



# Grafton High School

Achieving Excellence Since 1912

School Newsletter  
Week 7 – Term 4, 2020

## Principals Report

### Signing off for 2020

This will be the last newsletter for the year. Now that things have settled down greatly in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on schools, I thought it would be good to end the year with a traditional newsletter with a few announcements and stories. As far as announcements go, we have had quite a few changes to staffing that have occurred over the last few weeks.

Mr Moar has been successful in being selected as the new Principal of Casino High School, starting 2021. This is fantastic news for Casino High School and for Mr Moar, but sad news for Grafton High School. Mr Moar has been Deputy Principal here for 9 years and he will be sorely missed. His appointment as a principal is well-deserved and long overdue.

We will also see Mr Bertus go on leave for all next year leading into his retirement. Mr Bertus has been a Deputy Principal at Grafton High School for 7 years and will also be greatly missed. I wish him all the best in his future beyond school and into retirement.

Replacing Mr Moar and Mr Bertus as relieving Deputy Principals will be Mrs Martin and Mrs Hill. Mrs Breywo will be relieving Head Teacher - Teaching and Learning. The relieving Head Teacher Science will be determined in the coming weeks.

We will also be losing Mr Kinninmont on transfer to Woolgoolga High School and Ms Hargreaves on transfer to Nambucca Heads High School. We will be saying goodbye to two of our office staff – Mrs McVicar and Mrs Keats, who will both be retiring next year. Our Business Manager, Mrs Morrissey, is also moving on to work at the Grafton Education Office. I would like to wish all of these staff the best for their futures within and beyond education.

Finally, it is with a great deal of sadness that I must inform you that one of our recently retired teachers, Mr Ray Johnston, passed away over the weekend. Ray was one of our long serving Mathematics teachers and an integral part of the school. He enjoyed working with kids and was just an all-round decent human being who will be missed by all staff and students who knew him. Our thoughts are with his wife and family at this difficult time.

## 2021 School Captains

At the end of October, I had the pleasure of announcing our school captains for 2021:



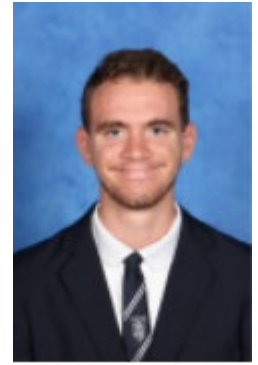
Girls Captain  
Bridget Walters



Girls Vice-Captain  
Britney Cole



Boys Captain  
Oliver Westman



Boys Vice-Captain  
Kyle Denhert

Due to COVID-19, we have been unable to have a full induction ceremony. We hope to hold this early next year once all SRC positions have been finalised.

## NSW Children's Parliament

On the topic of student leadership, on October 29 I had the pleasure of handing my office over to Year 7 student, Mae Carroll, so that she could participate in the NSW Children's Parliament. Like many events, the state Children's Parliament was conducted online this year using video conferencing due to COVID-19. The parliament involves student leaders undertaking leadership and advocacy training, talking to state Parliament MPs in a Questions and Answers session and presenting a 1-minute speech. I was most impressed with Mae's maturity, intelligence and motivation towards leadership and public service. She is a very confident young person with great potential. Well done Mae!



## Mobile Phones

Whilst it has only been five weeks since Grafton High School made the move to Yondr pouches for managing student phone use at school, we have already started to see a change in student behaviour. Some students have struggled with the transition, but this has seen a change in the classroom and playground at break times. Teachers have noted that the distraction of a phone has disappeared, and this has led to increased engagement in the classroom. The most visible and audible change has been the difference seen in the playground, where students are far more involved in sporting activities and games during recess and lunch. We have noted that students are increasingly involved in conversations with each other and they have commented on the difference it has made to their everyday interactions.



We have had considerable interest from other schools in the area, who are looking at adopting a similar system. The same system has now been adopted at South Grafton High School and is already in use at Casino High School. Overall, students have coped well with this change and I really want to acknowledge their cooperation.

We have recently had students ask about the use of other electronic devices at school, such as small game consoles and tablets. I thought I would clarify that the only devices students are permitted to use at school, in class and in the playground, are those that comply with our Bring Your Own Device policy. We permit students to bring and use Chromebooks and other full laptop computers – i.e. devices with a proper keyboard and full-sized screen. These are what we have determined are appropriate for student use in learning. Other devices, especially gaming devices, should not be used at school.

## School Improvements



We are still not quite finished with improvements to the MPC, but it is already looking fantastic. We hope to have the space completed by the start of 2021. One other improvement to our school environment that we were able to make recently has been the purchase of several large metal outdoor tables. These tables have been installed at the school farm as an outdoor learning area, in the senior areas and in the general playground. They were purchased with the assistance of our school P&C, who I want to thank for their kind donation to further improve facilities for students.

## Year 12 Formal

It has been an exceptionally tough year for our Year 12 students and so it was a great relief that we were able to hold a school formal to celebrate the end of 13 years of schooling. While COVID restrictions limited the number of adults and prevented parents attending, students still managed to have a fantastic time. COVID restrictions required us to hold the formal at school, but it did have the added benefit of showing off our refurbished school MPC. It was somewhat of a nostalgic moment when Year 12 danced in the COVID-safe outside disco in the Year 7 Area, where they began their high school education almost six years ago. I want to acknowledge the work of all staff who organised the event and helped on the evening. I especially want to acknowledge our Year 12 Year Adviser – Mrs Tracey Strano, for her outstanding dedication to our Year 12 students and for managing to pull off such a fantastic celebration under such difficult circumstances. I also want to again thank the Grafton High School P&C for their kind contribution in paying for the formal ticket cost for all Year 12 students.



## School Planning

All NSW public schools are in the process of developing a new school strategic plan for the four years from 2021 to 2024. Over the last two terms, staff have been undertaking a Situational Analysis to identify areas for future improvement. These areas will include mandatory targets in Reading and Numeracy as well as the HSC, attendance and student wellbeing. These will relate to student improvement and attainment and include targets that help to close the gap for Aboriginal students. We are now at the point of refining ideas down to fit within three Strategic Directions and then determining the initiatives we will focus on to help bring about improvement in student outcomes. As part of this process, we will be reporting back on the work we have done and seeking feedback from parents on this work. This will occur via a Google Form survey just prior to end of term. The results will be used to further refine the plan in early 2021. All public schools are required to have their completed plan published and ready to implement by the start of Term 2 – 2021.

## **Presentation Day**

Due to COVID-19, our annual presentation evening will be held during the day as a series of year assemblies on Tuesday 8 December. The assemblies will be for award recipients and their parents only. All parents will need to sign in on the COVID register and maintain physical distancing. All award recipients will receive an invitation with further details.

## **Ending the Year/Towards 2021**

A reminder that the last day of school for students is Wednesday 16 December 2020. The last week is our annual Activities Week. Students will have already received a booklet outlining the activities they can choose from. All Year 7, 11 and 12 students will return to school on Friday 29 January 2021. Years 8 – 10 will return on Monday 1 February 2021. The canteen uniform shop will be open from Wednesday 20 January to Friday 22 January 2021 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm each day.

## **Goodbye**

Finally, I need to announce that I will be leaving Grafton High School at the end of this year to take up the position of Principal at Coffs Harbour High School starting 2021. The principal position will be filled in a relieving capacity starting Term 1 next year, while a merit selection process is undertaken to select the new Principal. I hope to announce the relieving principal just prior to the end of this year.

This is my tenth year as Principal at Grafton High School, and it was time for me to make a move closer to my home and family to take on a new challenge. I am proud of what we have achieved over the last 10 years and I will be sad to leave. My family has a connection with Grafton High School, with my mother and grandmother both having attended the school, and so it will always have a special place in my heart. I wish all our staff, students and families all the best for the future. It has been a very special privilege to be the principal of Grafton High School.

*Peter South - Principal*



**THE UNIT is a Technology Club where high functioning kids on the Autism Spectrum can explore their technology interests at their own pace in a safe environment, with support from professional I.T. mentors.**

**(No diagnosis or referral required)**

**THE UNIT is not a classroom. THE UNIT provides a social venue where kids can blend in, be understood and not be judged.**

**2-Hour Sessions each Saturday.**

**New School of Arts, South Grafton.**

**For ages 9 to 17**

**phone or text: 0419 610 917**

**email: [b.carnaby@bigpond.com](mailto:b.carnaby@bigpond.com)**

**(NDIS and 'Creative Kids Voucher' friendly)**