

Residential School

In the latter part of Week 3, xsel's **Term 3 residential school** took place. As I am sure you have heard from the students and teachers on their return to their locales, it was a rewarding event with a range of powerful learning opportunities for students as well as some fabulous recreation and co-curricular activities. Mrs Bannister's item and Mrs Wade's report in this edition will give you more details of the richness of the experience.



Introverts vs Extroverts

Our society - including schools, media, research and business - greatly values collaborative projects and the capacity to be creative and productive in teams. xsel is no exception. Much of our planned activities at residential school make best use of the once-a-term opportunity for our far-flung student cohort to work together in small and large groups with their equally remote teachers.

The energetic fun and purposeful noise of residential school is a great stimulus to learning for many xsel students but there are those who prefer quietness and the opportunity for solitary thought when the chance arises. Each Thursday a segment



of the after-school time is a declared **quiet time** for those who need a break from the excitement to recharge and reflect on the day. The introverts among us need this time and it is our intention to afford all xsel students the means to engage at xsel residential school in a manner that meets both their individual needs and the organisational requirements of such a large scale event. I welcome any feedback parents or students can provide to me on the issue.

Recent reading around the dichotomy of extrovert/introvert personalities and learning preferences has reinforced for me the need for specific accommodations for our "lone wolves". I know that some parents worry that their quietly-spoken young people in later years may fail to meet the challenges of a gregarious workplace or tertiary study and suffer because of it. My reading suggests that such worries are not well-founded. With contemporary social media, ubiquitous connectivity, new platforms and the now almost limitless but distant audiences they provide, there is even more scope for success for the quiet ones among us.

A recent news item about the rock entrepreneur and Pink's Australian manager, Roger Davies, is proof that it is not just the extroverts who rule: <http://bit.ly/17cwXKb>. A longer but thoroughly digestible look at quiet achievers is Susan Cain's

book, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, Penguin, 2012. You might also enjoy a TED talk by Susan Cain http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts.html

Applying for placement in xsel 2014

The **current Year 6** students who sought placement in xsel in Year 7 2014 have now been contacted by the High Performing Students Unit (formerly Selective Schools Unit) with advice of the outcome of their application. Offers have been made and students and families across the region are taking up those offers. I am currently undertaking visits to meet our 2014 Year 7 intake and their families.

Parents who have accepted offers are invited to contact me to arrange a suitable time for me to visit. The principals of those students' prospective high schools will have advice from me in the next fortnight regarding which students from their "feeder schools" have accepted offers to join xsel.

xsel has also received applications from **students currently in Years 7 – 9** in our partner schools seeking placement in next year's xsel cohorts. All applicants should have acknowledgement of their application this week. The outcome of the xsel selection panel's deliberations will be advised early September to applicants, their families and schools. Please be advised that when a student is deemed eligible, enrolment is not immediate. Placement in xsel is only possible as vacancies emerge.

Pauline Freeburn

Teaching, Learning & Technology

What a brilliant residential! Each residential school we look to improve on the last one. Sometimes the improvement is incremental and sometimes substantial.

This residential we introduced Year 9 xsel students to the fabulous "Space to Grow" program run jointly by CSU Bathurst and Macquarie University. The students were able to use some of the technology used by professional astronomers to develop images gathered by the Faulkes telescope in Hawaii. An exit poll was informative "this is the best science lesson ever" and "that was sooooo cool!" were just a couple of comments. David Horton-James, Yr 9 xsel science teacher based at Lithgow High School led this session. It followed an astronomy evening for the entire xsel school the previous night. Four telescopes, all owned personally by xsel science staff were generously shared. Ms Bertolin trained her telescope on Saturn which was spectacularly clear, Mr Horton-James trained his on the Jewel Box Cluster near the Southern Cross, with Mr Watts and Mr Evans alternating between other parts of the night sky. As always students were delighted when they saw some celestial bodies in great definition.

Year 10 science managed to complete the stoichiometric calculations to correctly balance the equations for their exothermic reaction, whilst Year 8 mathematics got to show off their "crib". Some of the bedroom renovations, all correctly costed and drawn to scale were spectacular. Perhaps Maddison Collitts' four level affair won't be happening any time soon and Budjarn Lambeth's two tier affair complete with Tardis below for extra storage may also be in the realm of fantasy, however they were both able to justify the mathematical principles behind their design and showed incredible command of Google Sketchup software.



Opportunities to collaborate on tasks at residential school are keenly enjoyed by students and staff alike.

We were also delighted to welcome Executive Director, Public Schools Ms Dail McGilchrist to the assembly to say hello. As Ms McGilchrist now looks after schools across approximately 75% of the landmass of NSW it was indeed quite special to have her drop in.

Perhaps the highlight was the visit to the Dubbo Regional Theatre arranged by Ms Bev Winters. *Fawlty Towers* episodes have a long history and the two episodes performed for us by the Dubbo Theatre Company were hilarious. We were lucky enough to have a mini theatre lesson during the break between acts when Director Christine Bray broke character for a moment to discuss aspects of the show. The entire xsel school is very thankful for the efforts of Ms Winters and the cast and crew in enabling this activity.

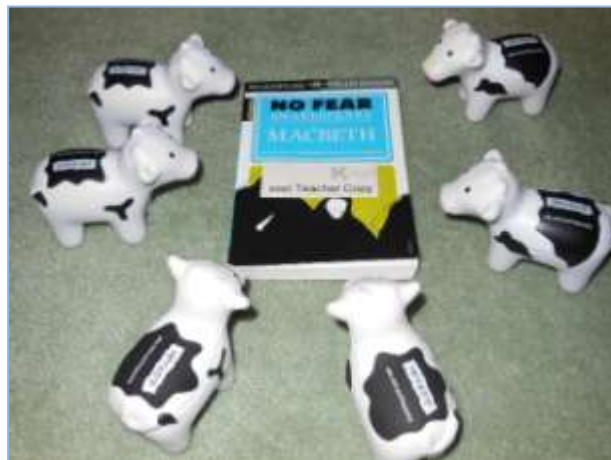
Whilst I am on leave Mrs Virginia Cluff will fill my position and Ms Fiona Isaacs, previous xsel science teacher will complete Mrs Cluff's Yr 7 science duties. Ms Isaacs spoke briefly at assembly about the last six months where she has been a volunteer teacher in Cambodia. Students were able to get a glimpse of global social justice opportunities should they choose to investigate them.

Barbara Bannister



Year 10 English will be participating in the [ABC radio Heywire competition](#) which requires them to submit a personal account of their lives in regional Australia and what is important to them. The Heywire Regional Youth Summit takes place over six days each February. Around 40 young people aged 16 - 22 fly in from all over the country to the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra for an all-expenses-paid week where they discuss ideas, walk the corridors of power and make life-long friendships. Each represents a rural or regional pocket of Australia, and is chosen to attend on the strength of their written, video, audio or photographic stories.

Daniel Hirst from Heywire sent xsel six toy cows promoting the competition and these have become very familiar via their appearances in emails. As "bull" is more fruitful for punsters, we ignored the anatomical evidence and the war of words was on.



Our bovine friends were well-red, studying Bull Shakespeare and the moospaper. In-boxes were clogged with fanciful notions such as David Tighe's, "I wouldn't want to sit under that bull; I don't like pats on the head" and David Clare's comment that the cow puns were "udderly ridiculous". Alistar Kopp's birthday was announced with a bull-etin and Ms Ryan wished him an "edi-bull cake" and "enjoya-bull day". Ms Winters was prepared to "cow-tow" to the English staff's "amoozing knowledge".

At Residential School the cows/bulls were awarded for dramatized readings of group appropriations of *Macbeth*. The recipients and new owners are:

1. Katie McInnes – receiving Adora-bull for her amazing ability to write rhyming spells.
2. Stephen Sanders (Debata-bull) for being as comfortable on stage as off.
3. Elijah Stanger-Jones (Unbelieva-bull) for the best scripted line, "If you're dead, it's for the best."
4. Alistar Kopp (Impossi-bull) or the robotic award in human movement for 'shakes', 'moves closer' and 'walks'.
5. Harry Roth (Horri-bull) for creative vocalisations, comic timing and the second best line, "I don't want to sound full of myself."
6. Lachlan Campbell (Admira-bull) for Group Leadership and being indefatiga-bull, insatia-bull, memora-bull and always lova-bull.

Lesley Wade