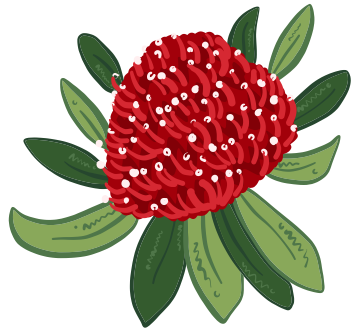


THE WARATAH

THE NEWSLETTER OF WARATAH SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTAL SCHOOL

- SUMMER 2025



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

As we look back over 2025, I am so pleased to let you know that so many of our students have made progress in their learning over the year. One of the requirements for each school is to keep records of what students have learnt each year, and there have been so many positive outcomes for our students.

In addition to wonderful outcomes in teaching and learning, we have also shared some larger school events, such as Book Week, Footy Day, the Halloween Disco, and in recent weeks, graduation.

This year we farewell 6 students who have turned 18 years old during the year, and several other students who are moving house or starting a new adventure in 2026. To our graduating students - Abdullah, Andrew, Ekina, Eddie, Jason and Sam, we wish you all the best in your adult life. We have been fortunate to share your journey with you so far and we wish you and your families all the best in the future. To Aloni, Nancy, and Krissy, we hope you remember your time at Waratah with fond memories, and wish you the best of luck in your new settings.

Bronwyn



EARLY YEARS 1

What a wonderful and busy semester it has been! The students in EY 1 have worked hard, explored new experiences, and continued to grow in so many ways.

Our Farm Raiser sessions have been a big success. The students have enjoyed getting their hands dirty planting, watering, and harvesting a variety of vegetables and herbs. They have learned about where our food comes from and how to care for plants as they grow.

Everyone has also loved our swimming sessions this term. The students have been building their confidence in the water, practising jumping in, blowing bubbles, and kicking. It's been wonderful to see how much their swimming skills have improved each week.

We've celebrated some fun school events together too. Footy Day was full of colour and excitement, with students dressing up in their team colours and joining in footy-themed games and activities. We also had a spook-tacular time celebrating Halloween, and the students enjoyed the creativity of Book Week, sharing their favourite stories and dressing up as beloved characters.

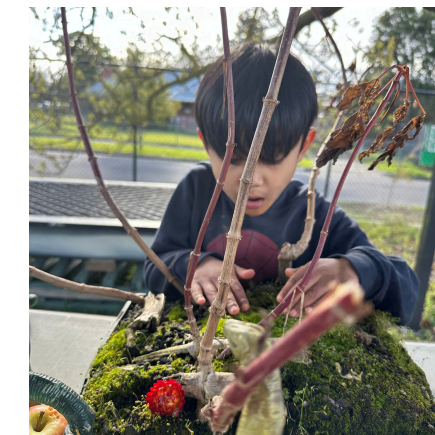
Our regular library sessions continue to be a highlight. The students love choosing new books to read and exploring different stories each week. Through our PMP (Perceptual Motor Program) activities, they have also continued to develop their coordination, balance, and movement skills in a fun and active way.

In Numeracy, the students have enjoyed learning about number, shape, and location through hands-on activities that build understanding and confidence. In Literacy, they have continued to enjoy reading and writing sessions, being introduced to new characters each week and growing their vocabulary and comprehension skills.

It's been a fantastic semester full of learning, laughter, and growth. We are so proud of all the progress the students have made and look forward to even more exciting learning adventures ahead.

Have a safe and restful break. See you all next year!

Ashely, Marisa, Grace, Amir, Indie, Iris, Khalid, Sumaya, Zain



EARLY YEARS 2

Wow! The year has gone by so quickly!

All students in Early Years 2 have been working hard towards their goals, and their wonderful efforts should be celebrated.

In this semester, students in Early Years 2 enjoyed participating in daily data collection activities, including sorting who was at school and who was at home. During literacy, students took part in weekly Little Learners Love Literacy sessions and Shared Reading with Brigita. Students also enjoyed our regular library visits and exploring a wide range of books in a calm, supportive environment.

Throughout the year, we explored key maths concepts such as counting, location, patterns, and shapes through hands-on and play-based activities that encouraged turn-taking, problem-solving, and communication.

Students have continued to enjoy engaging in play-based learning as part of our unit on "I Care for Myself and My Toys." We focused on learning how to take care of our toys and classroom materials by packing away and handling equipment carefully. We also learned how to take care of ourselves, including brushing our teeth, dressing appropriately for the weather, and applying sunscreen before outdoor play. During these activities, students were able to play and learn at the same time, developing independence, responsibility, and self-care skills.

This year, students also participated in a variety of rich learning experiences, including:

- EY2 Breakfast Club - learning how to sit together, request food, wait patiently, and eat safely
- Swimming Lessons - showing confidence, enjoyment, and safe behaviour in the water
- Farm Visits - learning about soil, seeds, watering plants, exploring new smells, and tasting vegetables
- Music Lessons - exploring rhythm and sound using guitar, drums, tambourines, and movement
- Arts and Crafts - cutting, pasting, colouring, drawing, and creating together
- Social and Emotional Learning - practising sharing, playing with peers, taking turns, and talking about emotions

It has been a joy learning, playing, and growing alongside the students in Early Years 2.

We are incredibly proud of all they have achieved this year. We wish you and your families a safe, happy, and restful holiday season.

Warm regards to the families from

Brigita, Trang and all the students: Tasniim, Kawach, Ibrahim, Fromsa, Binti and JayJay.

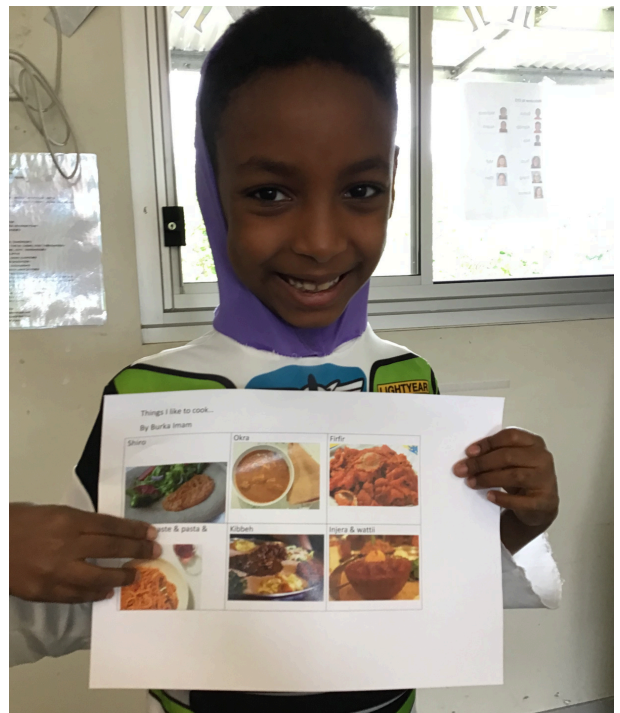
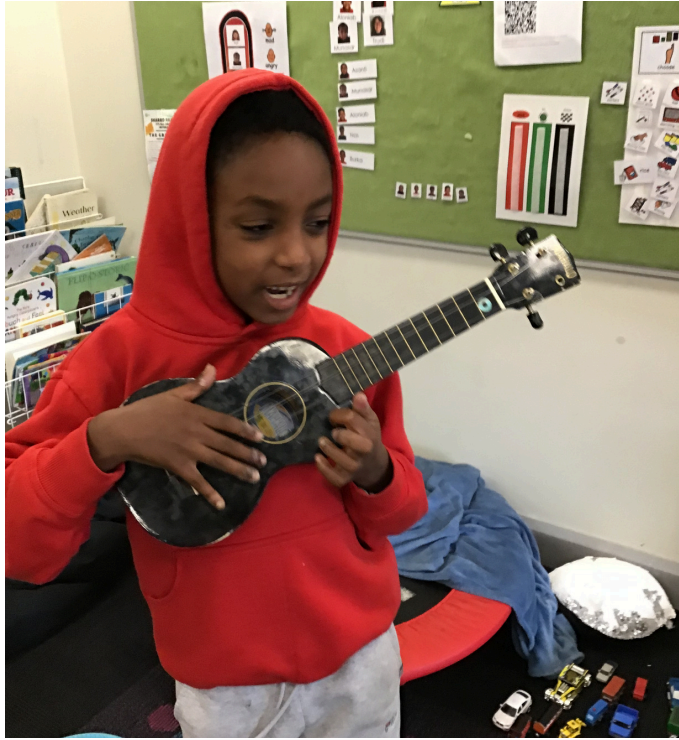




EARLY YEARS 3

In Early Years 3, our year has been filled with growth and memorable moments. We celebrated milestones and fun events including birthdays, the Halloween disco, AFL Day, Book Week and Swimming. Students have made truly amazing progress in their learning and gained confidence along the way. It has been a joy to see them build new friendships and show such enjoyment during interactions and shared play. This year, the children have also embraced hands-on learning through class projects, sensory exploration, and creative activities, letting their curiosity shine. We are incredibly proud of their growing independence and the enthusiasm they bring to school each day. What a wonderful year it has been!

Aloniab, Asanti, Burka, Munasar, Nas, Myf, Trang and Trudi



EARLY YEARS 5

This semester, our cheerful EY5 students have enjoyed participating in their regular school routines and exploring new learning opportunities through themed work and special events. In Maths, our focus has been on shape and transformation. The students have loved singing shape songs, listening to stories, and engaging in many hands-on activities that have strengthened their ability to identify and explore different shapes. Matching, sorting, and spotting shapes in our school environment has been a fun way to connect our learning to the world around us.

We have also been learning to use prepositions to describe where things are located, helping us understand language such as on, in, under, and next to.

Our theme, "Caring for Myself and My Toys," has given us many opportunities to practise good habits such as tidying our belongings and packing away when finished. We also learned about being SunSmart – Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide! Students sorted pictures of appropriate clothing for sun protection and regularly read our SunSmart book to remind us how to stay safe in the sun.

In the second half of the semester, we began swimming lessons again. The students attending have thoroughly enjoyed the water familiarisation and safety activities, building their confidence and water skills along the way.

Students have also enjoyed participating in a range of special events at school. Footy Day was a huge hit in our room. The students particularly enjoyed playing with the big inflatable ball. The Halloween Disco brought out our spooky sides. We had a great time dressing up and dancing in the hall.

It's been a wonderful semester of learning, growth, and fun in EY5!

Ash, Amiira, Charlotte, Kenzo, Sulaman, Uy, Carmel, Cynthia, Grace, Laura, Theresa and Vicky.





MIDDLE YEARS 6

It has been a very settled semester in MY6. The students have learnt the routines and been focused and hard working. They have all been making excellent progress towards their ILP goals and have been working on most of these every morning. In English they have been reading books with staff, working on their fine motor skills and handwriting and helping write stories by choosing images. In Maths classes we have been learning about shapes (e.g., circle, square, triangle) and locations (e.g., in, out). The students have made shapes from playdoh, taken interesting items out of a box, and requested circle carrots or crackers, square crackers or cheese and triangle cheese or melon slices. We have moved on from making pizza's to making scrolls with the added fun of rolling out dough and rolling up the scrolls before cutting them into slices. Swimming and cooking have also been very popular sessions. It has been such a delight to work with all of the students in MY6 in 2025. We wish you all a happy holiday and look forward to seeing you all in 2026.

Meg, Jennie and Kristin, with Harerta, Orla, Raff, Sara, Sterling and Tyler





ROOM 8

It's been such a joy watching our students grow, learn, and laugh together this year.

What an incredible year it has been for Room 8! It has been such a pleasure to see students working together, achieving their individual goals, and making fantastic progress in all areas of their learning.

Our love of stories has continued to grow this year. We've enjoyed reading a variety of books together, including *I'd Like to Be a Pirate*, *5 Little Monkeys Wash the Car*, and *Thank You for Being my Friend*. Every Tuesday & Thursday, students have looked forward to visiting the school library to explore new books and borrow favourites for our classroom book boxes.

In Maths, students explored shapes, more and less, and positional language. We also continued to develop counting skills through lots of hands-on activities – such as counting scoops while cooking or keeping track of shovel loads of dirt in the garden!

Some of our favourite highlights from this semester included dressing up for whole-school events like Book Week and Footy Day, as well as enjoying our exciting Middle Years bubble incursion.

It has been a fantastic year full of learning, laughter, and growth. Room 8 wish everyone a happy and safe holiday break – we look forward to seeing you all in 2026!

The Room 8 team - Emily, Janel, Kris, Kim, Rose, and Sarah, with Alice, Ekina, Lewis, Hasinat and Sam



MIDDLE YEARS 9

Students in MY9 have had an amazing and fun-filled year! We have worked together to achieve their ILP goals and continue following our routines in a new classroom.

We have continued to explore our love for books with weekly visits to the library, working on our reading skills and finding cool recipes that we can cook in class! In Maths, we have also looked at shapes, numbers, and 'more and less'.

In Term 4, we were able to participate in Swimming again, a crowd favourite! In the classroom, we have participated in some special cooking activities, making different types of pastas, pancakes, and trying different foods as well! We enjoyed dressing up for book week, participating in the bubble incursion and playing various games at footy day too!

All the staff in Middle Years 9 are so proud of what the students have accomplished this year. We have loved watching them grow and flourish and wish them luck for the future!

Middle Years 9 wish everyone a happy holiday and hope everyone has a great break. We can't wait to see everyone back in 2026!

Abdimalik, Ahmed, Ilyas, Mahad, Nancy, Riley, Sarsha, Amanda, Kieran, Guilia and Rebekah



MIDDLE YEARS 10

It's been a fun and exciting time for our students over the past two terms! From splashing around in the swimming program to building independent routines in the classroom, there's been no shortage of laughter, learning, and sensory play.

This semester, our class focused on their Zones of Regulation toolbox and developed a class Yoga session to follow for movement breaks. Through Morning Yarn and outside play, the students have embraced the importance of using friendly greetings, saying thank you, and showing kindness to themselves and others. Alongside all the fun, each student worked hard on their own personal goals, showing amazing resilience and growth in communication. We're so proud of everything Middle Years 10 has achieved!

Warm regards,

Amber, Ashleigh, and Shannon, along with Angelina, Christopher, Faida, Kai, Koshin and Lara



GARDENING

This term in our Gardening Program, students across all year levels enjoyed a wonderful variety of hands - on, nature - inspired activities.

Our Early Years students celebrated the birds in our garden, observing their colours, songs, and habits through creative and sensory experiences.

Middle Years and Senior students took on a range of gardening projects, including caring for the school office plants and heading out on nature walks to collect treasures by colour - a fun way to explore patterns, smells and beauty in nature.

Our Senior Students also designed and painted their own calico bags themed around Our Favourite Fruits - a colourful collaborative and creative project that combined art and sustainability.

To finish the term, students worked together to harvest, label, and prepare herbs for donation.

These fragrant bundles of freshness were a lovely way to share our garden's bounty with the community.

It's been a term full of growth, creativity, and teamwork in the garden!

Happy Summer Holidays Margaret



SATELLITE

What a busy year it's been in the Satellite Unit! Our students have grown in confidence, independence, and teamwork while having so much fun along the way.

We've had an action-packed year filled with exciting activities and excursions. The swimming program at Northcote Aquatic Centre was a huge highlight - the students loved every session and showed amazing improvement in such a short time! Our trips to the Melbourne Museum and Werribee Zoo were full of wonder and excitement, especially the Safari Bus where we got to see so many incredible animals up close.

We also took part in the Gardening Program at Waratah, learning how to care for different fruits and vegetables and watching them grow. Our weekly walks to Coles and Sweet Evelyn Cafe were a wonderful way to build our communication, maths, social, and independence skills while being active in our community.

The Christmas Variety Day was full of fun, laughter, and smiles - the rides and cartoon characters were a big hit! Throughout the year, our theme "Taking Care of Our Toys and Ourselves" reminded us about kindness, responsibility, and self-care. We also celebrated many birthdays and special moments together.

We are so proud of everything our students have achieved this year. Thank you to all our families for your ongoing support and encouragement.

Wishing everyone a joyful, safe, and relaxing holiday season!

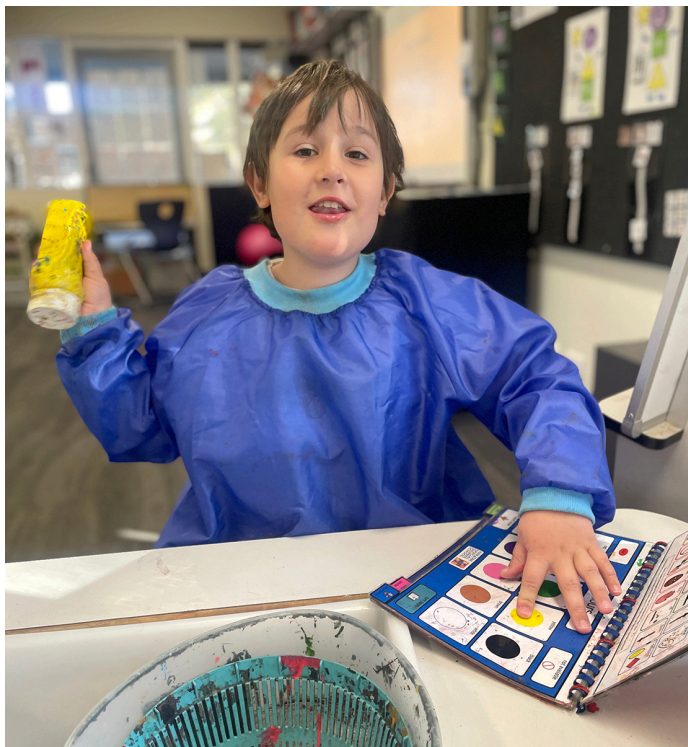
The Satellite Team

James, Leon, Sunny, Tony, Yusuf, Brendan, Jeni and Huong



ART

The Art Program has focused on a therapeutic and sensory-based approach during this year, with students learning to creatively express themselves through their choice and use of colour, shape, texture, and form. Over Terms 2 and 3, students have been encouraged to engage their mind, eyes, hands and fingers by exploring differing art materials and techniques in a fun, structured and supported environment. During various mark making, drawing, painting, collage and sensory-based activities, students have been exploring and experimenting with: acrylic and watercolour paints; crayons; markers; pencils; paintbrushes; rollers; sponges; texture combs; stamps; stencils; spinning tools; spray bottles; shaving cream; play dough; cotton sand; and even a hair dryer. Through sensory exploration and experimentation with these differing materials and tools, students have found the process to ignite their creativity, develop and refine their communication and fine motor skills, as well as provide emotional regulation and therapy. Well done everyone!!





ROOM 11

Room 11 continued to focus on our expected classroom behaviours of “sharing space with others”, “using equipment appropriately” and “trying our best”. Work skills included making dog biscuits, gardening, making cards and the laundry program. We visited breakfast club, participated in senior electives, celebrated student birthdays and visited the farm. A highlight was the opening of the new senior’s shop. Students earned waratah dollars during the week to purchase items on a Friday.

This year we see Eddie and Andrew graduate from school. Eddie started at Waratah in Prep and leaves behind a legacy of incredible acrobatics, a passion for connection and a young man who appreciates the wonder of smell, taste and texture. Andrew came to Waratah from Bulleen Heights in 2023. He found his groove inviting his trusted people into his world of characters, ideas and dreams for the future. Andrew’s love of his best friend Timmy the sheep showed us all how we can use our minds in different ways to help us navigate the world. Romeo, Greg, Adil, Eddie wish you all the best for life after school.

Krysten, Aidan, Jeni, Laura and Evan.



room 11



SENIOR TRANSITION 1

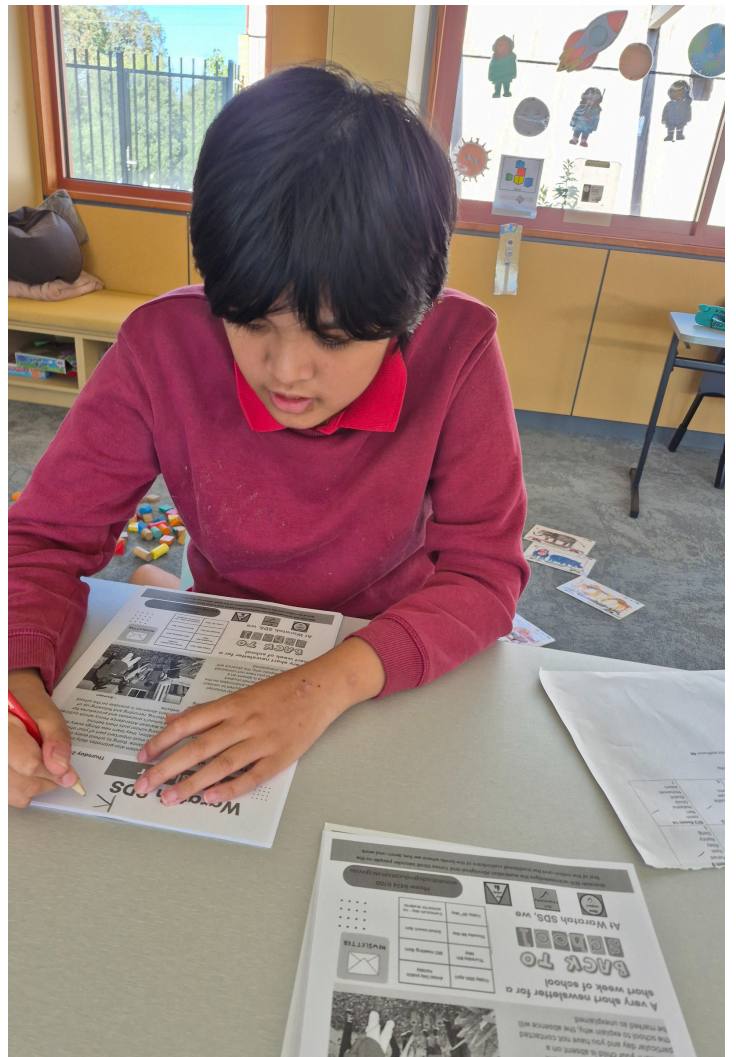
It's been a busy and exciting second half of the year in Senior Transition 1! Our students have continued to build their vocational skills through a range of fun, hands-on activities. Each week, students have taken on important roles such as delivering the school newsletter, sorting and delivering fruit to classrooms, and running our recycling program. Through sorting and counting bottles and cans, students practised their maths skills while helping the environment. The money raised from recycling went straight into restocking our STOP Shop, where students took turns working as shop assistants and customers – learning valuable money-handling and communication skills along the way.

Our Farm Program has also been a real highlight this semester! Students learnt how to plant, water, and harvest a variety of fruits and vegetables. The fresh produce was then used in our Cooking with Kurtis program, where students prepared and enjoyed delicious rice and noodle dishes made with ingredients straight from the farm. In Term 3, our theme was Celebrations. Students explored different cultural events and traditions, learnt about birthdays, and spent time celebrating what makes each of us unique. This term, our focus has shifted to learning about public and private places – helping students understand boundaries and safety in different environments. A big highlight this semester was camp, where some of our students had the amazing opportunity to spend time away with friends and staff. There were plenty of smiles, laughter, and memories made!

We also had so much fun celebrating Footy Day and Halloween – the costumes, colours, and smiles were everywhere!

It's been a wonderful year in Senior Transition 1, and we are so proud of how much each student has learnt, grown, and achieved. We can't wait to see what's next!

Rebecca, Takako, Bek, Abdullah, Hugh, Mayer, Otto, Phoebe, & Samuella.





SENIOR TRANSITION 2

What a fabulous year we've had in ST2! It's been busy, productive and filled with exciting programs, activities and learning experiences.

In Term 3, our topic was Celebrations, which was lots of fun. We celebrated Friendship Day by hosting a special party for the other senior school classes. The students did an amazing job setting up the tables, decorating the room, and preparing delicious fairy bread and cake to share. There was music, dancing and lot of fun for everyone.

Our excursions have been very popular this semester. In Term 3, we visited Woodlands Park where students explored different walking paths and trails. Then in Term 4, we walked for 35-minute along the Darebin Creek Trail to Artiga Café. Along the way, we spotted birdlife, insects and many different types of trees. The students loved ordering a drink at the café—a well-deserved reward after their long walk!

The Breakfast Club has continued to be a big success. Our students were thrilled to host parents and bus staff, proudly serving toast, crumpets, cereal and fruit salad. These mornings were a real treat, and everyone looked forward to the special visits.

One of the biggest highlights of the year was writing our own class song! Each student contributed a line to the lyrics, and together we created and filmed a fun music video. There was so much laughter and teamwork throughout the process and we were very proud of the result.

As we come to the end of the year, we want to thank all our ST2 families for their ongoing support and encouragement which has helped our students achieve their best. We have had a wonderful year. We also farewell Jason and Krissy, who are leaving us this year—we wish you both all the very best for the future!

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy, safe holiday season.

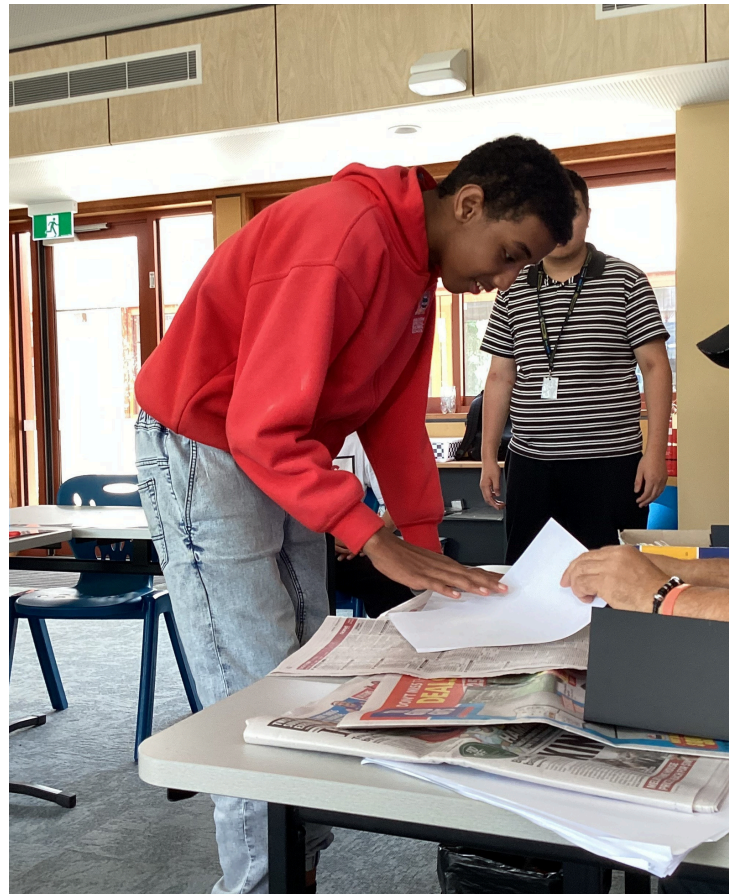
Warm regards,

The ST2 Team

Catherine, Mathilde and Joe,

Adam, Olivia, Natasha, Khalid, Ben, Mohamek, Krissy and Jason

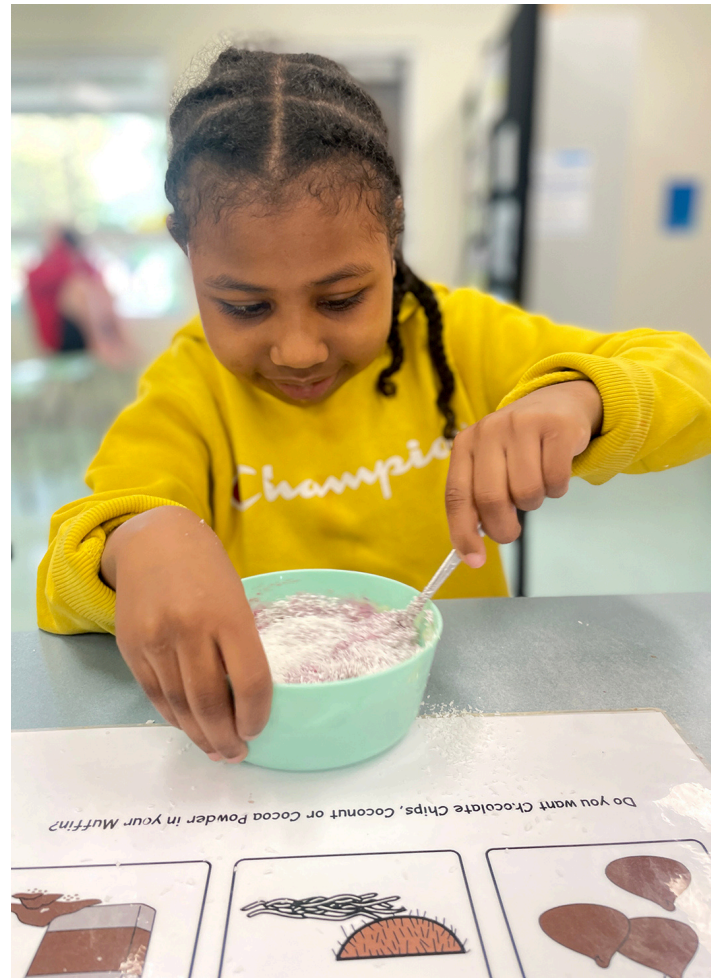




MECRAFTS

We have had the very fortunate and wonderful opportunity to take many of our students down to Farm Raiser, or to our own School Garden, to harvest fresh vegetables and herbs for the Homecrafts Cooking Program during Terms 1 and 4 this year. Students have loved being able to identify, pick, and then bring the fresh produce back to the kitchen. They have then used and incorporated the fresh produce into their very own nutritious and delicious dishes such as: veggie noodles; handmade pizzas; fruit flavoured muffins; and frozen banana, mixed berry & passionfruit sorbet. During the preparation and creation of the differing dishes, students have learnt about kitchen safety and hygiene, and refined their fine motor skills by developing basic food preparation skills such as: cutting and slicing ingredients using safety knives; measuring out, adding and mixing ingredients together; turning on/off and using appliances such as microwaves, hand mixers, and food blenders; and altering and changing ingredients by heating and cooling. Well done everyone!!!

Kurtis



PERSONAL & SOCIAL STUDIES

Over this semester, students participated in a variety of activities such as music and movement, art and craft, games and cooking sessions to develop their social, mental, emotional and physical capabilities. Students learnt about the importance of personal hygiene, healthy diet and exercising to keep themselves healthy.

The focus for this semester was to develop students' awareness and respect for their own cultural heritage and of the people around them as part of the multicultural studies. This involved learning about three different countries Somalia, Vietnam and India. The students learnt about the location of the countries on the world map, their national flags, traditional food and clothes, music and art and most importantly their festivals and celebrations.

Gurinder



As part of this curriculum, the students participated in a variety of activities to develop and practise skills required to be successful in a workplace. Over this semester, students participated in the 'Farm Raiser' program where they developed some gardening skills such as identifying different herbs and vegetables growing on the school farm, planting, watering and harvesting. Moreover, they participated in the 'Farm to table' program where they prepared pasta, sold scones and vegetable Rice Pulao. As part of this program, they learnt to take food orders, collect money, pack and deliver orders. The students were encouraged to view their role as a way they contribute to their community, socialise with others and develop confidence.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This semester in PE we finally settled into our forever hall. This space is a particular favourite amongst the younger students who love to run, climb, and explore. This was highlighted by how safe and responsible they have been during transitions - it is quite the trek from the early years yard. For our middles and senior students, we could really spread out for sports, games, and other movement activities. Our Term 3 team focus sport was Australian Rules Football. This culminated in footy day where the students enjoyed coming together to celebrate their favourite teams, songs, and snacks, we even had a goal kicking competition but amidst all the excitement... everybody won!

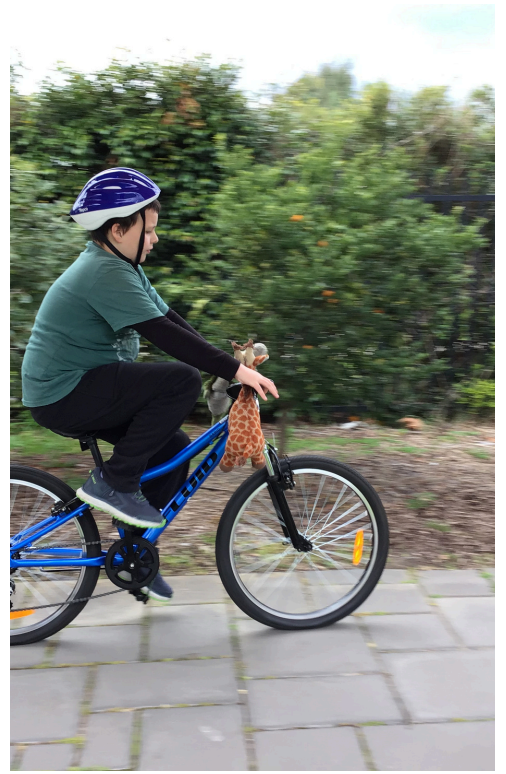
In Term Four - "striking a fielding", we explored net sports. These included tennis, balloon tennis, totem tennis, table tennis... and badminton! Other activities included bike riding, yoga, aerobics, and the addition of a much loved (albeit short lived) cage ball - a giant and durable beach ball which even the most reserved students could not ignore. Some of our middle and senior students participated in personalised gym style programs, where the focus was on recording progress, building strengths and addressing areas for improvement.

Regular programming paused briefly in October for the planning, organisation, and enjoyment of our beloved Halloween disco, a time for everyone to move, rattle, shake, and dance to the beat of their own drum. Halloween has long been a favourite at Waratah, our students love nothing more than to dress up and dance. Far from being scary, Halloween is a time to celebrate everyone different and diverse- and of course enjoy the odd trick and occasional treat 😊

On the topic of all things social and sporting, the students look forward to our next Interschool sports with Broadmeadows SDS, set to occur in week 10. If last year's event is anything to go by, I am sure it will be a fun and friendly event and hopefully we will see some familiar faces. Happy holidays everyone!

Stay safe, active and hydrated.
Clare, PE





CAMPS

This year we had 2 camps, one in Term 1 and one in Term 3. Both camps were fairly small but well-staffed, giving some of our students with less experience or higher support needs the opportunity, to participate in this amazing outdoor education experience. It is my absolute delight to report some amazing upgrades to the facilities including a new and improved low ropes course, talk about a glow up! This course might be even cooler than the high ropes, word on the street is that there are other new and exciting things on the horizon. Another exciting development is that camp which now includes full catering of all meals and snacks at no extra cost, wow! In the spirit of immersive education, students were supported to act responsibly and set tables, show respect by waiting their turn to be served, and act safely by washing up afterwards. Meals were hearty and nutritious, and everyone's dietary requirements and mealtime plans were catered to. Amazing!



