

Making the smooth transition to 'big school'

BY ALI SMITH

Children starting kindergarten next year have been getting a taste of school life, taking part in Wee Waa Public School's transition program.

Principal Kathy Nott said the children have been coming to school one day a week to become familiar with the school setting, make new friends and learn new skills.

"Transition teacher Lisa Gauci and school learning support officer Robyn Green are doing a wonderful job," said Mrs Nott.

"There's been a number of families interested in the program and they've come along and had a tour of the school.

"The children are doing play based activities and getting used to the school routine."



Zaliah and Blakely enjoying the transition program at Wee Waa Public School.



The transition program happens every Monday at Wee Waa Public School and is also a chance for children to make new friends, pictured Joshua and Alex.

From the mountains to the plains

Born and bred in the Blue Mountains and with a love of the great outdoors, new Wee Waa High School teacher Mark Patterson was destined to find himself teaching in a rural high school.

"My mother is a dedicated and passionate teacher, so teaching was always in the back of my mind as being a rewarding and challenging career, however, it was actually a Bachelor of Psychology that I studied at university," said Mr Patterson.

"While studying, I worked as a student learning support officer at a Western Sydney high school.

"I built a strong rapport with the students as I worked at assisting them with their learning and this really captured my interest and the realisation just how valuable education is.

"Providing that targeted help and seeing students progress was so rewarding," he said.

"Every young person needs and deserves a great education.

"So, after completing my three-year psychology degree, I chose to do a Masters in Teaching and graduated in 2017.

"I secured a fulltime teaching role straight out of university with a high school in the Campbelltown area.

"It was both challenging and tough, but very rewarding.

"There were 800 students and it was a term-on-term contract.

"My next role was at Cherrybrook Technology High School as a HSIE teacher for two years.

"I taught English, history, geography, society and culture.

"I loved the subject variety you have with being a HSIE teacher.

"The students at Cherrybrook Technology High were very motivated to learn and many of them really put quite a bit of pressure on themselves.

"Every student and school is different and each teaching role is challenging, but for different reasons.

"It's the rapport and relationship you develop with your students that helps make their schooling more impactful.

"Being a positive role model is a responsibility I take very seriously.

"Whether it be sport or in the classroom, or simply how I conduct myself out of school in a small country town, being a positive influence is never far from my mind.

"2020 was going to be my year to travel the world.

"I got to Brazil and was just five weeks into a 12 month trip when COVID hit.

"I returned to Australia and soon after a teaching role at Narrabri High School came up.

"I grabbed it with both hands and was there for three terms as a HSIE teacher."

Returning to Sydney at the end of his contract, Mr Patterson started teaching at a small school for behaviourally challenged youth.

"I loved my work, but I missed the North West," he said.

"So, when I became aware of a six-month teaching contract opening up at Wee Waa High School, I didn't think twice.

"It really didn't take much to get me back out here."

A keen community person and sportsman, particularly rugby league, Mr Patterson has been playing with



New Wee Waa High School teacher Mark Patterson.

the Narrabri Rugby League Club.

On weekends it's not just sport that keeps Mr Patterson busy but also his love of hiking and camping.

"I think I've done just about every bush walk there is in the area," added Mr Patterson.

"It's just such a beautiful region."

"I'm here initially for six months, but I am pretty keen to stick around.

"I am loving being a part of the community.

"Professionally, this is a great opportunity for me and I am keen to learn and grow as much as I can as a teacher."

Wee Waa's Youth Council representatives plan to be strong advocates for the region

Continued from front page

"I felt it was important that young people's voices from across the shire were heard and for their ideas to be able to be shared," said Mackenzie Jones.

"I have ideas about opportunities I see for young people and also some of the challenges and areas for improvement.

"I wanted to make sure that young people from Wee Waa had someone who could share their thoughts and perspectives," added Mackenzie.

"I thought it was the best way to share the thoughts of young people in my community on what they see as important and a priority," said

Caitlyn.

"I also thought it would be great to meet and hear from other young people from right across the Narrabri Shire."

Other members of the Youth Council include Temika Toole, Tim Mirtschin, Jordan Kay, Charlotte Penberthy, Andrea Brown, Eliza Dampney, Poppy Smith and Gemma Ferguson, who also works as a journalist for *The Courier* and *Wee Waa News*.

Shire mayor Ron Campbell said they will represent and promote the needs of local youth.

"The Youth Council's objectives are to provide advice and input into local youth-related initiatives, to inspire

and motivate change and to provide advice and assistance to Narrabri Shire Council on priorities that are important to them," Cr Campbell said.

"The Youth Council members are socially conscious young leaders who have been appointed to represent the youth of this community.

"We are looking forward to this collaboration and what it can achieve."

The Narrabri Shire Youth Council will elect both a youth mayor and deputy youth mayor and meet on a monthly basis, considering COVID-19 restrictions.

They will also receive mentoring from a council staff member and serve for a two-year term.



LEFT: Riley is one of a group of children who have been taking part in play based activities and learning the school routine while he prepares to transition to kindergarten next year.

Santos Activities Update

- ◆ On 30 September 2020, the NSW Independent Planning Commission (IPC) approved the Narrabri Gas Project. Further information on the IPC decision and a copy of the Development Consent is available at www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2020/03/narrabri-gas-project.
- ◆ Santos will undertake a 12-18 month appraisal program ahead of a Final Investment Decision for the next phase of project development.
- ◆ Santos continues work on the preparation and approval of the management plans required as a condition of consent by IPC.
- ◆ On 21 July 2020, the NSW Government released its Future of Gas Statement, outlining plans for the gas industry in NSW. More information is available at www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/future-of-gas-statement and on the Santos website at www.santos.com/news/
- ◆ On 20 July 2021, Santos advised the market that it had submitted a confidential, non-binding indicative all-scrip merger proposal to the Oil Search Board. On 2 August 2021, Santos and Oil Search reached agreement on the merger ratio with both parties committed to conducting due diligence over a period of approximately four weeks with the aim of entering into a Merger Implementation Agreement. More information is available at www.santos.com/news/
- ◆ The next meeting of the Narrabri Gas Project Community Consultative Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 21 September 2021. Communiques from previous CCC meetings are available at www.narrabrigasproject.com.au/community/consultative-committee/
- ◆ Santos has proudly sponsored the following organisations and activities:
 - Pink Up Namoi
 - Gunnedah Show Society Campdraft
 - Wee Waa Show Society
 - 2MAX FM - Narrabri Shire Community Radio
- ◆ The Wilga Park Power Station is online.
- ◆ Bibblewindi East, Bibblewindi West and Dewhurst South pilot wells are online. Tintfield pilot is offline.

www.narrabrigasproject.com.au