**Mullumbimby High School Ex-Students**

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**HAND OVER**

*The official hand over of the lectern and sound system has been done.*

We were invited to a school assembly on 17 March (the reason for the newsletter being a bit later than planned, so it could be reported to all members) for the official handing over of the sound system and lectern which members generously supported last year. As the first fund raising project undertaken by the Association, it was a very successful effort.

At the assembly we got to see the transparent lectern in all its glory, and to experience the improved sound system which makes so much difference in the hall. It has had a major facelift and looks 200% on the rather tired and dark interior many of us will remember. The natural wood paneling has been replaced by white paint to create a fresh impression.

Judy Hill who came from Sydney, Nic Van Horton from the Gold Coast, and Robyn Gray represented the Association.

Thanks were offered from the Principal and the two students who conducted the assembly and a student who sang one of her own songs.

The spotlight was also on sound engineer Nicolas Van Horton who had put in the hard yards (*see below, left*), buying the equipment, assembling and installing it. He also spent time tutoring staff and students about how to keep it in good order and how to make the most of it.

Regrettably our president, Neville Marks was not able to be with us on the day, as he’s travelling in South America.

However, a short message from him was included in the comments made on behalf of the Association by the secretary, Robyn Gray, who also received a Certificate of Appreciation for the gift, *below, right*.

This assembly was a much more impressive occasion than the last one we attended. Perhaps it was the presence of the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia and his assistant, or the Indonesian exchange students whose traditional dancing gave the occasion some colour, or maybe it was the smooth and mature MC-ing of the program by two senior girls. Maybe it was a combination of all of these elements, in the fresh, light atmosphere of the hall.

Whatever it was, when we were asked to observe a minute of silence for the victims of the calamities in Christchurch and Japan, the hall fell silent and still until the program continued and normal wriggling resumed.

See pictures on www.facebook.com/search/
HOW DID YOU COPE IN THE FLOOD AND CYCLONE? DEPENDS....

We asked some of our many Queensland members how they coped in the dreadful summer weather. The answer depended on where they were, but they were all safe - the main thing.

We know that the Cairns area, although waterlogged by the monsoon and TC Yasi, was spared the worst of the drama. Forests were stripped bare and gardens well pruned, but parts of Cairns did not even lose power, so they were lucky.

Ian Hayes is a marine insurer based at Airlie Beach. Here is an account of his experience:

“The season has been quite devastating for everyone. The two cyclones, ‘Anthony’ and ‘Yasi’, gave us winds of up to 120 km per hour. We only have one tree left, that will hit the house if it falls so I had to get out with the chain and ropes to secure it...

The cyclone last year hit us with winds up to 224 km per hour. We had 12 big trees come down, luckily only one hit the house and four others landed on top of my shed... The damage bill was $80K. Cardwell got hit real hard, about 400 km north of where I am. Being a Marine Insurance Broker we insure quite a few of the vessels and also homes up there, so it’s been full on to assist the owners with the salvage and begin the process of either repairing the vessel off or undertaking the repairs...

The grounds are so wet at the moment, they are soft and spongy. The water table is so full that there are people with bores that are overflowing and have been for some months. The problem here is that with the ground so soft, some of the trees are falling over because their root system cannot hold them upright.

The forecast is for more severe weather still to come. Glad I drive a big 4wd, have a boat and can swim! They have all come in handy to assist others in need of help.

We choose to live in FNQ so there is no point complaining. After all there is a good part of the year when we have some beautiful weather and all we do is play on the water, either fishing or diving. I would rather be here than in Japan!”

At Clifton, between Warwick and Toowoomba, Eugene Hollis-Neath is a real estate agent and he said that with heavy rain before Xmas followed by two large downfalls, there were a “a lot of farmers who lost crops, fences, irrigation gear and machinery. It was probably the biggest flood in our region ever, with different stories from the older generation. The New England Highway was cut at Nobby where Kings Creek runs through from the Piltron Valley Mountain Ranges.”

Eugene has an amazing gallery of photos that really tell the story.

In the same area, Patricia Allen (Bailey) sat tight on her rural property while the roads and creeks around Crows Nest, north of Toowoomba took a battering, along with the garden. But she felt herself lucky with only inconvenience to complain of.

Back up north at Yepoon, Lyle Robb builds houses. With the ongoing rain, he is finding it tricky to get the heavy equipment - trucks and cranes - that deliver his houses to sites in such boggy conditions. He needs it to be dry for a while. From north to south, amen to that.

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

If you are doing some interesting work or project, or if you have changed jobs, or found a bunch of old mates in your area, let us know. Pictures are welcome, too.

Contact the Secretary
mh.exassn@bigpond.com

And don’t forget the Facebook site. It’s a good place to post information you want to get out quickly. There are new links there, too.

www.facebook.com/search/

Ian Hayes supplied this Sydney Morning Herald photo and said, “This is what we were faced with the day after cyclone Yasi. This is where all the boats and the Marina ended up. All the boats are still connected to the walkways. It all lifted off the top of the pylons.”
It was with some shock that we learned of the passing of Graeme Vagg from his brother, Ian. It seems that he had been ill recently and he died on Saturday 12 March.

Graeme was an early member of the Association and was also one of the first to renew his sub. after the AGM last year. This profile was first published in a newsletter in 2009.

He was born in Mullumbimby and attended primary school to 5th Class and high school from 2nd year to 4th Year at the current high school site between 1946 and 1956.

He entered the Royal Australian Naval College in January 1957 and completed officer training courses in Australia and the UK plus four warships from 1957 to 1967, specializing in marine engineering. He was based in Sydney for ship and shore postings between 1965 and 1974 that included Vietnam convoy duties in HMAS Sydney, Vietnam war service in HMAS Vendetta and marine engineer officer of HMAS Vampire (now at Darling Harbour, Sydney).

Exchange duty at Long Beach Naval Shipyard, California, followed for the next 2½ years (living just 20 minutes from Disneyland) and then there was a return to Canberra in 1977.

In Canberra, the work was Defence Facilities project planning and a team of four had to develop new patrol boat bases at Darwin and Cairns, the fleet base in Western Australia and also upgrade the three Naval Dockyards. In 1981 he left the Navy to accept a civilian position doing similar work. He retired from that in 1998 after most bases had been rebuilt.

Civil engineering and building skills picked up along the way allowed Graeme to plan and build a big solar heated home in a rural area near Canberra in 1993.

Graeme is survived by his wife Angela and his three children. Ian is his brother and Margaret his sister. Our thoughts are with them.

Members of a certain age will remember Graeme's athleticism at school, and others may remember his parents.

His father Roy was known in the Brunswick district as a successful carrier who turned his voluntary interest in the St. John Ambulance Service into a career when he became the first Officer-in-Charge of the new Gordon Street Ambulance Station in 1956.

His mother, Tess (Jarvis) shared his interest and qualifications in the St. John movement, but was also a seamstress and a music teacher. Her musicianship gave pleasure to many people through her concert performances, and the dance bands she was with for many years.

ANNUAL SUBS FOR VOTING MEMBERS ARE NOW DUE

For those who haven't yet renewed their voting memberships there is just a little while to go. You don't slip off the radar if you don't send your $10 renewal, but you do slip on to the non-voting Associates register.

Many thanks to all those voting members who have already renewed.

It's not hard to convert from an associate to a voting membership. Please contact the Secretary.

Syl Reid has just done that, so congratulations and thanks, Syl.

WELCOME to Leigh Boileau (1958) who has signed on as an Associate, to Frank Harkness (1968) and to Margaret Thomas (Boileau, 1962) who have added their names to the Voting Register.

As our project this year is to increase our memberships, please see how many recruits you can sign on. At the Assembly, Year 12s were invited as Social Members until they become exes, so we hope that will spark some interest in the younger generation.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please don’t forget to let us know if there are changes to your contact details.

Call or email the Secretary

mh.exassn@bigpond.com

For those wanting to make a donation or renew subs, you can make a direct deposit to the Mullumbimby High School Ex-Students Association through the Mullumbimby branch of the Commonwealth Bank, BSB 06 2578 A/N 1022 4915.

And don’t forget to identify yourself so we know the deposit was made by you.
LATE NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL WEB SITE

We have been looking back at the school web site for some of the weekly bulletins which go to parents who opt for this version, rather than have these communications from the school lost in the back pack. In recent editions the Association has been featured, so we pass on these excerpts for your interest.

You can check out the full versions along with all the other information about school policies and student achievements on the site, so it’s worth having a look.

http://www.mullumbimb-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/

WE’VE GOT GREAT SOUND!! 18 February
Due to the commitment and hard work of the Mullumbimby High School ex-students association, we have a professional standard sound system and new lectern installed in the hall. This has been well timed as the $100,000 upgrade and renovation has also just been completed.

When the ex-students association reformed nearly two years ago, they approached the school and asked us what projects they could raise funds for. Since then, they have been holding a range of successful events and have managed to reach their fund raising goals. The new sound system and lectern will be of a tremendous benefit to the school and its students by enhancing the quality of performances and presentations. It is envisaged that it will also benefit the community - Mullum High JPA is now a high quality local venue due to the recent renovations and improvements.

On behalf of the school, I would like to thank Neville Marks, the President and Robyn Gay, the secretary of the association for their commitment to this project and special thanks to Nic Van Horton of the class of ’92. Nic is a professional sound engineer who sourced the equipment and volunteered his time to install it. A special handover assembly is being planned for Thursday 17 March – all are welcome. In the meantime, more information about the MHS ex-students association can be found at: http://www.mullumbimb-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/sws/view/1032484.node

“REVERSING YOUTH BINGE DRINKING IN THE BYRON SHIRE”
11 March 2011
PO Box 123
Mullumbimby 2482
Ph. 6684 2600
www.mullumbimb-h.schools.nsw.edu.au

WEEK 7 - TERM 1

Special Assembly next week
Our first student achievement assembly for 2011 will be held next week Thursday 17th March at 10:00 am in the hall. We have two exciting themes for this assembly – one a formal thankyou to the ex-students association for their donation of a new lectern and sound system to the school and this sound system will be well showcased by the performances of some our most talented musicians.

The second theme involves some cultural exchange between Mullumbimby High School and Mataram 5 Lombok, our sister school. Yunita, Saktyo, Rizky, Gilang and Ina, our Indonesian exchange students will be performing traditional indonesian dances. At the moment we believe that the assembly will be also attended by Consular General and Cultural Attaché form the Indonesian Embassy in Australia as well as Pak Endang the teacher accompanying the exchange students.

All parents and community members are welcome to attend.

Knives
I would like to remind parents and students about the NSW laws with regard to the