



● Carrington Melbourne

Selfless students in state's spotlight

BY ASHLEY ARGOON

THINK the stereotype of a self-interested and uncharitable younger generation is accurate?

Think again.

Students across the Riverina completed 36,500 hours volunteering during the past year, and have been awarded by the NSW Department of Education for their efforts.

Of the 48 Riverina students awarded for volunteering at least 80 hours was Billabong High School student Carrington Melbourne, who took out the top award.

Carrington was one of only 10 students across NSW to win a \$2000 scholarship, to go towards furthering her education.

The 15-year-old spent more than 130 hours talking to residents at the Harry Jarvis Wing Aged Care facility in Holbrook, working at the local pre-school, op-shop, Culcairn Pony Club and her school.

Billabong High School principal Phillip Carroll said the number of hours committed to volunteering, not only by Carrington, but other students across the Riverina, was phenomenal.

"The community tends to be a bit harsh on young people, but this program is changing that perception of what young people are like," he said.

Other students who received awards included Claudia Wright from Billabong High School, Ben Hoepell, Majella Moran, Tegan Rennie, Blythe Vogel and Jacquelin Frost, from Albury High School and Corowa High School's Dana Ottrey.



● Andrew Strong instructed students Liam Fitzsimmons, Teneysa Wayenberg, Braydon Todd-Fleming and Sophie Knight to 'lead like a strawberry' at the Impact Leadership Conference. Picture: JOHN RUSSELL

A little confidence goes a long way

BY ASHLEY ARGOON

EACH student has the power to change their school and be a leader.

That was the message at last week's Impact Leadership Conference attended by more than 150 primary students from 19 schools across the Border.

Keynote speaker Andrew Strong said students were the ones more likely to instil change.

"A lot of schools now are giving the responsibility to the students to set the culture of the school," Mr Strong said.

"It's the students who are going to change the culture of things like bullying, because students are going to respond to their peers as opposed to staff members or teachers."

Mr Strong taught the students that anyone could be a leader; all you need is a little confidence, and to not be afraid of making mistakes.

"It comes from a belief in yourself that you are able to try this and not be afraid to get it wrong, because that's how you grow and how you learn," he said.

"And often, particularly primary school students, think that

because they didn't get house captain, they're not a leader.

"But they don't need to have a position to take opportunities to lead.

"I think it's great for students to start now and learn and have the practical skills to go back and change their school."

He said being a leader was much like riding a bike; the more you worked at it the better you got and the more your confidence grew.

Liam Fitzsimmons, from Lavington Public School, said he would go back to school and try to lead by example.

"I've got more confidence now," the 11-year-old student councillor said.

"If I see someone sitting there by themselves, I'll say to them, 'come and sit with us'.

"If you're not confident, you go quiet and you don't talk."

"But if you are, you have a good time."

Each year, the conference holds 63 sessions for 20,000 primary and high school students across Australia, and teaches them to "lead like a strawberry and not like a watermelon" meaning students should be the same on the inside as on the outside.

Exhibition with designs on new ideas

BY ASHLEY ARGOON

ROBERT Baumgarten remembers how helpless he felt watching fire sweep through his home town and destroy countless homes and buildings.

As he watched while fire crews were unable to access buildings during the Gerogery fires of 2009, he had an idea.

If fire crews had been able to use a robot, controlled by a remote control, many of the properties that burned could have been saved since it was a lack of breathing apparatus that prevented the crews getting inside.

"It would give local people more of a chance to extinguish fires before the NSW brigade gets there," he said.

"They'd have a better chance at saving their house and sheds."

Now in year 12 at Trinity Anglican College Wodonga, the design technology student is using a school project to transform his idea into a reality.

And he was learning exactly how to do it at the Albury Art Gallery *designTECH* exhibition, which plays host to last year's top HSC projects from across the state.

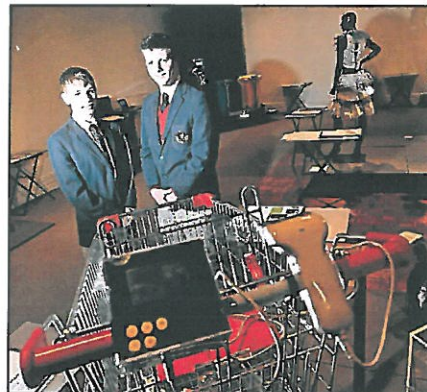
Meanwhile Sam Merrick, who is working on a convertible couch-bed, said seeing past projects showed students the process from idea to creation.

"It's a fair inspiration but it also gives a bit of grounding in reality because you can see what people are capable of," he said.

Trinity Anglican College design technology teacher Paul Trebilcock said the work on display set the bar for high standard projects.

The gallery has received bookings for 500 students to visit the free exhibition, on display until June 10.

Hosting about 30 projects, the exhibition holds work from six past students from across the Border.



● Trinity Anglican College Wodonga students Robert Baumgarten and Sam Merrick were on the lookout for inspiration for their own projects at the *designTECH* exhibition. Picture: BEN EYLES

Catholic staff at forums

CATHOLIC schools in the Sandhurst Diocese closed for two days last week with staff attending a conference in Bendigo.

Schools across the North East, including Catholic College Wodonga, Galen Catholic College in Wangaratta and FCJ College in Benalla, along with primary schools, were closed Thursday and Friday.

The Catholic Education Conference occurs every four years.

About 2000 priests, principals and school staff from primary and high schools attended, undertaking a series of workshops and listening to keynote speakers.

The aim of the conference is to encourage and inspire, share insight and wisdom, and further develop teaching and non-teaching staff.

More on the conference in next week's *Education Mail*.

Lookout for new principal

XAVIER High School is on the hunt for a new principal.

The role has been advertised online and in national newspapers, with expressions of interest required by June 14.

"It's been advertised in the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* to increase the pool of where we get applicants from," Wagga Diocese Catholic Schools Office secondary schools consultant Chris Smyth said.

An announcement of the new principal is expected early in Term three.

Acting principal Rod Whelan has been in the role for the past six months, taking over from Neville Powles who had been at the school for 10 years.

When he took up the position, Mr Whelan was undecided whether he would apply for the post beyond his 12-month secondment.