Didge you hear the one about...

Thanks to the generous donation of $2500 by Liverpool Catholic Club, Lurnea High School Students have been given the opportunity of starting their own Indigenous performance group.

The group is comprised of the school’s Indigenous students, as well as 5 IEC students, 3 recently transitioned refugee students and members of the school’s Support Unit.

Together the group is learning about the significance of the music and performance in Indigenous culture, and are getting the chance to express themselves by designing their own didgeridoo or set of clapping sticks.

Both the boys and girls groups are being taught how to play their instruments in two hour weekly workshops (Thursday p5-6) run by the school’s Norta tutor, Lesley Marks, and Liverpool Hospital Aboriginal Health Education worker, Robby Bell.

Robby will also be conducting health sessions with the students during this time on topics such as healthy lifestyles, drug and alcohol awareness and sexual health.

Once students have learned the basics, they will be creating a performance extravaganza for this year’s Presentation Night.

PICLO on board

This term we welcome Mr. Albert Vaka to the LHS team as our Pacific Island Community Liaison Officer (PICLO).

Mr. Vaka has an extensive background in working with troubled and disengaged youth in High Schools and through the Juvenile Justice Program.

He will be using these skills to work with students in one-on-one mentoring sessions, as well as small groups.

Mr. Vaka will be at Lurnea on Mondays. He can be contacted through Sentral, or Mr Cobon if you have student concerns.
Homework Help

Term 3 sees the establishment of Homework Help, a homework centre focusing on the school’s Polynesian students.

The idea, which was brought about by Ms Katie Talaia, who works as an IEC aide, came as a result of parent consultation during Term 2 this year.

This consultation was made in the wake of the school’s highly successful first entry into ‘Nesian Fest, a Polynesian cultural competition in which LHS finished 3rd overall.

Students will have access to computers and research material and will be able to receive help with homework and assignments.

Homework Help will run on Monday afternoons from 2.15-4.15 in the IEC library and will be staffed by Ms Talaia and the school’s PICLO, Mr Vaka.

All Polynesian students, mainstream, support and IEC, are welcome to attend, as are any teachers who would like to assist. See Mr. Cobon for details.

NAIDOC celebrations

After a poignant Assembly in Week 2 of this Term acknowledging NAIDOC week, LHS continues to encourage students to learn about Indigenous Culture.

The school was fortunate to hear from Aunty Carol Brown about the importance of NAIDOC and entertained by the multi-talented Daniel ‘The Fluteloop’ MacPherson.

Continuing the NAIDOC theme, PE will be running a series of Indigenous Games during junior classes. Art classes will be doing some boomerang painting and students in Year 9 and 10 will be cooking bush tucker with Aunty Carol.

LHS extends thanks to both Aunty Carol and Daniel for their attendance at our NAIDOC Assembly.

LHS Nominated for awards

LHS students were officially nominated for an award at the recent NSW Concil for Pacific Communities annual awards night.

The school’s ‘Nesian Fest performance group were nominated for a High School Performance award based on their successful first appearance at ‘Nesian Fest 2013.

Additionally, IEC aide Ms Katie Talia was nominated for her efforts in promoting Polynesian culture and work with recently arrived IEC students.

Unfortunately, neither were successful on the night, but deserve congratulations for their ongoing efforts.
Year 7 and 8 Polynesian girls are to be part of a pilot mentoring project called BEACON.

BEACON, which stands for Be Encouraged Achieve Change Overcome Negativity, will run on Mondays period 3 and 4 and is facilitated by PICLO Mr Vaka.

This program teaches students about the ways in which their own attitudes towards a situation can drastically impact on the outcome. Students develop resilience, learn about trust and the importance of honesty and friendship while having the opportunity to express themselves through music and sport.

If staff have questions, or would like to find out more, Mr Vaka is contactable on Mondays.

Sista Speaks

Sista Speaks, a program for Aboriginal girls and young women, will be running at LHS during Term 3.

Sista Speaks involves a series of confidence building workshops that teach girls about fundamental life skills in an approachable, informal setting.

One of the main challenges for the students will be budgeting, shopping and preparing a meal for the whole group. They will have limited funds and have to do all with work themselves. Unfazed, the girls are up for the challenge!

It will be run on Fridays P4 by Norta tutor, Lesley Marks, with assistance from Katrina Jeffs, Ms. Jeffs daughter, who is currently completing her teaching degree.

“Sista Speaks continues an age old tradition; learning secret women’s business form each other”

Lesley Marks

Students gain Uni insight

Students from years 10, 11, and 12 have attended a 3 day camp run by Australian National University’s (Canberra) Pasifika Austral- ia Office.

The camps, held in Canberra and on the South Coast, run a range of workshops on University pathways, Polynesian Culture and Youth Culture, such as hip hop dance.

Students have also been involved in workshops with Andrew Kalopea and Amanda Cooksley from UWS’s Polynesian and Indigenous support offices.

Additionally, senior Indigenous students attended the UTS Jumbunna day late in Term 3.

UTS Jumbunna, developing Indigenous students’ futures.
Culture Rap

LHS student, Mikalea Ford, performed at the Regional Aboriginal Vocal Identification Program (VIP) 2013 concert.

The concert, which showcases the musical talents of South Western Sydney’s Aboriginal Students, took place at Casula Powerhouse on Friday 23rd August.

Mikalea, who has been a VIP scholarship holder since 2009, has been steadily developing her musical and performance ability through sustained and consistent hard work. She has regularly performed at LHS events, including stirring performances of the Australian National Anthem in Aboriginal Language.

However, despite all the preparation, there was nothing that could prepare her for the day of the concert, when she was rushed to hospital after experiencing a loss of feeling in her legs.

Stoically, she still made the concert and performed outstandingly, describing the experience as “full on (and) a great experience”.

She is looking forward to continuing her link to the VIP program during 2014, her final school year, after which she is hoping to undertake further study in music and performance.

When interviewed for ‘Culture Rap’, Mikalea said she was currently examining her options for the future.

Culture Rap is a newsletter that allows LHS teachers, students and parents to keep up to date with the school’s development of student cultural understanding.

It reflects the school’s shared values of respect, responsibility, fairness, tolerance and understanding by promoting cross-cultural appreciation amongst our community.

Culture Rap is produced once a Term in week 5.

Teacher and community submissions are welcome. Please email 200 word (max) stories and picture of cultural events to timothy.cobon@det.nsw.edu.au

Search ‘Lurnea High School’ for online version!