OCTOBER 2026

THE RITA REPORT

ISSUE 10

LEARNING | RESPECT COMMUNITY | FAITH

ST RITA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BABINDA NEWSLETTER

VISION STATEMENT

St Rita's school is a dynamic learning community strengthened by our Mercy heritage and inspired through the teachings of Jesus Christ. We are connected and compassionate to the needs of our community and are proud of our local Wanyurr-Majay culture. We enagage our learners through relevant and hands-on experiences, bringing joy and confidence to learning.



CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS



Almost exactly one year ago, I advertised a community meeting, inviting anyone interested in helping organise celebrations for our school's 100th year in 2026.
To be honest, I was only expecting a handful of people to attend, but I was pleasantly surprised when more than 30 people turned up to that first meeting in October 2025.
It soon became apparent that our school has many proud alumni who were eager to celebrate the school's centenary in a big way. Much bigger, in fact, than anything I had envisaged at that stage.

Not a great deal was achieved at that first meeting other than plenty of ideas being shared and some passionate discussion. We set a date, and that was about as far as we got that night, but the wheels were well and truly in motion.

After some reflection, and keen to ensure that no event would detract from the learning occurring at our school or add significantly to staff workload, I asked Matt Owens if he would chair a committee for the centenary celebrations. Thankfully, he accepted. I felt Matt was the perfect person for the role, having been a tireless volunteer for our school and someone with strong past and present family connections to our community.

From there, regular meetings were held throughout the year. The committee gathered at the Taverna to discuss and plan, while Matt and Angela regularly met with me to discuss ideas and provide updates. I remain incredibly grateful for the work of this committee. They have organised numerous fundraising initiatives, coordinated advertising, designed and sold centenary merchandise, and worked tirelessly behind the scenes to bring everything together. Our magnificent centenary logo, designed by Serena Kuring from Catholic Education Services, has become a recognisable symbol of the celebrations and has featured prominently throughout the year.







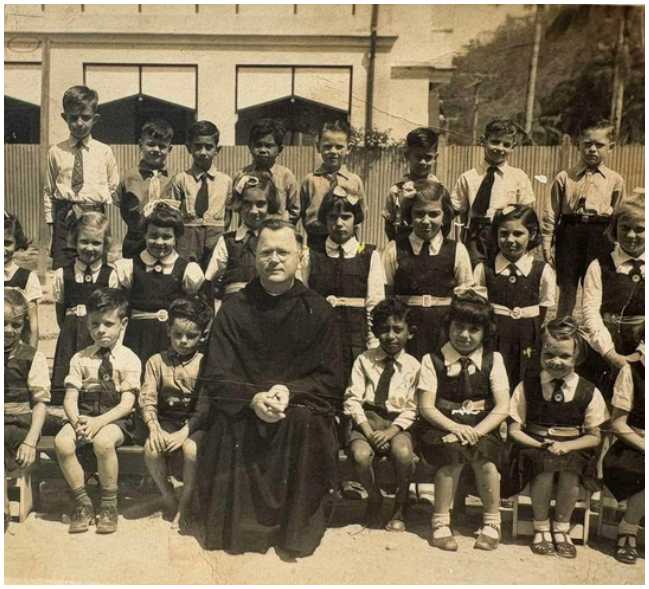
Early in the process, Julie Cross, with the support of Debbie Kurucz, volunteered to lead the development of the Centenary Book, which has now been published and will be available for purchase this weekend. Julie has dedicated countless hours over the past 12 months to documenting and preserving 100 years of our school's history. This is no small task, and I am deeply grateful for her commitment. The finished product is outstanding, and I would also like to thank Debbie Kurucz and Charles Di Bella for their assistance and support throughout the project.

Our centenary shirts have also proven extremely popular and look fantastic. It was decided that every current student would receive a shirt free of charge, which they will proudly wear during Saturday's celebrations. Following the event, students will be permitted to wear their centenary shirt as part of their school uniform.

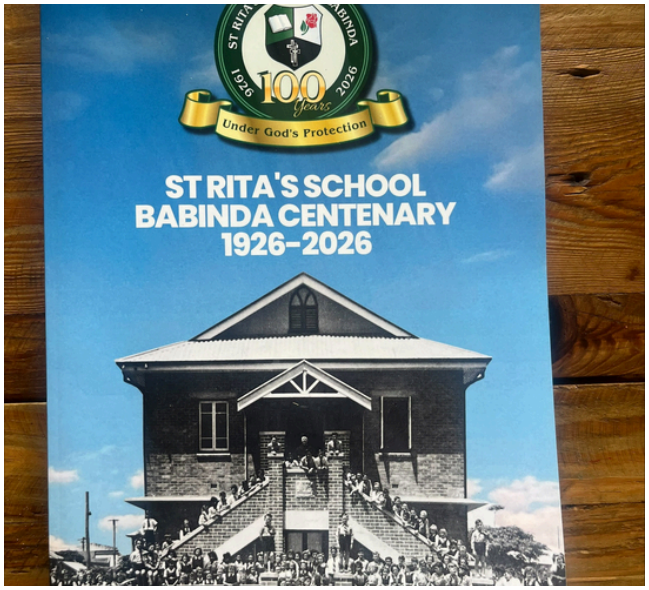
A Centenary Gala Ball will be held on Friday, 23 October, and at the time of writing, almost 100 tickets have been sold. It promises to be a fantastic evening, and I look forward to seeing months of planning come together.

On Saturday, we will host our official centenary celebrations. A Thanksgiving Mass will be held at 10.00am on the school basketball court, followed by a short formal program featuring speeches, a student performance, the centenary roll call and the ceremonial cutting of the cake.

I strongly encourage all current students and their families to attend this once-in-a-lifetime occasion. Following the formalities, there will be memorabilia displays, jumping castles, face painting, food trucks, a coffee van and live entertainment. With former students and families travelling from across Australia to be part of the celebrations, it promises to be a truly memorable weekend.







I would once again like to express my sincere gratitude to Matt and his committee for the incredible work they have done in organising this special occasion. I would also like to acknowledge Debbie Kurucz, who has provided outstanding support to the committee on top of her already demanding role at the school. Debbie is truly a community treasure. Many other volunteers have contributed their time, energy and talents throughout the year, and every contribution has been greatly appreciated.

I am looking forward to celebrating with you all this weekend and feel privileged to have played a small part in a school community now celebrating 100 years of exceptional Catholic education in Babinda. Congratulations, thank you, and well done to everyone who has contributed to making this milestone possible.

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

A huge congratulations to our Administration Officer and resident "jack of all trades", Mrs Debbie Kurucz, on being recognised for 25 years of dedicated service to St Rita's and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Cairns.

Mr Durm O'Riordan, Executive Director of Catholic Education Services, travelled to Babinda to personally present Debbie with a certificate and commemorative gift in recognition of her outstanding contribution.

Those of us who know Debbie understand just how much she means to our school and wider community. She is a true community treasure, and we are incredibly fortunate to benefit from her spirit, work ethic and genuine care for the many generations of students and families who have come through our gates.

I congratulate Debbie on the remarkable service she has given to St Rita's Babinda over the past quarter of a century. We are certainly blessed to have had her as such an important part of our community, and hopefully there are still a few more years to come.

THE RITA REPORT • SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

YEARS 5/6 CAMP

This week, our Year 5/6 students, accompanied by Mrs Masina and Mrs Sinton, will join students and staff from St Rita's South Johnstone and St John's Silkwood for our annual senior camp in Port Douglas.

This camp provides a wonderful opportunity for students to build friendships with children from neighbouring schools while participating in a range of exciting activities. Highlights include sleeping in tents, visiting the Cairns Aquarium, swimming and water slides, Hartley's Crocodile Adventures, camp games and activities, St Monica's Cathedral and a visit to St Therese's Bentley Park.

I am sure our students will have a fantastic time and create memories that will stay with them for many years to come.

GRADUATION AND END OF YEAR MASS

Our Graduation and End of Year Mass will be held on Friday, 27 November, commencing at 9.30am. The graduation ceremony will follow immediately afterwards at the school.
This is always a significant occasion for our community as we celebrate another year of learning, growth and achievement. Please mark this important date in your diaries.

SPORT

We are now two weeks into our six-week basketball program for the term. Jake from Cairns Basketball has been teaching our students a range of basketball skills while also helping them develop an understanding of the rules of the game. Students have been thoroughly enjoying these sessions.

Our swimming program also commenced last week, with Mrs Masina leading students through important water safety, survival skills and stroke development activities. A reminder for students to bring their swimming gear each Thursday, with the exception of Week 3 due to camp.

Our Small Schools Swimming Carnival will be held on Wednesday, 25 November, at the Babinda Pool. Spectators are most welcome to attend and support our students.

Last week, Abel, Samuel and Flynn proudly represented our school in rugby league as members of the Barbarians team at the inaugural Good Counsel Cup. While the team recorded one victory for the tournament, they improved with every game and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Our boys are relatively new to rugby league but have shown great promise, determination and enthusiasm in learning the sport.

PRINCIPALS REFLECTION

As we prepare to celebrate our centenary, it is impossible not to reflect on the countless students, families, staff, clergy and community members who have shaped St Rita's across the past 100 years. Their commitment, faith and dedication have built the strong foundation we continue to enjoy today. This weekend is not only a celebration of our history, but also a celebration of the people who have made St Rita's such a special place for generations of families in Babinda. I look forward to sharing this historic occasion with you all.
Michael Rowe
Principal

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL



Numeracy: Building Confident Problem Solvers for Life

At St Rita's, we are beginning to shape our school improvement priorities for 2027, with a strong focus on strengthening numeracy outcomes for all students. Our aim is to -

Improve student achievement and growth in numeracy so that every student demonstrates at least one year's growth in learning, with an increased proportion of students achieving above expected standards in PAT Maths, NAPLAN Mathematics and school-based assessment, through consistent evidence-informed teaching practices and targeted intervention.

Numeracy is much more than learning times tables and completing mathematics worksheets. It is the ability to apply mathematical knowledge confidently in everyday situations. Whether calculating change at the shops, interpreting data in the media, measuring ingredients when cooking, or managing a household budget, numeracy skills are essential for success in school and life.

Throughout next year, our staff will be working collaboratively to deepen student understanding of number, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving. We want students not only to know the answer but also to explain their thinking, justify their strategies, and apply mathematics in meaningful contexts. Research consistently shows that students achieve greater success when schools and families work together. Parents can make a significant difference by helping children see mathematics in everyday experiences.

Fun Numeracy Games for Families

You don't need worksheets or expensive resources to build numeracy skills. Try these simple family games at home:

Beat the Target *Choose a target number (e.g., 100). Players roll two dice and use addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division to get as close as possible to the target.*

Multiplication War *Using a deck of cards, each player turns over two cards and multiplies the numbers. The highest product wins the round.*



Supermarket Challenge *While shopping, ask children:*

- *Which item is the best value?*
- *How much will these three items cost altogether?*
- *Approximately how much change should we receive?*

Number Plate Maths *During car trips, use the digits on number plates to create number sentences. Example: 5, 7, 2 → (7 × 2) - 5 = 9*



Pizza Fractions *When sharing food, discuss fractions:*

- *What fraction is left?*
- *How many pieces make a whole?*
- *If we share equally, how much does each person receive?*

Race to 100 *Take turns rolling a die and adding the total to a running score. Players decide whether to take risks or play strategically to be the first to exactly 100.*



Time Challenge *Ask children questions such as:*

- *How many minutes until dinner?*
- *What time will it be in 45 minutes?*
- *How long did that activity take?*

Years 4–6 and Beyond

Multiplication War *Each player turns over two cards and multiplies the values. The highest product wins the round. For an extra challenge, use three cards.*

Supermarket Challenge *While shopping, ask:*

- *Which item is the best value?*
- *What is the difference in price between these products?*
- *If an item is 25% off, how much will it cost?*

Budget Challenge *Give children a budget for a family meal, birthday party, or weekend activity. Challenge them to make choices without exceeding the budget.*

Data Detective *Look at weather forecasts, sports ladders, or news graphs together. Ask:*

- *What does the data tell us?*
- *What patterns can you see?*
- *Can you make a prediction?*

Countdown Challenge *Choose six numbers and a target number. Students use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to reach the target, just like the television game show.*

Number Plate Maths *Use the digits on a passing number plate to create the largest number possible, a number sentence, or multiple calculation strategies.*

Estimate and Check *When travelling, ask:*

- *How many kilometres until we arrive?*
- *How long will the trip take?*
- *How much fuel might we use?*

Sports Statistics *Use NRL, AFL, cricket, or netball statistics to calculate averages, percentages, scoring rates, margins, and predictions.*

Our Goal

At St Rita's, we want every student to develop confidence, competence, and a positive disposition towards mathematics. By strengthening foundational number skills and fostering a growth mindset, we are preparing our students to be capable learners and problem-solvers for the future.
The most powerful message we can give our children is that mathematics is not just something we do at school. It is a life skill that helps us make sense of the world around us every day.
"Numeracy grows when children see, use, and talk about mathematics in meaningful ways."

Kind regards,
Sam Benvenuti






COUNSELLORS CORNER



Self-care for parents and caregivers

Why self-care is essential for parents

Remember, taking care of yourself can help make you a better parent. The small moments you take will help you feel more able to take on all the many and varied demands of parenting, so you and your infant can better enjoy your time together.

Self-care can often be seen by parents as a luxury, but it isn't all bubble baths and face masks. Self-care is anything you do intentionally to look after your own health and wellbeing. It includes things like eating well, getting sleep when you can and staying active. It also means taking time to relax and recharge – for example, by taking a walk outdoors, catching up with a friend or even just taking five minutes to have a shower alone.

Self-care isn't always 'fun' (for example, getting up early to exercise), but it does always make you feel better after you've done it. And research shows that how parents care for and treat themselves impacts on their child's development.1 Parents who are kind to themselves and take time to unwind are physically and mentally healthier and more confident in their parenting.

Parents who practice self-care are less likely to feel exhausted or burnt out, and tend to have more positive interactions with their children. These positive parent-child interactions are key to your baby's development and future mental health. As you navigate the daily ups and downs of parenting, you might need to call on your partner, friends or family (your 'village') to help you find space for these things.

Another important part of self-care for parents is self-compassion. That means being kind to yourself and not criticising or judging yourself too harshly. Remember that while it's natural to compare yourself to others at times, no parent (or person for that matter!) is perfect. You can learn more about self-compassion on the Raising Children Network.
(From Emerging Minds)

Yours in Counselling,
Kind regards,
Carmel








Jack	August 31
Illeana	September 21
Olivia	October 1
Eyvi	October 3
Flynn	October 12

DATE CLAIMERS

TERM 4 2026

Wednesday 21st - Friday 23rd of October	5/6 Camp Port Douglas
Friday 23rd of October	St Rita's Centenary Gala Ball
Saturday 24th of October	St Rita's Centenary Celebration Day
Friday 30th of October	World Teacher's Day
Friday 30th of October	Day for Daniel - Town walk

Wednesday 11th of November	Remembrance Day
Friday 13th of November	Special School Baptism
Tuesday 17th of November	Final pre-prep day
Wednesday 25th of November	Swimming Carnival
Friday 27th of November	End of Year and Graduation Mass
Friday 4th of December	Last day of the school year

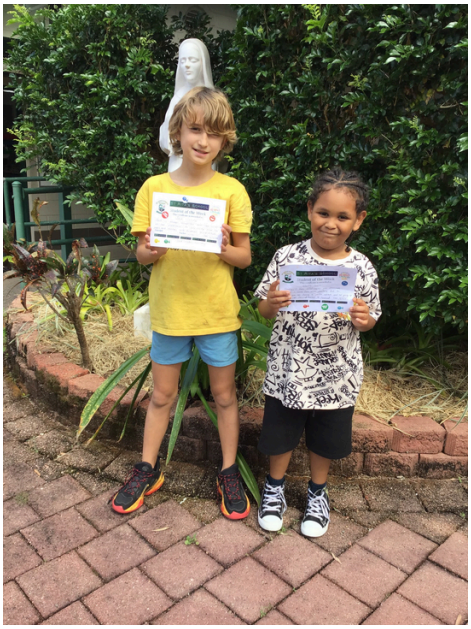
Students of the week

WEEK 10 TERM 3

Jack	Jack is always thoughtful and appreciative in our classroom. He consistently treats his peers and teachers with kindness and gratitude. Jack makes our day!
Stanley	Stanley, I have loved seeing you demonstrate persistence in lessons. Even when something feels too difficult you are showing a positive attitude and not giving up.

WEEK 2 TERM 4

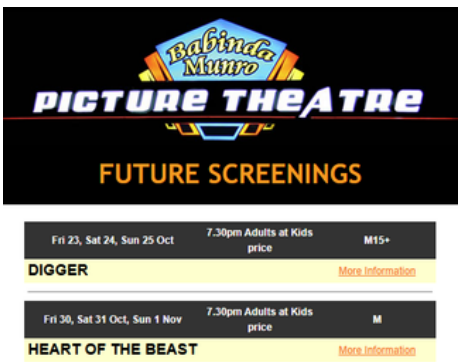
Alex	I have loved seeing you get along with teachers and peers. It has been wonderful to see you following directions, and to check for understanding if you are unsure. Keep it up!
Abel	Congratulations to Abel for consistently demonstrating responsibility and leadership within the upper years. Your noticeable effort to support peers contributes to a happy and positive classroom.







MUNRO THEATRE



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

