



Finley High School

5th December



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Newsletter Week 8, Term 4 2025

A WORD FROM MR WARD

Year 10

Year 10 are experiencing some wonderful opportunities as they prepare to move into the senior school in 2026. In Week 7, they travelled far and wide to take part in a range of work experience placements. A huge thank you, once again, and for the final time to Mrs Philpot for coordinating this important event. From all reports, students enjoyed valuable and positive experiences. This week, Year 10 are on the South Coast of NSW, and based on past trips, they are sure to have a fantastic time. On Monday 8th December, Year 10 will travel to Deniliquin to take part in driver education. I strongly encourage all students to make the most of this opportunity, because "A car can carry you far, but one careless second can take everything away."

Congratulations Levi

The school is incredibly proud of Year 7 student Levi, who has been invited by Sports Travel Australia to tour Canada in June and July 2026 and compete against some of the world's best young athletes. In addition, Levi will be travelling to New Zealand in January 2026 to participate in the North Island Colgate Games.

We are also delighted to announce that Levi has been nominated for Junior Sportsman of the Year and will attend the Edward River Council Australia Day Awards.

Levi's dedication and achievements are truly inspiring, and we are so proud of everything he has accomplished. To help support Levi and his family with the costs of these remarkable opportunities, the school will be holding some fundraising activities. If you would like to sponsor or support this incredible young man's dreams, please contact the school.

Men's Shed Donation

Thank you to the Finley men's shed for their generous donation to the school of \$3000. We are so grateful for this donation and the support of local groups like the men's shed. We are running several projects at the school so this money will go a long way to support teaching, learning and wellbeing programs.

Supporting Your Local School

I would like to thank all the families who choose our wonderful school. In our community we often hear messages like “shop local” or “play for your local team.” In the same way, supporting our local school is vital. Choosing our school brings essential financial and human-resource support to our town. When enrolment numbers drop, it has a significant impact on the whole community, so your support truly matters. Thank you for standing with us and helping our school continue to thrive.

Waterwheel

The Waterwheel magazine is now available to purchase from the front office for \$25.00. It's a wonderful memento of the year, and we thank everyone who contributed photos, reports, and Canva creations throughout 2024. A special mention goes to Cath Rorato for her work, Elyse Price for compiling a large portion of the magazine, and Kirstie Chesworth and Aileen Begbie for their careful editing. Your efforts have created a publication our school community can be proud of.

Orientation Day

Year 6 students from all our local primary schools came together on Tuesday for their final transition visit before beginning high school in 2026. It was wonderful to see them experience a school assembly and take part in a variety of lessons at Finley High School.

Thank you to all the staff who prepared and delivered lessons on the day. We look forward to welcoming our new Year 7 cohort when they begin with us in February 2026.

CWA STEM Scholarship

Congratulations to Chelsea Winn who was the recipient of this years CWA STEM scholarship. Chelsea is going off to study as a primary school teacher and the scholarship will make a big difference with university fees, resources and accommodation. A big thank you to the panel of Anne-Marie, Julie, and Heather who commented on how worthy each applicant was and commended Finley High School on the calibre of its students. It was evident that the school is doing an outstanding job in nurturing interest and excellence in STEM pathways.



Service Recognition

At our weekly Tuesday assembly, I had the pleasure of recognising three outstanding staff members for their dedicated service to NSW Education.

Congratulations to:

- Kathy Dempster – 20 years
- Garry Harding – 20 years
- Daryl Bird – 30 years

Thank you all for your commitment and contributions to our school community.

Deniliquin High School Support

We have all heard the devastating news from Deniliquin, where a fire has destroyed large sections of the school. Our thoughts are with Principal Mr Warren, his staff, and all the students during this incredibly difficult time. We are working closely with the NSW Department of Education to coordinate and offer any support needed. A heartfelt thank-you to our staff who recently prepared two wellbeing hampers for the team at Deniliquin High School to provide a small lift, and to our Firefighters, Elyse Price, Abbey Breust and Tanea Bower, who were on the ground responding during the event.

Respectful, Responsible Learners

November

Movember has come to an end for another year and a big thank you goes to the SRC for all their hard work in promoting this initiative, raising funds and hosting events. Your efforts have made a meaningful contribution to an important cause.



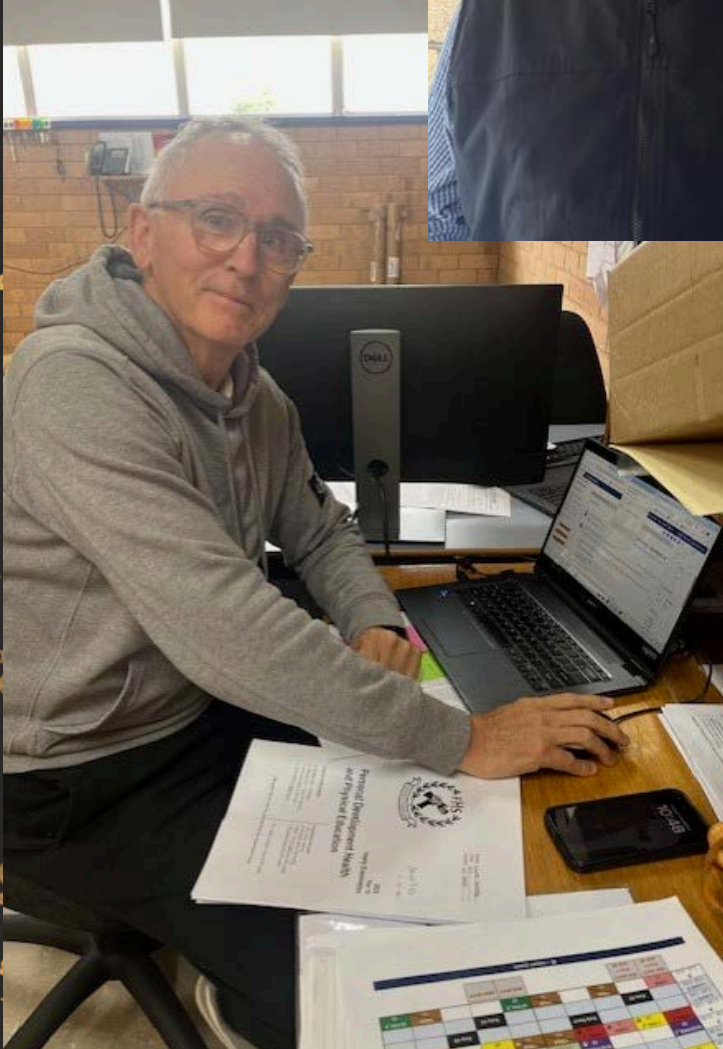
HALT Program

A big thank you to Finley Rotary and Jodi Brown for organising the HALT program. From all reports the presenter was outstanding, and the program was well received by all of our students and staff. The message was age appropriate and relevant regarding healthy relationships, being part of a positive change and encouraging supporting friendships.



Jeff Ward - Principal

2025 Retiring staff



Robyn O'Leary

For 38 years, Robyn O'Leary has dedicated herself to transforming the lives of young people through exceptional agricultural education at Finley High School. Since beginning her career in 1987, her commitment, vision and passion have shaped one of Australia's most successful and respected school-based agricultural programs. Her innovative approach, ability to inspire students, and tireless advocacy for agriculture have created a legacy that extends far beyond the school grounds.

Robyn has been central to developing hands-on, industry-aligned programs that give students authentic agricultural experience and clear pathways into the sector. She founded the school's carcass steer program and later established the Finley High School Shorthorn Cattle Stud and Poll Dorset Sheep Stud—initiatives unique in their scale and educational value. These programs provide students with practical, industry-accredited skills and connect them directly with farmers, breeders and agricultural businesses. Such partnerships offer meaningful applied learning opportunities, support engagement and prepare students for further education, employment and leadership roles in agriculture.

Her influence reaches well beyond the classroom. Robyn's leadership of the Agriculture Show Team is exceptional; she consistently volunteers long hours—often late into the evenings—to prepare students and livestock for competitions. Each year, she manages up to 40 participating students, coordinating entries, transport, accommodation, catering, and sponsorships. Remarkably, she has accompanied students to the Melbourne Royal Show every year since 1994, sometimes for more than 13 nights, demonstrating unmatched dedication.

Under Robyn's guidance, Finley High School has achieved outstanding success at agricultural shows across New South Wales and Victoria. Since 2022, the school has twice won the prestigious Bott-Burston Trophy for Most Successful School at Melbourne Royal, alongside numerous champion, supreme champion and grand champion titles. In 2024, Finley High achieved the rare feat of winning five of six major carcass awards and securing the Borthwick Trophy with steers bred entirely onsite. Strong results continued into 2025, reflecting the strength and consistency of the program Robyn has built. Students also excel in parading and junior judging, frequently reaching state competitions and being sought after by breeders to parade livestock—clear evidence of their professionalism.

Robyn's impact on students and the wider community is profound. More than 50 students regularly volunteer their lunchtimes to work at the agricultural plot, demonstrating the inclusive and inspiring environment she creates. She connects with students of all backgrounds and abilities, and many former students—now successful agricultural professionals—return to support the program, crediting her with shaping their careers. She believes in every student's potential and takes pride in watching them develop confidence, capability, and character. As Head Teacher, Robyn is a respected leader and mentor, known for her generosity, compassion, and commitment to supporting colleagues. Her leadership fosters cohesion, morale, and professional growth across the faculty.

Through her vision and strong community partnerships, she has also transformed the school's agricultural facilities from minimal resources into a first-class learning environment featuring breeding paddocks, sheep and cattle yards, and undercover working areas—improvements that will benefit generations of students.

Robyn's outstanding service is reflected in numerous honours, including the J.A. Sutherland Award, the ASG Inspirational Teaching Award, induction into the RASV Beef Cattle Hall of Fame, and multiple departmental and community recognitions. She views the personal growth of her students—gaining confidence, communication skills, leadership, and resilience—as the most rewarding part of her work.

Robyn O'Leary exemplifies the highest ideals of public service. Her dedication, innovation, and leadership have enriched countless students, strengthened community connections, and significantly advanced agricultural education across the region.

Sue Jarrett

Sue Jarrett joined Finley High School in 2013 as an on-call casual. She worked across all areas of the school the front office, kitchen and library. Sue learnt very quickly in every role; she was efficient, reliable, and nothing was ever a problem.

In 2019, Sue moved into a more permanent role in the library, working alongside Aileen Begbie and Jenny Philpot. It was here that Sue truly found her calling, creating amazing displays that often-reflected themes such as International Women's Day, NAIDOC, ANZAC Day, or the Olympics.

We will miss Sue's kind and gentle nature. Nothing was ever too much trouble for Sue, and she was very popular with students for her easy-going nature.

Sue is the ultimate "quiet achiever." If you want a job done properly ask Sue. She is a no-fuss person and a valued friend who always sees the best in everyone and everything. Sue is patient and kind to the students. Her absence will be keenly felt in the library, where she was such an important part of the SASS team. Morning teas won't be the same without Sue's delicious quiches at staff morning teas.

Jenny Philpot

Jenny Philpot began her journey at Finley High School as a casual teacher in late 2016, taking on regular part-time work in 2017. She initially worked in Hospitality before moving permanently into the Careers team around 2020.

In her role, Jenny ensures that all students have access to the resources and support they need to pursue local traineeships, apprenticeships, and employment. Her work in coordinating student work experience is exceptional she manages the entire process with great dedication, often putting in long hours to make sure every student has an opportunity. Jenny also follows up with employers to help students secure future placements and experiences. Local employers frequently praise Jenny for her professionalism and the strong relationships she has built, which often lead to new opportunities for Finley High students.

In addition to work experience, Jenny coordinates the School Based Apprenticeship program at Finley High School. She organises meetings with all stakeholders to ensure smooth transitions for students entering these programs, supporting them through to successful outcomes. These processes rely heavily on Jenny's outstanding relationships within the local community and her commitment to student success.

Jenny is known for her caring and empathetic nature. Students often seek her guidance not only for career advice but also for wellbeing support and life challenges. Her dedication to students extends beyond the classroom she supports Food Technology and Hospitality programs and assists with driver education for students facing barriers to completing their hours. Her popularity among students is evident, as many have invited her to attend the local debutante ball as the key presenter a clear sign of the respect and admiration they hold for her.

Among staff, Jenny is highly respected. Her opinion is valued, and she is known as a strong advocate for both staff and students. Jenny proudly represents Finley High School in the wider community, never hesitating to speak up in support of the school and its people. Jenny's hard work and commitment were recognised in 2023 when she received a Director's Award during Education Week. Finley High School has been very fortunate to have such a dedicated, compassionate, and community-minded teacher. Thank you, Jenny, for all that you have given to our school.

Garry Harding

Garry grew up in Toongabbie, in the Parramatta district, and attended Girraween Primary and Grantham High School in Seven Hills (now Hills Sports High).

Garry's teaching career began in Gilgandra, where he spent six weeks before receiving a call to take on a full-time position in Wilcannia, NSW at the age of 49! From there, he spent 10 years teaching in Wilcannia, followed by a short stint in Deniliquin, before finding his way to Finley High School, where he has been for the past decade.

Throughout his time at Finley, Garry has made a lasting impact in the TAS faculty, particularly with his expertise in Metalwork. His practical knowledge, calm approach, and dry sense of humour have earned him the respect and affection of both colleagues and students alike.

When asked about the highlights of his career, Garry reflected fondly on his time living in the NSW outback, driving the Wilcannia school bus through floodwaters, and of course, working alongside the great people at Finley High School, especially his mates in CAPA/TAS.

He says he will miss laughing and joking with the kids and annoying some staff! A keen Parramatta supporter Garry proudly represented the Parra Junior Eels, played for Toongabbie and competed in the University Shield during his high school days.

Replacing Garry will be no easy task not only because he has an exceptional set of practical skills, but Garry's knowledge of the equipment is outstanding. In true Garry style, he has requested no fuss and no special farewells. He's happy to quietly sail off into the sunset.

Thank you, Garry, for your humour and years of dedication to Finley High School. We wish you all the best as you head off into your next adventure wherever that may take you.

Dan Noonan

Dan Noonan recently shared an outstanding account of his life when he stood before the current Year 12 cohort to deliver an inspirational speech on life, hard work and making the most of every opportunity.

Dan's story is one of incredible breadth a life of study, teaching, business, and professional rugby, both in Sydney and England, before finding his way to Finley High School in 2021. Having never lived or taught in "the bush" before, Dan left the comfort of life by the ocean to take a leap of faith landing in a small farming town just fifteen minutes from the Murray River. As Dan puts it, he thought he'd stay for "a year or two," but five years later, he says, "it's been brilliant."

Teaching PDHPE, often with one leg strapped up, Mr Noonan quickly became a favourite among students. Calm, composed, and never one to be rattled, he's also earned the respect and friendship of staff. I knew I'd share a special bond with Dan the day I carried him fireman-style to his car after his leg gave out at a swimming carnival!

Dan is one of those rare colleagues who always takes the time to stop and genuinely ask how you're going something deeply appreciated by everyone around him. His professionalism, humour, and care for others have made a lasting impact at Finley High School.

Thank you, Dan, for your energy, wisdom, and friendship. We wish you all the best in whatever adventure comes next.



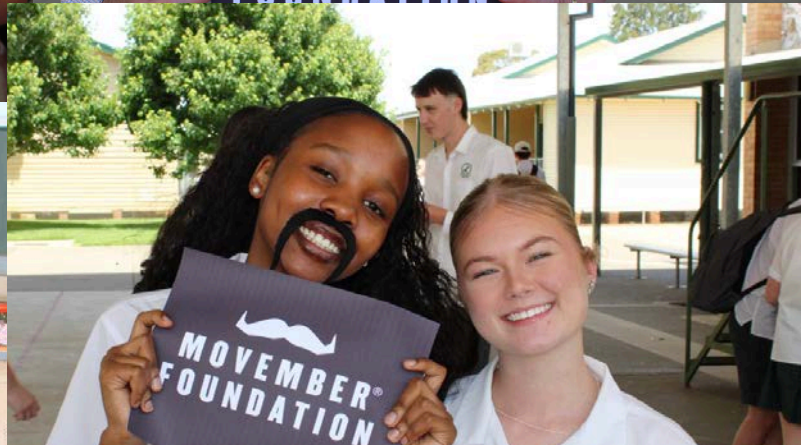
YEAR 10 WORK EXPERIENCE



RDA Wrap Up

On Thursday of Week 7, Harrison, Emily and Chance attended the RDA Christmas party to celebrate the end of their wonderful year of horse riding. Throughout the program, they have made fantastic progress in their balance, coordination and confidence, showing determination and enthusiasm each fortnight. During the celebrations, Chance was excited to win one of the party games, adding to the fun of the day. They also enjoyed a special ride in a horse-drawn cart and were delighted to receive a trophy from Santa in recognition of all their hard work. It was a joyful way to wrap up a successful year with RDA.











OFFICIAL



TAFE NSW Primary Industries Centre

Cnr Coolamon and Farrer Road,

NORTH WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

FINLEY HIGH SCHOOL

51 Tocumwal Street,

FINLEY NSW 2713

Dear Finley High School,

We are thrilled to share some exciting news! A huge congratulations to Year 9 & Year 12 students, James White and Tom White, for achieving First & Third Place respectively in the TAFE NSW Henty Junior Agriculture Judging Competition.

This is an incredible accomplishment, as there were 177 participants from across the region.

This competition tested a wide range of practical agricultural skills, including cattle breed identification, virtual welding, grain identification, wool recognition, and many more challenging stations. James and Tom's success is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and passion for agriculture.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Riverina Co-operative for generously donating a Yeti Drink Bottle and RB Sellars Wagga Wagga for generously donating a gift card as part of the prize pool. Their support helps make these opportunities even more rewarding for our students.

Well done, James and Tom! Your achievement is something your whole school community can be proud of.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Ingold". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Anna Ingold

Head Teacher – Agriculture and Animal Studies

Agribusiness Skills Team



School Based Apprenticeship – Carpentry

Are you passionate about Carpentry and ready to grow your career? Murrumbidgee Council is offering an exciting opportunity for a School based Apprenticeship - Carpentry to join our team.

Based at our Jerilderie Depot, you will work alongside our Building Supervisor/Inspector, gaining hands-on experience while working toward a nationally recognised Certificate III in Carpentry.

As an apprentice, you will learn how to handle carpentry materials, carry out general demolition of minor building structures, construct wall frames, and erect roof trusses. Your training will give you the technical knowledge and skill to become a first class carpenter

The successful candidate

A key requirement for this opportunity is to undertake a minimum of 144 days in paid employment during Year 11 and Year 12 plus the formal training required for the qualification. Undertake Certificate III Carpentry, and complete Stage 1 of this qualification by the end of your HSC. The employment and training can be undertaken during school time, after school and during school holidays.

To be successful in this role, you will also need to have the following:

- An ability to work as part of a team
- A can-do attitude, willingness to learn and to develop new skills
- An ongoing commitment to safety, quality and principles of continuous improvement

Course Delivery

Will be delivered both on the job and off the job. Two years part time during school, followed by three years full time post-school in both on and off the job training

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity. For a confidential discussion, in the first instance, please contact Sarah Gurciullo People and Culture Officer on 0417 765 465.

Please email your resume and cover letter to: jobs@murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au

Applications will be reviewed on Friday 12 December

FHS P&C UNIFORM OPEN DAYS

2025 - Term 4

WEDNESDAY 10th DECEMBER &
MONDAY 15th DECEMBER
3.30pm - 6.30pm

2026 - Term 1

TUESDAY 27th JANUARY &
WEDNESDAY 28th JANUARY
12.30pm - 3pm

2026 - Term 1

THURSDAY 29th JANUARY &
FRIDAY 30th JANUARY
9am - 12pm

All Welcome

AN OPPORTUNITY TO
TRY - BUY - ORDER
For students Year 6 - Year 12

LOCATED AT THE
FINLEY HIGH CANTEEN
ENTRY VIA HALL CAR PARK

For all enquiries contact
FHS Canteen - 0473946683
PLEASE NOTE - this phone will not
be monitored during
school holidays

The School Uniform Shop is run by the Finley High School P&C Association.
This is the only official uniform outlet for Finley High School.
All proceeds from uniform sales assist in supporting our students & school.

CASUAL POOL LIFEGUARD

2025/2026 Season

Make a Splash This Summer – We Need You!

Council is urgently seeking **Casual Pool Lifeguards** for the 2025/2026 season. Without lifeguards, our community pools cannot open – and we don't want that to happen!

If you're passionate about water safety, enjoy working outdoors, and want to be part of a great team, this is your chance. **Training and support provided.**

Please contact Berrigan Shire Council on 03 5888 5100 for more information.