



### Principal's Message

A big thank you to Ms West for your dedication to our students, staff, and community during my absence. Your friendly disposition, positive attitude and ability to handle unexpected challenges at short notice have made a lasting impact, and you will be greatly missed by everyone. Know that you are always welcome to come back and visit us, and the staff and I look forward to continuing working with you as a part of our Community of Schools. Thank you!



### Y Camp



Camp Yarramundi has been re-booked for 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> November in Term 4. A new note will be coming home requiring new parent signatures and information to acknowledge the change of date.

### Wear it Yellow Day

Mount Hunter PS participated in **Wear it Yellow Day** on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September. This is a community event to thank our local RFS for their efforts during our bushfire seasons and beyond. The captain of Mount Hunter RFS, Rory visited the school with the truck and held an assembly with students. We were also lucky enough to have the founder of **Wear it Yellow Day** Christine Di Bella, as well as RFS Community Engagement Coordinator Todd Burns attend on the day to share information and the reason why the day was started. It was fantastic to see students wearing yellow in support of the day and congratulations to Ivy and Avery who won



the colouring competition. Students, staff and volunteers enjoyed an afternoon tea.

### Sydney Southwest and NSW State Athletics Carnival

Congratulations to all students who represented Mount Hunter PS and Razorback in the Sydney South-West Athletics Carnival on 18<sup>th</sup> September. Well done to Lucas who participated in shot put on the day. Then on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October, our mixed relay team, consisting of Lucas, Elise, Avery and Evie represented Sydney South-West at the NSW State Athletics Championships at Homebush. What an achievement for a small school to qualify for a State event!! The team ran fourth in their heat and place 33<sup>rd</sup> out of over 70 teams. We are so proud of everyone who gives their all at these events!!!



### Public Speaking Finals 2024

On Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, four students from MHPS represented our school at the Primary Schools Public Speaking Competition Camden Network Final. All four finalists did a fantastic job of their prepared speeches and their impromptu responses. It was a huge challenge to undertake, especially considering our students had to speak in front of a large and unfamiliar audience. They all rose to the occasion wonderfully, once again making us very proud!







**Camden High School Year 7 Enrichment Class EOI**

Applications open for Year 6 students who wish to apply for the Year 7 High Potential and Gifted Education program. This is an aspirational program for students who have been identified as showing potential for high achievement. For a list of requirements, please see flyer and application form that was sent home via Schoolbytes. **The applications close today, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024.**

**World Teachers' day**



Last week we celebrated World Teachers' Day and the many ways teachers transform lives for the better. It takes an extraordinary person to shape young minds and I'm grateful to all our teachers for their invaluable contributions, both inside the classroom and beyond the school gates, who choose to work at Mount Hunter Public School. We are so lucky to have such a dedicated and inspiring team which is reflected in the education and care our students receive.



**Online school calendar**

The online calendar on our website and Schoolbytes is continually updated. Please check the calendar for important upcoming events.

**Mrs D Hermann**

**Principal**

**P and C Update**

**Mount Hunter Markets**

Mark it in your diaries - the next Mount Hunter markets will be held on the **24<sup>th</sup> of November**. This is a perfect time to purchase Christmas gifts. **All proceeds going back to the MHPS students.**

**MOUNT HUNTER MARKETS**  
**24 NOV**

**MOUNT HUNTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**  
165 BURRAGORANG RD,  
MOUNT HUNTER (VIA CAMDEN)

FOR STALL HOLDER INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS,  
CONTACT MOUNTHUNTERMARKETS@GMAIL.COM

**Our next P & C meeting will be held on Monday 28th October at 6:00pm in the hall (Week 3, Term 4).**

*The primary purpose of this meeting is to reconvene to discuss previous issues and to vote on our plans for the **2025 Car and Bike Show**.*

At this meeting we will review feedback from the previous Car and Bike shows and discuss voting on the continuation of the Car and Bike show in 2025.

Voting will remain open for 5 school days after the meeting to allow participants time to reflect. All financial members are encouraged to vote. I look forward to our discussion on the night. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation

Kate Stinson P & C President



**Student News**

**Year 6 mini-toy raffle**

As part of their fundraising activities this term, Year 6 students will be holding a raffle with over 50 mini-toys prizes donated by the Commonwealth Bank over the years. Tickets will be 50 cents each or 3 for a \$1.00. Tickets will be on sale before school over the next two weeks. Prizes will be drawn on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November.

**Dates to Remember:**

TERM 4			
Week 3	Monday	28 <sup>th</sup>	P&C Meeting 6pm
	October		
	Wednesday	30 <sup>th</sup>	Dance2bfit K-6 Assembly
	Thursday	31 <sup>st</sup>	Kindergarten Orientation 2
	October		
Week 4	Wednesday	6 <sup>th</sup>	Dance2bFit
	November		
Week 5	Monday	11 <sup>th</sup>	P&C Meeting 6pm Yarramundi Camp
	November		
	Tuesday	12 <sup>th</sup>	Yarramundi Camp
	November		
	Wednesday	13 <sup>th</sup>	Yarramundi Camp Dance2bFit
	November		
Week 6	Wednesday	20 <sup>th</sup>	Dance2bFit K-6 Assembly
	November		



### The Origins of Mt Hunter School

As promoted by The Oaks Historical Society



Mount Hunter is one of the oldest districts in Australia. At the time of white settlement in 1788 it was inhabited by the Tharawal and Gundungurra people. The first visit by officials from the new Sydney Colony was in 1796 when Governor John Hunter “ascended a hill which from every point of view, appeared the highest in the neighbourhood.” He called it Mount Hunter, a peak situated one kilometre east of the modern Calf Farm Road.

In 1848 Governor Fitzroy appointed a Board of National Education to establish schools in rural districts, using a combination of government and private funding. Previously schooling in the colony had been under the control of the three churches (Anglican, Presbyterian and Catholic) supported by limited amounts of state aid. Fitzroy’s policy produced a steady increase in the number of New South Wales schools, with 259 operating by 1866. Mount Hunter was one of these new schools.

The driving force for establishing the school was the Macarthur family, pioneers of the Australian Wool Industry and doyens of Camden Society. An application was lodged in 1857 and construction work on the school building commenced the following year. It is not clear from the records if a separate teacher’s residence was built at this time. The first reference to the construction of a residence was in 1884. Most likely the school started with a single building, a traditional schoolhouse accommodating both the teacher’s family and a classroom. Other buildings came later.

In November 1858, James Macarthur (4<sup>th</sup> son of John Macarthur) wrote to the Education Board, informing them the building would be completed by the beginning of the following year. He estimated the likely number of students as between 40 and 60, with perhaps as many as 80 attending. He also referred to the School as being at Mount Hunter Bridge. In these early days of public education in NSW, the local residents were expected to provide one third of the cost of the school buildings by subscription with the Board providing the remaining two thirds. Macarthur gave a personal contribution of £20 (pounds). For this era it was a significant donation, pointing to the early financial success of the Macarthur’s and the general prosperity of the Mount Hunter district. The settlement was large enough to warrant a school, ranking third behind Camden and Cawdor in population. The school became Mount Hunter’s first public facility, the Westbrook /Mount Hunter Anglican Church followed in 1875.

In a letter written at the time of the school opening Macarthur suggested it be known as Westbrook. He maintained that the school on the bank of Mount Hunter Creek is commonly spoken of as Mount Hunter School for brevity but is a very inappropriate designation. Westbrook would be that more applicable to the situation. If the Board sees no objection to naming it Westbrook School Camden, we will cause it to be so inserted in the chart of the Estate and will name the fine ‘flat’ on the Mount Hunter Creek, in which the schoolhouse occupies a central position, ‘Westbrook Meadows’ instead of ‘Brooks Flat’ – the name it has borne amongst the old residents in this part of the country since 1813, when the late Captain Brooks had a station here.

During this period, public schools were managed by committees of local patrons of education. Initially at Westbrook the patrons were James Macarthur, Stephen Gardiner, Nicholas Carney and Samuel Wheeler. Soon after the school opened, Macarthur recommended the appointment of additional committee members namely Sir William Macarthur (5<sup>th</sup> son), James Chisholm and Kenneth McClennan.



George Nolan’s Bullock team with the Creamery and School buildings in the background

Within the Macarthur business, James was the financier, the organizer of their plans and profits while William was the stock manager and agriculturalist. Their close involvement with the new school gave it a sound start and secure financial base. In March 1859, James Macarthur sent the Board a cheque for almost two pounds which brought the total contribution from the people of Mount Hunter to more than £66, fulfilling their obligation to contribute one third of the £200 cost of the school. Reporting in a recent visit to the site Macarthur said there were 34 pupils in attendance out of a total enrollment of 41 (coincidentally the same school enrollment of the sesquicentenary year of 2009). He described the students as “*nice looking children but generally speaking quite untaught*”. He also suggested that Mr and Mrs Traveller who were both teaching in class should visit the school in Camden “*to familiarize themselves with the proper system of teaching which is practiced in the National Schools*”. Mr Traveller resigned from his position on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1860 but did not leave the school until March 1861 when he and his family travelled overseas. In late October 1860, one of the Westbrook patrons, Mr Chisholm asked for another teacher to be appointed. The records do not provide a date for when the next teacher Simeon Brown arrived in Mount Hunter, but during 1861 and early 1862, repairs and additions to the school costing £60 were made.





It is therefore likely the school was reopened soon after the Travellers left.

The school, however, had other problems. In July 1862, the Education Board asked for an explanation about its poor attendance record. A letter from the local patrons explained that this was not Mr Brown's fault, "but owing to the settlers being busy mowing their wheat to make hay in consequence of the rust (and needing their children home to help)." They also pointed out that due "to the drought last year, the parents have not been able to pay their school fees." Under government policy, these fees were intended to augment the salary paid to teachers by the Board.

At the end of 1863, Mr Brown and three other teachers in the Camden area wrote to the Board asking for a special financial supplement in lieu of the school fees. The inspector for the central district (which included Westbrook), Mr Gardiner, refused the request as he thought it would make the settlers lazy and encourage them to avoid their fees during times of prosperity. School attendance was an ongoing issue. In November 1866, many pupils were again kept home to help with the harvest.

The head of the school committee was now Captain Arthur Onslow, the husband of Elizabeth Macarthur (the only child of James Macarthur) and later the Member for Camden in the NSW Parliament (1869-80). In June 1868, Onslow wrote to the government asking for improvements to the school. A tank was needed to supply water, plus the slabs on which the schoolhouse was constructed had shrunk so badly "the place was full of draughts."

Later that year, Mr Brown asked to leave the school, as he felt that a change would be beneficial to him and his family. He and his wife had six young children but their accommodation consisted only of four rooms and a kitchen. The Browns, however, did not leave until September 1871. The next teacher, William Rollo, commenced his duties at Westbrook on 10 October. A month later he listed the things he felt could be improved at the school. There was still no water supply for the classroom. There was no glass in some of windows. And much to Rollo's discomfort, "the best room in the house is so full of vermin that we often have to get up in the night and clear the snails and frogs from the bed."



Despite these difficulties, Rollo was enthusiastic about his new position and during the end-of-year vacation he visited each of the families in the district, urging them to send their children to school. Notwithstanding these efforts, the attendance was still below 30 at the beginning of 1872.

By the end of the school year, however, he was able to report an average monthly attendance of 31 and a quarterly enrolment of more than 40. Captain Onslow wrote to the government in February 1873, saying that the school's numbers had increased considerably since Mr Rollo's appointment, mainly due to his enrolment campaign.

Unfortunately, however, the school soon lost Rollo, as he was transferred to Molong in the State's central-west.

Westbrook was without a teacher for six weeks until the arrival of John Boate, who was known as a diligent and capable teacher. He stayed at the school until March 1875. Initially as a temporary measure, William Millar and his wife Matilda were appointed as replacements.



Mr Millar was 60 years old and slightly deaf. He had been educated at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and had previously taught at Yass Presbyterian Denominational School. He looked after the primary-aged students while Mrs Millar taught the infants class and also gave instruction in writing, singing and sewing. For these services, she requested 'a small salary' (there is, however, no record of it being paid).

In December 1878, Mr Millar, not for the first time, absented himself from the teachers' examination, after which he was forced to resign. Mr Walker from Mulgoa Forest Public School was appointed as the school's teacher in January 1879. This coincided with a proposal to close the schools at Cawdor and Westbrook in favour of a new central school equidistant between the two. Resident protests in both localities, however, forced the abandonment of this idea.

By early 1880, consideration was being given to the construction of a new school at Westbrook. The district inspector's assessment of the school facilities condemned them as "very old and past repair – most of the plates, floor joists and most of the slabs are perfectly rotten." He recommended "the erection of new brick premises for the (school) attendance will warrant it."

In September 1883, the Minister for Public Instruction referred the problems at Westbrook to a conference of inspectors of schools. As a result, in 1884, a contractor named Wheatley built a new classroom and a residence at a cost of 1060 pounds. This appears to have been the point from which the school had separate buildings. It was a time of great change, as also in that year, Richard Todd replaced Mr Walker. Todd became the school's longest serving principal, teaching through to 1898. During his tenure, on 8 March 1888, the school's name was officially changed to Mount Hunter. Continued next month .....