This has been an exciting and very busy introduction to my first term as Principal of James Cook Boys Technology High School. On my initial visit to the school, I was immediately impressed by the vast, well-kept grounds and the fabulous sporting facilities. Examples of these are our full sized playing fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, indoor squash courts and indoor basketball courts. The learning environments are also well kept and as a result cater for the needs of our boys. We have new and traditional science labs, a great library space that overlooks the ovals, excellent wood work and art rooms. However, what impressed me most was that during the school holidays when I visited I was astounded by the number of teachers who were on site planning work, cleaning rooms, designing new teaching and learning programs, tutoring Year 12 HSC students, and attending to the grounds. Their dedication and commitment toward the school and its students was amazing.

On the first day I met the students via the assembly and then sat in on classes to observe the teaching and learning. I was again impressed by the high quality of tuition that was occurring along with the thoughtful level of student engagement and participation.

Within the second week teachers and the SRC had organised an afternoon tea for our captains and school leaders and had invited, parents, guests and students from our local high schools to attend. It was a very pleasant and enjoyable evening. The week after, Halloween became our focus and some of the teachers and the students worked collaboratively to organise the event and decorate the school. Further events and activities occurred that provided the students with the opportunities to showcase their talents, extend their learning, positively represent the school and consolidate school culture. These events included: a moving Remembrance Day tribute, a two day Korean delegation tour, students representing our school at the University of New South Wales Mosaic project, our Year 10 Careers week “Cooking up Success”, Sports Award Ceremony, excursions to Jenolan Caves, and the musical “Wicked”, Year 6 Orientation Day, Year 9 Peer Mentoring program, yearly examinations as well as a Presentation Day. More details about all of these programs will be covered later in this bulletin by the teachers and students involved.

As part of our new planning process, we commenced collecting data from our students, staff and parents via the school situational analysis report. I employed a university consultant to interview students and teachers. Equally parents were surveyed and the accumulation of these details will contribute to future school planning and school improvement. The data...
that has been collected will be presented to staff during our professional development days at the end of the term. The latter along with student academic NAPLAN, HSC, student attendance and wellbeing data will be analysed and discussed. It will assist all teachers in collaboratively and collegially developing our strategic directions and will directly lead to formulating the school plan for 2015-2017. This has definitely been an exciting period for our school. I look forward to discussing our school and your son’s learning during the new year and in the years to come. Have a great and safe holiday.

Mr Mark Marciniak

2014 Presentation Day

James Cook Boys’ Technology High School Presentation Day was certainly a huge success at which Years 7, 8, 9 and 11 students proudly celebrated their remarkable achievements and academic successes.

Students were awarded prizes for academic excellence as well as displays of citizenship. The hall was beautifully decorated, by Ms Rees and the performance from the music students, led by Ms Lee, was captivating.

The special guests for the day were Ms Anne Ross, Director of Public Schools NSW, Mr Nickolas Varvaris, Federal Member for Barton, Councillor Andrews Tsounis, Representing the Mayor of Rockdale, Ms Valentina Angelovska, St George Youth Services, Ms Julianne Beek, Principal, Moorefield Girls High School, Mrs Virginia Pacey, Principal, Kogarah High School, Ms Jan Brennan, Representing John Flowers MP, Dr Sebastian Pfautsch, University of Western Sydney, Mr Steve Kamper, Cherie Burton’s Office Ms Lea Kitchener, Principal, Kogarah Public School and Mrs M. Paraskevopoulos, Parent and Citizens Representative.

The Presentation began with the official party making a grand entrance while being ushered by School Captains, Danyal Aslam and Ahmed Zahr and Vice Captains, Liam St Vincent and Shivam Prajapati. The formalities commenced with The National Anthem sung by the music students of JCBTHS. Mr D. Van Dijk’s offered the Acknowledgement of Country, school captains, Danyal Aslam and Ahmad Zahr welcomed our guests and our new Principal, Mr Marciniak, made his formal address.

He praised students’ outstanding achievements and encouraged them to strive, excel and always improve themselves.

Inspirational speeches given by Ms Anne Ross, Director of Public Schools NSW and Mr Nickolas Varvaris, MP, congratulated the boys on their marvellous commitment to study.

Congratulations to all the students who received awards. I would like to thank the Presentation Day Committee, all the teachers and the SASS staff for their great assistance. As well, the School Captains Danyal Aslam, Ahmad Zahr, and Vice-Captains Liam St Vincent and Shivam Prajapati, hosted the day brilliantly supported by the SRC. The polite and respectful school audience contributed to the warm atmosphere enjoyed by staff, parents and our special guests.

Ms Loutfy

Mr Mark Marciniak at our recent Presentation Day
Spelling Bee Competition— M Loutfy

Our boys in Years 7 and 8 participated in the “Hundred Word Spelling Challenge” competition at the beginning of Term 3. The aim of the competition was to target our students’ literacy and to provide them with an opportunity to further develop their reading and comprehension skills. The Year 7 students studied vocabulary appropriate to all their subject areas. Thank you to all faculties who provided word lists for Year 7 students. The Year 8 word list was made up of new and challenging vocabulary that would support their learning development.

It was wonderful to see that 4 students from our Year 7 (Safin Chowdhury, Omar Mohammad Bani, Hussein Rachid and Seth Tan) and one student from Year 8 (Alfonso Juan Ortiz) achieved the outstanding result of 100% in his spelling competition. Excellent effort young men!

Congratulations also to the 13 students who achieved over 90% and to the 15 students who achieved over 80% in this competition. Fantastic result!

I would also like to acknowledge the effort of all our students who tried their best and made good progress in their spelling. Well done young men and keep up the good work!

A merit assembly was held on Friday 13th November, 2014 to recognize the great achievements of our young students. With the assistance of the Principal, Mr M. Marciniak, students were rewarded with certificates, canteen vouchers and chocolates to acknowledge their wonderful effort in their spelling competition. I would like to extend my congratulations to these wonderful young men and encourage them to maintain their hard work.

I would also like to thank Year 7 & 8 teachers who organized the spelling program in their lessons throughout Terms 3 & 4 and all the teachers who attended and supervised the students during the presentation.

Year 7 2015 Orientation Day— Miss Jarvis

On Wednesday 3rd December, the Year 6 students who are attending JCBTHS next year visited our school for Orientation Day. After meeting Mr Marciniak, Mr Tsaridis and the school leaders, the boys attended two sample lessons. In Science they were able to watch a rat dissection and complete an activity while in PDHPE, they were able to use some of our sports facilities inside the hall. After the sausage sizzle, the boys separated into groups and completed a scavenger hunt during which they were able to learn about the lay out of the school. By the end of the day, it was rewarding to see that the nervous feelings about starting High School in the new year, were replaced by excitement. In my role as Year 7 Adviser in 2015, I am looking forward to supporting the boys while they settle into high school and work towards achieving their best, as active members of the school community.
Music—M Lee

Throughout the year, there has been a continual flow of performances by our talented Music students at James Cook Boys Technology High School. Earlier this term, a number of students performed in the school library for the prefect induction ceremony. The program consisted of “Maple Leaf Rag” by Scott Joplin which was performed by Gary Fang (piano), Lachlan Wilkie (drums) and Antonio Neskovski (guitar); “Canon” by Pachelbel performed by Nitesh Poudyal (guitar) and “House of the Rising Sun” performed by Sigrid Sinlao (vocalist).

Presentation Day featured an impressive repertoire of well-known Dave Brubeck’s “Take Five” performed by the James Cook Boys Technology High School Jazz Band, “Right Here Waiting” performed by Sigrid Sinlao and “Sweet Child O Mine” performed by Nitesh Poudyal and Lachlan Wilkie.

There was excitement when students attended a performance of the musical “Wicked” at the Capitol Theatre. Our students thoroughly enjoyed the outing and everyone requested that a second excursion be organised. Students were mesmerised by the colourful sets, costumes, and visual effects.

Early next year it is anticipated that there will be another Harmony Day Concert in the school hall, so all students who would like to perform are encouraged to start rehearsing for the special event now. Students in all years are also encouraged to learn an instrument at school, participate in band rehearsals once a week. This year, the most popular instruments to be learnt at school have been the piano, guitar, drums and saxophone. Any student who has enquiries about learning an instrument should speak to Ms Lee in the Music Department.

International Students

This term our International Students participated in an excursion to the Jenolan Caves where they experienced a guided tour of an underground cave for the first time. A mini bus was hired for the long journey and everyone left school at 8am so that there was time for morning tea at the famous Pie Shop before the tour commenced. The boys had an educational and very exciting experience appreciating the pleasant temperature and beautiful scenery of the Blue Mountains. Our International Students are of course looking forward to their next excursion during term 1 next year when they will once again experience the wonder of the Australian countryside.

During the prefect induction in the library this term, Gary Fang, our new international student from China, greatly impressed everyone with his exceptional skills in performing the piano. Gary is focusing his attention on his piano studies and wants to study Music at a tertiary level after his HSC. During the evening, Tommy Miao presented another Michael Jackson routine that reflected his impressive skills at entertainment. Tommy is currently studying three languages (Chinese, Spanish and French) for his HSC exam next year.

Tommy Miao and Hanwen Guo were exceptional ambassadors when the Korean Delegation was visiting our school in November. Both students were joined by members of the SRC and impressed the visitors with their helpful and friendly attitude towards an exchange of culture and educational philosophy, as well as their devotion to their school studies.

St George Special School

A disco was organised as a special Christmas entertainment for the students who attend St George Special School. Over forty students were escorted in their wheelchairs to our school hall by thirty of our community-spirited students from James Cook Boys Technology High School. It was a very enjoyable experience for our visitors who were wheeled around our hall, encircling balloons while loud music was played through speakers. We hope to organise another disco for the St George Special School students some time next term.

Korean Delegation

On 25 and 26 November James Cook Boys Technology High School hosted a delegation of forty education officials from Korea. There were two groups that visited our school which consisted of principals, deputy principals, education administrators and education supervisors. Mr Marciniak addressed the visitors on a number of topics, including the NSW Department of Education philosophies, the school curriculum, as well as university and TAFE. Mr Woo was present throughout the visit and was of invaluable assistance with his translation skills and explanations in the Korean language. There was an interesting exchange of information for everyone after which the visitors toured the school and were able to observe a variety of lessons.
Remembrance Day

At 11am on 11th November 1918, the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare and an armistice was called.

The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month attained a special significance in the post war years. The moment at which the hostilities ceased on the Western Front it became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war. After the end of the Second World War, Armistice Day was changed to Remembrance Day.

At James Cook Boys’ Technology High School, we commemorated Remembrance Day with a school assembly and a minute’s silence to remember all those who have fought and who are currently fighting for our country.

Two of the school’s senior Modern History students, Harry Maidiotis and Antonio Neskovski, spoke eloquently on the significance of Remembrance Day and of its symbol the red poppy. Both students highlighted the tragedy of war and the significant loss faced by many. However, they also focused on the sacrifice and the courage of Australian soldiers and of all those involved in combat.

We are already beginning preparations for Anzac Day 2015, which will mark 100 years since World War One. Our plans already include a formal assembly with the placing of a wreath, a minute’s silence, playing The Last Post and other activities to mark this significant event in our history. In addition, we will be sending a contingent of students to represent the school at local Anzac Day ceremonies where they can be a vital part of commemorating this momentous day.

Maria Atzemis—HT HSIE

Halloween

SRC / Prefects were very keen to organise the Halloween Party. The idea was to have a day of fun and celebration. It was an opportunity for the whole school to involve themselves in enjoyment and celebration. Students and teachers in the spirit of Halloween dressed themselves up in their favourite costume. The boys organised BBQ and various other food stalls during lunch. This was the most enjoyable part of the day besides decorating the quadrangle for the party. Tommy Miao entertained us by performing a tribute to Michael Jackson which was applauded with loud cheers by the whole school.

Prefect Induction

This year we combined the Prefect social afternoon with the Prefect Induction ceremony. Parents along with Prefects and SRC coordinators from surrounding schools such as Moorefield, St George Girls and others were invited to take part in the ceremony. The boys were very excited about their role as school leaders and also meeting people from other schools. Teachers from other schools commented on how well the evening was organised and were also very appreciative of all performers that evening. Sigrid Sinlao from year 7 entertained the guests with a beautiful solo performance. Guests thoroughly enjoyed the evening and made many positive comments about the boys – their behaviour, social skills as well as their organisation skills.
On 2nd December JCBTHS celebrated its annual Sports Presentation Day. This event was a celebration for students and staff alike, to come together and reflect on what has been an extremely successful sporting year. Students, Staff and Parents gathered around the sporting tables to acknowledge the sporting excellence of their peers. Our special guest speaker was a three time world featherweight boxing champion, Mr Jeff Fenech. Jeff spoke passionately and inspirationally to the students and staff. He spoke about determination, resilience and goal setting, each an important element of academic and sporting success. The students and staff were appreciative of his stories, talent and determination to change his life and his stories seemed to resonate with the boys.

There were many awards presented, for various sporting achievements, and once again our talented athletes were highly competitive against their sporting opponents in the St George District. The school has developed a community agreement with St George Juniors and are amidst negotiations to further and strengthen this valuable community partnership. The school is currently negotiating an upgrade of the schools weights gym for the use of students and St George Rugby Club.

2014 NSW CHS Knockout Competitions

We entered CHS Competitions in Errea Cup Soccer, Turner cup 15’s soccer, cricket, basketball, touch football, volleyball, squash, table tennis, tennis, School Boy Trophy Cup and Buckley Shield rugby league. James Cook enjoyed great success this year, winning the St George area Open Rugby League Knockout. The team went on to play in the Sydney East Regional Championships, winning their pool match against South Sydney High School but losing to eventual champions Aquinas College, in a hard fought match.

2014 was another successful year for James Cook on the competitive sporting fields. I would like to congratulate each student who has represented our school with distinction in the many sporting endeavors in which we participate and make special mention of those teams which secured premierships in the toughest sporting zone in NSW.
2014 Athletics, Cross Country & Swimming Carnivals

Students who successfully competed and won a placing in our Athletics, Swimming and Cross Country progressed on to represent at Zone, Regional and State competitions.

In the Swimming, Matthew Pandevski won the Junior Swimming Award and Mohamad Hijazi was awarded the Senior Swimming Award. In Athletics Adam Faour was the 12s champion, Munashe Marevanhema 13s, Volkan Er 14s, Daniel Thompson 15s, David Baker 16s and Mustafa Al-Gharib Open. In Cross Country, Abbas Dakdouk 12s, Munashe Marevanhema 13s, Mohammed Zaher 14s, Ali Saadi 15s, Hussein Boussi 16s, Aaron Felton won the Open.

The following boys’ were awarded for their excellence and sportsmanship in various sporting domains: Malcolm Forbes Award for Swimming & Study: Mohamad Hijazi—J W Kenny Athletics Award: Munashe Marevanhema—Steve Billington Shield - Most Outstanding Team Achievement: Opens Rugby League—JCBHS Coach of the Year: Ms. K. Naguib & Mr. M. Beeston—Sporting Excellence Junior Award: Munashe Marevanhema—Sporting Excellence Senior Award: Aaron Felton

Careers—Ms Blatchford

The Careers program has been hectic this term. Year 12 were busy investigating university degrees and preferences along with consolidating other pathways beyond school through alternative avenues such as TAFE, private providers, and employment. I have had the pleasure of some students returning to school to continue their discussions of post school options. My door is always open - even after students’ ‘sign out’.

This term I organised and managed a transition week for Year 10 during week 9 called “Cooking Up Success”. This was the first time a transition program of this nature had been implemented at James Cook. The program is designed to assist Year 10 students in their upcoming transition to senior school and further develop their school to work skills.

The variety of “Cooking Up” activities throughout the week, took students on a ‘Skills for Life’ journey with Paul Wade, volunteering activities at Endeavour Nursing Home, St George Special School and the Anglicare Toys and Tucker Appeal, De-Stress before Distress, mental health wellbeing presentation by the Black Dog Institute, Career Connections Jobs4Kids deciphering job advertisements and interview preparation, fundraising for Movember ($225 +), and Board of Studies HSC requirements.

The “Cooking Up Success” team designed their own workshops based on what they identified our Year 10 students needed for transition. Mr Beeston’s ‘Train Your Brain’ workshop proved to be one of the most popular classes with a focus on the Neuro-science and psychology behind how to improve the performance of the brain. Students had the opportunity to create balloon animals and learn how to juggle. Ms Mitchell delivered workshops on study skills, team building and financial literacy. Mr Hadges in collaboration with the SRC organized the Toys and Tucker appeal with a fantastic collection of 40 plus boxes donated to the Anglicare Christmas Appeal. A big thank you to everyone who donated. Mr Errington’s expertise in organising classes, rooms as well as the reward activity to St Peter’s Indoor Rock Climbing, enabled the week to run seamlessly. The Year 10 WOW students who designed and facilitated the WOW Communication workshop should be commended for sharing their knowledge learnt during the Foundation for Young Australians: Worlds of Work program. The Year 10 student facilitators were Hassan Taoube, Ali Dakdouk, Justin Del-Prado, Christos Siafakas, Anthony Hudd and Dion Paraskevopoulos.

Speed Careering was a major event for students, as it was an opportunity to listen and ask questions of a variety of industry professionals about their career journey. Representatives from the medical industry, State Rail, ACG Building, Australian Defence Force, OZ Energy, Australian Careers Development Center, My Freight, and UWS: Computing and ICT Faculty volunteered their time to speak to our students.

Overall “Cooking Up Success” was just that, a success. Feedback from staff and students was overwhelmingly positive which will see the program in 2015 further developed to meet the needs of the new Year 10 cohort.
The University of Western Sydney came to James Cook and delivered an interactive drama performance to our Year 7 students called Aim Higher. The performance was based on the journey of 3 young students who had different views and barriers towards further education. The message for our students was university is possible for everyone with different pathways and support is available to all students.
Mosaic Program

In terms 3 and 4, James Cook Boys Technology High School recommenced its involvement in the MOSAIC Mentoring Program. The MOSAIC Program is a unique Student Development Program run in partnership with the University of NSW and involved students from James Cook being selected to attend a Forum Discovery Day at the University, which facilitated the exploration of cultural issues and encouraged proactive community interaction. MOSAIC provides a platform for Arc@UNSW volunteers and students to discuss and workshop issues about cultural diversity and identity.

Following involvement in the Forum Day, our students returned to school and worked collaboratively with school staff, UNSW mentors and each other to prepare and complete a major work. This activity promoted self-expression and allowed students to communicate their understanding and perspectives on these issues. Our students developed a series of questions relating to racism and cultural diversity and then went into the local community and surveyed and recorded members of the public to gauge their opinions about this very important topic. These interviews were pieced together and edited by a student from the group, with the MOSAIC program culminating in the presentation of this major work at an Expo Night. UNSW Program organisers were extremely impressed with the quality of our students work and selected the James Cook major work to be showcased on the main stage at the Expo night.

Involvement in this program worked to develop and strengthen staff and student relationships, as well as develop connections with the University of NSW and encouraged students to aspire to higher education. It also provided the school with an opportunity to showcase and present our students in a positive light. Feedback from the university and from students involved indicated that all of the students had thoroughly enjoyed themselves and enjoyed the opportunity to extend their learning in a different educational context, whilst exploring a significant community issue in greater depth.

Step Up — Ms Cork

Throughout Terms 1, 2 and 3 the Year 7 students of James Cook Boys’ participated in the ‘Step Up’ program. ‘Step Up’ is a peer mentoring program that was developed at James Cook Boys by combining the principles of the Peer Support Foundation’s approach to student leadership with a range of welfare initiatives, aiming to address the specific needs of the students at our school and foster the idea of stepping up as a student, as a citizen of James Cook, as a leader and as a young man.

Every student in Year 7 was placed into a small group with 6 or 7 of their peers. Within this group they worked through a series of activities lead by two Year 10 Step Up leaders in sessions that occurred once every fortnight throughout terms 1, 2 and 3. The peer leaders, who were trained though the Peer Support program’s training modules in 2013, demonstrated a keen interest in ensuring that school life is a positive experience for all students of James Cook Boys’ and were consequently rewarded through their selection as Step Up Leaders for this program.

The Step Up program key aims were to develop and strengthen the leadership skills in the year 10 students whilst also teaching the incoming year 7 students a range of skills to step up and deal positively and proactively with life experiences.

Throughout Term 1 of the program the leaders met with their group of Year 7 students for one period every fortnight and assisted them in becoming familiar and confident with our school, their peers, their teachers and new routines, while also helping them to develop a sense of self-worth and belonging at our school. The leaders also accompanied the Year 7 group on their school camp in order to consolidate the positive connections within their group. This allowed the leaders to demonstrate their support in an informal setting, which in turn meant that when back at James Cook, the relationships between the leaders and their group members were genuine and built on trust and respect.

As the Step Up program continued into Terms 2 and 3, the activities encouraged Year 7 to take responsibility for their decisions and actions and also provide a fun but thought provoking environment to address issues such as bullying, relationships, coping with adversity, dealing with anger and self-image.
The conclusion of the program was marked by a celebratory BBQ in Term 3 where the hard work and dedication of the leaders was formally acknowledged and celebrated by all participants and where each student was given the opportunity to reflect on the merits of the program through a feedback survey.

In analysing the feedback from the students and the leaders, it was clear that the Year 7 students not only enjoyed the program but also learned some important lessons along the way. Over 80% of year 7 students surveyed stated that they liked participating in Step Up and even more boys said that they felt supported by their leaders throughout the year. When the students were asked what stepping up means to them, the answers included statements such as ‘standing up for yourself or your friends against bullies’, ‘man-ing’ up and taking responsibility’ and ‘showing respect for myself and for others’. It is these statistics and powerful statements that confirm the positive impact of peer mentoring in schools and again is evidence of the fantastic support, commitment and strength of character provided by the year 10 leaders, not only throughout this program but also in their role as group facilitators during the training of future Step Up leaders.

In order to continue strengthening the leadership skills of the students of James Cook Boys, the program looked towards future role models from the current year 9 cohort. In week 9 of Term 4 every student in Year 9 participated in the ‘Peer Support Foundation’ training program where they were mentored by the 2014 Step Up leaders and teachers through a fun but relevant day of activities.

This day not only offered the students the opportunity to develop their skills in teamwork, effective communication, problem solving and group management, but it also resulted in the selection of the 2015 Step Up Leadership team.

The list of students below were nominated by their group facilitators for their enthusiasm, cooperation, and understanding of effective leadership but most importantly for their potential to become outstanding role models for the incoming Year 7 students. I trust that they will bring a fresh and exciting new perspective to the Step Up program in 2015 and congratulate them for their hard work on the day and willingness to participate in a program that promotes positive relationships and a sense of belonging at James Cook Boys Technology High School.

**Step Up Leaders 2015**

- Hassan Nagi
- Andre Veleski
- Mohamad Hijazi
- Bahy Imam
- Houssien Fardous
- Jayden Steele
- Marcus Vilanueva
- Lachlan Wilkie
Images from our successful Peer Support Day