College Mission . . .

Building on a foundation of Christian values, the mission of Aitken College is to enable students to become informed and compassionate members of the wider community by inspiring academic achievement and creativity, nurturing self worth, encouraging environmental responsibility and committing to service with and for others.

Important Diary Dates for 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>10 Mar</td>
<td>Labour Day Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>19 Mar</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>03 Apr</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>03 Apr</td>
<td>Term 1 concludes for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>04 Apr</td>
<td>Professional Learning Day (student free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>22 Apr</td>
<td>Term 2 commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>25 Apr</td>
<td>ANZAC Day Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>09 Jun</td>
<td>Queen’s Birthday Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>17 Jun</td>
<td>Report Writing Day (student free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>27 Jun</td>
<td>Term 2 concludes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>21 Jul</td>
<td>Term 3 commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>12 Aug</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>21 Aug</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>22 Aug</td>
<td>Professional Learning Day (student free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>19 Sep</td>
<td>Term 3 concludes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>06 Oct</td>
<td>Term 4 commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>03 Nov</td>
<td>Mid Term Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>04 Nov</td>
<td>Melbourne Cup Day Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>21 Nov</td>
<td>Report Writing Day (student free)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>09 Dec</td>
<td>Presentation Night (Years 3 to 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>12 Dec</td>
<td>Term 4 concludes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term dates for 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3/4 February to 3 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22 April to 27 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 July to 19 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 October to 12 December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thought: “Ask not what tomorrow may bring, but count as blessing every day that fate allows you.” Horace

From the Principal

An element of Senior Chapel Services this week focussed on the song by Jaimie Lee, called ‘Different on the Outside’. You can listen to the song on Youtube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nEc6LQ-QSE and download from itunes. The lyrics are quite poignant and I have included them here:

I just can’t believe, the way you look at me,  
Cause I’m different on the outside.  
I may not run as fast, be the brightest one in class  
I’m just different on the outside

Oh can’t you see, we’re all the same  
I eat, I sleep, I too feel pain.  
I bleed, I cry, I live, I die  
So tell me why, tell me why

You judge me by my face, my religion or my race,  
‘Cause I’m different on the outside.  
I may not dress the same, can’t afford those high class names  
I’m just different on the outside
Oh can’t you see, we’re all the same
I eat, I sleep, I too feel pain.
I bleed, I cry, I live, I die
So tell me why, tell me why

I may not have a home, from street to street I roam,
I’m just different on the outside.

It is important to teach our children to have empathy and compassion for all. It is a responsibility for humanity to embrace difference - whether that be race, colour, religion, disability, gender or status, in terms of refugees, homelessness, poverty. Social justice is a responsibility of all and we need to live this in our actions. Engagement in social justice activities by students is encouraged.

A number of our families and staff were impacted by the recent bushfires. Although no-one lost homes, there was property damage and loss of livestock. We pray for those affected and offer support where we can.

The Parents and Friends Association committee have been busy planning events. Please support their initiatives. Details are elsewhere in this newsletter. One initiative is the Parents and Friends Community Business Directory. This allows for parents who have businesses to have their business details advertised on the website (including a pdf version). This is a great way to advertise your business to our community and I encourage families to consider using the services available.

Mrs Josie Crisara
Principal

Parents and Friends Association News

We hope you and your families have settled into school nicely. You would have noticed members of our Parents & Friends Association speaking at the school information nights. Thank you for the massive interest shown. We have new Committee members and the Volunteers Register is growing which is very exciting. It is never too late to join, so if you would like to add your name to the Committee or volunteers list, or if you would like any information please email admin@aitkencollege.edu.au. Also do not forget to like our Facebook page – it is a great way to keep up to date.

Bookings for the Community Business Directory are closing soon, so if you have a business you would like to promote please send in your booking form as soon as possible (see attachments). It is a fantastic way for school families to advertise their business to each other and with a potential reach of over 800 families viewing the website and newsletter it is exceptional value for money. Do not miss out.

Our Trivia Night will be held on Friday 21 March. This will be huge! There will be a silent auction, raffles, games and winners prizes. BYO food and drink, there will be tea, coffee and soft drinks for sale. Put a table together for some healthy competition or just come yourself and meet new people, it will be a great fun night. Tickets are limited so be quick and buy your tickets now! A booking form is attached to this newsletter.

We will be having a Hot Cross Bun drive for Easter; keep an eye out for order forms in the next couple of weeks.

Our Mother’s Day High Tea will be a sought after affair with limited tickets to this exclusive event. Tickets will be on sale shortly so pencil Sunday 4 May into your diaries.

Do not miss out on our first Pre-Loved Uniform Sale of the year on the last day of Term, Thursday 3 April from 3.00pm onwards in the Chapel and Performing Arts Centre foyer. Grab a bargain! Spaces are $5.00 each; email admin@aitkencollege.edu.au to book your space.

Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 March 2014</td>
<td>Trivia Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 April 2014</td>
<td>Preloved uniform sale between 3.00pm - 6.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 May 2014</td>
<td>Ladies Day High Tea (venue TBA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mrs Siobhan Short
Aitken College Parents & Friends Association

From the Deputy Principal

Aitken College Traffic: For parents or carers who drive into the College before 2.50pm and queue at the boom gate, please take careful note of the following:

- Please note that the boom gate queue must not extend past the entrance to the parent car park.
- When the queue reaches this point, all subsequent cars must enter the parent car park, park in a marked bay and wait until the boom gate rises.
- The boom gate queue must not extend back to the roundabout, blocking the entrance road and access to the car park. This practice is dangerous, may cause an accident and blocks the entrance road for other users.
To avoid the heaviest traffic each afternoon, please consider arriving slightly later to collect children: the Gym car park empties after 3.05pm and the western car park empties from 3.15pm. Arriving after these times makes for easier parking. Children are able to wait a while to be collected. Secondary students can wait until 4.00pm, primary students must be collected by 3.30pm.

Staff are on yard duty each morning from 8.00am; arriving slightly earlier to drop off children can avoid the heaviest morning traffic into the College. All drivers should be aware that Victoria Police and VicRoads are monitoring driver behaviour on Mickleham Road outside the College.

**Immunisation:** Year 7 and Year 10 girls and boys and Year 9 boys have immunisations commencing in Term 1. Please ensure a prompt return of the student cards. Aitken College has an excellent rate of immunisation; families are congratulated on their attention to this. Further information about school immunisation can be found at: [http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/immunisation-school-aged-children.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/immunisation-school-aged-children.htm)

**eSmart Schools:** Aitken College is commencing the journey to gain accreditation as an eSmart school. The College has maintained a strong emphasis on cybersafety education for many years in the Life Skills curriculum, Wellbeing initiatives and within each of the five schools. eSmart accreditation will bring together our policies, procedures and education programs and acknowledge their standing amongst the best practice in Australian schools. Part of this process will involve consultation with students and parents; if you as a parent are interested in contributing to discussion on one or two informal occasions, please email me to express your interest, at: kforward@aitkencollege.edu.au

Excellent and up-to-date information for parents on cybersafety and children’s use of the internet and social media can be found at: [http://icybersafe.com/](http://icybersafe.com/). This site was established by Ivanhoe Grammar School and is highly recommended.

**Parenting Skills:** At several of the recent information nights, mention was made of the excellent resources available at Michael Gross’s website [www.parentingideas.com.au](http://www.parentingideas.com.au). I recommend you take the time to visit this site.

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**Brookhill School Notices**

Congratulations and thanks are due to the Senior School students for their participation in this week’s House Swimming Sports. The day was a huge success, due in large part to the excellent example set by the students from the Senior School and the Senior House and Sports Captains.

Thank you to all parents who came to the Year 12 parent information evening on Wednesday, 19 February. At the evening, parents learnt about the Study Skills program students have been undertaking throughout Brookhill. There was also an informative discussion about the range of distractions of which Year 12 students must be aware; it is important that families and the College work together to help senior students keep focussed on the important task of preparing for their final exams.

On Friday, 28 February, all Year 11 students will take part in Clean-Up Australia day. This event is a part of the wider College commitment to Community Service and the environment. The students will be spending the day cleaning up the area at and around the Williamstown Foreshore, as well as taking part in House based activities.

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**VCAL News**

VCAL - the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning – is an accredited alternative to VCE. It involves a series of senior school completion certificates that has the flexibility to cater for students who work better in an applied manner; which is basically learning by ‘doing’ and的经历ing educational activities in the context of real life situations. Students who have a clear career direction have thrived in this environment. If your child is creative, loves the outdoors, loves fashion and beauty or has already said to you – ‘I want to be an electrician’ or ‘I want to have a career in childcare’ then VCAL will give them a head start into their career.

Last year, the students completed a number of assessment tasks which included an animal barn project, a paving project for the Science Gardens and a water tank project.

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**Mr Kim Forward**  
**Deputy Principal**

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**Mr David Murphy**  
**Head of Brookhill**

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**Mrs Jenny Lilley**  
**VCAL Co-ordinator**
**VET News**

**Block Credit in the VCE:** I recently spoke at Senior School Chapel Service to explain to students how Block Credit works in the VCE and how it can benefit them in their ATAR calculation at the end of Year 12; I thought it would also be beneficial if this information was passed on to parents.

Block Credit occurs when a student completes a VET certificate outside of school that has 180 hours of Level 3 Units of Competency (UOCs). When this is entered into the system that calculates ATAR scores, it provides a 10% increment of a student’s 1-4 subject average towards their ATAR.

The valuation of Level 3 UOCs does not occur until the certificate is assessed by VCAA at the end of the school year, so we can never guarantee Block Credit for a student, but we can always give a good indication when processed as to whether it will achieve this aim or not. Level 3 UOCs does not necessarily mean that the VET certificate has to be at a Level 3 itself (e.g. Certificate III in Retail) as some higher level Units of Competency are included at Certificate II level; so if your child has completed a VET Certificate II or III it would still be in their best interest for them to bring it to me at school.

If your child has a part time job and they are not already undertaking a VET certificate, they should ask their supervisor whether this is possible. Most workplaces have VET training processes in place and are experienced in the administration of them.

Here is an example of how Block Credit can benefit your child in their ATAR:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHD</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Studies</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total 1-4 best subjects** 150

**Average of 1-4** 37.5

**10% Block Credit for external Certificate** 3.75

In this case, 3.75 would be added to the student’s ATAR score as a 6th subject.

If your child already has 6 VCE subjects in Year 12, due to studying a VCE subject in Years 10 and 11, Block Credit can still assist them in their ATAR score. Sometimes unfortunately a student does not do as well in one of their more favoured subjects and Block Credit can replace this score, as long as the 1-4 average is higher than 10% of the subject in which they did poorly. Here is an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHD</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Studies</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total 1-4 best subjects** 147

**Average of 1-4** 36.75

**10% Block Credit for external Certificate** 3.68

In this case, Block Credit would replace the score for Physics, as 3.68 is higher than 2.3.

There are only positives to be achieved from Block Credit in your child’s ATAR score, so please encourage your child to bring me any completed VET certificates or the UOCs for one they are currently undertaking and will complete before the end of this year.

In addition to this discussion, if your child dances at a school outside of Aitken College in their free time, this could also be included in their VCE as an additional VCE subject. It is a 2 year program, so it would have to be started at the beginning of Year 11 at the latest. Please talk to your child’s dance teacher and ask them if it is possible to enter your child into VCE VET Dance and then ask them to contact me or have your child bring me the relevant paperwork.

If you have any questions relating to this information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9333 9194 or email mpatchell@aitkencollege.edu.au

**Mr Michael Patchell**  
**VET Co-ordinator**
Glenarthur School Notices

Next Tuesday, 25 February a special Assembly will be held for the induction of the 2014 College Leaders. Invitations have been mailed to parents of the following students who have been elected by their peers. On behalf of the Glenarthur community we congratulate them and wish them well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Captains</th>
<th>Kiara Corso</th>
<th>Francesco De Maria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Captains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millar</td>
<td>Jessica Dalgleish</td>
<td>Daniel Garisto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Ethan Davis</td>
<td>Jobelle Marasigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Isabella Jovanovski</td>
<td>Matt Rhook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brodie</td>
<td>Luca Mielli</td>
<td>Elise Yagmur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While at our Chapel/Assembly held on Monday of this week we congratulated our 20 Class Captains for Semester 1. Three other Year 9 students: Olivia McDonald (9D), Amanda Moore (9P) and Matthew Shaw (9H) who will fill key leadership roles this year, were also acknowledged. Providing students with opportunities to learn leadership and to develop skills that are required of good leaders is very important for young people at this age. These and other skills and knowledge that will help our students to successfully navigate their adolescence will be the focus of upcoming seminars to be presented by the highly acclaimed Oxygen Factory. The Year 8 seminar will be held on Thursday, 6 March, with the Year 9 seminar the following day. An information letter will be mailed home in the near future to provide parents/guardians with further details.

Earlier this week the students enjoyed the Senior Swimming Carnival. The behaviour, attitude and competitive spirit displayed by the students helped make this day a very successful one. As staff members we were also impressed by the students’ behaviour and manners while travelling on the coaches.

Mr Tim Agnew & Mrs Elpis Vlahopoulos
Head and Assistant Head of Glenarthur

Dunhelen School Notices

What a wonderful start to the 2014 school year! So far the Year 7 students have already been on camp and the Year 6 students have spent some time with their buddies. We had a lot of interest for the positions of School and House Captains and the candidates presented fantastic speeches. I congratulate them all on their presentations and their involvement thus far. Regardless of whether they attained a position or not they should be proud of themselves.

Our newly elected House and School Captains will participate in a Leadership Training afternoon on Thursday, 13 March at Sherwood Receptions. At this event, captains will gain important leadership skills and have their role as a leader of Aitken College, outlined to them. It is sure to be a wonderful afternoon.

I would like to invite the parents of newly elected School and House Captains to our Chapel and Performing Arts Centre for the College Induction Ceremony on Tuesday, 25 February during period one. At this formal ceremony, all the College School and House Captains will receive their captains’ badges.

The Year 7 camp at Phillip Island went very well. I would like to thank the Year 7 students for their fantastic behavior as this contributed greatly to the fun time had by all. A huge thank you to all the teachers who came along; your assistance is greatly appreciated. On the Tuesday Mrs Crisara came out to visit and it was her team which walked away as the Trivia competition winners. It was a wonderful camp and I am sure the students will have many stories and memories to share.

As the term progresses students will find that their workload may increase. Some students may even begin to feel overwhelmed. Please help your children to try and maintain a homework routine and be patient with them as they learn to prioritise their time and work. It is also important that your children know that their teachers are available to help them.

On another important issue, I would like to remind parents to monitor their child’s internet usage. While the internet is an amazing tool for our students, we need to remember that they are children and therefore need guidance, advice and boundaries. Please do try to keep yourself up to date with what is happening in the IT world and what your child is up to. Ivanhoe Grammar School has a cyber safety site that you can subscribe to for information.

Mrs Francis Scuderi & Mr Ben Prentice
Head and Assistant Head of Dunhelen
Cumberland School Notices

The first few weeks of a new school year are always busy with various events and activities scheduled. Thank you to the parents who attended the Cumberland Information Evening on Tuesday, 11 February. I certainly hope this was beneficial and that the last few weeks have been a smooth start to the year for you and your family!

From a school's point of view the students have settled into their classes well and are enjoying the many different learning opportunities with their new teachers. The entire community has been working hard in selecting captains for School, House, Class, Performing Arts, Library, and Environment. The student leadership positions for School and House Captains were announced during an Assembly on Friday, 21 February. Captains for Class, Performing Arts, Library and Environment will be announced on Tuesday during the Cumberland Assembly. At this point I would like to acknowledge and thank all students who have shown interest and put themselves forward during this selection process. I hope this has been a great learning experience for all. One aspect of leadership is to support the school community; I believe this is achieved by everyone!

Cumberland School Captains for 2014 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Captains</th>
<th>Devindi Perera</th>
<th>Alex Milojkovic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Captains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millar</td>
<td>Sarah Marmura</td>
<td>Marcus Lagana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Alicia Clarke</td>
<td>Anthony Ceniti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>Teia Klaric</td>
<td>Tianna Dimevski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brodie</td>
<td>Gemma Baird</td>
<td>Michael Cutri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congratulations to everyone.

Year 5 Picnic: The Year 5 students and staff hosted an open afternoon and picnic on Monday. The weather was perfect for this event and the attendance was excellent; thank you to all. I certainly hope the weather stays on our side for the Year 4 and Year 3 picnics.

Mr Ashley Penny
Head of Cumberland

Fairview School Notices

Fairview Information Session - THRASS (Teaching, Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills): The Preparatory school teachers have scheduled a THRASS and ICT information session for Thursday, 6 March at 6.30pm to 8.00pm in the Chapel and Performing Arts Centre. We have invited Ms Boon (Director of eLearning) to present a thirty-minute information session on the Fairview IPad program. Providing valuable information on how this resource is utilised in our school community.

The following session will provide parents with the opportunity to see and understand the process of THRASS. Parents will also be placed in their child’s year level, to engage in an interactive workshop. (It is not appropriate for your children to attend this session). If you have not returned your reply slip, please do this immediately.

A Few Things To Think About: When parents send their children to school they are concerned about many factors:

1. Is my child learning what is required?
2. Are they achieving set individual goals?
3. Are they progressing through reading and word levels adequately?
4. Are they making friends?
5. Do they have company during recess and lunch breaks?

We try to discourage parents to become fixated on levels and set goals; as all children will achieve at their rate. Their learning ability is important; however what is crucial is that they are healthy and happy. If children are in an environment that supports these issues, they will achieve to their fullest potential. What is important is that they are happy and feel safe. Therefore their overall wellbeing is imperative; that is their emotional, social, physical and educational needs.

The children’s homeroom teacher is a wonderful resource for parents; to support their queries and needs. They have the skills and ability to assist parents in identifying what they will need to focus on at home.

We encourage parents to allow the children to have time to relax at home and have fun. This is the environment that parents control; it is crucial that parents provide the children with rules and limitations. The children have access to a great deal of gadgets e.g. iPods, iPads, Nintendo DSi, etc. These gadgets are a useful resource; however they can occupy the majority of the children’s playtime. Establishing guidelines for technology is crucial, as children are now growing up in a world of amazing resources.
There are a few points that parent should all be encouraged to consider:

- Establish a consistent time where family talk occurs e.g. dinner time - the dining table is an amazing talking tool.
- Shared quiet and reading time at home.
- Establishing a routine where children are expected to follow rules and limitations e.g. set reasonable bedtime.
- Ensuring that children play with each other; not with technology but with each other.

Play is significant because it reinforces the following:

- Foundation to how children learn and interact with each other
- Foundation to their attention, response and processing skills
- They feel accepted, loved, happy and safe
- Building confidence, self-esteem and resilience
- Developing educational, emotional, social and physical skills
- Developing problem solving, language and communication skills
- Focusing on caring for others and their environment.

Ms Kerrie Neophytou
Head of Fairview

Careers News

Careers: It is timely for Year 12 students to begin planning for their pathways post Aitken. We are very happy to welcome students in B21 to have a chat about the future. Shortly we will spend some time in the Year 12 Life Skills classes discussing the ‘careers timeline’ for 2014/2015 and revising strategies for undertaking career research.

Career News 2: Career News 2 is now available and contains information about studying Medicine, undertaking the UMAT, some GAP year options, a plumbing Expo, short courses and folio preparation courses at RMIT, City Laboratory tours offered by RMIT, the ‘At Monash’ information sessions, changes to the entry requirements for the Monash Physiotherapy degree and more. The following link will take you to the careers newsletter: http://www.aitkencollege.edu.au/educational-programs/careers/careers-newsletter/

Do not forget that Ms Gibbs and Mrs Borg are available to help students with any questions they might have about careers, courses and pathways. Please come and see us in room B21 at the Careers Centre or telephone us on 9333 1866 or email your concerns or queries to careers@aitkencollege.edu.au.

Mrs Clare Borg and Ms Rae Gibbs
Careers Advisers

Chaplain’s Corner

Reflecting on the fires the weekend before last, and being one of those many people who was told “it is too late to leave”, it was certainly another huge reality check on how vulnerable our fragile lives can be. It seems that these wake-up calls help us to value our loved ones more and our material things less. It also shows that the “spirit of giving” is not confined to Christmas, and our sense of “community” rises to the fore when the community is under threat. I have seen and heard offerings of feed to those whose farms have been blackened, and shared conversations between neighbours who had never previously talked. It begs the question; why does it take a near disaster for this community caring to happen? It does however show that underneath society’s materialistic drive, there is an overriding care for others, especially in the face of tragedy. My thoughts and prayers are with those of you whose properties have been decimated later in the year to individual students based on their achievements. I am proud to announce this year’s 2014 Environment Monitors:

Environmental Programs News

The following students have been selected by their teachers and classmates to take on numerous responsibilities throughout the year regarding sustainability. Their efforts will earn them an Environment Badge which will be awarded later in the year to individual students based on their achievements. I am proud to announce this year’s 2014 Environment Monitors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Environment Monitors</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Environment Monitors</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Environment Monitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Kaylin Acar</td>
<td>Summer Mackenzie</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Francesca Songcuan</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Antonio Mollica</td>
<td>Brydie Green</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Declan Saunders</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Andy Fu</td>
<td>Popy Belofastov-Gee</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Derek Wells</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Aoide Andronikos</td>
<td>Briana Moschetti</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Ethan Klaric</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Jack Wylie</td>
<td>Sarah Johnson</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Yasiru Peiris</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Mackenzie Chetwynd-Brown</td>
<td>Boran Kockaya</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Marc Embuido</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Chayce Currie</td>
<td>Connor Murphy</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Bianca Mayne</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Abby Short</td>
<td>Harrison Bachman</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>Mitchell Tacono</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Claire Menzies</td>
<td>Sebastian Mafrici</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>Adam Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congratulations to the 2014 Environment Monitors!
I would also like to remind families about the first Aitken Adventure of 2014! Melbourne Girls’ College will host their annual Zero Carbon, Pedal Powered Moonlight Cinema. Guests are invited to literally contribute their own energy to a family friendly outdoor movie event. All attendees will have the chance to pedal the energy needed to project the film, or even pedal for their espresso! Eco friendly food and drinks will be on sale or guests are welcome to BYO picnic gear. Tickets $15/$8 concession with prizes on offer for most energy generated! Gates open at 5.00pm on 21 February 2014, THIS FRIDAY! For more information, go to: http://www.slf.org.au/festival14/pedal-powered-moonlight-cinema

Ms Cristy Herron
Head of Environmental Programs

Physical Education News

School Sports Victoria Senior Sports Day: Students from Year 11 and Year 12 represented Aitken College in School Sports Victoria Woodlands Division. They competed against a number of different schools within the Hume City Council. The results from the day are as below:

Boys Volleyball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (sets)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Craigieburn Secondary College</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gladstone Park Secondary College</td>
<td>2-0</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hume Central Secondary College</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Roxburgh Park Secondary College</td>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girls Volleyball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (sets)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Craigieburn Secondary College</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gladstone Park Secondary College</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girls Softball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (runs)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sirius Secondary College</td>
<td>30-7</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Senior Boys Tennis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (games)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mount Ridley Secondary College</td>
<td>18-14</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Gladstone Park Secondary College</td>
<td>18-14</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Senior Girls Tennis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (games)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Roxburgh Park Secondary College</td>
<td>9-22</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Craigieburn Secondary College</td>
<td>16-0</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A great first day of competition with some excellent results. The Girls Softball team and Boys Tennis team will now progress to the next round of competition in the Northern Metropolitan.

Intermediate Sport Day: Students from Years 9 and 10 represented Aitken College in the Woodlands Division for School Sports Victoria. The results of the day are as below:

Boys Volleyball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (sets)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hume Central Secondary College</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Roxburgh Park Secondary College</td>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girls Volleyball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (sets)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Craigieburn Secondary College</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gladstone Park Secondary College</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sirius Secondary College</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Girls Softball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (runs)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sirius Secondary College</td>
<td>20-12</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boys Cricket

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (runs)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gladstone Park Secondary College</td>
<td>9/47</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mount Ridley Secondary College</td>
<td>4/81</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9/61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intermediate Boys Tennis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (games)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hume Central Secondary College</td>
<td>24-0</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mount Ridley Secondary College</td>
<td>24-0</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Gladstone Park Secondary College</td>
<td>21-8</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intermediate Girls Tennis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Score (games)</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sirius College</td>
<td>20-8</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Year 9 and 10 day was a huge success, with the Girls Softball team, Intermediate Boys and Girls Tennis teams and Senior Boys Tennis team progressing to the Northern Metropolitan Region. Students and parents can keep up to date with the latest information, sports dates and rules, via the School Sports Victoria website www.ssv.vic.edu.au.

Mrs Natalie McNamara
Interschool Sports Co-ordinator

Year 8-12 House Swimming: The Year 8-12 House Swimming Carnival was held on Tuesday 18 February at St Albans Leisure Centre. It was a beautiful sunny day and students competed in the traditional swimming events as well as water polo, volleyball and a fill the bucket novelty relay.

Congratulations to the following students who were year level champions.

Year 8: Zoe Cachia, Peter Zugan and Matthew Aitken
Year 9: Emma Bardzinski and Joel Lomas
Year 10: Sabrina Wilson and Bailey Reilly
Year 11: Alisha Morgan and Nicholas Litver
Year 12: Izel Akyuce and Deen Ferzulla

The overall Glenarthur winner was Joel Lomas and the overall Brookhill winner was Alisha Morgan and Sabrina Wilson. Congratulations on your achievements.

Brookhill House Points | Glenarthur House Points | Overall House Points
--- | --- | ---
Cameron: 2,116 | Clarke: 1,454 | Cameron: 3,554
Clarke: 1,986 | Millar: 1,448 | Clarke: 3,440
Millar: 1,528 | Cameron: 1,438 | Millar: 2,976
Brodie: 1,096 | Brodie: 1,076 | Brodie: 2,172

Well done to everyone who competed on the day with such enthusiasm and house spirit. Thank you to all the staff who assisted in running such a successful swimming carnival.

Mr Jason Mackrell
Acting House Sports Co-ordinator

Aitken College Chartered Bus Service
Expressions of Interest for 2014

There is the possibility of limited vacancies on the following Aitken College chartered services for Term 1, 2014. The current Oak Park and Essendon runs have been re-structured to cover more areas. The charter runs for 2014 will therefore be:

- **Airport West**: Airport West, Gowanbrae, Tullamarine, Gladstone Park, Attwood
- **Essendon**: Essendon, Oak Park, Glenroy, Broadmeadows, Meadow Heights
- **Roxburgh Park run**: Roxburgh Park (which includes an area of South Craigieburn)
- **Greenvale run**: Greenvale
- **Sunbury run**: Sunbury via Bulla

If you are interested in using this service in 2014, please contact Diana Cohn at the College on 9333 1866.
OSHC NEWS

Welcome back to OSHC for 2014! The new year has taken off to a great start. Staff and children have been very busy engaging in a wide variety of activities including: incredible hulk pancake making, Chinese New Year activities, Valentines gifts for the ones we love, building large towers, making things with clay and the list goes on … but ultimately we are having lots of fun!

Attention Parents
Please remember if you have not made changes to your bookings they will be carried on from last year. Please call Camp Australia Head Office 1300 105 343 to cancel bookings.

New Bookings
Please notify OSHC 0401 050 498 if you have a cancellation or casual booking as onsite staff need to be notified in order to make sure your child arrives safely to OSHC.

REMINDERS

How to get started before using our programs you must register online for an account. Registering is quick and easy. Visit our website to begin www.campaustralia.com.au

Once registered you can make bookings and cancellations, view your statements and manage your details anytime of the day online. Keep in mind we are able to take bookings at short notice to help busy families.

Save on Care You can save 50% or more on Before and After School Care fees with the non-means tested Child Care Rebate. Almost all families are eligible. To find out more call our Customer Service Team on 1300 105 343 Monday to Friday.

Sunsmart!
Please remember that we are still in the summer season, therefore your child does require a hat in order to participate in any outdoor activities. If you would like to leave a spare hat at the program you are most welcome to do so.

WHAT’S ON THIS WEEK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scratch paper</td>
<td>Computer time</td>
<td>Cooking –TBC</td>
<td>Playdough</td>
<td>Computer free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Led light craft</td>
<td>Blocks, Lego</td>
<td>Outdoor group</td>
<td>Outdoor free play</td>
<td>Colouring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor play</td>
<td>Doll house</td>
<td>Games eg.</td>
<td>Crafts-jewelry</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group games</td>
<td>Star chimes</td>
<td>Octopus, Beading</td>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Game boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colouring</td>
<td>Colouring</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evacuation practice</td>
<td>Outdoor time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.campaustralia.com.au
From the Director of Chaplaincy and Student Services

Request for Crucial Parent and Staff feedback

The Chaplaincy Program plays an important part in the community and educational life of Aitken College. Weekly Chapel services aim to present values and issues of faith to the students in a manner which encourages, challenges and inspires and in a way which is different to the purely academic and secular subjects. The Chaplaincy team also provides counselling to students for a range of issues including family separation, grief and loss and peer relationships, as well as lunchtime activities for those wishing to engage with faith issues and make new friends.

We receive some funding from the Federal Government under the National Schools Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program which provides for a chaplain two days per week. As part of accountability protocols the College is required to provide feedback from the school community with respect to perceptions and beliefs which relate to Chaplaincy provisions within the community, some of which I have outlined above.

To this end I am requesting parents and staff, or close members of the Aitken Community (grandparents etc…) to give some feedback by completing the survey below and returning it to me, either in hard copy or by email: cward@aitkencollege.edu.au. This annual review will take only a little time to complete but is essential for the College to meet ongoing funding requirements. If you have participated in the past, we have appreciated this and I thank you in anticipation of you doing so again this year.

(Mr) Chris Ward
Director Chaplaincy and Student Services

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAPLAINCY AND STUDENT WELFARE PROGRAM
(Please complete and return to Reception or by email to cward@aitkencollege.edu.au)

Q1. Do you support the Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program at Aitken College as it offers Spiritual Direction and Emotional Well Being and Support Services to the Community?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Comment: _________________________________________________

Q2. Do you value the role Chaplaincy plays in a community such as Aitken College in underpinning concepts related to Faith, Values and the promotion of a Positive Ethos?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Comment: _________________________________________________

Q3. Do you support Aitken College’s continued involvement with the federally funded National Schools Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program which currently provides funding for a staff member two days per week?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Comment: _________________________________________________

Please feel free to give any other relevant comments on this matter:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
You still have time to purchase a space and promote your business in our Community Business Directory for 2014!

This fundraiser will be used by the Parents & Friends Association to improve the College environment, facilities and equipment, for the benefit of all our students.

Aitken families (and friends) may purchase a space for $50.00 to promote their business in the 2014 Community Business Directory. This is a very inexpensive way to advertise your business for a twelve month period.

If you would like to participate and support this fundraiser, please complete the attached form and return with your payment to the Accounts Office as soon as possible.

Current bookings include:

**BREAST PROSTHESIS AND LINGERIE FITTING SERVICE**

**Sensational Solutions for Women**

This is a mobile breast prosthesis and lingerie fitting service, for women who have undergone surgery for breast cancer (mastectomy). Helping women gain a better quality of life after breast surgery.

Contact details: Kerry Martin  
☎ 54284 364  m: 0417 119 748  
✉ kerrymartin-2011@bigpond.com

**FINANCIAL**

**Kirs Accountants**

Established in 1984, our business offers business, auditing and taxation services – including accounts preparation, taxation business advisory, superfund auditing, etc.

Contact details: Gerald Kirk  
☎ 9467 6933  
✉ www.kirksaccountants.com.au  
✉ gerald.kirk@kirksaccountants.com.au

**Mortgage Choice – Mortgage Broker and Insurance**

This is a free service for finding the best mortgage to suit you; also insurance and finance to suit all your needs.

Contact details: Chris Howitt  
☎ 9333 4370  m: 0401 334 599  
✉ chris.howitt@mortgagechoice.com.au

**SSE Accountants**

Accounting and tax services.

Contact details: Burhan Erdogan  
☎ m: 0499 405 585  
✉ admin@sseaccountants.com.au

**FOOD & CONDIMENTS**

**Mystiko – Extra Virgin Oil**

Mystiko originates from beneath the White Mountains in the Chania region of Crete, a best suited climate for the olive. Through a traditional cultivation that dates back centuries, its unique regional flavour remains a provincial mystery that has become the foundation of Cretan cuisine.

Contact details: Helen Marrero  
☎ m: 0401 873 435  
✉ hmirda@gmail.com

**HANDYMAN**

**Hire A Hubby Greenvale – Handyman, Property Maintenance**

Contact details: Richard Robinson  
☎ m: 0414 825 127  
✉ hahgreenvale@bigpond.com
HEALTH SERVICES
Melting Moments Massage
Hi, my name is Xzavia Green. I have completed Certificate IV in massage therapy. I’m offering discounted rates for Aitken parents - at my home or yours - $30 for a 1-hour Relaxation Massage; $40 for a 1-hour Deep Tissue Massage; an extra $5 if I come to you. Flexible hours, give me a call.
Contact details
Xzavia Green
☎ m: 0417 537 815
✉ www.facebook.com/xzavia.meltingmomentsmassage
✉ Xzavia_mmmassage@live.com.au

MAKE-UP ARTIST
Helen Erdogan Make-up Artist – for all occasions
Contact Details:
Helen Erdogan
☎ m: 0438 080 334
✉ selinerd@hotmail.com

PLUMBING
Reliable Hot Water
We specialise in all repairs and installation of hot water systems and general plumbing.
Contact details:
Kevin Doyle
☎ 9387 7077 1800 246 656
✉ www.reliablehotwater.com.au
✉ admin@reliablehotwater.com.au

SOLAR ENERGY
Smart Solar Energy
We provide all year round energy efficiencies, providing solar and safety film installation for residential and commercial buildings. WERS Rated. Licensed and Qualified.
Contact details:
Hus Yariz
☎ 9333 5411
✉ info@smartsolarenergy.com.au

TRANSPORT
Bill Kerry Machinery Transport Pty Ltd
Contact details:
Michael Kerry
☎ m: 0417 396 795
✉ info@bkmt.com.au

Thank you to all the above service providers for submitting your applications and we look forward to receiving many more from our College community.

Yours sincerely

Siobhan Short
President
Aitken College Parents & Friends Association
Many families in the Aitken College community manage or own a business. As a fundraiser the Parents & Friends Association are compiling a Community Business Directory to provide a way in which we can support each other in buying local and helping your business.

The Business Directory will be updated for the 2014 school year and will appear on the College website in a searchable format and as a pdf document. All money raised will be used by the Parents & Friends Association to improve the environment, facilities and equipment of the College, to benefit our children.

Aitken families may purchase a space, promoting their business, in the Community Business Directory for $50.00. This is a very inexpensive way to advertise your business for a twelve month period. If you would like to participate in this exciting initiative, please complete the attached form and place it, along with your payment, in the Parents & Friends Association box at Reception as soon as possible.

Please support this fundraiser by completing the section below and return to Accounts Office with your payment as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Siobhan Short
President
Aitken College Parents & Friends Association

AITKEN COLLEGE PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION
COMMUNITY BUSINESS DIRECTORY 2014 - $50.00 PER SPACE
(Please complete and return with your payment to the Accounts Office as soon as possible.)

FAMILY NAME: ____________________________________________
PHONE: __________________________ MOBILE: __________________________
EMAIL: ____________________________________________
BUSINESS NAME: ____________________________________________
BUSINESS TYPE: ____________________________________________
BUSINESS ADDRESS: ____________________________________________
Postcode __________________________
BUSINESS PHONE NUMBER: __________________________ BUSINESS MOBILE: __________________________
BUSINESS WEBSITE: ____________________________________________
BUSINESS DESCRIPTION: (50 words or less)

☐ CHEQUE $ __________ payable to Aitken College Parents & Friends Association
☐ CASH $ __________
☐ CREDIT CARD: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex
Card Number: __________________________ Expiry Date: __________________________ $ __________
Name on Card: __________________________________ Signature: __________________________ Date: ___/___/2014
Parents & Friends Association

Silent Auction
Friday 21st March 2014
From 7pm (7.30pm start)
Common Room 1 (Senior School Building)
BYO Food/Drinks
Tickets $10 each
Tables of 8-10
Silent Auction
Raffles, Games & more!
Book Now!

Email: admin@aitkencollege.edu.au

Trivia Night - Please complete and return with payment to Accounts Office by 7 March 2014

Name: ____________________________ Address: ____________________________
No. of tickets and/or table: _______ Email: ____________________________ Telephone: ____________________________

☐ Cheque: $ _______ made payable to Aitken College Parents & Friends
☐ Cash: $ _______
☐ Credit Card: $ _______
☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

Card Number: ____________________________ Expiry: ____________________________
Name on card: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________

Tables of 8-10
Volunteers Wanted for 2014 Kitchen Garden Program

Aitken College has just been accepted into the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program!!

This program involves Years 3 and 4 students growing vegetables and learning to cook with what they have grown.

The success of this unique and exciting Program relies on the support of volunteers.

You don’t have to be a green thumb or a master chef, you just have to love growing food, eating food and being with children.

If you would like to volunteer in the kitchen or garden, we would love to hear from you.

Cooking and gardening classes are running weekly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GARDEN PROGRAM</th>
<th>KITCHEN PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00am – 11.00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Thursdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.20pm – 1.20pm</td>
<td>11.20am – 1.20pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact: Sarah Dennis
At: sdennis@aitkencollege.edu.au
Cristy Herron combines an imaginative approach to using ICT with a hands-on project that has become a valuable educational resource.

The Year 10 Environmental Science elective class at Aitken College is a project-based unit that aims to get students excited about the environment by allowing them to be creative in how they approach new concepts and ideas. The unit was developed as a way for students to get involved with environmental initiatives at the college while at the same time linking some of the content to their core science outcomes.

This semester, students were given the task to develop and implement an action plan aimed at improving staff and student adherence to environmental practices across the college. An enthusiastic bunch of students at the college thought it would be a great idea to revamp the all-but-forgotten native ‘Science Garden’ in order to generate interest in the environment, and to get classes learning about native flora in a new and exciting way. The students focused on turning the Science Garden into an interactive nature walk for participants.

The Science Garden was established more than eight years ago by science classes of all year levels, both to help revegetate the college grounds with native plants and so students could learn about the importance of biodiversity from a scientific perspective. Since then, the Science Garden has been pummelled by the elements and become overgrown and weed-ridden. Over the years, teachers stopped using it as a medium for learning, and the garden went from being a symbol of vitality to becoming merely a place for students to get into mischief during recess and lunch.

Seeing the garden’s potential to engage students in Environmental Education, the five optimistic students in the Environmental Science elective class recognised the revitalisation of the Science Garden as an opportunity and developed their action plan accordingly. A previous assessment task required each

Aitken College Interactive Nature Walk introduction picket.
student in the class to research a native plant species present in the college grounds and complete an information brochure with general details and interesting facts about, and care instructions for, that plant. The student action team decided these would form the basis of their project.

So how do you take a stack of seemingly mundane information about plants and turn it into something exciting? With the internet, of course! Students worked closely with the Director of E-learning and formed an Aitken Environment blog containing links to each of the plants researched by Environmental Science students.

Their next challenge was to connect the Aitken Environment blog site to the Science Garden. Too easy... just use QR codes! A Quick Response (QR) code is a type of barcode that, when scanned by a QR code reader application on a smart device, directs the user straight to the website linked to the code. The student action team then focused their energy on labelling native specimens throughout the Science Garden with individualised QR codes that were attached to star pickets with zip-ties and Velcro. Even though this equipment forms only a temporary set-up to run a trial period before investment is made in more permanent structures, the result is impressive.

In addition to constructing websites and QR code labels, the action team helped organise contractors to come in over the September holidays to tidy up the Science Garden. Weeds and debris were cleared away and areas surrounding the nature paths were mulched and mowed. Four weeks into Term 4, teachers and staff of the college were notified that the new and improved Science Garden was ready for visitors eager to learn about Aitken Environments.

Because several year levels at Aitken College are required to have iPads as learning tools, it is important for teachers to incorporate ICT technologies into their teaching methods on a regular basis. The Interactive Nature Walk has made it easy for teachers to do so in relation to environmental and earth science. Students of all ages can enjoy using smart devices to learn about native flora.

With Sustainability as a cross-curricular priority in the Australian National Curriculum, there’s no better time than now to incorporate ICT and experiential learning with required learning outcomes. Because students are able to see, touch and smell the plants as they read about them, they are able to instantaneously connect theory with reality. It makes their learning more relevant, which we all know is essential for maximising student engagement towards improved outcomes.

Since we’ve opened the Interactive Nature Walk to staff and students, positive energy has filled the Science Garden. There has even been talk of expanding the QR code idea to include not only native flora, but other environmental initiatives across the school. Members of the college community could learn about the purpose, for example, of the many onsite water tanks used to supply the entire college with water in conjunction with our onsite sewerage system, just by scanning a code with their phone. The possibilities are endless.

Thanks to the student action team from the Environmental Science elective class, Aitken College is at the forefront of incorporating ICT with outdoor environmental learning.

For more info see: http://aitkenenvironment.wordpress.com/. 

Cristy Herron is Head of Environmental Programs at Aitken College where her role is to maintain the school’s status as a 5-Star Sustainable School within the ResourceSmart AuSSI VIC framework. She earned her Masters in Outdoor and Environmental Education at LaTrobe in Bendigo which led her into teaching. Her passions for the outdoors range from rock climbing to snowboarding and everything in between. She feels that enjoying the outdoors is a great way for students to develop positive relationships with natural environments and move towards becoming environmentally responsible adults.

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