



# Columba Catholic College

*Learn, Aspire & Achieve*

## PAST STUDENTS' NEWSLETTER

(Incorporating Past Students from St Columba's School,  
St Mary's College & Mt Carmel College)

NOVEMBER 2014

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Dear Past Students,

One of the big elements to a modern successful College is having appropriate infrastructure in place to enable, support and foster future growth. 2014 has been a very important time in this regard. The completion of the renovations to the Quinn IT Block, the new dining, kitchen and meeting facilities in the O'Farrell Dining Hall and the complete refurbishment of the girls' Good Samaritan dormitories have occurred throughout this year. Work on the drama suites continues and will be completed in 2015. The Dalrymple Trade Training Centre is now fully operational and looking towards expansion in the future. Recently I attended a Principals' Meeting in Townsville, which focused on the DTTC and highlighted it as an innovative and co-operative model to consider in other places.

Presently we are awaiting final Governmental approval for the major works on the St Mary's Campus, which are due for completion by the middle of 2015. This project will involve the construction of a new two story classroom block, the conversion of the existing administration to classrooms, canteen and sports storage, the demolition of the Year 1 and Year 5 classrooms and the conversion of the internal area of the Mercy Building to retain its beautiful character, but convert some of the less appealing internal areas into functional and attractive administration and staff areas. Upstairs will largely remain the same with Chapel, meeting rooms and gathering space. This is a major project valued at close to \$3 million which we hope will be funded jointly by the Federal and State Government. Mr Langbroek, State Minister for Education, advised us recently that the State Government has guaranteed \$1 million toward the project. Final word should be given by the Federal Government next month. We await with nervous (but confident) anticipation.

Throughout this year Mr Judd Murray, our IT Manager has worked closely with our IT Strategic Committee to extend and expand our IT facilities. In particular, our network on both campuses has been upgraded and extended to the new buildings and to the dormitories as well. Students and staff now have Wi-Fi access throughout both campuses. The radio network link between the campuses has been upgraded, the internet connection will be upgraded to more than double its present capacity in Term 1, 2015 and usage of the (Bring Your Own Device) network is now available to all students on the Mt Carmel Campus and will soon be trialled on the St Mary's Campus.

At present about 25% of our students have taken advantage of the benefits the BYOD network offers them and bring their own device to school on a regular basis. We expect this to grow gradually and intend to look at ways of promoting this growth throughout 2015. We expect that by the end of 2015 most students will have access to this network. The College is presently investigating ways of helping students to have their own device in the future. Technology is a wonderful tool for education and as time passes we rely on it more and more. At present we are trialling electronic roll marking, digital daily notices, the use of the Google suite to put student work, assignments and even homework on line and available to students and to some extent, their families. As with all such major and complex developments there are teething problems but the communications possible using such technology make it well worth the effort. As each problem arises we deal with it but so far good planning by the IT Committee has minimised the initial issues and Judd working with TCEO specialists and the IT Committee, has dealt with each as it arises.

The partnership with TCEO has been a very important one for us, not just in IT but in many other regards as well. I would like to express appreciation to all TCEO personnel who have assisted us over the last 12 months.

In 2015 we enter a new era with TCEO – the beginning of the implementation of Co-Responsibility. In short we become a systemic school in every regard. The policy of Co-Responsibility summed up briefly attempts to ensure that every child in Catholic Education in the Townsville diocese has the same opportunities as every other child in a Catholic Education school elsewhere in the diocese. One area where there will be a marked impact will be in the finances of the College.

It will be no surprise to most of you to know that boarding schools are much more expensive to run than day schools as there are many expenses necessitated by having students on campus 24/7 instead of the 8 to 5 situation which a day school faces.

Under the Policy of Co-Responsibility Columba Catholic College will receive additional funding from TCEO to bring us up to a similar level of net funding per student as other P-12 Colleges such as Ryan Catholic College and St Anthony's Catholic College. Funding will be shared in as fair a method as can be devised across the Diocese. Boarding is very important to the Diocese and support for our regional and remote students will fall on the shoulders of the whole Diocese and not just on the boarding schools themselves. This will be a major benefit to this College. All of the details of the Co-Responsibility policy have not been fully discussed and many will develop over time as new issues arise but the policy is one very much based on Catholic ideals. In particular, this policy supports the ideal that all children in Catholic schools have the opportunity to achieve to their full potential. Not all of the parts of Co-Responsibility will meet with everyone's approval but it is a bold and positive move that co-incides with the review of the Australian Curriculum, the review of Senior Schooling and the move of Year 7 to secondary. 2015 will be an exciting and dynamic year.

I congratulate our new Principal, Mr Dan McShea, who is presently Principal of Gilroy Santa Maria Catholic College in Ingham, on his appointment and assure you that he is an extremely capable young leader and administrator who is eagerly looking forward to the challenges of the New Year. He visited recently and is impressed with all he viewed.

At the end of 2014, I complete 7 years as Principal of Columba Catholic College and 27 years as Principal of various Catholic Colleges around the state. Prior to this I was a teacher, and English Subject Master and Deputy Principal for 16 years in Education Queensland. It will be the end of a very long career in Educational Leadership. I thank you all for your support and encouragement throughout my time here. I have enjoyed myself and feel that I leave the College in a good position to further build on the magnificent work that Mrs Althea Norton commenced in 1998. I take this opportunity to thank our wonderful and professional staff both teaching and support for all that they do for our students on a daily basis. I have always found our staff to be dedicated and caring and Columba would not be the great College it is today if it weren't for their hard work. I would especially like to thank our Senior Leadership Team who really are the hardest working group of people I have ever worked with.

A special thanks must go to Mr Geoff Watson, Chair of the College Board, Mr Rohan Dixon, Chair of the Finance Committee and Mrs Katrina Ford, President of the P&F and their executives and members for all the support they have given the College and me personally. I thank their families also as I know that they couldn't do what they do without support in the home. I also acknowledge the support of Fr Michael Taylor who recently celebrated 25 years as a priest. We had the opportunity to celebrate this wonderful milestone when he visited on 14 November.

One of the challenges that Columba Catholic College faces into the future is the competitiveness that now exists in both the day and boarding market. As the drought worsens and the mining industry continues to decline, fewer families are able to afford boarding fees. I would ask you to pass on a message to any family who wants a Catholic Education for their child - "Please come and talk with the Principal". We want to help and, in fact, do so for many families unable to afford full fees. We see it as our responsibility to help your children have a Catholic Education.

The economic climate has also encouraged us to market the College in new and more effective ways. One of the media we have used for the first time over the last 12 months is television advertising. The other is the production of a promotional DVD of the College which is available to view on our website.

As we get ready for the year's end I wish you well for Christmas and hope it is a happy and holy time for all and that 2015 is a bigger and better time for everyone.

May God Bless You Always

  
Mike Ashton  
Principal

## A letter from the Director, Townsville Catholic Education Office

Dear Colleagues

It is my pleasure to announce the appointment of Mr Dan McShea as Principal of Columba Catholic College, Charters Towers from the beginning of the 2015 school year. Dan is presently Principal of Gilroy Santa Maria College, Ingham.

Dan comes with a breadth of experience in senior leadership including, Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and Year Co-ordinator positions. He is presently near completion of his Masters of Educational Leadership.

Dan comes to the Charters Towers community with a rich Catholic upbringing and an active faith involvement in his youth which has continued into adulthood. In his application he speaks about being 'passionate about working with students and being in the business of transforming lives and enabling students to realise their potential'.

Dan is very excited about this appointment and with his wife Sonia and young family is looking forward to their opportunities, challenges and rewards this role will provide.

We wish Dan well for this opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Dr Cathy Day

Director

Townsville Catholic Education Office



Current Principal, Mike Ashton, welcomes the incoming Principal for 2015 Dan McShea to the College who visited Columba in October and spoke to students and staff.

## HON BOB KATTER MP



Each year, the Columba Catholic College Year 7 Class visits Canberra. One of the highlights of the trip is always the visit to Parliament House. In 2013, Year 7 Teacher Aide and Past Student, Leesa Stevenson (nee Walkey 1976-1987) and her son, Lloyd were lucky enough to catch up with Past Student Hon Bob Katter MP (1959-1962) during the Year 7 Visit to Parliament House.

Photo Right - Bob Katter (1959-1962) with 2013 Columba Catholic College Student Amber Pople (2009-2013). Photo taken at the 2013 Year 12 Graduation Ceremony for the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, ACT.



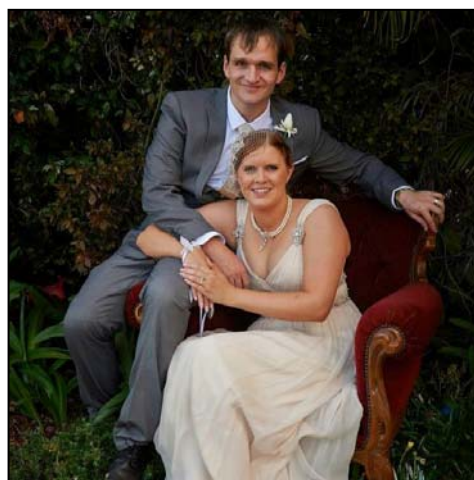
# Just Married



Tiannah Bennett (2005-2008) married Ryan Ulett 16 August 2014 in Charters Towers.



Chloe Isaac (2008-2008) married William Jackson 26 September 2014 in Townsville.



Jeremy Naughton (2000-2005) married Heather McLelland (2004-2006) 4 October 2014 in Charters Towers.

## BRISBANE GATHERING

The tradition of past students in the Brisbane area to attend Mass at St. Patrick's Church in Fortitude Valley, followed by morning tea took place again this year on Sunday 13 July. Thanks to the efforts of Noel Tunny, this year's gathering presented a great opportunity for past students and staff in attendance to hear from the Principal, Mr Mike Ashton on about how the College is building on the past proud traditions and rich history in preparing present students for the future. Br Vic Larkin always enjoys attending this gathering and catching up with Past Students of the College.



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## FOCUS ON LOUISE VELLA-COX (1984-1985)

Louise Vella graduated in 1985 having spent two years in Charters Towers, and moved to Townsville to complete her Bachelor of Education at James Cook University. Louise has spent the last twenty-five years as an educator in the Townsville and Cairns Dioceses, and was Principal of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Mount Isa. Louise's husband, Lee Cox, is also a teacher, and between them, they have taught at a number of Catholic schools in North Queensland.



After Louise graduated in 1989, she returned to St Mary's College and Mrs Althea Norton, also a past student of the College, was her first Principal. Louise spent three years in Charters Towers before moving back to Townsville to take up a teaching position at Ignatius Park College. The next ten years or so were in middle management positions in non-systemic schools such as Ignatius Park College and St Patrick's College, The Strand around a three year hiatus in Japan, teaching English.

An opportunity in the form of a leadership position allowed Louise to return to her hometown of Ingham in 2005. Louise spent five years at her old high school, Gilroy Santa Maria College, as Deputy Principal before moving to Cairns to take on the role of Senior Education Officer at Catholic Education Services. The last three years have been spent in the West.

In July Louise took up the position of Foundation Principal of Southern Cross Catholic College, Townsville. Much of her time has been spent preparing the school for its secondary intake from 2015 and growing it in to a Prep to Year 12 College by 2019.

Louise says her journey as a teacher has been both rewarding and transformational. From an early age, she was influenced by some amazing teachers and has had a number of her own students become



Wooden clock made by Joe Phillips (2003-2013) in Year 10 woodwork on the Mt. Carmel Campus of Columba Catholic College in 2013, sitting on top of a wooden coffee table made by his father Warren Phillips (1973-1984) in Year 10 Woodwork at Mt. Carmel College 1982. Joe is in his first year apprenticeship with his father at Triwoz Industries, Charters Towers.



## Where are they now?

- Myles McLachlan resides in Rockhampton and works for Aurizon (formally QR National) and has done so for 29 years. Myles is currently employed as a senior logistics officer in Aurizons Local Network.
- In the 2013 edition of the Past Students newsletter, we highlighted the achievements of past student Tom Bell (1969-1977) who published his first novel during 2013. "Homecountry", has recently received Amazon Best Seller status Tom writes under the name T.W. Lawless. Check out his website [www.twlawless.com](http://www.twlawless.com).
- Douglas Ova emailed the College earlier this year. He is currently the Deputy Principal of Cameron Secondary School, Alotau, Milne Bay, PNG. Douglas would like to hear from any of past students who attended and graduated in 2000. Douglas wrote what a great experience it was for him and other Papua New Guineans to attend such a great college and expressed his thanks to Mrs. Norton, who was Principal at the time, the late Br. Foat and all the great teachers of 2000. His email is [dougova@gmail.com](mailto:dougova@gmail.com)
- George Tounokon (1993-1995) emailed the College in September. George is currently teaching at Yangoru Secondary School, teaching Computer Studies and Business Studies. He has two degrees, one from Loyola University, Chennai India and one from Papua New Guinea University of Technology, both in the field of Information Technology. George remembers his time well at the College and hopes to make it back some day.



- 2013 College Senior Kelam Nona in her Ceremonial Uniform marching for the Navy and our ANZACS – Anzac Day 2014. Kelam is currently living in Melbourne, Victoria.



- Emily Merrin (2006-2010) made cover page of Townsville's Duo Magazine in May this year. Emily resides in Townsville and is a Personal Trainer at Genesis Fitness and Director/Personal Trainer at EmBody Personal Training



- Earlier this year, the 2014 Confraternity Team raffled a signed 2014 Bulldogs jersey. The jersey raffled was donated by past student Kelly Egan (1984-1985). Kelly played in the Firsts while at school before going on to play NRL for the North Sydney Bears. He is currently assistant coach at the Canterbury Bulldogs.

We are always delighted to receive news from past students, and we are sure you would too via the Past Students' Newsletters.

Please send information by post to

**Jo-Anne Thompson (nee Kerle - Past Student 1973 - 1984)**

**Columba Catholic College PO Box 274**

**Charters Towers Qld 4820**

**or email: [jthompson@columba.catholic.edu.au](mailto:jthompson@columba.catholic.edu.au)**

Likewise, if you have the opportunity to visit Charters Towers, please call in and visit the College - you will see many changes!

# Brother always made a difference

**Br Graeme Frawley cfc 1937 – 2014 by Brother Tim Scott cfc**



Graeme John Frawley was born in Longreach. His father was a police officer and his mother, a woman of strong faith, ever ready to assist those who were economically challenged. He had two older sisters, Mary still living in Kooralbyn, and Janice who predeceased him. Possibly because of his father's work the family moved from Longreach to Brisbane, where little Graeme attended St. Finbarr's, and then Marist Brothers' College, Ashgrove before going to St. James's School in the Valley. Graeme well remembers the day when their Grade 6 class was taken to farewell a ship, *'The Bulolo'*, from Bulimba wharf. On board were the first Christian Brothers going to open their mission in Papua New Guinea. "Little did I know that day" says Graeme, "that I would spend twenty years of my life working in PNG."

As was the custom Graeme moved to Gregory Terrace, where he completed his sub Junior and Junior education, before responding to the call to be Brother in 1954 and given the name Brother Sarto. At Strathfield Graeme was 18 and together with other nonteaching Brothers he cooked for 250 people, three meals a day. Says Graeme "I very quickly had to learn 'quantity catering'". Sometimes they had alternate weeks off which meant that they were not in the kitchen, but spent long hours either in the laundry or bakery. Thus it was for three and a half years for Graeme. Then began Graeme's time at Minto, another of the Brothers' training colleges, running the kitchen single handed with some help from the Brothers in training. He also had to do the washing of clothes in the laundry. He was to spend nine and a half years at Minto. In his spare time he helped in the dairy and on the farm.

In 1966 Graeme was transferred to the Tai Tapu community in New Zealand. He took over the vegetable garden, and with fruit plentiful in the College orchard he quickly learned the art of preserving fruits to last throughout the year. He joined a Harrier's Club, taking part in a considerable number of marathons with creditable successes. 1970 saw Graeme working as chef at the Brothers' training college at Helidon and then at Xavier Teachers' College at Indooroopilly. January 1972 found him on the way to Charters Towers as the new Bursar as well as managing the tuck shop, the book room and college bus driver.

In 1984 Graeme was asked to go to Papua New Guinea on a temporary basis .... which lasted nineteen years. He was asked: (among many other things)

- To set up the PNG Regional Brothers archives at the Provincialate, and also the archives of the Goroka Liturgical Institute,

- To take over also the Bursar's job at the Melanesian Pastoral Institute.
- To go to Port Moresby to work at the PNG Bishops's Conference as General Secretary. Graeme constantly represented the Bishop at meetings throughout Oceania.
- To audit the books of the Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace and Development.
- The Rector of the Bomana Seminary rang and asked if Graeme could come out and take over the job as accountant "just until we can get a replacement". All of this together with the other duties which Graeme already had! Seven and a half years later the replacement arrived!
- Graeme became involved in the Bomana Metropolitan Gaol, where he co-ordinated the Sunday Services. This he did for ten years. A number of inmates became close and long term friends of Graeme from this period.
- At a later date when Australian Catholic Relief became "Caritas" the Bishops asked Graeme to take over as National Director of PNG. This led Graeme to meetings in London and Brussels as part of his work.

In the New Year of 1999 while attending a meeting in New Zealand Graeme was not well. The Doctor informed Graeme that he observed the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease, and urged him to return home as soon as possible. The Parkinson's Disease was confirmed, and the presence of a brain tumour was detected. Graeme's quote: "This was not good news for me who had always been so active. I adopted the motto suggested by the writer Edward Hays: 'To die young .... as late as possible'." Graeme continues: "I was saddened that illness had snatched away the total freedom to fashion my days. I found that I had to change my spirituality so that I could be accepting of all that was making my heart heavy, all that would dampen my spirits. I needed to recount my blessings, not my trials; to measure my happiness, not my adversity. I dreaded being written off, or worse still, being thought of prematurely in the past tense."

In 2003 he was moved back to Brisbane where he eventually went to Holy Spirit at Carseledine and then in 2013 to the new Holy Spirit complex, 'Viridian', at Boondall. It was here he passed away peacefully on the 17<sup>th</sup> June. His life was celebrated by the Christian Brothers, his many friends and past students from the colleges in which he worked from the Gregory Terrace College Chapel.

## With Sympathy

**Sharon Archer (nee Baker)**  
(1968-1970)

**Les Bagley**  
(St. Mary's College Swimming & Diving Coach)

**Christine Bradford**  
(1980-1984)

**Garry Francis Crossley**  
(1968)

**Brother Frawley**  
(Mt. Carmel College Teaching Staff 1972-1984)

**Mr Joe Janecock**  
(Mt. Carmel College Teaching Staff)

**Annie Jones (nee Newby)**  
(1935-1942)

**Dot Lewis**  
(Mt. Carmel College Household Staff 1980's)

**Frances Tincknell (nee Lyons)**  
(1950-1952)

**Lyle Magoffin**  
(1967-1974)

**Debbie Malone**  
(1977-1978)

**Barry Smith**  
(Mt. Carmel College Teaching Staff 1980's)

Many friends, work colleagues and past students of the College honoured Brother Frawley's life at the Gregory Terrace College Chapel earlier this year.



Photo Above Left (L to R) - Brother Neil Langan, Brother Vince Connors, Clarence Hart, Brother Tony Hempenstall, Brother Ian Robinson and Marie V Wherry (nee Jayo) Past Student 1969-1972 and Past Staff Member of Mt. Carmel College & St. Mary's College.

Photo Above Right (L to R): Mrs Althea Norton (nee Wherry) - Foundation Principal Columba Catholic College 1998-2007, Principal St. Mary's College 1978-1997, Past Student (1951-1963), Br Jim Darcy and Br Marty Sanderson.

Photo Left: Clarence Hart - Past Student 1975 - 1981, College Captain 1981.