

P5.
7th DEC
2021
JOURNAL

SCHOOLS - DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

SHUTDOWNS.

COVID 19 ATTACK AT THE SCHOOL

STUDENTS AND STAFF ORDERED TO TEST

AS THE SCHOOL CLOSED ON 26th NOVEMBER 2021

600 STUDENTS 100 STAFF NEEDED TESTING

BEFORE SCHOOL RESUMED ON 30th NOVEMBER 2021

SEVERAL SHUTDOWNS OVER 2 MONTHS

WITH 24 SEPARATE OCCASIONS WHERE

A POSITIVE CASE FOUND

Cleanup: Testing times for Covid-hit school

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

All of Dandenong North Primary School's students and staff have been ordered into Covid testing before being allowed back at school.

The besieged school was closed on Friday 26 November after several earlier shutdowns and further confirmed Covid cases the previous Monday.

Under Department of Health directions, about 600 students and 100 staff needed to show a negative Covid test to come back to school on Monday 29 November.

The department had decided there was a need for a "clean start" after Covid infections had been "bubbling along" at the school this term, principal Kevin McKay said.

School administrators and volunteers worked late into the night, collating and processing the 700-odd Covid test results being either phoned in or being physically brought into the school.

There was no help from the health department's contact-tracing team, which left the school's limited staff resources "stretched above and beyond".

The rich diversity of students and families is often the school's "greatest gift", Mr McKay says.

But in this instance, it presented a communication "challenge", due to language barriers as well as a lack of interpreters.

"Our staff were fantastic. I couldn't have done it all myself."

The school has been shut down several times in the past two months, with 24 separate occasions in which there's been a positive case.

On each occasion, it was up to the school to contact trace.

Effectively, each infected students' classmates and families needed to be informed and tested as "positive contacts".

"Each time we devote two staff for half a day on the paperwork and contact tracing.

"It's been very difficult. No one else can do it for us."

Mr McKay said students were also unsettled by the upheaval.

Most parents had been "just fantastic" in



Principal Kevin McKay says the school has been "stretched above and beyond" by frequent Covid cases. 214367
Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

understanding the situation. Some refused to have their children tested, meaning they were required to stay from school for 14 days.

Encouragingly, Tuesday 30 November was the first day of no reported new cases at the school for some time, Mr McKay said.

He has no criticism for the school's re-opening in term 4, despite the region's lagging vaccination rates.

"It had to happen at some stage."

He hoped that primary school children would be vaccinated for 2022. He doubted that it would be made compulsory.

Last year, the school and the nearby Emerson School minted student medals to mark a difficult 2020.

"Perhaps we should have waited this you," Mr McKay said - with a rueful laugh.

SCHOOLS — DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

\$6 million UPGRADE. FROM STATE GOV.

WORKS INCLUDING. NEW COMPETITION GRADE GYM.
AND MODERNIZED BLOCK E

School's budget up

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Dandenong North Primary School has been allocated a \$6 million upgrade in the recently announced State Budget 2021-22.

The works include a new competition-grade gymnasium and a modernized Block E. It is one of 52 Victorian schools upgraded in the budget.

Dandenong MP Gabrielle Williams said she was "proud" that the school was getting the upgrade it had been calling for.

"Every child deserves a great classroom."

The State Government also announced \$900,000 towards the City of Greater Dandenong's Springvale Boulevard project.

The project aims to attract new visitors by

modernising and beautifying the Springvale Road precinct.

It would "make this important local shopping strip safer, more accessible and more vibrant," Keysborough MP Martin Pakula said.

Generally, the Government's "caring" budget was headlined by a \$3.8 billion boost to mental health services, including separate streams for infants/children and for young people.

According to the government, the Budget is a job creator. It will "support" an average of 38,000 jobs a year for the next four years.

It claims its school building program "supports" 3500 jobs, as well as creating 3000 mental-health workers and 6000 early-child educational roles.

The State Opposition says the \$5.8 billion of new taxes and tax increases will "destroy" jobs. "Victorians are paying the highest taxes in the country, and Dandenong cannot afford massive new tax increases which will destroy local jobs," South Eastern Metropolitan Liberal MP Gordon Rich-Phillips said.

Dandenong's manufacturing sector would be hard hit by steep rises in land tax and new payroll taxes, he said.

They will deter businesses from employing local people in Dandenong, which has higher than the state average unemployment rate.

"The Andrews Labor Government has no plan for Victoria's economic recovery and is still playing catch-up from its covid failures."

Some Budget highlights include the roll-

P5

8 SEPT
2020

JOURNAL

SCHOOLS — DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

PRINCIPAL — KEVIN MACKAY. DETERMINED
TO RECAPTURE THE SCHOOL'S MORALE
AS THEY RETURN TO TEACHERS AT
THE SCHOOL SITE ON 28th SEPTEMBER 2020
AFTER WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID-19

NEWS

D5 8th SEPTEMBER 2020 JOURNAL

Concern for lost learning

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Students won't only need to catch up on schoolwork but also recapture school morale, says Dandenong North Primary School's principal.

Kevin Mackay says the second-wave classroom lockdown and Covid-19's impact generally has been "devastating" for many children - who will begin to return to school from 28 September.

He compares the impact to generations who grew up in the polio pandemic in the 1950s or the Cold War's threat of nuclear holocaust.

"One can only imagine the effects long-term.

"Kids are very adaptable but they're reading the fear in their parents' voices and body language."

It's been a particular challenge for a school community, in which 90 per cent of students are from non-English backgrounds.

Some parents misunderstood lockdown rules, thinking they weren't allowed to leave the house at all.

They forbade their kids from their own backyards for light and exercise, Mr Mackay says.

"It's worse the second time around," he says of the latest wave.

"From what we're hearing from the kids, they're struggling because there's no substitute for teaching in a classroom."

School milestone events have also been cancelled, such as Year Six camps, Harmony Day celebrations and Book Week parades.

"We're planning on making a special event calendar for the kids when they return," Mr Mackay said.

"It's to build up team spirit again.

"We will be losing more learning time however, so it's a double-edged sword."

Due to student and teacher burnout, lesson time has been reduced by two hours a day during remote learning.

Over a shutdown of 100 days, that equates to 200 lost hours per child.

Mr Mackay recently made headlines with his view that some Preppies at the school will need to restart Prep in 2021.



Kevin Mackay is ready to rebuild school morale in Term 4. 214367 Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

They won't be 'repeating' Prep because they never really started it, Mr Mackay says.

"The research into the ineffectiveness of repeating grades is based on doing the same thing twice.

"These kids, though, haven't done it once."

He said the situation was unique to his school's high number of non-English-speaking households.

Learning from home, these students are deprived of English conversation with teachers and peers. Fundamental skills wither, like reading, learning sounds and vocab.

In lockdown, students also miss critical socialisation skills - learning to share, take turns, put your hand up, gaining confidence to ask a question of a teacher.

Yet, there have been positive discoveries, Mr Mackay says.

Teachers have learnt new ways to use technology, students have enjoyed Webex video-conferencing to catch up with classmates.

As Mr Mackay speaks, he notes the classrooms are "unnervingly quiet" and without their usual "bustle". The school has only been open for up to 30 children of essential workers during lockdown - down from 800 in term one.

"It's like a ghost town.

"We're looking forward to getting back as one school again."

Under the State Government's 'road map', Prep to Year 2, VCE/VCAL and specialist school students will be returning to school from 28 September.

The rest of primary and high-school students' returns will be staged from 26 October.

Woodlee Street's woes

By Cam Lucadoux-Wells

Greater Dandenong Council will launch a formal report into traffic bedlam plaguing Dandenong North Primary School.

Cr Matthew Kirwan, who raised the motion on 25 March, told of a rapid rise in students leading to increasingly unsafe congestion in surrounding streets, particularly Woodlee Street.

He reported cars parking on footpaths and in driveways, as well as speeding and erratic driving through the school drop-off and pick-up time chaos.

In recent years, two young girls were struck by a car while walking to school and a resident Louise Ferguson was crushed between vehicles while trying to help manage traffic outside her home, Cr Kirwan said.

The report will look at the pros and cons as well as costs of measures to curtail speeding and improve safety and amenity during school peak times.

"Various options have been put forward as suggestions for improvement by residents

and the school namely part of Woodlee Street ... allowing only one-way traffic and a school crossing across Woodlee Street but there may be other, better options," Cr Kirwan said.

Greater Dandenong engineering services director Julie Reid recently said that a one-way system on Woodlee Street would not help traffic flow or safety.

It would instead "compromise road safety, encourage higher traffic speeds and increase the likelihood of a serious accident".

As reported by Star News, during every school peak time, the narrow street is clogged with two-way traffic glacially weaving through parked cars and one lane of space.

Despite the risk, parents and children cross between the stagnant cars.

At other times, there is reported speeding and a nearby "death trap" corner at Edward Avenue regularly cut or even missed by cars.

Ms Ferguson has told of her car being written off after being crashed into by a reckless driver, and another motorist being pushed off the road onto her nature strip.

She said another car careering through a

neighbour's fence and narrowly missing the resident's kids.

The Department of Education and Training recently told Star News that the issues were for Greater Dandenong Council to solve - despite suggestions that land at the former Cleeland Secondary College site could ease parking shortages.

The council report is due to be handed down in September.

"The Department has raised concerns about this issue with the Greater Dandenong Council who are responsible for street parking regulations and traffic management," a spokesperson said.



Louise Ferguson, whose pelvis was crushed between vehicles, during Woodlee Street's chaos. 190894 Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CLAIM.

DANDENONG NORTH - PARKING IN WOODLEE ST. PRIMARY.

P1
12 MAR
2019
LEADER

SCHOOLS — DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

"THE READING FACTORY" PROGRAM.

15 YEARS AGO 2004 A SMALL GATHERING OF
STUDENTS WORKED IN SHELTER SHED — NOW 180
STUDENTS ATTEND DAILY SESSIONS.

P1.

LEADER 12th MARCH 2019.

NEWS 07⁺



Dandenong North Primary pupils Hamidah, Ashritha, Kavya, Farzana and Amir are involved in the Reading Factory. Picture: NORM OORLOFF

READING THE WRITE STUFF FOR STUDENTS

Christian Tatman

FROM little things, big things grow.

The Reading Factory program started at Dandenong North Primary School in a converted shelter

shed with a handful of students.

Fifteen years later, 180 students attend sessions daily to improve literacy and develop a love of reading.

Principal Kevin Mackay said students from 50

different backgrounds attended the school.

Mr Mackay said the program reinforced the habit of reading and had subsequently successfully raised literacy levels.

"It instils a passion for

reading, self belief and an expectation they can read," he said.

A documentary has been made about the program.

dandenongnorthps.vic.edu.au

SCHOOLS — DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

TRAFFIC IN WOODLEE ST A CONCERN

HEAVY TRAFFIC JAMS AT SCHOOL AT PICKUP AND
DROP OFF TIMES.

11 MAR
2019
JOURNAL

P10
18 MAR
2019

WOODLEE ST
PARKING

NEWS

11 MARCH

SCHOOLS

D'NONG NORTH PRIMARY

NEWS

P10

18 MARCH 2019

JOURNAL

Dango

school

Blame-game on traffic

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

You don't have to tell Louise Ferguson the dangers of the school-day traffic jam on Woodlee Street outside Dandenong North Primary School.

Ms Ferguson was crushed between two cars as she tried to "manage" traffic. She could get her car out of her driveway at school drop-off time on 13 December.

As she helped a learner driver exit their car from a tight parking spot, she wedged Ms Ferguson between her vehicle and a parked van.

Ms Ferguson's pelvis was fractured and her lumbar spine damaged as a result.

It came after many dire warnings from the school and families to Greater Dandenong Council.

Every school peak time, the narrow street is clogged with two-way traffic glacially moving through parked cars and one lane of space.

Despite the risk, parents and children are stuck in the stagnant cars.

"They should make it one-way at peak-times," Ms Ferguson said.

"It would be safer and the traffic would be flowing."

"What's it going to take for them to do something - a child to lose their life out there?"

At other times, there is reported speeding and a nearby "death trap" corner at Epsom Avenue regularly cut or even missed by cars.

Ms Ferguson's car has been written off after a speeding car, another motorist was pushed off the road onto her nature strip. She was in another car careering through a neighbour's fence and narrowly missing the resident.

Dandenong North Primary School principal Kevin Mackay agrees with making Woodlee Street one-way, with a parking area reserved for pick-ups and drop-offs.

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

The dangerous traffic woes plaguing Dandenong North Primary School are a matter for the local council to solve, according to the Department of Education and Training.

For years, there's been an increasingly perilous mix of parents and students crossing streets clogged with cars as the school has soared in population.

In December, a resident was crushed between cars during a school drop-off time in Woodlee Street.

"The Department has raised concerns about this issue with the Greater Dandenong Council who are responsible for street parking regulations and traffic management," a spokesperson said.

"We know that some schools, particularly those in residential, built-up areas, can face some challenges with parking during pick up and drop off times."

"Safety around schools is everyone's responsibility - for parents, students and the local community."

A nearby resident Kyle Gibbons said the department should use land at the former Clelland Secondary College site across the road as a solution.

The land could be used for on-site parking, or to enable an inlet parking bay for parents to quickly drop-off and pick-up their children, Mr Gibbons said.

"Otherwise we're just waiting for someone else to be hurt."

Dandenong North Primary School's staff have arrangements to park at Dandenong



A taxi and another car in a standoff on Woodlee Street during school peak-time. 190894

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

High School and a nearby church.

It has also communicated to parents of safe drop-off and pick-up points further away from the primary school.

Residents have also suggested making Woodlee Street one-way during school peak times - to avoid the current two-way traffic bedlam.

Greater Dandenong engineering services director Julie Reid recently said investigations found a one-way system on Woodlee Street would not help traffic flow or safety.

"The traffic volumes and congestion on David Street mean that a southbound one-way system would not noticeably reduce congestion."

"A northbound one-way system would mean that all pupils would have to cross the road to get picked up."

"Introducing a one-way system would compromise road safety, encourage higher traffic speeds and increase the likelihood of a serious accident."

Councillor Matthew Kirwan foreshadowed a motion for the council to further investigate solutions.

SCHOOLS ——— DANDENONG NORTH

P8
18 JAN
2018

ASBESTOS REMOVAL

BUILDINGS IN POOR CONDITION THAT CONTAIN
ASBESTOS WILL BE REPLACED WITH PERMANENT
MODULAR BUILDINGS

PRIMARY
SCHOOLS DANDENONG NORTH
P8 18 JAN 2018

Classrooms, no asbestos

Asbestos-riddled classrooms will make way for new learning spaces in Dandenong North.

Dandenong MP Gabrielle Williams announced that the State Government would invest \$1.9 million in the Dandenong North Primary School project as part of the Asbestos Removal Program.

The program will demolish buildings in poor condition that contain asbestos and replace them with permanent modular buildings.

"Using modular buildings increases flexibility for schools and reduces the interruptions to students, staff and teaching programs," Ms Williams said.

The new buildings will be built off-site and delivered to also reduce on-site safety risks.

Dandenong North Primary will work with the Victorian School Building Authority over coming weeks to ensure smooth delivery of the major upgrade.

P6
24 July
2017
J

1 BREAKFASTS

P6 JOURNAL

24th JULY, 2017 DNDONG NTH
PRIMARY

Charlotte, Erin and Liep start their school day together. 169700

Full tummies, ready to learn

By Casey Neill

Dandenong North students need a little help to start their school day in the best way.

Wooranna Park Primary School hosts a breakfast club from 8.15am each Wednesday and Friday with support from the State Government, parents and teachers.

The school's looking for more volunteers so it can serve up brekkie on more mornings, and butter, jam, vegemite, jasmine rice and seaweed to add to the basics provided.

Teacher Meg Symons said the breakfast club was important for the school community "because it bridges the gap between the haves and have nots, giving all the students in our school the opportunity to have a warm meal to start the day off in a positive way".

"It is a fun bonding experience between staff, parents and students to come together and share a meal, taking responsibility for the serving and clearing up of their meals," she said.

"It sets our kids up for a good day and makes them feel welcome and cared for in the school community."

The kids serve themselves, eat, and wash their dishes afterwards.

Student Oki likes breakfast club because "we can eat and talk and all hang out together".

Sarsha said the food was "so yummy" and



Sarsha and Oki cook up breaky. 169700



STUDENTS

P34
7th AUG
2017
JOURNAL 2

SPACE FOR 100 EXTRA STUDENTS

² New classroom's room to move

Dandenong North Primary School now has space for 100 extra students.

Education Minister James Merlino and Dandenong MP Gabrielle Williams announced on Thursday 3 August that the school had received a new double-storey, four-classroom portable building.

It's fully-insulated, features double glazed windows and can fit 100 students.

"Dandenong North Primary School is experiencing high growth and these classrooms will give teachers and students more room to move," Ms Williams said.

Dandenong North Primary School principal Kevin Mackay said he was delighted to take ownership of the new building "which provides us with badly needed extra classrooms for our students".

The building was delivered through the State Government's \$63.6 million investment in building and refurbishing hundreds of relocatable school buildings.

The program has created more than 190 jobs over the past year.

Building manufacturer ATCO built the Dandenong North classroom at its Hallam factory.

7th AUGUST 2017
P.34 JOURNAL

■ This teaching pair are a lesson in love of the job...

Couple are class

By Casey Neill

"You get a cucumber sandwich, a cup of tea and a framed certificate that says 95 years."

And Kevin and Jenny Mackay couldn't have been more thrilled.

Education Minister James Merlino recognised the Dandenong North Primary School husband and wife team for their combined service to education on Thursday 20 July.

Mr Mackay has been a fixture at the Cleeland Street school since 1983 and principal since 1986, while Mrs Mackay joined him 17 years ago.

Mr Mackay "vividly" remembers the moment they first met, at Clayton Primary School.

"We were both brand new to that school on that day," he said.

"You don't know anyone so you're always looking for someone to talk to and make a connection with."

"It happened to be Jenny."

"She was moving into a classroom and I was there as assistant principal."

He offered to help. They married in 1983.

It was a combined effort that earned them the minister's recognition, in more ways than one.

Mr Mackay said education department service awards hadn't previously stretched to 55 years.

He wrote to the minister about it and received a congratulatory letter back.

When Jenny received notice she'd be recognised for 45 years, she chased up the 55-year nod for her husband.

"She said 'it's a bit of a shame, between the two of us we've got 95 years' service' and that piqued their interest and got them going," Mr Mackay said.

They both agreed that teaching was the best job in the world.

"I think probably the greatest joy I get is going home every day knowing I've made a difference in people's lives," Mrs Mackay said.

"I just really love this community."

"We can contribute to making so many families feel welcome in their new country."



Kevin and Jenny Mackay have shared more than the average lifetime together in education. 170812

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

"We give them hope for their future."

"They've given up everything for their children."

"If we don't do our job properly, it's all for nothing."

Four teachers at the school spent their primary school years in its classrooms, as did two education support staff.

"I taught two of them myself," Mrs Mackay said.

The parent of a former student painted Mr Mackay for this year's Archibald Prize portrait contest.

"This family came with no English, nothing," Mrs Mackay said.

"The father was really well-known as an artist and a writer in China."

"He's had to take up jobs he's overqualified for to support his family."

His child, Billy, got a 99.8 ATAR score and

went on to university.

"Now his child's got through school, he wanted to get back into the artistic field," she said.

"Billy asked 'would Dad be able to paint you?'"

Mrs Mackay recalled another girl who returned to see her with a box of flowers.

She'd hated school, but Mrs Mackay turned that around and she'd been accepted into medicine.

"And now she's Kevin's doctor!"

Journalist
+ BLEADER.

SCHOOLS

DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

COUPLE CHALK UP 95 YEARS' SERVICE

Sam Bidley

KEVIN Mackay is 73 and is still leading the charge at Dandenong North Primary School.

One of Victoria's oldest school principals, he has notched up 55 years in education and his wife, Jenny Mackay (deputy principal at the school), has done 40 years.

"We have 51 different student cultural backgrounds. When I arrived, it was only three or four," Mr Mackay said.

"In my first year of teaching, a salesperson came with equipment that was new at the time -

overhead projectors and photocopiers - it was all hugely expensive," he said.

"I remember saying no school would ever be able to afford this. Now you see the technology we have - interactive whiteboards and computers. Kids are much better educated today."

Mrs Mackay said four of the teachers were once pupils at the school, as was Mr Mackay's doctor.

"She returned to visit me with a large box of flowers after finding out she had been awarded a place at Monash University in medicine, to thank me for encouraging her and getting her re-engaged in school."

Jenny and Kevin Mackay.

Picture: WAYNE TAYLOR



DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

ENVIRONMENT STUDY

P7
25th Nov
2016
JOURNAL

GRADE 1 AND 2

TRIP TO MORDIALLOC

SAFETY IN WATER AND SUN



Classroom theory hits the beach

Dandenong North Primary students took their sun, sea and water safety studies from the classroom to the beach. Year 1 and 2 students hit the sand at Mordialloc Beach on Tuesday 25 October. They'd been learning about the beach and its environment at school, particularly about safety around water and being sun smart. Year 2 student Fatima said she and her friends used spades and buckets to build a bridge in the sand. "We even collected green and red seaweed and used that as decorations," she said. Classmate Adonis enjoyed playing cricket on the beach, and Elijah went on a "gigantic see-saw". "I had the best time on it. It was really exciting to go on such an amazing thing," he said. Athsayan was taken with the playground: "There it was. What I had been waiting for, the pepperoni coloured, giant ship!"

DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

LIGHTS OF LEARNING

SCHOOLS GIVING EXTRA HELP FOR THE
DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS NOTED FOR
THEIR EFFORTS WITH SIX OTHER AUSTRALIAN
SCHOOLS.

DJ Connecting people and communities

MONDAY, 16 DECEMBER, 2013 9.5 DANDENONG JOURNAL

Lights of learning

By CASEY NEILL

TWO Greater Dandenong schools are punching well above their weight - and are now teaching others around the country and the world.

Dandenong North and Silverton primary schools were last week named among eight from across Australia in the Social Ventures Australia (SVA) Bright Spots Schools Connection.

These Powerhouse Schools have risen above the "disadvantaged" label on their communities.

They'll receive financial, mentoring and networking support to build on their strengths, and help SVA create a plan to turn around struggling schools.

SVA Bright Spots Schools Connection director Sue Cridge said the schools knew how to excite their students about learning.

"These schools have something to teach all of us - we can all learn from them so that success in these 'bright spots' can spread to become a bright system," she said.

Dandenong North principal Kevin McKay said the school's inclusion justified its efforts.

"You don't get those results without a fantastic staff," he said.

"It's great for them to see people outside of the school are recognising what they're doing."

He said the key to the success was "hardly a revelation". "We actually teach," he said.

Mr McKay said years ago teaching became geared toward kids learning for themselves.

"It might be all right in affluent suburbs where the kids have lots of great experiences at home," he said.

"It doesn't work for people who start school with no English language to begin with. It doesn't work for people who've had disrupted learning or no learning at all."

He said teachers worked with students until they understood a concept, and the school used the additional funding it received for its "disadvantaged" location to employ extra staff.

"That helps us to reduce the sizes

of our groups and get to the point of need more quickly," he said.

Mr McKay said it was all about giving kids from war-torn countries a better life.

Silverton principal Tony Bryant said Microsoft picked the Noble Park North school among the 12 best in the world in 2009.

"That was based around innovation, used of technology, performance, engagement," he said.

"We've mentored other schools around the world and we're now a 'world tour school'.

"Thousands of visitors come to Silverton every year to see what we're doing and try to replicate us."

Students have access to a TV studio, radio station, a laptop each and a planetarium and there's a focus on team work through open, flexible working spaces.

"We've got a fantastic school community that's embraced what we're doing," he said.

"We don't want our kids to be disadvantaged for the rest of their lives.

"We give them every opportunity to succeed."



Dandenong North Grade 4 teacher Karen Rouda with students Reshma, Nebojsa (standing) and Keerthi. 112010

Picture: ROB CAREW



Silverton students Will, Mandeep and Chante operate a TV camera against a green screen. 112015

Picture: ROB CAREW

SCHOOLS — DANDENONG NORTH PRIMARY

12th AUG
2013

COOL FOR SCHOOL

KEVIN MACKAY (PRINCIPAL) AND STUDENTS
CELEBRATE SHARE IN FUNDS TO BETTER
THEIR SCHOOL

12th AUGUST 2013

Picture: MARTIN REDDY



Cool for school

Dandenong North Primary School principal Kevin Mackay and students Sana, Muram, Simone, Daniel and Dev, have plenty to be pleased about. The school is one of dozens in Greater Dandenong that will share in millions of dollars in Better Schools cash. REPORT PAGE 5

D'NONG NTH PRIMARY

KEVIN MACKAY - PRINCIPAL

OAM. QUEENS

BIRTHDAY

SERVICE TO EDUCATION

STAR
13TH JUNE
2013.

Top class honour

By BRIDGET COOK

DRIVING home late at night after meetings that go far beyond his requirements as a principal, Kevin Mackay sometimes feels lonely and wonders why he takes on extra commitments.

But the Cranbourne man said being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List on Monday put in all into perspective.

Mr Mackay received the honour for his service education, which he has been involved in for more than 50 years.

While he has been the principal of Dandenong North Primary School since 1986, the OAM was also in recognition of many other roles he has taken on to improve the teaching profession.

Mr Mackay is the current principals' representative on the Policy Reference Group, an executive member of Federal and State Governance of the Australian Principals Federation, life-member of the Victorian Principals Association and has represented principals in two Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBA).

"This is recognition from my peers and that's very important to me," he said.

"These people understand what it means to give up so much time to sit on a committee or be a part of the EBA negotiation to benefit the profession.

"Sometimes I feel quite alone

when I'm travelling home late at night from an EBA negotiation and you wonder why you do it.

"But awards like this show that people do understand all you do and appreciate what you're doing for the profession.

"I think that one of the things we miss in education is acknowledging of the work that teachers do.

"It's opportunities like this that confirm your belief in what you're doing is actually acknowledged and valued."

Mr Mackay said he has seen a huge change in Dandenong North Primary School since he started there.

"When I first went there the make-up of the student population was majority Anglo-Saxon," he said.

"Over the years, Dandenong has become one of the centres for refugees and immigrants.

"The school now has 80 per cent of students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

"In many ways it's been a change for the better as we have gotten to see the integration of new children and cultures into Australia.

"When see the way all the kids integrate and mix together it gives you hope for the future of Victoria and Australia as a society."

Mr Mackay said what he loved most about the teaching profession was the impact they had on people's lives.

"Every day we get to help change people's lives through education,"



Dandenong North Primary School students Sitra, Samr, Anfal and Pamadhi jump for joy with their principal Kevin Mackay after he was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) this week.

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

he said.

"I've gotten to see former students come back as adults and they are now doctors or lawyers or now teachers themselves and it's fantastic to see."

Mr Mackay said there was a particular student that made him realise the difference he could make to people's lives.

"He was very difficult at school back in the day," he said.

"I looked after him in my office when he was sent there quite frequently.

"I saw him recently and he said he would probably have been dead from a drug overdose if it wasn't for the way we helped and treated him at school.

"He is now making a good liv-

ing for himself and contributing to society."

Mr Mackay said another student stuck out in his head from his years of teaching.

"A former student who now works as a doctor at Dandenong Hospital was walking past recently and I called her in and we had a chat," he said.

"She said I had contributed to her becoming a doctor as we had given her opportunities to deviate from the normal path in primary school and gave her the freedom to do those things.

"At secondary school she didn't get that and ended up leaving and studying herself.

"So her primary education gave her, her first start."

STAR - Thurs, 13 JUNE 2013

No
DATE

SCHOOLS — DANDENONG NTH PRIMARY

NETBALL COACHING BY MICHAEL RUSSELL



NETBALL coach Michael Russell gives Evelina Bukczynska a helping hand, watched by Southern Melbourne Sweathog Saints player Andrew Parkison, at a netball clinic at Dandenong North Primary School. Mr Russell, a qualified netball coach and physical education instructor, says the clinics, sponsored by the Quit campaign and organised by the Victorian Netball Association, emphasise fun and fitness. — Photo by SAM STIGLEC.