

Secondary entry #3: Merriwa Central School



# MERRIWA MOUTHPIECE



Remembering those who fell on foreign shores.

Picture: Breanna Goodear

## Following in the footsteps of the Anzacs

By BREANNA GOODEAR

APRIL 25 held extra significance for a select group of Hunter School students this year. After a rigorous selection process 20 students were chosen to participate in an Anzac centenary tour of Gallipoli co-ordinated by the Hunter Valley District Council of RSL Sub-Branches and Combined Hunter Valley Schools Project.

"One student was selected from each of the senior schools in our region," said Fred Goode, HVDC vice-president.

These students represented Australia at the official Anzac centenary celebrations. In the lead up to the service, the students visited battlefields scattered along the peninsula.

The entire experience was unforgettable according to 16-year-old Sarah Van der Voort.

"To see all of the graves, row after row, is heartbreaking. Most cemeteries contained more graves than the population of my school. But to see the Turkish graves, which had multiple names on each gravestone, showed just how many innocent lives were lost. You hear the stories, but it just doesn't seem real until you see it in person," Sarah said.

For this group of young Australians, following in the footsteps of the fallen was an overwhelming and vital experience. It allowed them the opportunity to feel sympathy and understand not only what happened but the reasons for these events.

By JOHN CRONIN

ON April 30, 20 members of the ROAR academy were invited to attend and help run the Learning to Lead program hosted by Molong Central School.

The program is a part of the overall statewide Premier's Sporting Challenge. The idea is to create future sporting leaders and encourage kids to be active.

Molong Central School HSIE teacher, Samuel Horner, played a pivotal role in the organisation of the day.

"After discussions with the Premier Sporting Challenge Manager Noel Fitzgerald last year, he mentioned that a few schools had the opportunity to 'Adopt a School'. For me Merriwa was a natural fit given their excellent ROAR Program," Mr Horner said.

Primary students from five schools across the state attended the day with Molong Central School, Merriwa Central School, Cummoock Public School, Manildra Public School and Cudal Public School all represented. The ROAR boys were joined by a further 20 leaders from Molong.

Mr Horner said that this program helps students enhance leadership abilities. "I believe that the PSC Sport Leadership program is a fantastic initiative in getting kids from all ages out, active and



Students from across the state took part in the Learning to Lead program in April.

demonstrating leadership."

Founder of ROAR, Adam Johnston, believes the day was an important step for members in becoming better leaders.

"By exposing our boys to unfamiliar schools, students and locations we were able to take them out of their comfort zone and prove that they have what it takes to be leaders regardless of location or audience."

The event was a huge success

with all of the students embracing the opportunity to learn new skills in a variety of sports.

Mr Johnston was impressed by the way the ROAR members undertook their roles throughout the day.

"The boys confidently enhanced their communication and teamwork skills. ROAR continues to provide our boys with the opportunities to become the best that they can be and our leaders are

living proof of that," he said.

Vice-captain of ROAR, Luke Cronin hopes to see more involvement in the Learning to Lead program.

"Since the day was a success we plan to make it a regular event, not just for Molong, but other towns around NSW to teach students how to stay physically active and healthy, while having fun playing the games we love," Luke said.



Youth are embracing and sharing traditional Indigenous culture.

Picture: Jennifer Evans

## Students are finding their voice

By TEIANNA TAYLOR  
and MADDILYN  
BLACKADDER

ABORIGINAL students at Merriwa Central School are feeling inspired. Recently students have expressed an interest in forming a Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) in the Upper Hunter and it is about to become a reality.

Year 11 student Janaya

Austin sees the Junior AECG as an opportunity to be heard. "It will give us a voice in the school and the community," Janaya said.

Upper Hunter AECG president Elizabeth Howard has lent her support to the initiative. "The fact we have enthusiastic Aboriginal students in our communities wanting to be involved in this shows the quality of leadership that we as older people

can look forward to in the future," Ms Howard said.

An important component of the initiative will be working with the Wakageetti group to increase student knowledge of culture.

The Junior AECG will encourage all students to learn about Aboriginal culture and traditional ways of living so that we share this knowledge and it is known to future generations.



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