From the Principal

Firstly, to end the year, I wish to thank the staff for their dedicated efforts throughout 2014. When one looks back over the year, there have been so many highlights it is impossible to name a ‘best’. For me, however, the fact that the school is growing in numbers, parents are choosing Bonnyrigg as their school of choice, is very heartening. When I first arrived at Bonnyrigg HS in 2007, the numbers of families choosing other schools was very high indeed. Today, we are saying no to many out of area applications, close to 200 this year. With a larger school comes issues but also benefits. We are able to offer a full range of curriculum subjects to cater for the needs of all students. Thank you, parents, for allowing Bonnyrigg HS to educate your children.

China, a sister school in 2015: I have mentioned in the past, we are trying to establish a sister school in China. Originally, the Department was trying to match us with a school in the Hubei Province, a country area of China. However, recently, Mrs Ellis, our Chinese teacher, and I discussed the possibility of establishing a Confucius classroom as a language learning centre. The Chinese government gives establishment and ongoing grants to maintain the connections between the languages classes and China. The Bonnyrigg HS application has been forwarded to the Department. One of the conditions of establishing a Confucius classroom is a sister school relationship with a school from the Jiangsu Province. If we are successful, Bonnyrigg HS students and staff will be able to visit China from next year. The Province of Jiangsu is between Shanghai and Beijing and contains the ancient capital of Nanking and has a population of over 76 million. Jiangsu is considered the birthplace of China, as it is where the first Wu Dynasty was formed. We look forward to a long relationship with China.

Parent Forums/information nights: Wednesday, December 10, was the last parent meeting for 2014, not as well-attended as we would like to see. Parents did see the outline of the school budget and school plans for 2015. The next meeting and first for 2015 is Wednesday, February 25th, 6pm in the Common room.

Zombie Mushrooms and What is Learning? Schools are just one area where learning takes place in all its forms. Currently, the educational world is all about ‘skills’ for the 21st century so the students of today can adapt to the world of tomorrow. When one looks at the list of skills for the 21st or any other century they are remarkably similar. Creativity tops the list followed by flexibility, adaptability, team work and the ability to work in a team as well as lead one. To test just one class, Ms Hollinger’s 7A, I gave them a project on something they had never heard of: ‘Zombie mushrooms’. They had to use all the 21st century skills, not only to produce what a zombie mushroom may look like but also a story line to go with it. Ms Hollinger and the class did a very creative and fabulous job to produce imaginative stories, a book trailer, a pictorial history of the project and of course the Zombie mushrooms themselves. The class had to use all the skills of 21st century learning of creativity, flexibility, adaptability and team work to produce an outstanding project.

Finally, I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a safe, happy and prosperous New Year. I’m looking forward to seeing everyone again in 2015.

Until next time,
Mr MN Bryce - Principal
The Power of Reading

Everyone knows how important it is to read. Reading increases our knowledge of the world. It takes us to places we can only imagine. We live vicariously through wonderful characters, all from the safety of a lounge chair. One can read thousands of articles to support the assumption that reading improves student outcomes but showcasing one wonderful reader at our school can only underscore this and prove that a well-resourced library that encourages wide reading will increase academic results across all areas.

Janey Xiong is a year 9 student. She loves coming to the library and is a happy, daily visitor. We are profiling her as this week’s avid reader. Over the last three years, Janey has been one of our best “customers”. She has borrowed close to 500 books. Many of these have been graphic fiction. What is wonderful about Janey is her catholic reading tastes.

Slowly, she has added fiction to her repertoire and her NAPLAN results are amazing.

Well done, Janey, and thank you for proving the value of reading and of libraries.

Splendour in the Mountains

This year we took nine ATSI students to Katoomba as a reward for their fantastic attendance and punctuality. Our first stop was to the Paragon café. It is Australia’s oldest café, a 1920s national treasure. We enjoyed coffee, tea, milkshakes and an assortment of delicious cakes. It was truly a pleasure to take these amazing students out for the day.

Their behaviour was impressive, as was the way they treated each other, the staff and the general public. Well done.

At Scenic World, we rode on the steepest passenger railway in the world, the Scenic Railway, went backwards and forwards on the Scenic Cableway and took the Cable car high up over the Jamison Valley with a beautiful view of the Three Sisters.
Staff Profile - Hannah Dunsing

Seasons Greeting! For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Hannah Dunsing.

I have only been living in Australia for 5 years, migrating from America. I have been teaching in Western Sydney since 2011, however I have only been teaching at Bonnyrigg High School since Term 2 of this year. My teaching at Bonnyrigg encompasses a few roles, including Year 7 Literacy teacher, Learning and Support Teacher, Junior Learning Centre Coordinator and the Transition Adviser. As Transition Adviser, I work alongside the Career Adviser to work with individual students in Years 10, 11 and 12 to help with résumé writing, looking for work experience or apprenticeships to transition into the workplace.

When I am not working, I am spending time with my husband and three year old son. We enjoy going to the beach, zoo, aquariums and traveling. Our next trip will be to my home country of America during the school holidays or, as I say, school vacation! We will be visiting my family in Connecticut and hopefully experiencing a white Christmas!

I also enjoy reading when I have time. I am currently reading Unbroken, the story of the Olympic track star who survived a plane crash during World War II and then became a prisoner of war (it will be in the movies soon). This man had so much resilience to overcome every obstacle that was placed in front of him. We all need to demonstrate resilience like this man!

Enjoy your holidays and I’ll see everyone next year!

Trolley Drive

FAIRFIELD STARR PARTNERS/UNITING CHURCH CHRISTMAS TROLLEY DRIVE

On Friday 5.12.14, Mrs Mayfield accompanied four of our SRC members to Fairfield. They included Brendon Tapuai, James Carrier, Justin Duong and Sonal Kapoor (pictured left to right). Fourteen primary and secondary schools from the surrounding district were represented. Participating schools, including Bonnyrigg High School, have been collecting non-perishable goods for those in need.

This event was a celebration of the support given. The students wheeled the trolleys through the streets from Starr Partners (a real estate company) to present them to the Uniting Church Diner. An army band accompanied the procession through the streets and the emergency services, including the police, were there to ensure the safety of the participants.

As the local newspaper was also there taking photos, look out for an article in its next edition.
The year is finishing fast and I, like so many people, haven’t been able to complete all my work. It’s been a busy, fast and furious year, where a number of building changes have been made and new equipment and machinery have been brought in to improve the delivery of courses.

The construction course is a new subject for our faculty. A portable room has been delivered with new machinery and benches, and with power connected back to front. Three-phase power can see machinery connected so they operate in the opposite direction. Now all that remains is to set up tools and equipment for student use. Our first group of students will be completing the path area outside the classroom, as soon as the weather improves. This is the first outdoor activity that this group has started for the school and we hope that in the future many more projects will be possible for them.

There is no secret that one of our construction students has had an accident requiring medical treatment in a hospital. His injury will heal, but it shows that it is important for students to be on guard. Even hand-tools can inflict bad hand injuries. Is important to remember that students must always wear protective equipment and follow teacher directions.

One thing some students are attempting is to wear headphones and listen to music in the classroom. This is a very dangerous distraction for students, as they don’t concentrate on the activities in the classroom and the cords can get caught on all sorts of equipment. So these must not be used all worn at any time in practical classrooms.

Some students towards the end of the year have been coming to school wearing the wrong footwear. This is also dangerous, especially if these shoes offer no physical protection. Students without the correct footwear will not be allowed to enter a practical room. Parents must provide a note for their child/ren when the right shoes are no longer available due to costs or a child’s feet growing out of the current pair of shoes.

I would also like to remind parents that the fees we request from families supports the practical work each child undertakes in the classroom. Without these payments, we’re forced to reduce the size of projects and ‘scrounge’ for recycled materials to make less appealing projects. It is important that parents make contact with the principal when fees cannot be paid within a reasonable length of time. I wish to encourage all parents to inform our principal by the end of term one in 2015 if circumstances change to prevent payment.

The quality of some project work in year 12 Industrial Technology Furniture courses could have been better this year. A good tip for the current group undertaking a major project is to finalise a budget so the work can commence from the start of 2015. Another good tip is to use a phone log of the work undertaken each day in the classroom. Take pictures of the work being completed.

In finishing, on behalf of the Industrial Arts faculty, we wish each and every one a safe and happy holiday. Enjoy the break.

Mr G McTighe
Industrial Arts Head Teacher.