Dear Parents and Friends of St Patrick’s Community

The legend of Saint Patrick has evolved during the 1500-odd years since the missionary brought Christianity to Ireland. Much embellished in the telling, his story has become a mixture of truth and myth. However, perhaps the best-known legend of Saint Patrick involves the shamrock, the symbol of Irish heritage. After training as a priest and bishop, Patrick arrived in Ireland in 432AD and immediately set about trying to covert the pagan Celts who inhabited the island. Having previously lived and worked there, he was very probably already aware that the number three held special significance in Celtic tradition, and he applied this knowledge in a clever way. He used the shamrock, a three-leaved clover which grows all over the island, to explain the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity.

There is another legend that relates to out school’s crest. Saint Patrick was preaching close to a pagan standing stone, which was considered sacred to some of his audience of potential converts. It was already carved with a circle. This mark would have been familiar to all pagans as a symbol of the sun or moon gods. St Patrick is credited with drawing a Christian cross through the circle, and blessing the stone. In this way, it is said, he created the first Irish Celtic Cross.

It was wonderful to celebrate St Patrick’s Day, firstly with the Parish on Saturday evening and then, as a whole school this week, on Tuesday. After Mass on Saturday, we walked the new labyrinth and enjoyed some refreshments together in the Autumn evening. Tuesday’s activities focused on both the cross country run, as well as time playing together as a whole school. Our prayer service was reflective and reverent and it was wonderful to hear enthusiastic singing.

Saturday was also a very busy day for many parents who rolled up their sleeves and catered for the Cooma Show. It is a massive effort. Thank you to those parents and the staff and students who also assisted them.

For 2015’s School Board, I am happy to announce that Erika Statham will continue as President, Kaye Pearce as Secretary and Bernie Sullivan as the representative for the MacKillop Board. There is an invitation inside this newsletter to consider nominating for the School Board.

There is much for which we can be thankful at St Patrick’s; we have been blessed in so many ways.

Frances Robertson  
Principal
St Patrick’s Promotes Healthy Relationships

St Patrick’s Parish School Cooma is joining the crusade to curb bullying and violence in schools. The school has registered with the ‘National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence’ for this Friday.

Students have been doing investigation and have discovered that around the world, there is some research indicating that more than one in five children are bullied at school, every week. In addition, more than one in five employees are bullied at work, and some research suggests that more employees are bullied at work than at school.

Bullying in all its forms is basically an abuse of power, by someone who is stronger - physically, verbally, mentally, socially, electronically, politically or financially - towards someone who can't block the bully's games and cruel behaviours.

**The key definition for bullying is that there is an imbalance of power, it is deliberate and it is repeated.**

The ethical and legal responsibility for reducing bullying belongs to the whole community, but St Patrick's school has a special place in working to expose and reduce the incidents of bullying. The new school policy is called Promoting Healthy Relationships.

At St Patrick's, our goal is to maintain and develop relationships based on Gospel values and in the spirit of the motto; “**Strength in Gentleness**”. All students have the right to feel safe, secure and welcomed in their school learning environment.

The St Patrick's community expects:

- students to show respect for each other, in words and actions
- friends and observers of victims and bullies to speak out against bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour
- all acts of bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour to be reported.

*Bullying and harassment are any form of repeated behaviour directed towards a person that is unwanted and uninvited, which humiliates threatens and/or frightens a person and creates a risk to mental or physical health and safety. It includes contact that is direct, indirect, through a third party, by ‘phone, texting, in writing, by email, through social networking on the web, to individuals or to groups.*

When bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour are reported:

- The student/s will be listened to,
- The situation will be assessed,
- A negotiated plan of action will be developed, which may involve disciplinary action and/or counseling. The appropriate people will be contacted

There will be follow-up for an agreed amount of time. Disciplinary action will be taken if students continue to demonstrate bullying, harassing or anti-social behaviour. **Our focus must be on promoting healthy relationships.**

Steve Joyce

Acting Assistant Principal
A reminder about School Fees

After considerable consultation with the Finance Committee of the School Board and the Catholic Education Office, the school stream-lined and re-organised the structure of the school fees for 2015.

Previously, there were many categories for levies (eg ICT and P&F levies) and extras (eg the school magazine). Some things were paid in Term one only, others in Term One and Term Two, others for all four terms; some things were per student and others were per family. In Secondary, there were ten different items on the fees list. The overall feedback from some parents was that it was confusing and they often needed the office staff to work out how much they owed.

Therefore, it has been re-organised into set categories that align with the expenditure.

This process was ratified by both the School Board and Catholic Education in November 2014.

The contribution to the Building Fund remains the same at $50 per term. This is an important fund for paying things like the rates, insurance on buildings and maintenance. These are hefty costs and St Patrick’s cannot survive without this pool of money. Whilst it is a voluntary contribution, the benefit for you is that it is tax deductible.

Naturally, whilst we must be financially responsible, we also want to ensure that there is not undue hardship for families. Everyone is entitled to have their circumstances considered by applying for fee remissions at the end of Term One in 2015. In addition, families with more than two children can apply for special consideration for a period of two years.

Others may prefer to have a confidential conversation with me and make individual arrangements.

Application forms for assistance with School Fees are available at the School office. A new application form has to be submitted each year and needs to be accompanied with the relevant documentation.

The closing date for either a submission of an application form is Thursday 2 April.

Please feel free to make an appointment to discuss any matters relating to school fees as soon as you can by calling the school office on 64521721.

Year 7-10 Social

There will be a social on Thursday 26 March from 7.30pm until 10.00pm to raise money for Caritas. This will be held at the Ex-Services Club. Naturally, there will be no late entry or early exit unless accompanied by a parent.

The theme will be

It’s time to find the leg warmers, shoulder pads and that neon lycra!
Celebrating Mass with the Parish for St Patrick’s Day
Welcome to the Labyrinth

Preparation for the Labyrinth Walk

Approach the labyrinth with respect and openness

Quiet yourself as you begin to walk. Be aware of sights and sounds around you. Push away any worries or concerns

Relax, Receive, Return

Pause at the entrance, breathe deeply, walk at a slow even pace. Feel the earth and be aware of feelings. Be still, take time in the centre, stay as long as you wish, leave the centre when you are ready. Pay attention to a word or phrase that arises from this walk. Integrate this word or phrase into your life

When you step out of the labyrinth turn and look back over your journey with gratitude. Rest quietly for a while. Share your experience.
May your blessings outnumber the shamrocks that grow, And may trouble avoid you wherever you go.
St Patrick’s Games
ST PATRICK'S PARISH SCHOOL - COOMA
A School with Altitude
Ph: 6402 1721

MON - YEAR1 SUPPORT NIGHT

TUES - ST PATRICK'S DAY
"TO BE SURE TO BE SURE"
This St Patrick’s Day we held our annual Cross Country Carnival at Lions Park, Cooma. This is a fantastic venue for the cross country as the terrain is varied, undulating and is easily accessible to spectators. We were treated to some very good weather for running and our thanks go to all parents, carers, grandparents and friends who came out to watch the students compete.

Congratulations to the following students who were crowned aged champions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8yrs</td>
<td>Tyrell Bartlett</td>
<td>Georgia Rumball</td>
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<tr>
<td>9yrs</td>
<td>Gus Brabham</td>
<td>Olave Wilkinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>10yrs</td>
<td>Eric Henderson</td>
<td>Clara Thornton</td>
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<tr>
<td>11yrs</td>
<td>Jack O’Donnell</td>
<td>Maddi Stott</td>
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<tr>
<td>12yrs</td>
<td>Remi Bradlman</td>
<td>Lucy Thornton</td>
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<th>Secondary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12yrs</td>
<td>Will Lehrman</td>
<td>Anna Brayshaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>13yrs</td>
<td>Hugo Steiner</td>
<td>Amber Martin-Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>14yrs</td>
<td>Bailey Rogers</td>
<td>Maria Tarasyuk</td>
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<tr>
<td>15yrs</td>
<td>Bas de Ruijter</td>
<td>Abby Macnab</td>
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<tr>
<td>16yrs</td>
<td>Pat Connolly</td>
<td>Meg Pearce</td>
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<tr>
<td>17yrs</td>
<td>Tim Sixt</td>
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The Primary House Champions were 1st Caelum, 2nd Terra, 3rd Ignis and 4th Aqua. The Secondary House Champions were 1st Ignis, 2nd Aqua, 3rd Caelum and 4th Terra.

The first 6 competitors in each age group have qualified for the next carnival. For Primary that will be on Thursday 7 May in Cobargo and for Secondary that will be on Wednesday 20 May in Canberra.

Mr Lawley
Sport Coordinator
Secondary Cross Country
Special Provisions for Assessment Tasks for Years 7-10

St Patrick's Parish School works to ensure all students, including those with disabilities, have equal opportunities to show their achievements. The school has a process in place that allows students to apply for special provisions.

The Disability Discrimination Act (2005) defines disability very broadly to include physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities and special needs. It includes physical disfigurement, the presence in the body of a disease and any other chronic or short-term illness.

What kind of provisions can students ask for?

• enlarged print papers or specific coloured paper
• use of a computer, subject to limitations
• extra time for reading and completing test papers
• scribes for tests and/or note takers in class
• audio-taped questions
• being able to take movement and/or sustenance breaks
• being able to take a test in a separate venue with an independent supervisor
• alternative assignment formats
• negotiated extensions of time for assignments
• oral examinations of written material
• during exam week one scheduled exam per day.
• Extensions to assessment due dates to ensure even distribution of tasks.

How do students apply for Special Provisions?

If you think you may be eligible for Special provisions please see Mrs Fletcher ( whilst Mr van Ommen is on leave). She will let you know which forms the school requires you to complete and the documentation that may be needed. Applications for Special Provisions need to be forwarded by the end of Week 9, Term 1.

Requests for special arrangements will be considered carefully to ensure fairness and equity for all students. These will not necessarily be granted for some/all assessment tasks.

Mrs Fletcher
Secondary Coordinator

Prayer of St Patrick
Invitation to the School Board

There are currently vacancies on the St Patrick’s School Board available for a period of two years, commencing Term 2 2015. The School Board is an advisory body supporting the Principal and staff, and members of the School Board represent the school community in supporting the growth and development of the school. These positions can be both challenging and rewarding, and are very important in ensuring the school continues to succeed. Please consider membership as a way that you can contribute.

Please use the form below to either nominate yourself or another parent (with their permission) and return it to returning officer, Mrs Bev Clarke (Office Manager). If more than three nominations are received, a ballot will be conducted to decide the representatives.

Nominations close 4pm on Thursday 26 March 2015.

Please complete the form below if you wish to nominate someone for the School Board and return it to the school by 4pm Thursday 26 March 2015.

Your name___________________________________________________ Contact number _________________________________

Your nomination:
Name of person______________________________

Your signature ____________________________________________

Nominee to complete:
I accept nomination as a representative for the St Patrick’s Parish School Board for a period of two years.

Signature _____________________________________________________________________________

Contact details: ___________________________________________ Email _________________________________

Canteen News

** Don’t forget Mini-Canteen is on Wednesdays for Infants and Primary, items from 50c to $2 **

I hope everyone enjoyed their green St Patrick’s Day lunch orders. A big thank you to Mrs Gill and Mrs Menshic who helped get them ready on time!

Canteen volunteers (thank you!) for the next week are:

- Wednesday 18 March, 10am: Linda Quodling
- Wednesday 18 March, 1.15pm: Denise Menshic & Marjorie Revelant
- Thursday 19 March, 10am: Volunteer needed
- Friday 20 March, 10am: Sara Souter
- Wednesday 25 March, 10am: Catherine Pearce
- Wednesday 25 March, 1.15pm: Grant Pascoe & Marjorie Revelant

No meal deals or specials this Friday, just order from the price list which can be found [http://stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au/srcfiles/Price-List-Term-1-v1-28JAN15.pdf](http://stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au/srcfiles/Price-List-Term-1-v1-28JAN15.pdf)

Put the code word "Shamrock" on Friday's lunch order and see what surprise you get from the canteen!!

Caroline Blyton
Canteen Manager
**Year 1 Support Evening**

On Monday evening an enthusiastic gathering of parents of Year One students attended the first in a series of parent support evenings. The intention of these evenings is to strengthen the home-school relationships by giving parents an insight to current classroom teaching practices and provide some handy hints for supporting their child’s learning at home.

This session had a focus on reading and will be repeated next Wednesday 25 March at 9.15am in the staff room for parents of Year One who were unable to attend.

I look forward to working with parents of Stage one, together with Belinda Wilkins, when we provide the next session in Term 2 which will have a focus on Numeracy.

**Stephanie Lovat**  
Curriculum Coordinator

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**Cooma Show - THANK YOU!**

Cooma Show was a huge success with a profit of over $2000 being raised for the school. Thank you to all the parents, grandparents, students and teacher who assisted on the day. Also Father Mick did wonderful job on the BBQ for a significant amount of the day, so a big thanks also to Father Mick. Thanks to Ruby, Marjorie and Tammy for extra coordination for this event on their part. The P&F Executive would also like to congratulate all the students who exhibited in the show – well done.

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**Hazeldean Open Garden 28 March – P&F Catering**

Hot on the heels of the show catering is another function we have been asked to cater, on Saturday 28 March. This is the Hazeldean Open Garden, so once again we are calling on parents for support with donations of cooking and help for a couple of hours on the day. We are providing a morning tea and light luncheon. This is definitely a day for the mums and daughters to enjoy, whilst helping the P&F.

We are asking our families for assistance on the day from 8.00am until finish around 2.00pm. So if you are available for a couple hours of your time would be appreciated. Hazeldean is a beautiful garden and you would have ample time to enjoy the garden as well as assist the P&F. We also require donations of scones, chocolate brownie & muffins for the morning tea.

See below to indicate your support.

Please return the section below indicating times you can assist or donations to the school no later than Monday 24 March 2015 or you can advise Karen McGufficke 0417 496708  
 mkmcgufficke@bigpond.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Available:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Number:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donation of scones, chocolate brownie &amp; muffins (please indicate) – Please leave at the school office on Friday or contact Marjorie Revelant P&amp;F Catering Coordinator 0418 485 229 to arrange collection from you.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for offering your time and assistance for this fundraising event, if you have any questions please contact Tammy Byrne 0428 645323 Karen McGufficke 0417 496708 or Marjorie Revelant P&F Catering Coordinator 0418 485 229
Term 1 Registration (Friday 27 March 2015)

Letters of invitation to register in our Parish home-based Sacramental Program for 2015 have been sent out to families whose children are in Years 3, 4 and 6. If you would like your child - or children - to be part of the program this year, you are asked to complete the registration form and send it to the Parish Sacramental Coordinator, Lou Mackay, or our Parish Priest Fr Mick MacAndrew, c/- St Patrick’s Church; or phone 64522062; or email: lou.mackay@cg.catholic.edu.au by Friday 27 March 2015.

Term 2 CONFIRMATION

This is a four week course offered to families who have children in Year 6 and onwards. The first session is for the whole group in the Church. Children and parent(s) attend these meetings. The following three sessions are in home groups at a time and day that most suits the family. All four sessions are of one hour duration. The program includes Reconciliation one evening, a practice held during school hours prior to the celebration of the Sacrament and a Thanksgiving Mass afterwards. Confirmation will be celebrated this year on Friday 19 June 2015 at 6.00pm with Archbishop Christopher Prowse.

Term 3 RECONCILIATION (Confession)

This is a short three week course offered to families who have children in Year 3 and onwards. The sessions are one hour long. Children and parent(s) attend these meetings. They are followed by the celebration of the Sacrament in August at a time that is convenient to the family. The program is a very gentle one that is suited to young children. Reconciliation must be celebrated before undertaking the First Communion program. Reconciliation will be celebrated on 15 and 22 August 2015.

Term 4 FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

This is a short three week course offered to families who have children in Year 4 and onwards. The first session is for the whole group in the Church. Children and parent(s) attend these meetings. The following two sessions are in home groups at a time and day that suits the family. All three sessions are of one hour duration. A practice is held during school hours prior to the celebration of the Sacrament. Note: Reconciliation must be celebrated before undertaking the First Communion program. First Holy Communion will be celebrated on 7 and 8 November 2015.
**5I class Mass**

Last Thursday 5I celebrated a Parish Mass with Father Mick. These are the thoughts of some of our students afterwards.

“I thought our class Mass was special because Father Mick let us stand around the altar for the Eucharistic Prayer.” - Tomas Carton

“I really liked the quiet time we had to pray.” - Paige Walker

“I thought our class Mass was special because I felt God and Jesus present.” - Matilda Saxby-Rendall

“I really liked how the atmosphere was calm and quiet and the hymns were sung quite strongly.” - Molly Brabham

“I thought our class Mass was special because the singing was just beautiful.” - Sam Williams

“I found the Mass meaningful, because it gave me a better understanding of the holy words said by Father Mick” - Ava Barrett

“I thought our class Mass was special because we had time to ourselves to pray.” - Charlie Pendergast

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**The Flying Tomatoes Report**

Thank you to everyone who supported our small sale of produce recently; tomatoes, cucumbers and homemade pickles. We raised about $60. The proceeds will go towards purchasing seedlings and plants for our winter and autumn crop. A big thank you to the Kleven and McGufficke families for the manure to enrich our soil in the primary gardens. The Flying Tomatoes are busy turning the soil in preparation for our new crops. We are still in need of some soil for our herb garden and more manure. If anyone can help out, this would be greatly appreciated.

Yours in garden bed preparation

The Flying Tomatoes

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**Strictly Musical**

Hi! I am making a difference and fundraising for **Monaro Committee for Cancer Research Incorporated**, a cause that is close to my heart. I have set myself a goal to raise $1,000.00 and I need your help with a donation, big or small. Simply click the link below to view my fundraising page and donate.


All donations to this site are sent directly to Monaro Committee for Cancer Research Incorporated and you'll get a receipt automatically via email. Help do even more by 'liking', leaving a 'comment' and 'sharing' my page too. Every little bit helps to reach my target of $1,000.00. So please dig deep for this great cause and help make a difference.

Thank you for your support

Tony Nassar
National Youth Week
IT STARTS WITH US
10–19 April 2015

Cooma Youth Music Awards
11th April 2015 @ The Hub Youth Centre from 2pm

Open to young performers aged 12 - 25 years old
All types of musicians welcome — soloists, bands, vocalists etc.
$360 worth of prizes to be won on the night
Drug and alcohol free event - Nibbles provided

To enter, please collect a form the Cooma School of Music or the front desk @ Cooma Monaro Shire Council. Fill out and drop back. Registration closes Wednesday the 8th April

For further information please call Emma at The Hub 0437 135 092
or Allan at Cooma School of Music 0407 384 590

Supported by
www.youthweek.com
Year 9 Religious Education

Students in Year 9 are studying Major World Religions. Part of this study involves investigation of Aboriginal Spirituality. Students participated in creating dot art paintings and were encouraged to reflect on their location, journey and connection to people and places as they were involved in this activity. A deep part of aboriginal spirituality is connection to land and journey. For students to gain a sense that our very lives and culture are integral in our religious experience, is an important part of our study of Major World Religions.

And in Year 1...

Students in Year 1 prepared recently for our St Patrick's Day Celebration through a Godly Play Experience of Jesus the Light of the World. They reflected that Jesus did amazing things and taught amazing things. In this he was light to the world.

We, too, are part of that light. As we share the light, nothing is lost but more light is present in our world.

Year 9 students then assisted Year 1 in making lanterns for our school celebration.
We are moving into the season of Equestrian events and the matter of insurance (public liability or personal) once again needs to be clarified.

The Catholic Education Office insurers (CCI) have made it clear that they are unable to cover equestrian events. Parents must take responsibility for any accident, illness or injury that may result from their child participating in this equestrian event.

It appears that the minimum insurance which is needed to satisfy the Equestrian Australia with regard to gymkhanas is that our students need to have individual public liability insurance.

Personal accident insurance is not a requirement, but a sensible option. Having junior membership to Equestrian Australia will be important, particularly for those intending to continue competing at gymkhanas.

Paid Advertisement

**Private Tutoring: Reading and Spelling**

Does your child need extra help in reading and spelling?

My name is Candace Kenneally and I am passionate about reading and supporting children to reach their potential.

I provide one-on-one tutoring, tailored to the needs and interests of each child.

I believe children can benefit from extra tuition, whether to strengthen or improve their reading/spelling skills.

I am a qualified primary teacher and I create an environment that is supportive, encouraging, creative and fun.

And, I don't forget the parents! I support you with any information you require, or refer you to organisations or resources that might support you in supervising and understanding your child's development.

Please call me on 6452 4830, or email cankensolaz@gmail.com, if your child needs extra help with reading and spelling!
Healthy Family Recipes

Looking for a healthy snack for the kids? The Flying Tomatoes can help you!

Capsicum Boats

You Will Need:

2x small red capsicums
1x 185g cans tuna in spring water, drained
3/4 cup bought avocado dip
Fresh alfalfa sprouts to serve

Method:

1. Cut capsicums into quarters lengthways. Remove the seeds and membrane. Place tuna in a bowl. Use a fork to flake. Add avocado dip and stir to combine. Spoon the tuna mixture into capsicum pieces and top with a large pinch of fresh alfalfa sprouts. Enjoy! Molly Brabham
April 2015 School Holiday & Youth Week Program

Tuesday 7th April - Easter Party- from 11am
Come in and enjoy a hot lunch and join in with a Easter Egg hunt.

Wednesday 8th April - Masterchef Cooking Day - from 11am
Come in a challenge your culinary skills.

Thursday 9th April - Yoga / Self Care Day - from 11am
Come in & enjoy a day of pampering & self care.

Friday 10th - Movie & Popcorn Day - from 11am
Enjoy a range of movies and warm buttery popcorn.

Youth Week Activities

Saturday 11th April - Cooma Youth Music Awards - from 2pm
Open to all young performers, prizes to be won. Registration required.

Wednesday 15th April - Youth Homelessness Matters Day - from 11am
Come and support this event...sausage sizzle in the park - prizes and resources to be won!!

Thursday 17th April - MAGIC Card Tournament - from 11am
Open to all young people on the Monaro - prizes provided - register for this event is required @ www.surveymonkey.com/r/youthweekmagic - spaces are limited.

Any enquires, call or txt Cathy 0403 498 322 / Emma 0437 135 092
Or facebook us on CathyEmmaHub

12-17 years old - FREE
Lunch provided

All events are Drug & Alcohol Free

The Hub: YMCA Youth Services
39-41 Vale Street, COOMA
P: 6452 5534

[YMCA, COOMA MONARO SHIRE COUNCIL Logos]
Having received my education in both public and private schools I believe I have a good perspective of what quality education can deliver to a young person. Although I began my education in the public system I spent the final two years of high school in the Catholic system. I have particularly fond memories of my time at St Edmund’s College where under the careful guidance of the teachers there I obtained a greater sense of purpose and direction in life.

For those who don’t know me, I am the son of immigrant parents, born and bred in Queanbeyan, my mum a cleaner, my father a carpenter. Some of my best childhood memories were spent in my father’s workshop, perched on a stool, watching him work. His ethic, moral, positive approach to life, his notion of community and family was infectious. Before politics, I ran my family’s small business, manufacturing energy efficient windows, doors and building products. My wife Deanna now runs the family business and we have two beautiful daughters Alessia and Domenica.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals believe in stronger schools for our regional communities. Over the last four years, our government has undertaken the biggest reforms in decades in school education, vocational education and training, early childhood and university sectors to ensure our children receive the best education. Since coming to Government, the NSW Liberals and Nationals have delivered an additional 760 teachers to our schools, committed nearly $3.2 billion to improving school infrastructure, with 18 new or relocated public schools funded and 44 major upgrade projects already announced, initiated considerable reform, funded a $4.5 million upgrade to the Cooma TAFE workshop, $20,000 for a sensory garden at Cooma Public School, playground upgrade at Nimmitabel Public School and $52,000 for a covered walkway at Monaro High School.

It is important to remember that while our public schools have undergone significant reform under a Liberals Nationals Government, our private and independent schools have also benefitted from additional funding assistance. Fundamental too many of these reforms has been the idea that schools and parents must be given sufficient flexibility to make the right choices for their pupils and children. A one size fits all approach to education does not work and, under this government, we have endeavoured to restore the balance by giving communities greater say in the how they commit resources to educating students.

Recently I was pleased to announce $695,026 in NSW Government funding for a new Technical and Applied Studies learning space at St Patrick’s School. The funding falls under the Building Grants Assistance Scheme (BGAS), where non-government schools may apply for assistance for the construction, renovation or upgrading of educational facilities. In 2015/15 funding for BGAS amounted to over $11.7 million shared across the state. This scheme has been effective in improving the care of schools, care that is vital to their efficient operation as places of learning, and to the morale of staff and students. It is essential that school buildings are maintained and refurbished so all students can learn in the best facilities possible; I look forward to seeing how this funding will help to transform learning spaces at St Pat’s. I also fought hard to secure NSW Government funding for a direct bus for Cooma students to travel to MacKillop College in Canberra. I believe that everyone has a right to a choice of education and that it’s easily accessible to all.

The Baird Government strongly supports the right of every parent to make the best educational choices for their child within the NSW education system — and has backed that commitment with funding and resources to ensure that non-government schools are able to continue to provide a world-class education. I am pleased to announce that a re-elected Baird Government will continue to provide Catholic and other non-government schools with record levels of funding. Recurrent funding for non-government schools will reach $908 million this year. The Baird Government has a proud record of supporting the non-government school sector and is actively considering ways in which we can further assist non-government schools to continue to deliver high quality education for our students. Non-government schools have also benefitted from the $261 million Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan. This was an election commitment we made in 2011 and it is delivering improved results in schools that have faced long-term challenges.

I have been working hard to deliver better facilities and support for our students and teachers in the Monaro. The NSW Liberals and Nationals have always put students at the heart of all decisions we make about education and will continue to do so.
More than 30 years ago, people across Australia came together to protect Tasmania’s Franklin River. This experience energised people who would become the leaders of the next major political party of Australia — Bob Brown and Christine Milne, who formed the United Tasmania Group, the first ‘Green’ Party any where in the world.

In 1992 the Australian Greens were formed and in addition to protecting the environment, it was recognised that we needed to speak on behalf of others who are disadvantaged in our society: children, refugees, students, individuals and families living in poverty. We also wanted to challenge the dominant paradigm of adversarial politics and amassing weapons by looking at alternative ways of dealing with conflicts, and to find ways of involving people more directly in the decisions that affect us all.

The Greens have developed extensive policies based on these four principles – ecological sustainability; social and economic justice; peace, nonviolence and disarmament; and grassroots democracy – and have done so in consultation with party members and those who are leaders in their fields. We have policies ranging from Education, Arts & Creative Industries and Water to Bushfire Risk Management, Children & Young People and Criminal Justice, and the list goes on. State policies are all available here: http://nsw.greens.org.au/policy, national policies at http://greens.org.au/policy.

Today we have Greens in local government around Australia, and we have members in State and Federal Parliaments, all working to make decisions and achieve outcomes based on the four principles, including introducing consensus decision-making and safe meeting procedure where possible, into the committee structure for example.

In the coming NSW election, Peter Marshall is standing for The Greens. Peter lives in Captains Flat and is a Palerang councillor. He works in the fields of mental health and corrective services as a researcher and psychologist. Peter is originally from Northern Ireland, where he comes from a family of doctors and dairy farmers, the basis of a passion for health, mental health and the rural environment. Growing up through the height of Northern Ireland’s “Troubles” in his formative years led to Peters strong commitment to ethnic and religious tolerance, and social justice.

SNAP SHOT: Education  The Greens long-term policy vision is for a properly funded, robust public education system. The Abbott government’s decision to abandon the final two years of Gonski funding will have dire consequences for NSW public schools. The Greens believe that the state government has a primary responsibility to secure outcomes for public schools. We also call for funding of the wealthiest private schools to be abolished and that these public funds be redirected to equity programs within the public school system.

SNAP SHOT: Pest Control  The Greens believe that all deer, horses, cats, foxes and other non-indigenous vertebrate invasive species should be removed from the national parks estate. This means giving adequate funding to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for professional and effective invasive species control and not, for example, wasting time, money and effort on programs such as the amateur shooting program in National Parks.

SNAP SHOT: Clean Politics  Democracy relies on elected representatives working for the best interests of the people they represent. The Independent Commission Against Corruption has repeatedly revealed who some members of the old parties really work for, and it isn’t the community. The Greens stand for clean politics and are the party in NSW and nationally that has been pushing hardest for limits and controls on political donations, to reduce influence-peddling. Collaborative regulation is needed between state, territory and the federal government to prevent money-laundering through parties’ branches across state borders.

Earth ♦ justice ♦ democracy ♦ peace