Alex Moore struts his stuff on the town.
“Students are volunteers, whether we want them to be or not. Their attendance can be com-
manded, but their attention must be earned. Their compliance can be insisted on, but their
commitment is under their own control.”

Phillip Schlechty

It is always important that we reflect and learn from our experiences. This year has been an amazing year for
our Campus. We have had many successes in influencing the lives of our young people and helping them to chart a way forward in their education. However, for me it is about so much more. In education circles we sometimes get so caught up in what we benchmark as a ‘success’. In my 20 years of teaching this continues to grate against my very philosophy as an educator. So, what in essence do I believe?

I believe that every child needs connections that extend beyond their home.

I believe that every child deserves to be heard and helped.

I believe that every child is worth it, even when they don’t know it for themselves.

I believe that every child has the right to make up for a mistake and to make them..

I believe that every child can make a difference.

I believe that every child can teach me something.

From this vantage point, I believe that at Cooks Hill Campus we inspire children to be the best they can be, to build on their own success, no matter how small or how big and I believe that we have the most amazing staff in any school I have been in to make this a true reality.

To our teachers: Brendt, Matt, Aurelia, Lizzy, Sasha and Amanda; continue to be the change we want to see in education. To Ros, you are the office and we are thankful for all your hard work. To Darren, an amazing Head Teacher that has been my wingman, the Campus could not do it without you.

Welcome to 21st century learning, we are here to stay!

Have a happy and healthy Christmas break with peace and harmony surrounded by those you love.

TRACEY BREESE
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

TERM 1 WEEK 1

All students return to Campus 29th Jan.
Uniform shop open the 28th Jan 10-2pm.
No sport week one. Sport will begin Friday week 2.
Parent introductions to advisory week 4, Monday afternoon open advisory from 2pm-4pm

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE

HARDSHIPS OFTEN PREPARE ORDINARY PEOPLE FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY DESTINY...

-C.S. LEWIS
From Darren’s Desk

I’d like to be a little self-indulgent and take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our fantastic learning community for the many successes we have achieved at Cooks Hill Campus this year.

It has been a year of great learning for all of us. Students, Parents, Advisors, Mentors, Support Staff and Executive, all began the year excited by the prospect of a school founded on the exciting Big Picture design. A design which incorporated a wide variety of innovative concepts such as Weekly Internships, Personal Interest Projects, Learning Goals, Exhibitions, Check-ins/outs, Individual Learning Plans, Town Hall and regular Journal writing. Viv White has been crucial in guiding us all through this steep learning curve. Thank you Viv.

Term one saw advisors answering questions like “What does empirical reasoning mean?”, “How can I possibly present for an hour at my exhibition?” and “How will I get an internship?”. This term the questions have evolved to “What experiments/testing could I do to increase the quality and quantity of empirical reasoning in my learning plan?”, “Is it OK if my exhibition goes for longer than an hour?”, and “How do I turn my favourite internship experience into an SBAT?”

The growth in our students both socially and academically over just one year is the most amazing transformation I have seen in my career. For most of our students, in a single year, they have exhibited the type of development normally seen over the course of 6 years in a large high-school. I believe this is due to many factors. These include:

Amazing Advisors. Advisors get know each of their students very well, they then use this understanding to guide each student along their own personalized educational pathway, customized to student interests, abilities and readiness. Along with this is a great deal of modeling. In many ways our learning community operates much closer to an adult learning environment or workplace than a traditional school. Respect underpins all interactions and conversations. Advisors and staff have consistently modeled this over the course of the year, and in such conditions, the students have absolutely followed suit. Without fail, the many visitors we have had through our school this year to observe the innovative nature of our pedagogy have used words such as ‘calm’, ‘respectful’, ‘mature’, and my favourite, ‘great vibe’. When schooling is built on the solid foundations of respect, relationships and consistent focus on learning and importantly ‘love of learning’, and the environment is really conducive to achieving this (smaller class sizes, great advisors, and a curriculum designed around each student to name a few) then students thrive. Advisors have also been undertaking a great deal of learning. Gone are the safe confines of a key learning area. All of our advisors are now becoming experts in all KLAs across Stage 5 and the many facets of Big Picture design delivery, while deepening their knowledge of their specialist KLA through the development of innovative Stage 6 curriculum resources for our senior students.

A huge thank you also to the parents. It is evident through the many communications I, and the rest of our staff, have had with caregivers, that our students are benefitting from a combined, supportive system. The Big Picture design ensures far more frequent and productive communication between the key stakeholders in a
student’s education than traditional schooling can accommodate (email, phone calls, narratives, reports, learning plan meetings, and exhibitions). These communications are always based around how we can support students to ensure the best possible learning opportunities exist for them. In this regard caregivers have been hugely influential on our ability to assist Cooks Hill Campus students to be the best they can be.

**Mentors and LTI placements.** The impact that encouraging students to ‘leave to learn’ has on their knowledge, skill, and social development cannot be underestimated. The difference in students after completing a successful LTI is immediately noticeable. Aside from the obvious skills and knowledge they gain from being immersed in a workplace, the confidence, maturity and deeper understanding of the adult world they bring back from these experiences is undeniable and hard to adequately acknowledge. Thank you to **Amanda** (our LTI coordinator), mentors, workplaces and families for accommodating our students placement in the real world. You are making a huge difference to the future of our wider community.

Most of our community would have had the pleasure of meeting **Ros**, who runs our office and admin with amazing efficiency and grace. The manner in which she single-handedly and patiently handles the work of an office full of people never ceases to amaze me. I know (from consistent student, staff and parent feedback) that the school would not be enjoying the successes we have had this year if it weren’t for Ros’ hard work and always calm demeanor.

**The boss.** I can categorically state that the best interests of students are at the forefront of every decision made by **Tracey Breese**, our Campus Leader. It is greatly satisfying and inspiring to work with a leader who not only places student interest at the forefront of decision-making, but has the experience and creativity to do this in a meaningful and consistently successful way. I have greatly enjoyed and learned from, the many brainstorming sessions we have had while navigating the often unfounded paths of our journey this year, from curriculum design to logistical forecasting and planning. I am looking forward to spending the next twelve months refining existing practice and tackling the challenges that the 2nd year of operation will bring.

Most importantly, the students. By far the most rewarding part of my role at the school is getting to know each and every student. In my previous role of HT TAS at a large school, I was barely able to really get to know my own students until stage 6, let alone the rest of the school. This role allows me to get to know the whole school community very well. It has been a pleasure to observe and play a role in the development of our awesome students. You are pioneers. The way you have not only adapted to this new school design, but thrived, is a credit to you. It is your unique personalities, your respect for all, your enjoyment in your learning, your willingness to assist any other member of our community at any time and your ever-present smiles that make working at CHC a fantastic and rewarding experience. Thank you.

Thank you all for a great first year at Cooks Hill Campus, I hope you have an enjoyable and relaxing break.

As always, please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding your family’s experience at Cooks Hill Campus.

**Darren Ponman - Darren.ponman1@det.nsw.edu.au**
CAMPUS CAPERS

Sheri, Tayla & Ally get crafty

Our progress on the yarnbombing!
BIO EXCURSION

Conducting experiments

Testing water samples
ADVISORY #1

2014 is coming to a close and it has been a great year

We have all shared many memories and good times

On the 28th of November our Advisory celebrated the birth of Sasha, we would like to thank Sherri for helping to create Sasha’s very own “Minion” cake

We have had some wonderful new additions to our advisory throughout the year

Our year 9s have created some wonderful pieces of work throughout the term and produced great exhibitions

We hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday and we all come back next year pumped and ready to go
THE RFPs
WEEK 10, Term 4

Coming to a close, this year has been unimaginably busy. Art courses at the university, secret valentine, scholarships, pick-me-ups, fundraisers, Halloween tricks rather than treats, secret Santa, and finally, to end our mighty monumental year, a Christmas party.

Xmas decorations have gone up in style inside of the Wolfpack. Tinsel twinkles greens and golds, red strung high and vibrantly. The fireplace like that of a family home, and over the year, that is exactly what the Wolfpack has become.

Beginning the year awkward and uncomfortable¾let’s try to be honest, we’ve come a long way. With only one week left, the friendships developed here are more than any one of us could have imagined.

We help each other, support each other, and throughout stage 6 work, that foundation has been needed most. The final assessments for, well, everything, were due this week and last. The Wolfpack would like to thank all the advisors, staff, parents and students involved with Cooks Hill Campus for their constant and unwavering support.

As our farewell, the Christmas party on Wednesday involved secret Santa’s, pizza, a wad of chocolate, and yes, our inner party, study, eating, exhausted from prelims animal.

We wish the best to everyone on their holidays, and for Izzy to steer clear of any and all stairs. For Justin not to bust his knee, Joni to keep up the yoga! Kayla, man, improve your speedrunners, for the love of God. And to all of the Wolfpack, have great holidays!

And our Alpha, Lizzy Carter, keep making people happy.

From the TGIF headquarters of the wolfpack branch

Head Director of delivering you nice news
Some of our building blocks that we’re proud of this year:

- Being at Big Picture has made me more mature – Erin
- Writing proposals, independent research and working to deadlines – Lachlan
- I’ve wanted to come to school – Lachlan
- Contacting LTI workplaces for interviews & LTIs
- I’ve been more social and have had fun at school – Alex
- Spending time in the community helping others
- I’ve gained experience working with Adam in at Newcastle High – Josh
- Working as a team in our advisory to make a better learning space and reduce conflict – Jacob
- I’ve learnt about my favourite cars and been to a mechanics for work experience – Jacob

Imagine if every skill gained, experience taken, goal achieved, assessment task completed, and piece of knowledge gained was a lego block...

something tangible that you could collect and keep...

and over time you could stack them up into walls...

what would you build?
Serious footballer poses

Matt’s special shirt

Normal poses
To finish off what has been an amazing year we asked each other what has been the highlight for them for the year. Here are some of the answers:

**Nikita** – Getting my traineeship at Response Services

**Lara** – Completing year 10

**Bryent** – getting into Live Music Sound Production course at TAFE for next year

**Shine** – Just being here with everyone

I am so proud of The Linchpins and I have to pinch myself to realise that a whole year has gone by. The Linchpins have evolved so much over the year and have completed so much work through projects and LTIs. What I am most proud of is how each student has grown over the year and has re-engaged with learning based around their interests. For anyone who asks me whether Big Picture works, I just tell them to come and see for themselves.
SHOUT OUTS!

Shout Out to Eboni for cleaning up the area outside the school grounds last week.
Shout Out to EVERYONE for making this an awesome year full of new experiences.