

Primary entry #26: St James Primary Muswellbrook



ST JAMES' JOURNAL



Emily Manning, the Platinum Dance Centre director.

All-stars can let special people shine

By **MATILDA JONES** and
COLBY TUCKERMAN

PLATINUM All-Stars is a group for children in the Upper Hunter living with special needs. It gives them the opportunity to socialise, get fit and have fun.

Emily Manning started the group in March 2015. Learning fundamental moves, having fun, building their confidence and meeting new people are the main focus of this group. Ms Manning wants to give people with special needs the same advantages as everyone else.

Ms Manning was inspired by a desire to "give every child a chance to dance and to be treated fairly."

"Gross motor skills and jazz are currently being taught. Students use props such as balls and hula hoops," she said.

Approximately six to 10 students attend the All-Stars classes, with students coming from all over the Upper Hunter.

Ms Manning believes that "socialising, make new friends and to be accepted as their own person" are great benefits to the All-Stars.

She has seen plenty of positive feedback from both parents and dancers and believes the group is sustainable long term.



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Eisteddfod rocks town

By **AMBER MORGAN,**
HEIDI RICHARDS and
HANNAH SMITH

THE Muswellbrook Eisteddfod is back for its 24th edition this year at St James' Muswellbrook Primary School.

The very first eisteddfod was held in April 1992. The inaugural eisteddfod had only three divisions with dance, vocal and instrumental, and school choirs and bands being run over the course of a week, from April 14 to 18.

Now in 2015 16 dedicated committee members organise and set up the eisteddfod. There are also over 40 volunteers.

The eisteddfod has grown from its humble beginnings and there are many categories for schools and children to enter including instrumental, dance, school choirs and bands, vocal, speech and drama, public speaking, piano and creative writing. Anyone can participate - there are over 2000 entries in this year's event alone.

The motto of "Have a go. Enjoy the occasion. Enjoy the experience. To vie is to be victorious!" is ever-present in Sally Jackson, a member of the St James' staff as well as being on the eisteddfod committee.

"There are over 2000 students who compete each year," Mrs Jackson said. "The most popular sections are the dance and speech and



St James' Students excel at eisteddfod. Picture: Amber Morgan, Heidi Richards and Hannah Smith

drama sections." Mrs Jackson has been involved in the committee for eight years and sees one of the greatest benefits as being a student's confidence at school and in public. "There's nothing better than seeing children's confidence grow and improve in all areas as a result of the eisteddfod."

Dance is the most popular cat-

egory in 2015 with over 500 entries. In the past, it ran for three days but now it is five days of competition, such is its popularity.

When the eisteddfod is over, the committee thinks about ways that it can improve and starts the huge task of planning for the 2016 edition.

"It takes about six months to do

all of the planning for the next eisteddfod. It's certainly a lot of work but I do it because it's fun and I love watching talented children and adults," Mrs Jackson said.

The eisteddfod runs at St James' Muswellbrook from May 23 to July 9. See sites.google.com/site/muheisteddfod/home for more information.



The sisters of St Joseph re-enactment.
Picture: Supplied by St Joseph's Aberdeen

Sister's spirit alive in Muswellbrook

By **AARON ESTRADA,**
RYAN NICANOR and
NICHOLAS ROBERTS

SAINT Joseph's and the Sisters of St Joseph, celebrated the opening of new buildings and facilities at St Joseph's Aberdeen recently.

The Honourable Arthur Sinodinos officially opened the school. One of the highlights of the day was the re-enactment by year 10 stu-

dents of the arrival of the first sisters of St Joseph in Aberdeen in 1896 by horse and cart.

The spirit of St Joseph truly lives on in St James' Muswellbrook resident nun, Sister Dorothy. "It was in 1955 when I first met the Sisters of St Joseph Aberdeen," Sister Dorothy said. "In 1957 I knew that God was calling me to be a Sister of St Joseph."

Sister Dorothy is "very

happy" in her vocation and one of the great joys of her service is the "opportunity it gives me to help so many people by teaching."

"Currently, I teach music, in particular piano. I have taught many instruments over the years but I'm happy where I am at right now. I'm certainly very fulfilled in my service to the community of Muswellbrook," the dedicated teacher said.



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