

Primary entry #22: St Columban's PS, Mayfield

# Tellitlikøitis

ST COLUMBAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MAYFIELD



**HARMONY LINKS THE WORLD:** Children from St Columban's celebrate their acceptance of others.  
— Picture by Katie Johnson

## Many are one in Mayfield

By ISABELLE DOLPHIN, JESSICA MARTIN and JENNIFER HUMBERSTONE

ST COLUMBAN'S Primary School, Mayfield, received a special commendation in the Cohesive Community Schools Award, which was a NSW State Government initiative. St Columban's was the only Catholic school to receive recognition and one of just eight schools in NSW. St Columban's received the award for demonstrating an ongoing commitment to social harmony and recognising cultural diversity. Initiatives encouraging community cohesion included multicultural days and celebration of special festivals and events.

The Cohesive Community School Award was awarded to schools that showed a commitment to the NSW Government's 2003 policy which encourages and values diversity and recognises schools that promote understanding and mutual respect.

"I commend the school on their efforts to build closer cultural ties with the community," said NSW Premier, Morris Iemma.

Staff, students and the community at St Columban's have developed many projects, events and curriculum areas during recent years that reflect the school's values of kindness, respect and acceptance of others.

# Shipping help to Tonga

By FINISI TOKI and SOANE PULUIVEA

THE riot-torn Tongan education system has received a container-load of teaching resources from St Columban's Primary School, Mayfield.

Once a haven, Tonga was ravaged by violence and riots in November, 2006 and parts of the country remain in uproar.

St Columban's set out to help schools in Nuku'alofa.

"Their schools need help to educate the children," said the principal of St Columban's, Michael Doyle.

St Columban's banded with other Catholic schools to organise help.

St Joseph's HS, Lochinvar; St Mary's HS, Gateshead; San Clemente HS, Mayfield and St Columban's PS shipped a container to Tonga with 25 computers just out of warranty, high school text books, library books and shelving, a photocopier and cartridges, plus boxes of spare parts to maintain the equipment.

The Honorary Consul-General Louise Waterhouse helped St Columban's organise the trucking of the container to the shipping terminal in Sydney.

Reverend Sione Pinome and his congregation from the Free Wesleyan church of Tonga helped pay shipping costs.



**THE SCENE:** Main picture, riot-torn Nuku'alofa. Inset: A hearing-impaired student using the computer sent to Tonga by Hunter schools.  
— Pictures courtesy of Owen Doyle, Tonga

A media release from the Kingdom of Tonga acknowledged that the country's unrest, which spanned death, violence and destruction, stemmed from public reactions to governmental policy.

"The riots we believe began with the government and its rules," the release said.

"His Majesty's government remains determined to press ahead with reform," said Tongan Attorney General and Minister of Justice Alisi Taumoepeau.

"But in the immediate future, the key task is to continue to restore order so that rebuilding can begin." One member of Newcastle's



Tongan community was "heart-broken" by the events in Tonga. "It will take a lot of work to rebuild the community," she said.



**HEARTFELT:** Sister Marie receives her award from Dr Wayne Tinsey, Director of Catholic Schools, and Father Barry Tunks at Sacred Heart Cathedral during Catholic Schools Week.

## Recognising four decades of devotion

By EMMAH SESSIONS, JASMIN DIXON and CHLOE JORDAN

SISTER Marie Jones recently received a Monsignor Coulahan award for devoting 41 years of her life to Catholic Education at a presentation at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton.

The Monsignor Coulahan Award is an initiative of the Catholic Schools Office to recognise staff, both teachers and support staff for their contribution to Catholic education.

Sister Marie has taught at schools all over NSW and acted as both a teacher and principal. She has been at St Columban's Primary School, Mayfield for 13 years and during that time has helped many students and families in crisis.

She runs the Seasons for Growth Program for students who have lost parents through separation, divorce or death. The Journey Program, a guided

meditation at St Columban's, is also facilitated by Sister Marie.

St Columban's has many children who need assistance with uniforms and Sister Marie monitors the clothing pool.

She also liaises with St Vincent de Paul and other charities so she can help families with food hampers, camps and excursions for children who need respite from family crisis.

She is also "Santa" to many children at Christmas.



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# Victory needed over violence

## Editorial

By **MADISON MITCHELL, TALLULAH LANGFORD, GABBY HARVEY** and **AKANETE NGATUVAI**

VIOLENCE and vandalism is increasing on our streets.

Every time you pick up a newspaper or turn on a TV you hear more news about someone being bashed, killed or injured.

In Newcastle, everyone seems to know someone or of someone who has been the victim of an attack. The attacks seem to be either late at night or early in the morning, often in the Newcastle CBD and close to pubs and clubs.

According to Sergeant Gerard Lawson, of Newcastle Police's crime division, there are approximately 6000 attacks statewide each month.

Most of these attacks are assaults, bashings and incidents of harassment. Most attacks are a result of alcohol and drug use.

According to media reports in Newcastle many attacks are physical and happen in the early hours of the day, around the inner city.

What can be done to reduce these attacks?

We could take away the extra hours. Do we need more police visibility? Yes, we do need more police for the sake of our safety. Should clubs and pubs be allowed to trade in the early hours of the morning? No.

Local and State governments have made a move towards locking down premises serving alcohol but many publicans are arguing about their possible loss of trade.

What is more important, safety and the well-being of many, or extra cash for a few?

Visitors and tourists to Newcastle should be able to feel safe and enjoy our beautiful city without the threat of potential violence.

Our citizens should be able to walk freely at night, knowing that they will see the light of day without physical harm.

Newcastle has beautiful beaches, great restaurants, lovely scenery and, on the whole, friendly people.

Our heritage buildings are also under threat from vandalism. Graffiti is everywhere - under bridges, in alleyways, on blank walls and fences.

What we need in Newcastle is a little self-control. We need to be responsible for our own actions and accept the consequences of those actions.

Personal safety is paramount, whether in the home or on the streets.

Newcastle is a community and our community pulls together in time of disaster and threat. This time, the threat is to all of us and our families. We have to stand together as one community and say no to drugs and alcohol. We have to tell the Government that we definitely need more police and that our safety is the most important thing. It is our responsibility to take control.



**READY TO GO:** Year 4 students are eager to begin the game of cricket. - Picture by Stephanie Jones

## Pitch for harmony

By **LEO MARKS** and **YU-SHENG HSU**

AUSTRALIA'S biggest cricket game took place on Harmony Day, when nearly 100,000 participated in the sport to celebrate cultural diversity and inclusion.

Around 626 schools with an estimated 98,830 children took part in games at sporting fields, playgrounds and ovals at lunchtime to reinforce the Living in Harmony message.

"The cricket game was not limited to schools alone," said Cricket Australia chief executive officer James Sutherland.

"Australia's Biggest Cricket Game

is about providing the opportunity for all Australians to join in a sport that is part of Australia's history and culture."

People who participated believed cricket was a powerful way to spread and celebrate the Australian values of unity, inclusion, diversity, teamwork and respect.

Harmony Day is celebrated on March 21 each year.

It is about bringing people together to promote Australian values and celebrate the Australian way of life.

Australia's Biggest Cricket Game was supported by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and media outlets around the country.

## Getting a math flying start

By **JOSHUA SMITH** and **NATHANIEL KING**

ST Columban's Primary School was instrumental in developing the National Year 6 Science Test, which was held in October, 2006 in 600 sample schools throughout Australia.

While working with The National Science Literacy Review Committee, St Columban's was asked if it would be one of two Catholic schools in NSW to pilot the new mathematics program being developed for Australian schools. A number of government schools in the Hunter Region also took part.

ICE-EM stands for International Centre of Excellence for Education in Mathematics. Like the National Science Test, ICE-EM is funded by the Australian Government to improve student outcomes in mathematics and science.

A group including 26 university



**NUMBER WONDER:** Learning is fun with ICE-EM. - Picture by Luke Kiem

mathematics departments, the CSIRO and the Department of Mathematical and Information Science has helped develop the new program.

When the pilot project is completed it will cover the core requirements of all Australian States and territories and provide progressive connected development of mathematical ideas and techniques.

## Bridging the road safety gap

By **JOSHUA INGLE** and **JOE DO**

A NEAR accident involving a Sudanese child in year 1 at St Columban's PS, Mayfield recently highlighted the need for African students to develop road safety skills.

School and community members decided there was a need to bridge the cultural divide and heighten the awareness of the dangers that crossing a road and riding a bike could pose for children.

As a result, teachers, parents, community members and students were involved in a road safety day which emphasised the importance of being safe pedestrians, cyclists and passengers, as well as the importance of older students demonstrating responsible street and road behaviour to younger students.

The importance of maintaining a bike and wearing suitable light coloured clothing and helmets was focused on in one of the activities.

Police liaison officer Alison Greenwood spoke to students about responsible behaviour on and off buses, when getting in and out of vehicles, when riding bikes as well as crossing roads.

Mrs Moffat, ESL teacher at St Columban's said that children from other countries needed to be aware of the laws and rules on Australian roads.

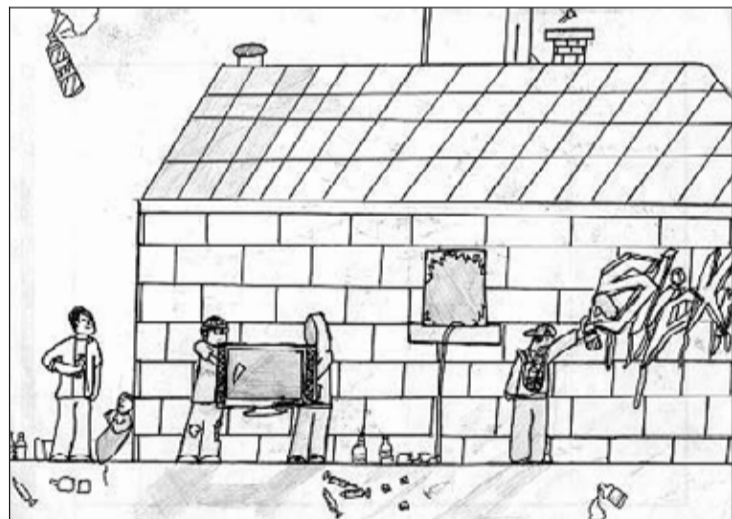
She also said that a community effort was needed to reinforce and model the road rules to enable refugee children to remain safe.

Simon Agwaig, a year 6 Sudanese student, reinforced Mrs Moffat's statement by saying that there was no need for road rules in Sudan.

Simon felt he had learned a lot by taking part in the road safety activities, especially the ones focusing on the importance of wearing a helmet when riding a bike.

The students also watched videos about bike riding, did role plays, played board games, sang songs, looked at pictures and completed activity sheets with road safety messages.

At the end of the day, students took home activity and information sheets to share with their families.



- Illustration by Jarrod Rampling, Nathan Kembrey and Brandon Adderley

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