I am excited to be writing this column for the ASA Newsletter for two reasons. Firstly, the ASA Management Committee has implemented a number of strategies for achieving our goals, as detailed in the inaugural Strategic Plan (November 2013), and secondly, the 2014 Annual Conference is fast approaching.
One of the main tenants of our Strategic Plan is to improve all forms and levels of the organisation’s communication. To that end the Management Committee has overseen the development of a new website and a ‘refreshed’ e-Newsletter. We hope you will enjoy the website (http://www.anglicanschoolsaustralia.edu.au) and the newsletter and we look forward to receiving your feedback.

Ove time our aim is to populate the website with contributions from a range of member schools and with information and resources that would be of benefit to all who work in Anglican schools. With regard to the newsletter, in addition to our regular features, we wish to publish articles from a range of schools which capture our mission work, religious education programs and service learning programs.

This issue of ASA News features service learning. In order to maintain an updated website a part-time Communications Manager has been appointed to the ASA. Mrs Wendy Hillman, who has exceptional qualifications and experience and has worked in Anglican schools for many years, will be working out of the Anglican Schools Commission office in Perth and can be contacted at whillman@asc.wa.edu.au. From time to time Wendy will seek information for uploading onto the website from member schools. If you have additional information that would enhance the site or if you would like to have information amended please contact Wendy at the above email address.

Our national conference in Perth is now less than two months away. The organising committee chaired by President Elect, Garth Wynne, has brought together a fascinating group of keynote speakers to inspire us as we deliberate the theme, ‘Mining The Soul’. We will be challenged to think about the role of spirituality in their lives and schools.

As a lead into the conference program chaplains are encouraged to attend the Chaplaincy Shadowing and Chaplaincy Networking Programs while other delegates have the opportunity to join the ‘Leading with Soul’ tour during which they will meet with the principals of three leading Western Australian Anglican schools.

It is not too late to register for the conference. Simply click here to download a conference brochure and registration form. Members are reminded that a number of funded registrations are available for schools that would otherwise have difficulty in financing a staff member’s attendance at the conference. The closing date for receipt of funded registrations is 30 June at 5.00pm WST.

I very much look forward to seeing you in Perth.

Fiona Godfrey

The President will outline these shortly.

Implementing the Strategic Plan

Under the leadership of President, Fiona Godfrey, and Executive Officer, The Reverend Peter Laurence, Anglican Schools Australia’s (ASA) Management Committee has been focusing on implementing the priorities of the network’s Strategic Plan 2013-2016, ratified last November. We have seen the appointment of a part-time Communications Manager, the introduction of a new website, the launch of an upgraded Newsletter and the development of online resources for chaplains, religious education coordinators and principals. Also this year, ASA will have a presence at General Synod in Adelaide.

In April President Elect, Garth Wynne, and Peter Laurence met with representatives of Anglican schools at St Andrews School in Singapore with a view to strengthening ties between ASA and similar associations in our geographic region. Garth also met with representatives of Anglican schools in New Zealand. On both occasions schools were invited to attend ASA’s upcoming conference in Perth. It was also suggested that these schools may wish to access ASA’s online support materials.

Preparations are also underway for establishing a national chaplains’ representative group. Discussions with chaplains regarding this proposed group will take place at our August conference in Perth.

Other plans currently on the drawing board include the development of a regular ASA journal, the implementation of special projects (similar to Dr Jennifer Barr’s Indigenous Education Research Project, 2009) and advocacy work as required. The Management Committee is also working on plans to secure the long-term financial viability of the network. The President will outline these shortly.
NEWS

SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS

PRINCIPALS

2014

Dr Alan Campbell, Headmaster, Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie), Brisbane, Queensland

Mrs Debbie Dunwoody, Camberwell Girls Grammar School, Melbourne, Victoria

Dr Eddie Grogan, Matthew Flinders Anglican College, Buderim, Queensland

Mr Simon Lees, Toowoomba Anglican College & Preparatory School, Toowoomba, Queensland

Mrs Maria McIvor, Whitsunday Anglican School, Mackay, Queensland

Mr Adrian Pree, St James’ Anglican School, Perth, Western Australia

Mrs Erica Thomas, Newcastle Grammar School, Newcastle, New South Wales (effective from 22 September 2014)

2015

Mrs Kim Kiepe, St Hilda’s Anglican School for Girls, Perth, Western Australia

Mrs Judith Tudball, St Michael’s Collegiate School, Hobart, Tasmania

CHAPLAINS

2014

Ms Sasha Peard, St Peter’s Anglican College, Broulee, New South Wales

Captain Yvonne Gunning, Sapphire Coast Anglican School, Bega, New South Wales

RESIGNATIONS

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mr Alan Green, Newcastle Grammar School, Newcastle, New South Wales

Mrs Anne Feehan, Camberwell Girls Grammar School, Melbourne, Victoria

Mrs Robyn Kronenberg, St Michael’s Collegiate School, Hobart, Tasmania

Mr Bruce Rixon, Bishop Tyrrell College, Newcastle, New South Wales

Mrs Joy Shepherd, St Hilda’s Anglican School for Girls, Perth, Western Australia

BOARDING AT ESPERANCE

Building has begun on the development of a 40-bed boarding house at Esperance Anglican School. It is the first Anglican Schools Commission (WA) school to venture into boarding and aims to open the boarding house with 20 boarders next year.

SHORE Celebrates 125th Anniversary

Congratulations to SHORE (Sydney Church of England Grammar School) on celebrating 125 years of Anglican education.

The school was officially opened on Saturday 4 May 1869.

Quicklinks

Heads

• http://www.edudemic.com/7-ways-to-transform-education-by-2030/
• https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/education-transformation_unleashing_potential_technology_education/?chapter=2
• http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001095/109590eo.pdf
• http://www.inc.com/bill-murphy-jr/7-ways-great-leaders-see-the-future-differently.html

Chaplains

• http://www.agora.org.au/
• http://publicchristianity.org/
• http://www.abc.net.au/religion
• http://afewsmallishfish.blogspot.com.au/
• http://colouredglassclassroom.blogspot.com/

If you can suggest websites and blogs that would be of interest to principals, chaplains and other educational leaders please advise the editor by emailing Wendy Hillman at whillman@asc.wa.edu.au

Raising ASA’s Profile

Anglican Schools Australia is a network of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia and as such has been invited by the Primate, The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall, to have a presence at this year’s General Synod in Adelaide. The Management Committee was delighted to accept this offer as a way of raising the profile of ASA and committee members, Fiona Godfrey and Jim Laussen, have volunteered to staff the promotional stand, a feature of which will be a large poster depicting a map of Australia with a state-by-state listing of all ASA schools. Our upgraded website will also be on display.

If you are attending General Synod please drop by ASA’s stand and introduce yourself to Fiona, Jim or Hazel Cole, ASA’s Executive Assistant.

Download a copy of ASA’s poster here.

DIOCESAN APPOINTMENT

BISHOP ELECT

The Reverend Jeremy James has been appointed Bishop for the Eastern Region in the Diocese of Perth.

LEFT Commissioning of Mr Adrian Pree as Principal of St James’ Anglican School, February 2014. Left to Right: The Archbishop of Perth, The Most Reverend Roger Herft AM, Mr Philip Goldsworthy, Mr Adrian Pree.

RIGHT Commissioning of Mrs Maria McIvor as Principal of Whitsunday Anglican School. Left to Right: Mrs Maria McIvor, The Bishop of North Queensland, The Right Reverend William Stay.
Construction is underway for St James’ Anglican School, Alkimos, 40kms north of Perth. Principal Adrian Pree, who was commissioned in February, is currently working out of an office on site, and has begun recruiting staff for the School’s opening at the start of next year. He believes, ‘a school is at the heart of a community,’ and feels ‘privileged to be the first principal to work with and get to know the students and families who are the future of Alkimos Beach’.

Situated on a 10 hectare greenfields site overlooking the Indian Ocean, the co-educational Anglican Schools Commission (ASC) school will open with classes from Kindergarten to Year 6, growing to Kindergarten to Year 12 by 2021. At full enrolment St James’ will cater for 1100 students. With its motto Wisdom Faith Service, the School will continue the tradition of the other ASC schools in offering parents an affordable choice for the education of their children – one that offers academic excellence in a caring Christian environment.

The development of the School is a co-operation between the Anglican Schools Commission, the Anglican Diocese of Perth, the Anglican parish of St James’ Vanchep and Anglicare WA. St James’ Anglican School is the eleventh ASC school to be established since 1985.

New School

St James’ Anglican School takes shape
Radford’s G-Trips

George Huitker

In 2010 a small group of students, colleagues and staff from Radford College’s senior school travelled to northern New South Wales to assist at preschools, primary schools and high schools affiliated with the Gunawirra organisation.1 Over time these trips have become known as ‘G-Trips’ in recognition of Gunawirra ideals and the traditional language of the Gamilaraay people, in Aboriginal mythology Gunawirra means the invisible seed of all creation.

In some cases the effects on ‘city’ students have been transformative. One boy recently reflected on his time with the Gamilaraay people as a change agent.

In 2012 I found myself in serious trouble at school, and as part of the consequences, I had to undertake a certain amount of community service. With the encouragement of several teachers, I found myself heading out on Gamilaraay 4. I thought the entire experience was going to be terrible, but actually those nine days were the best of my life and completely changed me in so many ways … I have gone from being a kid who was going down the wrong track, to someone who has a new and different perspective on life.

Watching this lad engage, enthuse and inspire what were possibly miniature versions of his former self in his ‘adopted’ class would have warmed the hardest of observers’ hearts. Not surprisingly he volunteered for another G-Trip in the following year.

The G-tradition continues this year with three, possibly four, groups of 20 students and 4 members of staff, heading to Tingha’s Green Valley Farm, 629kms north-north east of Sydney, which will be their base. From here they will travel to their workplaces - selected rural pre-primary, primary and central schools in Armidale, Bundarra, Gilgai, Moree and Tingha. Some G-trippers will be commuting for up to four-and-a-half hours a day to reach their remote schools.

For the last two years Radford students have also been fundraising for the ‘Crossing The Divide’ (CTD) initiative run from Bundarra Central School (http://www.crossingthedivide.nsw.edu.au). This program, which was championed by past G-trippers, offers an alternative program for youth who have been disengaged from mainstream education. Courses focus on life skills, health and wellbeing as well as educational and industry-specific pathways. More than 85 per cent of students enrolled in the program are from Tingha and Inverell and over 80 per cent are Indigenous.

One of Radford’s students had this to say after spending a week working, learning and laughing alongside a group of CTD students:

It is easy for us, in our position of relative privilege and good fortune, to turn a blind eye and plead ignorance to the injustice which does not directly affect us. It is easy for us to judge others, when we have no concept of the harsh realities that dictate their lives. … I dream of a future where opportunity and choice in the life you lead are not governed by your place in society which you had no say over. I dream that in the future, programs that provide a way across this ever-growing divide for those who have been left behind will have their place cemented in our education system. A future within our lifetime where everyone is at least given the chance to ‘Cross The Divide’.

Gamilaraay trips are rich service learning experiences. They provide hope that our future leaders will have the courage and the skills to help ‘bridge the gap’ between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ in our society – something which our generation has not been able to effectively achieve. I encourage schools to consider ways of befriending and developing meaningful links with Indigenous communities. The rewards for schools and Indigenous communities are significant.

1 Gunawirra is a not-for-profit PBI organisation comprising Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal professionals working side by side for fundamental improvements in the life of Aboriginal families, their infants and children.

2 One of Radford College’s aims is ‘to develop our students as outward looking service focused leaders who have the courage and skills to transform’, Radford College Strategic Plan, 2011-2015

Radford’s G-Trips

George Huitker

George Huitker, Director of Service Learning at Canberra’s Radford College, writes about the School’s service learning trips to northern New South Wales where students, colleagues and staff work alongside the Gamilaraay people in pre-schools, primary schools and high schools affiliated with the Gunawirra organisation.1 Over time the trips have become known as ‘G-Trips’ in recognition of Gunawirra ideals and the traditional language of the Gamilaraay people. In Aboriginal mythology Gunawirra means the invisible seed of all creation.
Students at Western Australia’s Swan Valley Anglican Community School (SVACS) are encouraged to show their service and compassion for others and this was never more on display than at two whole-school fundraisers in March in support of the Leukaemia Foundation.

First was Crazy Hair Day. On this occasion the School was a profusion of colour as students delighted in the opportunity to wear weird and wonderful hairstyles, hats and wigs. Many teachers were involved too. Nothing was off limits - the more creative, some might say outrageous, the better! Participants donated gold coins for this privilege, raising a total of $1096.

A week later it was the World’s Greatest Shave. Thirty students, along with Mr Gary Racey, Head of the Senior School, and teachers, Mrs Jennifer Kingston-Gregory and Mr Darryn Longbottom, took to the stage in the School’s multi-purpose hall to have their hair shaved or coloured or, in some cases, both.

Members of the Student Council were astounded by the generosity of the school community. At the outset their goal was to exceed the $3000 they had raised for the Leukaemia Foundation WA in 2013. They never imagined they would more than triple this amount. It was thus with immense pride and a huge degree of satisfaction that in May the Student Council was able to present Jessica Macri, Fundraising Campaigns Manager for the Leukaemia Foundation WA, with a cheque for $9883. Of particular note were the fundraising efforts of two Year 7 students. Taya Clark raised $1200 and Keeley Wallace a staggering $2500.

What makes the fundraising efforts even more poignant is the fact that a student in the School is currently battling leukaemia. That young person’s plight has touched the hearts of many and most students chose to be involved. Sam White summed up the thoughts of many of his peers when he said, ‘Someone I know has leukaemia and I wanted to raise money for them.’ Jacob Canet-Gibson was motivated to get involved after seeing the World’s Greatest Shave last year but also because several people in the school community are suffering from cancer. He said, ‘I wanted to try and raise money and get attention for cancer in our local community and school.’ Thalia Wilkinson believes that ‘shaving your hair is something to be proud of as it shows respect to the people who have to go through the pain of cancer’. She went on to say that people who have cancer ‘feel better about life’ … knowing people care a lot about them …’

Fundraising for the Leukaemia Foundation

ASNA’s Travel Partners

In 2013 Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) entered into an agreement with QANTAS as our preferred airline. At the same time ASA appointed Campus Travel (part of the Flight Centre Group), Australia’s only travel management company solely dedicated to the academic sector, as our preferred travel provider.

Airfare discounts, traditionally available to government and large corporate customers, are now available to all ASA member schools when you book through Campus Travel. Discounts apply to the lowest Red e-deal as well as full-priced Business Class or First Class air travel, Australia-wide and world-wide on QF marketed flights. This includes the Emirates partnership as well as the one-world network.

Campus Travel prides itself on its ability to deliver cost savings, streamline the booking process and offer flexible solutions for study tours, sporting groups, language tours, music groups and student exchange programs. Jamison Warren, Director of Sales at Campus Travel, highlights the company’s emergency assistance program, which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from anywhere in the world as being a key benefit for schools.

As one of our conference sponsor representatives from Campus Travel will be in attendance in Perth where they look forward to meeting delegates from ASA schools. Alternatively, click here to download further information.
Shortly after arriving in Belgium we were immediately put to work. Our opening concert was held outdoors at the Cloth Hall in Ypres for a large crowd enjoying the sunny spring weather. That evening the group experienced the moving Ceremony of Remembrance at the Menin Gate Memorial, which takes place every evening at 8:00pm when The Last Post is sounded under the Memorial’s Great Arch. Except for the occupation during World War II when the ceremony was held in Surrey, England, this memorial service has been held on a daily basis in Ypres since 2 July 1928. The local people are intensely proud of this simple yet dignified tribute to the courage and self-sacrifice of those who fell in defence of their town.

On the evening of 19 April it was the Hutchins’ students’ turn to honour the sacrifice of the young men who were not much older than they were. Even though our boys knew the importance of the trip before we left Hobart, reality is much more confronting. To look up at the immense walls of the Menin Gate and read the thousands of names is an experience that will stay with them for a lifetime.

In the lead up to ANZAC Day students from both schools were given tours of various battle sites and cemeteries at the Western Front. They saw the huge craters at Hill 60 and Lochnager - remnants of the intense fighting and destruction that took place at these locations, and the rows and rows of white headstones at Tyne Cot, Thiepval, Fromelles and the cemetery for the Australian Fifth Division. At every stop we paid our respects and the boys began to think more and more deeply about the events of 1914-1918. As a teacher it was interesting to witness the transformation in their attitudes. They were learning about ‘real events’ that changed ‘real people’s’ lives.

We were honoured to give concerts in Fromelles, Pozieres and Villers-Bretonneaux, three towns central to Australia’s involvement in the First World War. On each occasion the mayor presented us with gifts for our schools. We got to hear the stories and meet people who still remember the ANZACs and the role they played in liberating their towns. In Villers-Bretonneaux there were displays by the local school children showing their research into Australian history, culture and animals. Kangaroos featured heavily but so too did a sense of gratitude almost 100 years and several generations later.

The students performed admirably on ANZAC Day braving both the cold and the lack of sleep. It is hard to describe the emotion we all felt that silent morning on the Somme but my mind could not help but think as I sat and listened while reading the names beside the tower that still bears bullet holes from World War II, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The students were equally moved. At an assembly shortly after they returned to school one boy said:

This whole trip has been an amazing but also moving experience for us all, and has opened our eyes to the ongoing effects of the First World War, even a century later. To think that many of those who served were not much older than ourselves was particularly confronting at times. Representing our school and our country on the soil where so many fell in the midst of such horror, and yet so many acts of unimaginable bravery occurred, was a great honour and a humbling experience.

Lest we forget.

Robert Stewart

A group of students from Tasmania’s The Hutchins School and St Michael’s Collegiate School was honoured to be invited to be the official choir for this year’s Dawn Service at the Australian National War Memorial in Villers-Bretonneaux, Belgium. Robert Stewart, Head of Music at Hutchins, and Ann Morgan, Head of Music at St Michael’s Collegiate, led the group of twelve boys and twenty one girls as they travelled through France and Belgium to attend this very special and most moving service. Robert writes about the group’s concerts, tours to various battle sites and war cemeteries, and their experiences at Menin Gate and on the Somme at the ANZAC Day service.
Volunteering in Education Centres in Phnom Penh

Jo Pengelley

On 9 December 2013 a party of thirty three students and staff from Perth’s St Mary’s Anglican Girls’ School and Christ Church Grammar School departed for Cambodia, in response to an invitation from Scott Neeson, Executive founder and Director of the Cambodian Children’s Fund (CCF), to volunteer in CCF Education Centres in Phnom Penh. Jo Pengelley, Head of Library/Indigenous Support Teacher at St Mary’s, writes about the group’s experiences. She describes the program, the extreme poverty and suffering that they witnessed and the joy that comes from giving service.

The Cambodian Children’s Fund (CCF) volunteer program is based around four Service in Action (SIA) principles of educational enhancement, cultural exchange, learning through service and leadership development and the students spent their time volunteering at the fund’s Education Centres in Phnom Penh. The days were long and exhausting. Working in pods of three students and a staff member, the volunteers helped students from lower primary to upper secondary.

Our time with the CCF ended with a concert in our honour - two hours of song, dance, Cambodian humour (that we didn’t fully understand) and the presentation of a cheque for $36,000 to Scott Neeson, representing the funds we had raised prior to the trip.

It is very hard to summarise the magnitude of our experience. It confronted many of our world views and exposed us to poverty and suffering on a scale few of us have ever seen before. The CCF children redeemed it, however, with their joy, trust and commitment to education – their only way out of the poverty cycle. Perhaps the experience is best summed up by a few of the comments our students wrote during their final debrief:

They were so excited to have us sit and talk with them and teach them any skills that would improve their English. To see the students and mothers lined up trying to get into the school and the education opportunities was an eye-opener.

One of the most emotional times for me was when we had to hand out food to the long line of children who were coming in from the surrounding rubbish dump. They stood in line, hoping for a small plastic bag of clear broth and bean shoots and a half cup of rice. Unfortunately, our job was to decide who received the food, based on how many we had enough for. Those who looked the hungriest were fed and many missed out. I was touched by their resilience and their thankfulness for such small offerings of nourishment. I found it hard to eat after those nights, but I knew we had to keep up our strength for a new day.

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A seemingly endless number of children wanted to climb on me and gain my attention. It was not uncommon to have four or five children hanging from your arms, legs and around your neck.

These children were so desperate to learn. Their mothers would try and push them through the gates or hand them to Scott as he walked the rubbish dump. They knew the school was a safe place and it could get them out of poverty. I have taken my education for granted and I am so thankful for what I have been given.

We have been invited to return this year and we look forward to building on our experience and deepening our relationship with this wonderful charity.
As boys and staff of Western Australia’s Christ Church Grammar School arrived at Thursday morning’s Senior School Assembly on 9 May, they were met with a most unusual sight – what appeared to be a homeless man lying in the chapel forecourt.

The unexpected visitor, who drew hundreds of side-glances and puzzled looks, turned out to be someone very familiar to them all. A make-up artist had transformed School Chaplain, The Reverend Canon Frank Sheehan, into a barely recognizable version of himself.

The exercise was modelled on last year’s St Bartholomew House’s Homeless Experiment, where six Western Australian business leaders were made-up to go undercover as homeless people to raise awareness about the issue. One of them was Atlas Iron Chairman David Flanagan, invited by the School’s Centre for Ethics to speak about his experience to the boys.

David Flanagan, who is also Chancellor of Murdoch University and a well-known philanthropist, explained how his ‘time on the streets’ had given him a real insight into how the way you look and behave has a significant impact on the way people treat you.

He said being treated as if you were worthless could make you feel worthless and that if you felt worthless or useless you were going to find it harder to get the confidence to put your life back together. “What we can do is be respectful of all people, as you don’t know where they have come from in their lives.”

When asked about his experience Frank Sheehan said he was conscious that the staff and boys had avoided contact. “That was understandable. Most of the looks were those of sadness,” he said.

“I heard David Flanagan’s words and felt inspired by them; inspired by his readiness to do something about homelessness and his strong desire to understand what it might feel like to be on the margins of society.”

Frank Sheehan and David Flanagan

Kate Chesson
The Hawkesbury Community Kitchen is a Christian-based aid agency that feeds approximately 150-200 families each week in the Hawkesbury. The kitchen is open for dinner on week nights from 6:00pm until 7:00pm and for drop-in visits on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Those who drop in during the day are offered morning tea or lunch as well as access to showers and washing machines. Every second Friday students and staff from Arndell Anglican College’s Senior School volunteer their time at the kitchen.

A working partnership between the Hawkesbury Community Kitchen and the College was forged in 2011. Since then many students and members of staff have volunteered their time to help the less fortunate. Duties include numerous tasks such as preparing and serving meals, cleaning up, washing dishes and mopping floors. Some students volunteer to assist on more than one occasion, which is testament to the personal rewards they derive from their involvement with the aid agency. Two students who regularly volunteer wrote about their experiences at the kitchen.

“We found the Hawkesbury Community Kitchen to be a highly rewarding and enriching experience. It was amazing to be able to serve and interact with the local community. Serving meals there enabled us to gain many new skills. Our team worked extremely well together and we got to know each other better. We had loads of fun while cooking the meals, setting and packing up and serving. We were able to reflect on the things we have access to in life and use this to serve those in our community who lack some of these basic necessities in life. We can’t wait to do it again.”

Helping others in need is an extremely rewarding experience. Arndell Anglican College will continue to encourage its students to volunteer in the Hawkesbury Community Kitchen and thereby make a difference in their local community.

Volunteering in the Hawkesbury Community Kitchen

Lauren Kenny

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” Peter 4:10

Lauren Kenny, an English teacher at New South Wales’ Arndell Anglican College, writes about the college’s partnership with the Hawkesbury Community Kitchen, a Christian-based aid agency in the local community.
The Whitsunday Way

North Queensland’s Whitsunday Anglican School recently released the June 2014 edition of its Service Learning Newsletter. Edited by Matt Hodge, the School’s Service Learning Coordinator, the newsletter presents an overview of the School’s community service based activities.

In this issue we read about the Junior School’s participation in Relay for Life in support of people suffering from cancer, the students’ Easter raffle for Anglicare, their efforts on National Schools Clean-Up Australia Day and of a number of young students who sent their teddy bears and wrote letters of support to children in the Philippines whose families had lost everything in the typhoon disaster in 2013.

Closer to home, or in this instance school, Year 1 Hayley Ball donated her pocket money to the School for the purchase of two ‘balance bikes’ to assist the Kindergarten and Preparatory children learn to ride without trainer wheels. Last late year she wrote to Mick Martin, Head of the Junior School, outlining her plan. At a Junior School assembly in February a beaming Hayley presented a cheque for $120 to the School. On another front, fourteen Year 3 girls were inspired to put their finger knitting skills into practice for Anglicare. With the generous support of their parents the girls spent hours creating ‘a range of finger knitted accoutrements’ (jewellery and rubber band bracelets) which were ‘snapped up’ by their peers for a total of $122.40 when they went on sale in mid-March. The girls decided to purchase food to that value from Woolworths and donate it to Anglicare. Their teacher, Renee Whitmore, acquired a $100 donation from Woolworths enabling the girls to spend $222.40 on food for the charity.

Likewise fundraising for community service projects has been high on the agenda in the Middle School. Inclusive of Relay for Life, over $9300 has been raised in the first six months of the year for their chosen charities. These include supporting four World Vision children and local organisations that make a difference to their community such as the CG Rescue Helicopter Service, Mackay Hospital’s Children’s Ward, the RSPCA, Suicide Awareness Mackay and Mackay Headspace. Students have held cake stalls, pancake stalls, ice-cream stalls, Easter stalls – even a rice and water lunch stall, as well as raffles, a talent show and a disco. On an individual level Ethan Lavat, Year 5, opted to forego birthday presents at his 10th birthday party in favour of a donation to support the Sri Dog Foundation of Australia. Other children support the RSPCA, the Eimco Surf Lifesaving Club and the Save the Orang-utan Association.

Karen Owens, Head of the Middle School, says, “In an age where the opinion of our youth as being quite egocentric is often shared in the media, our students excel with a strong conscience for their social responsibilities.”

2014 Service Captains, Aikira Taylor and Cynyr Larsen, gave quite different responses when asked: What charities are most important to you? Aikira responded with the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, Breast Cancer Foundation and Fred Hollows Foundation whereas Cynyr said he liked charities that focused on Australians helping Australians such as Swags for the Homeless and Buy a Bale. Cynyr’s endorsement of Buy a Bale, which helps fight poverty in the bush, resonated with many students, particularly the boarders, who are very much aware of the effects of the severe drought gripping parts of Queensland. When Renee Dettmann, Head of Trinity House, put the call out for donations to the Buy a Bale campaign the students dug deep into their pockets for the cause. In a matter of weeks they had raised $880.

2014 signals the 25th anniversary of the School’s Interact Club, which has long been a vehicle for senior students to demonstrate their leadership skills, while serving the school, local, national and international communities. The School is most appreciative of the long-term support it has received and continues to receive from the Rotary Club of North Mackay.

Each year students also raise funds for overseas social service projects. The proceeds from this year’s Term 2 Service Learning Day will help support the work of a group of students, staff and parents who are heading to Vietnam to construct two houses in a local village.

In her column in the newsletter, newly appointed Principal, Maria McIvor, wrote:

Service learning is more than just a ‘buzzword’ for community service at volunteering at our school. Service learning involves students in authentic and meaningful service to their communities. Reciprocal service experiences provide powerful opportunities for intellectual and spiritual growth, which fosters an enriched sense of social responsibility. Our students develop empathy through living and sharing the experiences of others.

She goes on to say:

Service learning goes beyond what is learned in the classroom. It is a hands-on experience. Students gain new skills by working directly with the community and engaging with real challenges that life presents. Celebrating a community where actions speak louder than words is the essence of who we are. The quality of relationships which we foster; our spirit and pride to be a place where we can be ourselves and express who we are, our diversity, is what I name ‘The Whitsunday Way’.

In conclusion Maria McIvor says, “‘The Whitsunday Way’ reaches out and shows compassion and giving to others; fosters our sense of empowerment and capacity to be change agents and seek to lead in the global community.”

1 Whitsunday Anglican School’s Service Learning Newsletter is published twice a year at the end of each semester.