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Building Works on Campus

Tocal has received $5.5 million for capital works on the campus. The funds have come from the Federal Government and will be used to improve training and accommodation facilities for Tocal students. Work on most of these projects has started. The college kitchen will be done over the Christmas break.

The college improvements will include extensions to the college kitchen, a caretakers flat to provide after hours support, extending the multi purpose skills training centre, training room at the college dairy and improved accommodation for visiting school groups.

The start of the 2010 Tocal College year has been postponed to February 15 to allow this to be completed in time for the new student intake.

Students and visiting groups from 2010 on will reap the benefits from these facility upgrades.

Cows Create Careers

This is a schools’ initiative that started in Victoria. Over the last few years it has been introduced into NSW schools. It involves setting up a pen and shelter and bringing dairy calves to high schools for 3 weeks.

During this time, students feed and care for the calves and do various units on the dairy industry.

This gives them an appreciation for the importance of the industry in providing milk and dairy products. It also allows students to find out what it is like to work on a dairy farm.

The program is supported by Tocal College, NSW Department of Education, local farmers who supply the calves and local businesses who provide calf feed and shelters.
Principal's Column

There is so much happening at Tocal this year. It is one of the busiest years I have seen.

Students are progressing very well in their courses; they are getting involved in college life and the student community.

It has been gratifying to witness how students have matured and become independent adults in such a short period of time.

I was pleased to see that two Tocal graduates were runners up in the NSW Farmer of the Year Awards.

Megan Mosely runs a farm near Cobar with her husband. They have developed innovative sustainable farming practices and are active in the farming community, promoting modern farming methods.

David Gibson from Dorrigo is an ex-trainee who has done well as a rural contractor in the Dorrigo area.

In July, the Rotary Youth Driving Awareness Program was held at the college. All Certificate III students and around 300 local high school students were trained in safe driving practices.

This was an initiative of the Tocal College Advisory Council and I am sure the students appreciated this course as it will help them understand the serious consequences of motor vehicle accidents.

We recently received advice that Hunter Water is awarding 3 new scholarships for 2010 students. This is a great boost to our scholarship program, which provides financial support to at least 65 students each year. The majority of Tocal students receive scholarships to assist with payment of their college fees.

Tocal recently received capital funding from the Federal Government to renovate some buildings on campus and to build new facilities that will enhance college life for all students.

I look forward to having you join us at Tocal in the near future.

Best wishes,

Cameron Archer
Principal

Funds for Westpac Rescue Helicopter

Each year Tocal students raise funds for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service that has saved many Hunter lives.

Those injured in accidents on country roads or in the bush can be quickly transported by helicopter to hospital for treatment.

Tocal Students Association donates $1,000 each year to this worthy cause.

Rotary Youth Driver Awareness (RYDA)

As part of a leadership and teamwork course for students this year, the RYDA program was conducted for Tocal and local high school students. This 1-day course involved local Rotary clubs, police and emergency services personnel, accident victims and their families.

One of the activities involved a police car demonstrating breaking distances at different speeds. Students were amazed at how much longer it took to stop a vehicle travelling a few extra kilometres an hour.

The aim of the workshop is to make young people appreciate the potential dangers of driving motor vehicles.

The program has been very popular in schools around Australia and was well accepted by Tocal students. Rotary plans to run this program annually for local year 11 high school and Tocal students.

The 1-day RYDA program was part of a 5-day leadership course that included guest speakers Sam Gunn (Chairman of the Young Farmers Taskforce in the NSW Farmers Association) and Penn Lloyd (Meat and Livestock Authority).
Bushfire Training

Certificate III students are trained in fighting bushfires as many will need these skills during their working lives.

Safe fire fighting techniques are valuable skills which are learnt by starting fires in suitable college paddocks and then confining the burn and making sure the fire doesn’t spread to other areas. For some reason, students enjoy this activity!

Some days the winds were very strong. However, with careful preparation and the right safety gear, the fires were still able to be lit and contained.

Some students were so partial to this they joined the local bushfire brigade to continue their training.

Leaving Their Tales Behind Them

The college runs about 250 Dohne and Border Leicester cross ewes. These are used to train students in sheep handling, crutching and shearing.

Students learn how to mark lambs, which is an important operation on sheep properties. This involves removing the tails of all lambs and the testicles of the males.

Different methods are used on different sheep properties. These include hot irons to cauterise the wounds, rings to cut off the blood supply or sharp sterilised knives.

Some students enjoy this work more than others, but it is a necessary operation as removal of tails reduces the incidence of flystrike, which can be a devastating problem especially in humid conditions.

New Scholarships

Hunter Water recently announced new scholarships for 3 Tocal students. These involve 2 awards of $2,000 and 1 of $1,000.

The scholarship programs are part of the sponsorship arrangements for the Tocal Field Days. Hunter Water is a key sponsor of the Tocal Field Days which are held on campus the first weekend in May each year.

The new scholarships will be allocated to 3 students commencing at Tocal in 2010. Applications for all Tocal scholarships are available at www.tocal.com

NSW Farmer of the Year Runners Up

Two ex-students, Megan Mosley and David Gibson, were runners up for the NSW Farmer of the Year 2009.

Andrew & Megan Mosely - NSW Farmer of the Year Runners Up

Andrew and Megan Mosely are passionate about farming. They run ‘Eliwanda’ and ‘Manuka’ Stations which span some 26,500 hectares near Cobar, west NSW. Both stations support a diverse livestock mix, including a white Dorper sheep stud, Santa Gertrudis Shorthorn Cross cattle and Boer Cross does.

Andrew and Megan strive to achieve an environmentally regenerative, low input, red-meat production enterprise. They take a holistic farm business management approach to ensure the business balances social, environmental and economic variables.

David Gibson - NSW Young Farmer of the Year Runner Up

David Gibson is the manager of both ‘Kelvin Park’ and ‘Rainbow Valley’ near Dorrigo, NSW north coast. He runs a leading, mixed-farming operation of breeding and backgrounding stud Angus cattle, forward fodder production and a fodder conservation business.

His foray into farming came at age 22, when an opportunity arose for him to purchase a hay-baling contracting business.

Under his management, the business grew by 80% in 5 years, and in 2008 he was able to use the proceeds to purchase ‘Kelvin Park’.

Ultimately, David aims to operate a long-term economically and environmentally sustainable business.
Ex-Student Mick Fetch

Novocastrian-born Mick Fetch loved music from an early age and was influenced by the music styles of Slim Dusty, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley.

Whilst at school, he was involved in the school choir and operettas.

Mick was 18 when he got his first guitar and felt the impact of a variety of musical styles. Once he got the guitar Mick couldn’t put it down.

With the encouragement of his family, he bought a P.A. system and was doing gigs in local pubs and clubs within 12 months!

Mick lived the music life of Sydney and Central West NSW and rubbed shoulders with many experienced musicians who taught him how to hone his craft.

He performed with various bands in Sydney and Wollongong. Later he moved to Mudgee where he was the founding member of country band “Left Hand Drive”.

However, all roads eventually led home and he returned to Newcastle to pursue a flourishing solo career.

Mick spent time with legendary Newcastle cover band “Radio Ga Ga” whilst developing the acoustic style for which he is now renowned.

Tocal students are hoping that Mick will agree to give a concert at the college later in the year.

Woolclasser

Hunter TAFE holds a woolclassing course at Tocal, one night a week over 2 years. This course prepares students for work classing wool in shearing sheds.

Their job is to classify fleeces, according to length and quality, straight after shearing, and prepare the clip for sale.

Many graduates embark on a career in woolclassing and travel round Australia from shed to shed.

Others class their employer’s woolclip or do it as a sideline to make extra money during the shearing season.

There is a shortage of woolclassers in Australia. Hence, The Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX) is trying to attract back woolclassers who have let their registration lapse and encourage more people including women to train and take on this job.

To be registered with AWEX a woolclasser must have completed and passed a recognised training course in woolclassing/wool preparation.

Bales bearing a registered woolclasser’s stencil are declared by the woolclasser to be prepared to or above the Standard declared in the Woolclassers’ Code of Practice.

Next Open Days

Friday 9 October 2009
10.20am - 3.00pm

Friday 16 October 2009
10.20am - 3.00pm

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