporting them has been an incredible journey. To all staff, thank you for being such a strong support and for becoming friends and family. I will miss you all and wish every student the very best. **Brian (Frenchy)**

We know that you will be a huge hit on Hamilton Island. See you for Schoolies next year.

Brooke started working with the College in January 2014, took a three year break in 2021 and returned in 2024 to make a huge difference to our educational model. Her most recent appointment as Curriculum Co-ordinator saw her oversee the latest Department of Education changes to the secondary curriculum so that all the Stage 5 teachers were working together to impart their knowledge of their specific subject while improving the literacy skills of the students. It's hard work overseeing dramatic change in any workplace but Brooke has managed the pathway so successfully that everyone is ready to continue the model into 2026.

Brooke has accepted a new challenge at another local school where she is sure to make a difference and lift the literacy and numeracy levels of the students in her care.

Thank you Brooke, for all your expertise, time, effort and vision that you have given to the staff and students of MVC.



Celia has been working with MVC for **20 years** as our school psychologist, and has decided that it is time to implement her phased retirement plan. Unfortunately, that means that she will no longer be sharing her calm wisdom and advice with those who are part of the College community.

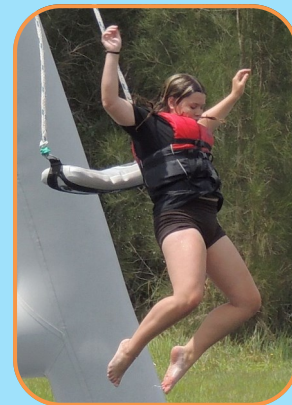
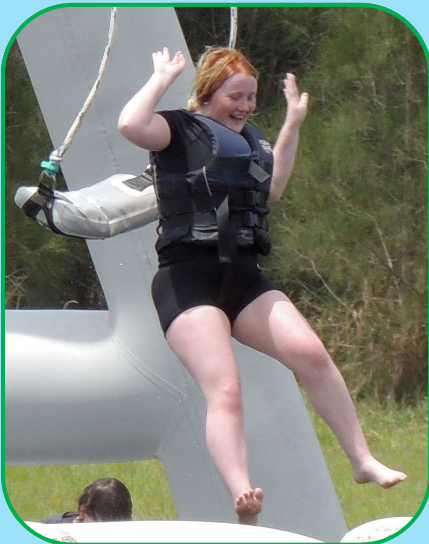
Celia has been juggling a very successful private practice with her heartfelt commitment to the College and has finally decided that a 60 hour working week is not sustainable for anyone, especially someone with children and grandchildren scattered around the country.

Lucky for us, Celia's dedication means that she will be staying in touch with the College next year to continue her guidance with the Whole School Wellbeing Program.

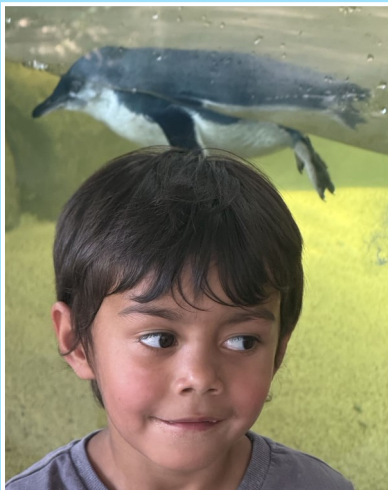
Thank you for your dedication to the College from its concept to where it is now and enjoy your well deserved time with your family.



2025 BIG DAY OUT AT STONY AQUA PARK



GINDA BARRI BIG DAY OUT AT BILLABONG ZOO





COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS APPEAL

A massive shout-out to Ashleigh Mace from Queenwood School for Girls for co-ordinating a Christmas appeal with the wonderful Queenwood students and their families. And also thanks to Ash and Todd for making the delivery trip to VC.

Thanks also go to Mark Morrison for managing and delivering similar donations from Newington College. Additionally, the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation kindly donated many gifts for boys and girls in our VC community. These generous donations of gifts and food hamper items will be shared with many members of our College community.

The Dunghutti Land Council also welcomed our Ginda Barri young mums and their children to their South Kempsey centre where they received donated gifts and food hampers.

These heartfelt contributions bring the spirit of Christmas to life, and we are extremely grateful for their kindness and support. **Sally**



MVC STUDENTS DECORATE KEMPSEY'S CHRISTMAS TREE

The students and staff of R4 have been collecting Return & Earn bottles this year and, to mark our very successful year, we cashed them in and treated ourselves to chips, gravy and, of course, the essential devon.

Then, with full hearts, we headed to the Reject Shop, where we purchased tinsel and a Christmas decoration for Kempsey's replacement Christmas tree on behalf of VC. We decorated the tree together, climbing, laughing and creating a moment of joy for our community and a memory we'll all hold onto.



We wrapped up our last classroom session by reading a story about our class, sharing laughs and reflecting on the journey we've taken this year as a team.

R4, you have filled this year with strength, kindness, growth, and connection, and I couldn't be prouder of each and every one of you.

Courtney

