Dear Parents and Caregivers

Over recent weeks you may have seen, heard or read about the flying fox colony that has returned to the Sunshine Coast and taken up residence on the Council and school properties bordered by Hunter Oval on the east, Bliss Oval on the north and our neighbours along Tepequar Drive on the west.

Recent publicity has come about as the lifestyle of a number of our neighbours has been affected by the noise, smell and droppings of the flying foxes. There is also concern about declining property values and uncertainty around health, heightened by the recent incidents of Hendra virus infection in horses and the potential of humans contracting the virus from horses.

For these reasons, the neighbours would like the colony relocated and have contacted Councillor Debbie Blumel to facilitate the process of information gathering and sharing, with a view to making a decision about future action. After meeting with representatives from Council, Department of Environment and Resource Management, Queensland Health, neighbours and various experts in this field, I write to summarise the situation and to inform you of the facts as presented by those experts with a view to having our school community well-informed and free from the more emotive arguments that arise when discussing flying foxes.

The Health Facts (information from Qld Government publications: ‘Living with Flying Foxes’ and ‘Hendra Virus Infection Fact Sheet’, Health Department and DERMS officials)

Flying foxes are associated with two viruses - the Australian Bat Lyssa virus and the Hendra virus.

**Lyssa virus** is not a reason to fear bats, as it is very rare and preventable if you are exposed. The rate of infection in free living, healthy flying foxes is less than one percent. To date, in Queensland, two humans are known to have died from Lyssa virus, one after being bitten by a flying fox and one after being bitten by a sheathtail bat.

Lyssa virus can only be transmitted to people when infected bat saliva comes into contact with human tissue through a bat bite, scratch or with exposure to mucus membrane eg eyes, nose or mouth. Therefore, it can be avoided by not handling these animals. If a dead, injured or sick bat is found, no attempt should be made to assist the animal. A staff member should be notified immediately, or if after hours or beyond school grounds, contact can be made with the Dept of Environment & Resource Management (1300 130 372) or RSPCA (1300 ANIMAL) or your local wildlife care group or rescuer.

In the unlikely event of contact taking place, it is recommended to wash the wound well with soap and water or any detergent. A vaccine is available to prevent Lyssa Virus infection following bat bites or scratches.

Humans are not exposed to the Lyssa virus if flying foxes fly overhead or feed or roost in gardens. Nor is it spread through their droppings, urine or if we live, play or walk near their colonies.

---

**Hendra Virus**

Although rare, the flying fox has been implicated in infecting a horse with the Hendra Virus. Scientists are yet to determine exactly how horses are infected. Hendra virus is not transmitted from flying foxes to humans.

Horses may contract Hendra virus infection from eating food contaminated by flying fox urine, saliva or birth products.

The seven confirmed human cases all became infected following close contact with respiratory secretions and/or blood from a horse infected with Hendra virus. Many people have reported similar contact with infected horses but have remained well and their blood tests have shown no evidence of infection. There is no evidence of human to human contract nor that the virus can be passed directly from flying foxes to humans, from dogs to humans, from the environment to humans, from humans to horses, or can float in the air.

**So what is the situation at Stella Maris?**

I am told that the Black and Grey-headed flying foxes took up residence about 18 months ago, and to date, we have been largely unaware and unaffected by their presence. Unlike our neighbours, staff and students are not at school when the bats are at their most active, that is, very early in the morning and early evening during which times they fly out and return from their foraging for fruits and seeds. During the day, bats are relatively inactive in the trees.

Our singular concern at school is health and well-being and I am assured by health and environment officials that avoiding direct contact with flying foxes affords the best protection against any infection. For this reason, students will be further educated about flying foxes, with experts and officials visiting Stella Maris for educational sessions with students. Particulars will follow as details are confirmed.

A small perimeter of undergrowth along Hunter Oval has also been cleared, at the suggestion of employees of the Department of Environment and Resource Management, with a view to discouraging the flying foxes from moving closer to the school end of the forest. Understandably this would prove a great curiosity for students.

Students are already aware that, should they find any animal, bird, creature in the grounds, they are to notify a staff member immediately. They are not to approach or handle any animal whether alive, injured or dead. This, of course, is sensible advice generally.

Thank you, parents, for helping us reinforce this message at home. We will keep you informed as more information comes to hand.

Welcome back to Term 4. It can never be said that life in a school is ever boring or predictable.

Have a great week everyone. **Glenda**
Dear Parents/Caregivers,

The Virtue for this fortnight is Peacefulness. Peacefulness is an inner sense of calm. It comes especially in quiet moments of reflection or gratitude. It is getting very quiet and looking at things so you can understand them. It is also a way of approaching conflict with others so no one is made wrong, talking through the problem that has arisen rather than making personal judgements about the other's motives.. It is being fair to others and yourself. It is giving up the love of power for the power of love. With peacefulness, everyone wins.

Signs of Success
I am practising peacefulness when I:

• Create inner peace with a regular time to pray, meditate or reflect;
• Use peaceful language even when angry;
• Speak gently and respectfully;
• Avoid harming anyone;
• Appreciate differences; and
• Find peaceful solutions to every problem.

For the Christian, Peacefulness is a Virtue to be striven for, and is quite counter-cultural. The following reading recently helped me enormously on the death of my sister, Carole. She had been suffering from Cancer for the past twelve months and was recovering beautifully, but suffered a setback and an untimely death, which was very hard to accept. I found the following reflection written by Sarah Young in Jesus Calling based on Psalm 13:5 and Ephesians 5:20 very helpful and uplifting – I hope you do too! It changed my perspective from wallowing in grief, to celebrating the end of suffering and a sure belief that Carole was safe in the arms of loved ones who had gone before.

When many things seem to be going wrong, trust Me. When your life feels increasingly out of control, thank Me. These are supernatural responses, and they can lift you above your circumstance. If you do what comes naturally in the face of difficulties, you may fall prey to negativism. Even a few complaints can set you on a path that is a downward spiral, by darkening your perspective and mind-set. With this attitude controlling you, complaints flow more and more readily from your mouth. Each one moves you down a slippery spiral. The lower you go, the faster you slide; but it is still possible to apply the brakes. Cry out to Me in My Name! Affirm your trust in Me, regardless of how you feel. Thank Me for everything, though this seems unnatural – even irrational. Gradually you will begin to ascend, recovering your lost ground. When you are back on ground level, you can face your circumstances from a humbler perspective. If you choose supernatural responses this time- trusting and thanking Me- you will experience My unfathomable peace.

Have a very peaceful fortnight. God bless, Judith.

Music Awards

6th October 2011
Piper Atkins, Sarah Baillie, Marnie Pursell, Cooper New, Austin Brown, Emma Burchell, Erin Mahon, Samuel Henrick, Will Kennelly, Roxene Larkin-Young, Tanaya Nicholson, Ricky Dowe, Abby O'Brien, Shauna Orlaughson, Michelle Ansell, Laura Magao, Tahlia O'Rourke, Lachlan Pugsley, Lachlan England, Mary Corcoran, Grace Camp, Bridget Fuller, Ben Wessely, Emma Burchell, Abby O'Brien, Jorja Jones, Olivia Lanskky,
**MUSIC NOTES**

It has been a flying start to Term 4 - welcome!

**Choirs In The Community** – This Thursday 6th October, our SM Singers, Speech Choir & Stella Fellas (about 120 students) will be giving two concerts to the Maroochydore & Respite Centre and the Buderim Views Nursing Home. We performed two Christmas concerts to these very grateful & appreciative audiences last year. Some of our school friends have family who are residents and clients of these wonderful organisations. **REMEMINDER** – there are only a couple of students who have not returned their permission slips from last term. No note – no attendance. Formal Uniform, bring your own lunch and drink bottle for picnic lunch. We will be leaving the school by 10.30 and returning at approx. 2.30. Please let me know via email if any parents wish to attend either of the concerts.

**Lesson timetables** and the Term 4 music newsletter were emailed to all enrolled families during the holidays for instrumental, singing and speech and drama lessons. Timetables are also displayed on the notice board in the music breezeway. Please email StellaMarisMusic@bne.catholic.edu.au if you did not receive the email, or if you need to update your details.

**Congratulations** to all our 27 music award recipients for Term 3, who will receive their certificates at assembly this Thursday morning. Names were published in the music newsletter.

**Holiday & Classroom Music Making** – Congratulations to those who performed on their instruments or sang to their family and friends in the Holidays. What a wonderful way to polish pieces. Olivia Lanskey 7H performed her Baroque cello piece at the Cello dreaming Baroque Brilliance Concert in Eudlo. We are studying the Baroque style from History of Music in years 6 & 7. Some of our students sitting AMEB exams will be playing for their peers in the Music Classroom this fortnight. Good luck to you all!

**Community Concert** – some of our family and friends belong to the “Hot Ginger Chorus”. Concert – “Too Hot To Handle” Lake Kawana Community Centre Sat Oct 8 7.30pm. Adults $25 Children $10 www.hotgingerchorus.org.au

---

**Tasting Success**

Congratulations to Debela Savimaki 6V who competed at the National Athletics in Darwin over the September Holidays(17th - 19th September).

Debela was the Queensland Boys Team Captain and judging from his performance it was a position well deserved.

Gold medal in the 4 x 100 boys relay
Silver medal in the 200m
Silver medal in the 8 x 100 mixed relay (4 girls and 4 boys)
4th place in the 100m (in a photo finish)

What an outstanding effort Debela. Well Done!!

---

**New Stock “Quelch” Fruit Juice Ice Blocks**

.50c each or ½ .25c instead of Zooper Doopers

---

**Inaugural Meeting - Stella Maris Care Pantry**

You are invited to an inaugural meeting of the Stella Maris Care Pantry next Tuesday, 11th October at 2pm in the Children’s Chapel. The purpose of the meeting is to set up procedures which will meet the needs of families in the community at Stella Maris while respecting the privacy of all concerned. If you have indicated you would like to help or have an interest in how this new group will run, please come to the meeting to show your support and contribute your wisdom in setting up procedures. Please complete the return slip and send back to your child’s class teacher by this Friday 7th October. Thank you in advance for your support.

Judith Mellifont. APRE.

Please complete and return to the class teacher by FRIDAY 7th October:

I will be attending the inaugural meeting of the Stella Maris Care Pantry on Tuesday 11 October at 2pm.

I am unable to attend the meeting but am interested in being part of this group in the future.

Name/s ..............................................................

Contact Number/s ................................................

---

**Stella Maris ‘Walk on Water’ Surf Competition**

The annual Stella Maris surfing competition is being held on Tuesday 25th October at Maroochydore Beach. The competition is open to students from year one to year seven. The cost is $35.00 + GST for all surfers. This is a teams event. We need 10 surfers for the competition. If you are interested please see Mr Quinn. Entry forms and more information to follow.

---

**P&F Meeting**

October 11 @ 6.15pm in the Staffroom. All welcome.

DATE CLAIMER: Sat 22 October
Help Your Child Be Safe Online

The internet and online technologies, like mobile phones, are incredible tools. They provide an opportunity to communicate, learn, play and be entertained by content from around the world.

Like communicating in the real world, there are risks involved in interacting online. Cyberbullying, identity theft, scams, sexting and inappropriate content are some of the issues that can pose challenges for all young people — from pre-schoolers just starting to use a computer, to more experienced teens.

Knowing how to use online technologies safely, and how to deal with issues, is essential to young people having positive experiences online.

As a parent, you have an important role to play in helping to educate and guide your child online. To assist you, the Australian Communications and Media Authority’s (ACMA) Cybersmart Outreach program provides free cybersafety presentations and information tailored specifically for parents. Resources can be found at www.cybersmart.gov.au.

Cybersafety Outreach Internet Safety Awareness Presentation For Parents

This internet safety awareness presentation offers an overview of cybersafety issues focussing on the interests and needs of parents. The presentation runs for around 60 minutes, and will be held in the Hall at Stella Maris on October 19th starting at 6pm sharp.

It is easy to understand, thorough, non-technical and informative. The presentation gives parents a sound understanding of cybersafety topics and provides advice on how to help children and young people stay safe online.

Presentation at Stella Maris

Stella Maris will hold an internet safety awareness presentation for students, teachers and parents on 19th October. Grades 3-5 12.30pm; grades 6 & 7, 2pm; Staff, 3.30 pm and Parents 6pm.

If you would like further information about cybersafety or the presentation itself, please visit: www.cybersmart.gov.au. Or contact Christine Craig on 54098910.

Christine Craig (Guidance Counsellor) email: c.craig@bne.catholic.edu.au