

Primary entry #20: Wirreanda Public School



Wirreanda Whispers



Wirreanda Star Struck students at a collaborative rehearsal day.

Star Struck is a-maze-ing for students

By HAYLEY CARMODY, LAUREN MACKENZIE, JADE BOWDEN and AMELIA COCHRANE

STAR Struck is a performing arts extravaganza presented by the Hunter area of the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

This year Wirreanda Public School is participating in Star Struck for the second time. Sixteen students will be attending the event, all first timers, extremely excited to be part of the experience.

Participating in the 2015 show, titled A-Maze-ing, are 82 primary and high schools from across the Hunter. Star Struck began in 1990 and has produced mind-blowing performances for two days every year since. The principal sponsor for 2015 is Glencore. Star Struck relies heavily on sponsorship to continue being able to provide this opportunity to kids of the Hunter.

Star Struck is a rewarding experience for all students, teachers and parents involved. It teaches students commitment and persistence and builds confidence through a feeling of success when their hard work pays off on the big stage.

The whole school community at Wirreanda is extremely excited to be involved this year. Corynne Darcy, organising teacher, said that "Star Struck is a great way to express your feelings through dance."

Star Struck 2015 will be held at the Newcastle Entertainment Centre on June 12 and 13.

Wild storm hits Hunter

By SHANNON BOHAN, CHARLOTTE THREADGATE, AYSSA WEAKS, ANNABELLE TACON and LANI HIBBERT

AT the end of April, wild weather hit the Hunter. It was the biggest storm to batter the Hunter in the past decade.

The storm started on Monday, April 20 and ended on Friday, April 24. Throughout that week more than 100,000 houses were affected. Trees were ripped out by their roots to fall onto houses, waterways and power lines. The wild storm meant that homes were cut off from power, water and food; a family's most vital supplies.

The floods were one of the most horrendous and devastating parts of the storm. About 4500 people were cut off by flood waters, with some townships only regaining complete access weeks after. The most affected towns were Dungog, Gillieston Heights, Hinton and Wollombi.

According to Weatherzone's Total Lightning Networks, there were over 6224 lightning strikes during the period from April 19-23.

This storm will be remembered as not only one of the worst in recent history, but with hail crashing down all over Sydney, and houses floating away in Dungog, it will also be remembered as one of the most widespread.



Tree damage at Wirreanda Public School from the severe winds.

The SES dealt with around 12,000 calls for assistance. Most of these calls were for fallen trees and broken power lines. They reported that they performed around 100 flood rescues overnight on Tuesday, April 21 and completed around 50 per cent of the many requests for assistance. Unaffected local businesses pitched in by

offering free food, ice and shelter for those worst affected.

Along with the severe damage that impacted residents, many businesses, including schools, were disturbed. Countless primary and high schools were closed during the storm. More than 100 Catholic and public schools were closed due to the cyclonic conditions. Some staff

were cut off by floodwaters or fallen trees, unable to reach their place of employment for the entire week.

The Hunter once again pulled together as a community, facing adversity and overcoming a freak natural disaster. Over a month has passed since the storm and the Hunter is well on its way to rebuilding what was lost.



Kiani Sampson in her lead role of Hairspray.

A star in the making with big plans

By REGAN TAYLOR and OLIVIA LIGHTFOOT

HAVE you heard the name Kiani Samson? Have you seen her name in flashing lights? If you haven't yet, you will soon enough. Medowie resident, to Broadway singer and dancer: that's the goal for this young performer.

Kiani Samson was a student at Wirreanda Public School from 1998 until 2004.

During her primary education she always showed a passion and talent for creative arts, particularly dance and singing. Kiani, now 22, has a list of achievements that she has worked extremely hard to reach during the past couple of years.

Kiani shares her passion and talents with many students, teaching them a variety of dance genres at a local dance school weekly. Her stu-

dents said: "She is amazing. We are so lucky to have her."

Professionally Kiani has cheered for the Newcastle Knights for three years. She then moved to performing in well-known musicals for the Metropolitan Players Inc, including *Hairspray* in the lead role of Tracy Turnblad and was awarded the prestigious CONDA award (City of Newcastle Drama Awards) in 2014 for her performance.



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