



Kinross Wolaroi Report to Synod 2013

TELL:

Chaplaincy

Kinross Wolaroi School is a school of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA). As such, it has an ethos that embraces faith, life and wisdom. As a UCA School, we are embracing of all people: people of different Christian denominational background, people of other faiths and people of non-faith. Each individual is respected for his or her personal convictions yet all support the theological and educational ethos of the School. Together we worship the one God. Together we strive to empower our students to be social responsible, spiritually aware and fully engaged in life.

Worship

The Chaplain leads worship in both the Senior School and the Preparatory School as well on certain Sundays for the Boarders.

The more significant services of 2012 included the Commencement Service and Induction of Leaders for 2012, the more solemn Ash Wednesday service which summons in the Lenten Season, the Easter Service recalling Jesus' Passion and celebrating the resurrection, the end-of-year services acknowledging and celebrating the contributions of the Year 12 students as well as their graduation, and finally the advent of Christmas.

The senior school has six Houses. Students and Tutors of each House attend 'Chapel' once each fortnight. This is an opportunity to begin the day in prayer, reflection and song. It is hoped that students are challenged in their perceptions of the world, lead to reflect on their lives, called to action for sake of justice and encouraged to lead by godly example. Students are encouraged to become the individuals that God intends for them to be. During these services House Leaders take an active role in leading others in prayer and reflection.

The Chaplain leads a weekly 'Chapel' for the Preparatory School. These services are built upon passages of Scripture that promote those individual traits that are necessary for fullness of living: friendship, respect, positive attitude, resilience, thankfulness, etc. The overall message is that God has created each person to be 'fully alive' and to celebrate the gift of life through relationships with God, family, society and the environment.

Kinross Wolaroi has a significant boarding population. Each term, Boarders who are in-House on the particular Sunday, attend a Celebration of the Lord's Day at St John's Church in Kite Street, Orange. These services, open to members of the broader community, allow

students to engage with the broader Church. We extend our gratitude and our thanks to the St John's community who generously welcome us into their own fold.

Rites of Passage

This year, a number of members of the School community celebrated a Rite of Passage of one description or another. It was a privilege to have baptised baby Harrison, first child of Trent (IST, SDD teacher) and Elizabeth Chapman in March and baby Oliver, second child of Alistair (Director of Boarding) and Tanya Miller in May. Both Baptisms were officiated at St John's Church and the babies were welcomed into the worshipping community by students and staff of the School, members of the St John's community as well family and friends of the babies' parents.

This year we also rejoiced with Ryan Buchmaier (Year 11), Mikaela Priest (Year 10), Joshua Priest (Year 8) and Brianna Priest (Year 6) who were Confirmed into the Anglican faith by Canon Frank Hetherington of Holy Trinity Parish, Orange.

I look forward to officiating over the marriages of Pattianne Gay, mother of Madeleine (KWS, 2006) and William (KWS, 2010) to Jim Marsh, and of Richard Gallard (KWS Groundsman) to Amanda Dodd, and also of Jemma Hordynsky (KWS 2008) to Luke Turner. These marriages will be celebrated in the New Year.

Club 3:16 – Christian Youth Group

During lunchtimes on Fridays a number of students gather for 'Club 3:16'. This is a Christian youth group who share time together in order to grow in their understanding of the depth and breadth of God's love. I take this opportunity to thank Mr Yooie Choi for his initiative and for his work with this group.

Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue

Key to the ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia is ecumenism and also inter-faith dialogue. Our school typifies the ecumenical emphasis of the Church and much has been mentioned above of our shared expressions of faith and worship. In terms of inter-faith dialogue, this year during Harmony Day in March we welcomed visitors from the Board of Jewish Education (BJE). Mrs Shula Jaffe-Krimhand, coordinator of the BJE Outreach Study Program, led Year 10 students through a demonstration of a typical Jewish Passover meal. Mrs Sandy Hollis guided Year 11 and Year 12 students of Studies of Religion through the significance and rituals of a Jewish wedding.

The Studies of Religion elective for the HSC is designed to provide understanding of the history, ethics and practices other world faiths. This course has opened opportunities for students to visit places of worship and to meet and interact with people of other faiths.

Not least of all, through the generous invitation of the Islamic organisation 'Affinity Intercultural Foundation', students have been able to participate in a specially designed Study Tour of Turkey. The tour took in sights of Istanbul, Gallipoli, Pergamum, Ephesus, Cappadocia, Kayseri and Goreme. Students were welcomed into schools and the homes of locals and the girls were treated to a Turkish 'hens night'. We learnt of the extraordinary histories of both Islam and Christianity in an ancient land, as well as the stories of Australians and Turks who fought and died on the Dardanelles. We meet with people from all walks of life and were inspired by their generosity, their warmth, their hospitality and their commitment to a world based on mutual respect. We gained a deeper understanding of

Islam and were made to consider our own faith teachings and beliefs. Further, we saw the diverse and rich ways in which faith shapes and directs peoples' lives.

Year 12 Retreat

At the end of first term all Year 12's who are not taking part in the Cadet Camp or Music Camp attend the Year 12 Retreat. The Retreat has become a particularly successful program and one greatly anticipated by the students.

The Retreat, run over three days, aims to give students the opportunity, the time and the safe environment within which to reflect on their lives, to share their worldview and to better appreciate their individual worth as people about to enter 'the real world'. On the Retreat, the teachers attempt to dispel for the students the notion that faith is separate to daily living and they therefore endeavour to reveal existing link between each person's life and God. This is done through strengthening friendships, sharing lived experiences, discussing the interpretations of lived experiences and introducing students to the notion of a trusting submission to God's plan for each person.

Charity and Service

In a world that is so often typified by one's concern for oneself, Kinross Wolaroi challenges its students to consider the wellbeing of 'the other'. When students identify a situation of need, they are encouraged to respond in positive and constructive ways. There are a number of charitable activities taking place in the School due to student initiatives. This year, they included the Salvation Army Red Shield Door-knock Appeal, the Legacy Appeal, Jeans for Genes and assisting George Brown High in New Britain. Boarders sponsor two children through World Vision. Senior students coordinated the purchasing of Christmas gifts for each resident of Wontama Aged Care and Nursing Home.

The highlight for the year was an initiative that had our Principal, Mr Kennelly, wear a duck suit during the School Assembly. This was the agreement should the target amount be reached. Bridget Bennett, a Year 12 student, organised and coordinated an altruistic fundraising initiative to raise money to purchase 60 ducks for impoverished villagers in Cambodia. The ducks are a valuable resource; they are a food supply, a source of eggs and a means of increasing the prosperity of the village.

A Tragic Loss

It may be inevitable for a School our size to suffer the tragedy and loss. It was with great sadness that we marked the death of Taylor Martin, a Year 11 boarder from Narromine, who died from an aggressive illness. Taylor was a great friend to many, especially in the Boarding House and through her creative expressions of art and music. We offer our sincere sympathy to Taylor's family and friends.

TEACH:

The essential aim of Religious Education at KWS is to encourage and assist students in their growth to Christian maturity. Therefore, teaching programs provide a variety of strategies and resources to heighten the interest of students in the content. By engaging students in meaningful learning experiences development of their knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes as well as spirituality will occur.

KWS undertook a complete revision of the scope and sequence as well as teaching and learning programs 7 – 10 in 2012. The appointment of a Religious Education Coordinator to

oversee and manage this process was testament to the commitment of the Executive of the school to this task. Teaching teams have been formed on each year level and curriculum revision undertaken. Further in-servicing of staff and new resourcing of the subject has invigorated the faculty. With this, greater opportunities for community engagement have been identified for the future and a broadening of the excursion program planned for 2013. An essential part of this has been the identification and outreach to guest speakers who are willing to share their faith journey with our students.

The 1 and 2 Unit Studies of Religion courses remain popular in the school. The multi-faith approach the syllabus takes can be challenging to a school in a rural setting, however, through the two day excursion to Sydney by the Year 11 students, exposure to the Jewish, Buddhist and Christian traditions are achieved.

KWS provides a range of opportunities for students for leadership development. Our school cadet program provides leadership training from Year 9 upwards. Those students who choose not to continue with this program in Year 10 are involved in Community Service during the cadet camp followed by Peer Support Training later in the year. Year 9 & 10 students have the opportunity to attend Leadership Camps during school vacation periods.

All Year 11 students attend the 2 day Leadership Camp in May. Day 1 involves a range of workshops aimed at encouraging each student to broaden their understanding of the concept of leadership and serving the school and broader community. Day 2 focuses on KWS starting out with brainstorming ideas on "The school we want to be". From this the students come up with ideas of areas they would like to work in throughout the school for the remainder of their time with us.

From here they form Focus Interest Groups which are self-initiated and directed. It is amazing to see the great work some of these groups have produced, not the least of which is the academic tutoring of younger students in the school library during lunch breaks, after school and in the boarding houses of an evening.

The final selection of leaders is conducted at various stages throughout Year 11. Voting for the Head and Deputy Head Prefects takes place at the conclusion of Leadership Camp and these positions are announced at the end of term 2. Cadet leaders are announced at the conclusion of Promotions Camp in July. Tutor House leaders are announced at the end of Term 3 as Year 12 students are farewelled. Voting for School Prefects takes place at the end of Term 4 and Leaders are inducted Week 2 Term 1 of the following year.

TEND:

Within the school we have various programs of support for the wellbeing of students. Peer Support activities happen in Year 7, under the leadership and guidance of trained Year 11 students. A specific program is in place to combat bullying (the String Movement, which is completely student driven); this involves direct connection with the other high schools in Orange so it is also a great way of breaking down some of the "island mentality" that can exist between students of different schools. In Year 9 we run The Rite Journey program; now in its third year at the school, it has been an enormous success. The overall Tutor system, under which all wellbeing matters are run and overseen, is a foundation and "home base" for all students. Indigenous students are integrated into their Tutor House and also have a staff member to look after their more specific needs.

Students support Legacy by selling badges, they door-knock for the Salvation Army and Red Cross and at the end of the year they put together Christmas packages for residents of Wontama and some make visits on Christmas Day to elderly people who have no other family contact. The 40-Hour Famine is well supported, as is Jeans for Genes. The fund-raising focus which has gained most direct and active students support, however, is the Cancer Council's Shave for a Cure. Cancer has had a huge impact on the lives of both students and the wider school community, and support for this event has risen dramatically in recent years. In 2012 over \$13 000 was raised for the Cancer Council, all of it driven by students. The school has a link with George Brown High School in PNG and with K R Mangalam School in India (a student group visited India in December 2012) which will continue to develop. We are hoping to further develop a link with Anson Street Special School, a local school for students with disabilities, so that students do more "hands-on" service work.

TRANSFORM:

All students are involved in Community Service Activities which is compulsory in Year 10. In addition student groups visit organisations to offer support. This includes a strong link with Wontama Aged Care Nursing Home.

Students at each year level have informative speakers to offer assistance with each stage of growth of young people. In particular there is a real emphasis on the Year 9 and 10 levels where we believe students have the greatest need.

When not utilised by the wide ranging and extensive activities of the students at Kinross Wolaroi School, we open the facilities for the use of others. This includes extensive out of hours use of the gymnasium, classroom facilities, swimming pool and playing fields by a wide variety of community groups.

We have extensive involvement with schools that are less fortunate including George Brown HS in PNG.

We allocate a large percentage of our income to support students who would not normally be able to afford to attend KWS. Families may apply for consideration of acceptance into KWS via the Scholarships and Bursary programs which offers extensive financial support for school families and individuals facing tough economic times.

Over the last 6 years we have made a concerted effort to assist Indigenous students attend KWS. This year we have 27 Indigenous students most of whom have difficult and deprived backgrounds with limited family support in their home communities. We value the association we have with the Yalari organisation who have assisted us with the introduction of Indigenous students. We have 8 students from the Yalari organisation. The remainder are on substantial Bursaries to provide them with the best opportunities and allow them to make the most of their potential.

Our grounds are well maintained through the use of reticulation water system and the use of extensive bore water. New buildings are constructed to the latest environmental standards with double glazing and installation of insulation to prevent energy loss.

TRACTION:

KWS was about to be closed in the late 1970's. The turnaround in the school required prudent management of our resources and the highest level of Governance and Leadership

by the School Council. Since these times the growth in the school has been phenomenal. This has required a constant and vigilant approach to managing the resources of the school. As witness to the growth and success of KWS we have constructed buildings worth over \$30 million in the last 10 years.

We are fortunate to have the backing through the school foundation of a highly successful 'cow/calf' program which was established in the mid 1980's. Over the years this has grown into a high value asset through the acquisition of farms and resources. The long term aim of this program is to fund the Financial Assistance Bursary packages offered to families in need and to students from deprived backgrounds.

This year we have a renewed focus on increasing our bequests and donations program from ex-students. Up to this point we have received limited financial help from former students or friends of the school. We have appointed a full time Director of Development who has been charged with this responsibility.

Brian Kennelly

Kinross Wolaroi School - Principal

5 February 2013