Significant number of NNSW Pathfinders attend iThirst camporee

16 Pathfinder clubs.
507 Pathfinders.

These were the numbers of Pathfinders who represented the North New South Wales (NNSW) Conference at the South Pacific Division’s (SPD) iThirst Pathfinder Camporee, held from 6 to 11 January in Toowoomba. They joined thousands of other Pathfinders from around the division, seeing more than 8000 young people converge on the Toowoomba Showgrounds for six days of activities, worship and spiritual blessings.

Pastor Eddie Hypolite, senior minister of Avondale College Church, was the guest speaker for iThirst. He encouraged Pathfinders to see the value that they have in God’s eyes, sharing stories and experiences from his own life with them during the nightly meetings.

Pastor Rick Hergenhan, Director of Youth Ministries for the NNSW Conference, says, “Eddie did a top job of talking to the 10- to 16-year-old age group. He really excelled at it, speaking on an adaptation of his ‘Chasing Daddy’ series.”

The nightly meetings also featured a serial drama that explored the Passion week. Pathfinders enjoyed taking part in the praise and worship times. “The music was very tasteful,” says Pastor Hergenhan. “It engaged everyone from the Aussies to the Islanders in a worshipful way that spoke to each of them.”

iThirst clearly spoke to numerous Pathfinders, as indicated by the commitment cards handed out on the Sabbath of camporee. More than 1400 Pathfinders requested Bible studies, with more than 450 asking to be baptised. On the Sabbath, there was also a special baptism service for around 80 Pathfinders from around the SPD who had already previously committed to being baptised.

Michelle Villis, Pathfinder and Adventurer Club Director for Lakeside Church, was impressed by the personal touches put into the camporee, noting that the commitment cards handed out to attendees were each personally labelled. “The kids were also given a cup that represented their thirst for God,” she says. “As much as I knew iThirst was going to be a life-changing event for the kids, it was a life-changing event for me too. I was really blessed by it.”

The Sabbath program also saw awards given to people who had dedicated 10 or more years’ service to Pathfinders in the SPD region. Pastor Hergenhan says, “I gave out around 25 pins to people from our own conference who have dedicated 10 or more years to Pathfindering. I think Allan Bates had given around 42 years of service, and Gil Evans was up there in the 30s too. It’s a massive commitment on their behalf, and it has made a big difference in the lives of so many Pathfinders.”

(Continued on page 4)
OUR CONFERENCE

From the General Secretary: What does the conference do?

I was recently talking to a colleague about the role of the conference office and its relevance to the ministry of the local church. He’d recently spoken to some people in a local church asking them “What do you think the local conference does for you?” For the most part, the members “umm’ed” and “ahh’ed,” looked around nervously, shrugged their shoulders and struggled to answer the question effectively. My colleague had a great idea: wouldn’t it be great if we could bring local church leaders into the office for a few hours, give them a tour, give them something to eat, a short presentation and an opportunity to ask questions. Have we as a conference team actually communicated effectively what it is we do? I am sure we could improve.

Here are some of the things we are working on at the moment:

1. A lot of time in 2014 was spent pulling together a strategic plan for the 2015 to 2019 period. A lot more about this will be communicated in the lead-up to the North New South Wales Conference Constituency meeting on 23 August.

2. The ARISE lay training school commences on 9 February, and the work of processing 50 to 60 applications for 36 positions, collecting fees and just overseeing this outstanding program is significant.

3. The Leadership in the Local Church conference at Avondale College is on the weekend of 6 to 8 February. Around 400 people will attend this year, many of whom will be accommodated and fed, as well as inspired with outstanding keynote speakers and workshops. It takes a lot of work to pull it all together.

4. Big Camp runs from 10 to 18 April. The lineup of speakers, including Dr Ron Clouzet, Pastor Nathan Renner, Kessia Reynie Bennett, David Franklin and many more will make this camp outstanding. The work involved in making this event happen is enormous.

5. Grey Nomads continues to be very popular and runs from 8 to 16 May. Dr David Jamieson from Aldergrove Church in Vancouver is the evening speaker, and Pastor Geoff Youlden will be doing the morning Bible study. Once again, it takes a lot to make this happen.

6. One of the most exciting initiatives that is currently involving a lot of conference employees’ time is called UR Church. For those attending the Leadership in the Local Church conference, you will hear a lot more about it there. For all others, you will hear more about this over the next 12 to 18 months.

7. I haven’t even started on what is going on in the schools company and the aged care company. Each of them could write an article much longer than this one on the exciting things that are happening in their area.

I could go on…..

We have an outstanding team of people working in this office. They are committed, hard-working, missional and just wonderful people. I do hope one day that you get the opportunity to come and visit us. And please know that we are always open to feedback on what it is we do. Also, please pray for us. We covet your prayers!

— Pastor Paul Geelan

Cooranbong stamps mark on National Diversional Therapy field

In a move that cements diversional therapy as a major component of health and wellness in Cooranbong, resident Avondale Lifestyle Community diversional therapist Lindl Webster has recently been elected Vice President 2 to the national Diversional Therapy Australia Board.

The announcement comes hot on the heels of a recent win at the National Diversional Therapy Awards for Excellence (see the December issue of NorthPoint), with Lindl claiming the Excellence Award for her cutting-edge work in improving quality of life for aged-care residents.

“Assuming a key leadership role on the board not only ensures our own Avondale Lifestyle Community in Cooranbong stays abreast of leading developments within the diversional therapy field of practice,” says Lindl, “but more excitingly also ensures that our local retirement village can potentially lead the field.”

“I am excited to be able to lend my experience and enthusiasm to our peak body of professionals, effectively ensuring better choices and self-esteem for our residents when it comes to decision making and management of our recreational programming,” she adds.

Avondale Lifestyle Community Village Manager Lorin Bradford agrees, adding that “diversional therapy adds true meaning and spark to aged-care residents’ lives.”

“We are always looking to engage with the wider community, to connect with school students, volunteers, and family and friends of residents,” he says. “Lindl’s initiatives have the capacity to touch and impact all these people, allowing them to enjoy the experience of making a difference to the lives of our residents.”

Lorin believes that the village is privileged to be able to reap the benefits of such talented staff.

—— Felicity Pittaway

Big Camp/Grey Nomads applications reminder

If you haven’t sent in your applications for Big Camp or Grey Nomads 2015, please note that applications close on the following dates:


This is the first time that applications for both Big Camp and Grey Nomads have been available online. Application forms can also be downloaded from the conference website, [http://nnsw.adventist.org.au](http://nnsw.adventist.org.au).
2015 pastoral appointments

Alstonville — Tim Kingston
Armidale — Lorenzo Berry
Avondale College — Eddie Hypolite/Mark Craig
Avondale Memorial — Vadim Butov/Helen Butov/Gregg Pillay
Bellbrook — Marcus Mundall/TBA
Ballina — Tim Kingston
Bellingen — Bob Manners/Denni Sforcina
Blue Haven — Danny Milenkov
Bonnells Bay Plant — Ssu Finau
Boolaroo — David Stojic
Boorangul Church Plant — Talai Mohr
Bourke — Keith Stockwell (also Global Mission)/Danuta Stockwell
Bray Park — Peter Howard/Ashley Smith
Brewarrina — Keith Stockwell (also Global Mission)/Danuta Stockwell
Broadmeadow Samoan Church Plant — Talai Mohr
Byron Bay — Ray Dabson
Camden Haven — Obed Soire/Jeanelle Isaacs (Bible Worker)
Casino — Tim Merritt
Central Coast Community/SPD Church Plant — Wayne Krause
Cessnock — Talai Mohr
Charlestown — Bob Bolst
Coffs Coast — Abel Iorgulescu
Coffs Harbour — Abel Iorgulescu
Coonabarabran — Afiiupu Tuaoi
Coonamble — Shaun Hespworth (Bible Worker)
Dora Creek — Peter Cousins
Dorrigo — Don Sforcina
Dungog — Mark Venz/Rick Sharp
Erina — Yong Shin Chee
Forster/Tuncurry — Graham Stewart
Gateway — James Greensill
Glen Innes — Adam Cinzio
Gloucester — Uriah St Juste
Gosford — David Price
Grafton — Steven Magaitis
Gunnedah — Afiiupu Tuaoi
Guyra — Lorenzo Berry
Hamilton — David Stojic
Hillview — Fred Chileshe
Inverell — John Lang
Kanwal — Danny Milenkov
Kariong XChange — Nimrod Maua
Kempsey — Marcus Mundall
Kingscliff — David Asscherick/Jared Smith
Kurri Kurri — Ken Love

Kyogle — Tim Merritt
Lakeside — Peter Watts (also Conference Evangelist)
Lightning Ridge — Beulah James
Lismore — Keith Jackson/William Maola
Macksville — Paul Richardson
Maclean — Steven Magaitis
Maitland — Mark Venz/Rick Sharp
Moree — Tim O’Keefe/Braeden Entermann
Mullumbimby — Cranville Tooley
Murwillumbah — Peter Howard/Ashley Smith
Muswellbrook — Miroslav Stilinovic
My Church — Mark Venz
My House — Joel Slade
Nambucca Heads — Paul Richardson
Narrabri — Tim O’Keefe/Braeden Entermann
Nelson Bay — Ken Love
Newcastle Church Plant — Nic Coutet
Newcastle Polish — Jan Jankiewicz
Newcastle Multicultural — Esava Koro
Newcastle Spanish — Roberto Valesquez
Ocean Shores — Ray Dabson
Ourimbah — Eddie Mackie
Port Macquarie — Obed Soire/Jeanelle Isaacs (Bible Worker)
Quirindi — Marty Thompson
Raymond Terrace — Esava Koro
Singleton — Miroslav Stilinovic
South Kempsey — Marcus Mundall/TBA
Swansea — Fred Chileshe
Tamworth — Marty Thompson
Taree — Graham Stewart
Tenterfield — Adam Cinzio
Telegraph Point — David Kosmeier
The Entrance — Yong Shin Chee
The Haven — Nimrod Maua
Toronto — Brock Goodall
Tumbulgum — Errol Wright
Tweed Heads Church Plant — Daniel Christie
Wallisend — Ben Rae/Tarenne Greenwood
West Wallsend Company — May Chae (Bible Worker)
Wauchope — David Kosmeier
Wingham — Uriah St Juste
Woy Woy — Eddie Mackie
Wyee — Peter Cousins

*This list is accurate as of the date of going to press (27/01/2015)
Significant number of NNSW Pathfinders attend iThirst camporee

(Continued from page 1)

The commitment to service to Pathfinders by people from around the NNSW Conference continued at iThirst, with “a good number” of people from the conference joining the team of 450 iThirst staff. “Ros Camps was the head of all the sub-camps,” says Pastor Hergenhan. “Pastor Michael Chapman, Simon King and Andrew Thompson headed up three of the 18 activities that were available. Tim Ethridge was there handling communications; Allan Bates headed up TeenForce; and others helped in the kitchen and with set-up. They all did a really good job.”

Pastor Daron Pratt, Director of Children’s and Family Ministries for the NNSW Conference, was in attendance to work with Pastor Jeff Parker, Director of Youth Ministries for the Australian Union Conference, on site management. “I was responsible for all the tents, as well as delivering all of the furniture and then delivering groceries to people all over the campground,” he says. “It was a lot of hard work — I did 1260 kilometres driving around the grounds just problem-solving and keeping clubs happy!”

But he notes, “It was a great experience to talk to people of all nationalities and hear about their experiences of getting to camporee. Some of them had to raise huge amounts to get there. Australian clubs took other clubs under their wing and fed them or gave food to them. It was such a sharing experience.”

Ironically, the iThirst camporee was not without water problems, as two of the bores broke down and water had to be carted in. “The iThirst theme was literal for a day or two until we solved that issue!” says Pastor Pratt. Pastor Hergenhan adds, “When we arrived on 28 December to set up, it was pouring rain and all the bad memories of the last camporee flooded back for everyone! We worked out of the sheds for two days, but that was the last rain we saw. However, we had some issues with water supply, which was a real paradox as we’d had floods last time and this year’s theme was iThirst. But the Lord provided and we had adequate water.”

Water was involved in a number of activities that the Pathfinders took part in, giving the kids who attended a chance to get muddy and cool off in the warm Toowoomba weather. Pastor Hergenhan says, “The activities were great. The biggest hit was the colour run. That involved throwing coloured powder at each other. Everyone was told to bring a white shirt — most did and got covered in the powders. That was good!”

The activities gave kids an opportunity to meet other young people from a variety of clubs and cultures. “From the kids’ perspective, they had a ball,” says Pastor Pratt. “People crossed language barriers to communicate. To see the grins on their faces, and the friendliness and swapping of shirts and comparing notes — it was great to see the cross-pollination of cultures and understanding.”

“A big thank you goes to Pastor Nick Kross, Youth Ministries Director for the SPD, Litiana Turner, Associate Youth Ministries Director, and the staff who made the camporee happen,” says Pastor Hergenhan. “We also thank all the clubs who participated. It was a really positive event, and hopefully it’s one that’s etched on the minds of the young people who went — we pray it will be a real high point or turning point in their spiritual journeys from now into the future.”

— Adele Nash

Photos courtesy of Charmaine Patel, Pastor Jeff Parker and Adrian Jackson
There are many music CDs with unique titles. But Asian Aid’s new *Huggles and Heartsongs* CD is unique more than just in title.

Launched in December 2014, the music CD with 20 beautiful songs and lullabies will capture a child’s heart for God, while giving hope to orphaned and/or abandoned Nepali children.

Kylie Stacey, Director of The Music Room — together with song-writer, musician and Kindergarten teacher Coralie Fraser, who co-produced the CD, and singers and artists who brought life to the project — wanted to use the CD for social change.

Money raised from the sale of the CD will help provide a home-like environment for Nepali children where their physical, emotional, academic and spiritual needs are met, and where they form lasting relationships.

Whether children listen to the CD when they play during the day, or as they are hugged and cuddled — or “huggled” — at bedtime, the original songs will soon become their favourites. One child’s musical enjoyment will lead to another child’s empowered life. It’s indeed a unique way of giving hope.

“All children — whether they are in Australia or Nepal — need to know they are loved, in order to grow to their full potential,” says Kylie. “As little ones drift off to sleep each night, I hope that *Huggles and Heartsongs* will fill their minds and ‘love tanks’ with positive messages, and with hope.”

— Sonja Larsen

CDs cost $15 each (including postage) and can be purchased by visiting <www.asianaid.org.au/hugglesandheartsongs> or calling (02) 6586 4250.
The minutes of the Wallsend Adventist Church Board Meeting of 20 November, 1954 record that “Bro Bennett asked for permission to establish an MV Pathfinder Club.” At the Business Meeting held on 8 January, 1955 Jack Bennett reported that “the first meeting of the Pathfinder Club was held in the Rawson Hall on the 18th December.” Thus began the Wallsend Pathfinder Club.

Little did Jack imagine that 60 years later the Wallsend Pathfinder Club would not only continue to exist, but would be flourishing as one of the largest clubs in the North New South Wales (NNSW) Conference.

On 6 December, 2014 the club celebrated this significant milestone with a reunion of former Directors and Pathfinders, joining with current Adventurers and Pathfinders at their annual investiture.

Fifteen of the 26 former Directors were in attendance, plus three family members representing Directors who had passed away. During the investiture this group was honoured with the presentation of commemorative engraved pens.

Former Pathfinders, many from the original club, enjoyed re-establishing contact and reminiscing. Brothers John, Robert and George Norris reunited for the occasion.

The club was thrilled that Jack, living in retirement in Broken Hill, could attend the special celebration. Jack was escorted by his daughter Marilyn Harris, herself an original club member. In recognition of his significant contribution to the club, Jack was given the honour of cutting the 60th birthday cake made by Bev Stuckings.

The strong emphasis on marching led to the club demonstrating their marching prowess for the 1958 South Pacific Division Session. The intense rivalry between Wallsend and Hamilton Clubs continued for many years, and was evident in the tied point score at the 1963 Pathfinder Fair. A formal agreement was drawn up to ensure the two clubs would share the Pathfinder Shield over the following 12 months!

Many Fairs, Camporees and Expeditions later, the club continues to engage in a strong honours-based outdoor program, which attracts young people from across the Newcastle and Hunter area. Close to 100 juniors and leaders make up the current club under Director Russell Halliday.

A healthy Adventurer Club, led by Barbara Rosendahl, feeds the Pathfinder Club, assuring its future for many years to come.

The display of club memorabilia assembled by Pathfinder leaders Ingelisa Lis and Teresa Clark in the church foyer and on the stage was a fitting tribute to the club’s history. It supplemented the history booklet compiled by Joy Guy which was launched via a presentation to Jack Bennett.

Photos courtesy of Brad Rea, Melanie Ogle, Marilyn Harris and Jeff Guy

The original Wallsend Pathfinder group led by Jack Bennett. From left to right: John Norris, Marilyn Harris (nee Bennett), Jack Bennett, Kevin Hards, Del Booth (nee King), Rosemary Humphries (nee Hardt), David Hall and Marlene Darby (nee Howard).
Pathfinders and Adventurers “overflow” with blessings in 2014

Community service was a major player in the activities of the Northern Tablelands Pathfinder and Adventurer Club in 2014. We believe that salvation and service go hand-in-hand, and that Pathfinders was originally designed as a means of saving youth, as well as involving them in the mission of our Church — to share the Gospel and the love of God with a dying world.

Beginning with helping in the children’s tent at the Celtic Festival in Glen Innes, the children were then keen to participate in more community activities. What followed included a visit to an Armidale Nursing Home — entertaining the residents with singing and chatting; a food collection, which was distributed to the needy at Christmas; and entertaining children with clowns and balloon art while handing out information on Pathfinders during a new street opening service in Glen Innes.

Participation in this street service led to being invited to come back again for the “Families Day” held in Glen Innes by the local council and the Department of Community Services. The children entertained the families with clowning, balloon art and face painting, while once again providing information on Pathfinders. The community response was very positive and they are keen to have the club helping out in the future.

The food collection was entitled project “Trick or Treat for the Poor” and was advertised beforehand in the Armidale newspaper. Then, on Saturday afternoon, 1 November, the club spent a couple of hours door knocking, requesting nonperishable food items for the needy.

The response from the community reflected the enthusiasm of the children and was overwhelmingly positive. Many people gave numerous items and the children are keen to make this an annual project. The local newspaper even printed a follow-up story on the collection.

The food was then packaged into 30 large bags and boxes, and, with the assistance of the local ADRA leaders, distributed to some very grateful residents as Christmas gifts. The children delivering the boxes received as much of a blessing as those they were giving them to.

“Overflow with Love” was the theme for all Pathfinders in 2014, and the Northern Tablelands Pathfinders and Adventurers received this from each of the communities they have worked in as they were attempting to bless others. A wonderful display of the workings of the amazing God we serve. Our challenge now is to build on what our Pathfinder and church pioneers started, and inspire others to re-engage in evangelism. The rewards are eternal.

— Cherie Boyd

New Wauchope Church building officially opened

The Wauchope Church congregation celebrated the opening of their new church building on Sabbath afternoon, 6 December.

The afternoon was very well attended by some 350 people, including past and present members, members of surrounding Adventist churches and some local community members. With an estimated capacity of around 250, the new church was overflowing.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was performed by Pastor Justin Lawman, President of the North New South Wales Conference, who was assisted by Pastor Danny Milenkov (Wauchope Church pastor until 2011), Pastor Uriah St Juste (who was the Wauchope Church pastor at the time) and Pastor David Kosmeier (Wauchope Church pastor from January 2015).

Pastor St Juste says, “It was a very special day for Wauchope Church. What was particularly special about the afternoon was that we had letterboxed the neighbourhood and invited community members to attend. We also invited members who had stopped coming to church, and one lady was there who hadn’t been to church for several decades. We also invited contacts from our health programs and other events.”

The day’s program included an historical overview of Wauchope Church, which was officially formed in 1926, but at that point the members met in homes and rented premises. It wasn’t until 1962 that they had their own building to worship in.

This quaint little country church was sold in 2013 to enable the building of the new premises on land generously donated by church member, June Moe.

Wauchope Church members are full of praise, giving thanks and glory to God for blessing them with such a modern facility in such a beautiful setting.

Pastor Lawman says, “The special Sabbath provided an opportunity to connect with the community and former members, who were invited to attend. What a journey the church has been on! They’ve been blessed by the donation not one but two blocks of land for the building by June and her family — June’s husband Pastor Rex was the President of our conference from 1972 to 1975 and 1985 to 1996.”

— Maureen Bradley/NorthPoint
OUR CHURCHES

Lakeside Church hosts successful Christmas concert

Saturday evening, 20 December, saw Lakeside Church packed to overflowing for their Christmas concert. This is the second year that Alexis Deves has organised a very successful concert at the church at Christmas time. There were many present from neighbouring areas and all seemed to thoroughly enjoy the program.

The concert began with a segment from the church’s children’s music group, ably led by Diane Grieve. This included singing, percussion and movement to music. Several of the children performed individual items on the piano and violin, as well as a group violin item led by Renee Lis.

The Lakeside Ensemble performed several items at intervals throughout the program. Clive McMahon and Brian Kjim conduct the ensemble. There were also individual items, which were very well received. Community carols were also a part of the program and everyone enjoyed singing along to some well-loved Christmas classics.

The concert had been preceded by the first course of a potluck tea and, at the conclusion of the concert, dessert was served while live music played. Many enjoyed the fellowship — and music — at this time.

— Pam Hill

Photos courtesy of Bryan Martin and Cyril Hill

Three baptisms for Spanish Company

On Sabbath, 22 November 2014, the Newcastle Spanish Company rejoiced to see Cristobal Pastor, Maria-Salvadora Gato and Rosario Pezo descend into the baptismal waters. Cirila Pastor was also accepted into the congregation by profession of faith. They were all invited by their friends to the church group: Lidia Venegas, Massi Romero and Angelica Enriquez respectively.

They received Bible studies from Robert Velasquez while they were coming regularly to the church, until The Holy Spirit touched their hearts and led them to the decision to be baptised. The baptisms took place at Hamilton Church and were performed by Pastor Juan Quiroga, who previously conducted an evangelistic campaign for the Newcastle Spanish Company.

— Lilian Rodriguez

Wallsend Church welcomes 17 new members in 2014

“At Wallsend Church, we are praising God for 17 wonderful new members who have joined us in Christ’s mission this past year, either through baptism or professing their faith,” says Pastor John Denne.

They came from various backgrounds — 11 are adults, six are young people. Some have no Christian or biblical background. Some are from Adventist homes. Some have come from other denominations. Pastor Denne believes God’s supernatural leading is evidenced in them. “Miracles have happened and self-discipline has demonstrated true discipleship,” says Pastor Denne. “Addictions and bitterness have been left behind. There are some who have been seeking God for some years and others only this past year. They have learned the power of Christ’s forgiveness and have placed Him on the highest pedestal. Business owners and a retail manager have faced giving up Sabbath work.”

Friendship has been the key to them joining the church in mission. “Of significant influence has been the caring ministry of our teams in the church,” says Pastor Denne. “From greeters to the worship team; to elders to our hospitality team. The result is a TEAM result. No one person has accomplished this, except God. Many are already significantly involved in ministry.”

Brock Goodall, who was Wallsend’s associate pastor last year, ministered very well to attract the six young people to Jesus. Their parents and Adventist education are also to be commended for their investment.

“101,” the church’s new attendees group, which meets during Sabbath school time, has developed a great atmosphere where the teaching of the Bible, friendship, caring and social occasions unite to make being a follower of Jesus the “very best thing that we can do,” says Pastor Denne. “Ten of our 17 new believers have come from ‘101,’ and others plan to join us in the future. Nine of the 17 folk have been influenced through our partnership with Macquarie College. We thank God for that.”

On the weekend of 28 and 29 November, 10 of these people joined the congregation— seven by baptism and three by profession of faith. “When our friends shared their testimonies it was one of the most significant spiritual occasions of my life,” says Pastor Denne. “Their honest expressions about coming from pain to hope and transformation in Jesus, probably left no dry eye in the congregation. Many expressed how emotionally moving it was.”

The church now looks forward to seeing what God has in store for each of these folk as they use their spiritual gifts to expand Christ’s magnificent kingdom.

— Pastor John Denne/ NorthPoint
TVAC student takes out top award

Tianah-Jane Leistra, a student from Tweed Valley Adventist College (TVAC), took out a top national award for the training organisation that helped her get a head start in the business world.

Tianah won the GTES School Based Apprenticeship/Trainee of the Year Award for her work at the Commonwealth Bank in Murwillumbah, and was featured in the local newspaper, the *Tweed Valley Weekly* (pictured, left). Tianah said, “I was actually quite shocked to find out I had won. . . . Winning an award like this gives me a real sense of accomplishment — it’s something that really picks you up.”

Vaughan Jones, the Business Studies teacher at TVAC, says, “Tianah was an obvious choice for the trainee opportunity — she has always shown a high degree of aptitude, combined with dedication to her schoolwork. The traineeship at the Commonwealth Bank has augmented her academic studies, providing confidence through experience.”

He adds, “Tweed Valley Adventist College takes pride in the achievements of students and is thrilled that Tianah has received distinguished recognition for her efforts.”

— Vaughan Jones/Tweed Valley Weekly

Teens take service at Lakeside

On Sabbath, 29 November, the Teen Sabbath school group presented the church service at Lakeside Church.

The whole group was involved in different ways in the running of the service. They led out in the singing, did a special item with puppets, performed a short skit, and Ryan and Rohan Keegan told an entertaining children’s story using puppets. Hailey Hall and Isaiah Lilikakis (pictured below) had their first experience at preaching, and managed very well.

The theme for the day was “One Way” — Jesus is the only way to eternal life. The teens are to be commended for a job well done.

— Pam Hill

Flash mob surprises shoppers

If you have seen a flash mob on YouTube, you will have some idea of what happened when Taree Adventist Church Choir, directed by Robert Pannekoek, performed in the Taree Central Mall on Thursday, 18 December.

At the prearranged time, the mall music ceased and two sopranos stepped forward singing. The remainder of the choir joined them and sang some seasonal tunes. This was done a capella except for the special song *Face to Face at Calvary* with Alison Gilbert playing on a keyboard.

A number of people watched for the full 30 minutes, including some of Robert’s scripture students, and it was definitely felt that this will be the first of more such events.

— Bernice Pannekoek

Three baptisms at Taree

Many family members and friends came to witness the baptisms on Sabbath, 20 December of three precious persons by Pastor David Kosmeier during the church service at Taree.

Joy Hammond (pictured, right) had received studies from Pastor Lyndon Thrift. She has attended Taree Church for many years with her late husband, Cliff. Many of Joy’s family members came to witness Joy follow Jesus. Joy’s bright personality is shared with her church and the friends she brings to church.

Gail Becroft (pictured, below right) had received studies from Pastor Lyndon Thrift. She has attended Taree Church for many years with her late husband, Clifford. Many of Joy’s family members came to witness Joy follow Jesus. Joy’s bright personality is shared with her church and the friends she brings to church.

Simeon Chakovan (pictured, below left) had also studied with Shane Cowan. Simeon is a very friendly young man, a very welcome addition to our youth group. He had family and friends from this area, and also Sydney. His grandmother shared her joy at seeing Simeon baptised, and also seeing Simeon’s sister coming forward for baptism.

— Bernice Pannekoek
Our Churches

Newcastle Samoan Church Plant celebrates first year

Before Jesus went to heaven, He said to His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

The Newcastle Samoan Church Plant is a church plant that has responded to the Great Commission from the Saviour, which says, “Go and make disciples of all nations…” The plant was officially opened by Pastor Paul Geelan, General Secretary of the North New South Wales Conference, on 9 November, 2013, and the group started with only a few people. But at the present time, the church plant has grown in numbers and in spirit, with the majority of members being young people and children.

On Sabbath, 8 November 2014, the group celebrated their one year anniversary. Members invited their friends, and on that special Sabbath the church was full. Talai Mohr, minister of the Newcastle Samoan Church Plant, says, “It was a special time to thank God because He changed, strengthened and saved lives during the year. The celebration included singing, praising and testimonies. The celebration was concluded with a big lunch and all people enjoyed the fellowship.”

He notes, “Our aim for the year 2014 was to baptise one soul in order to extend the Kingdom of God on earth. To fulfill this aim, we started visitations, Bible studies, gave out DVDs, held weekend camps, ran social activities and the ‘Secrets of Prophecy’ seminar. The results of those ministries were many young people studying the Bible and changing their lives. Six of them were baptised during the year and some will be baptised in the beginning of 2015.”

Talai says that, as a church minister, he believes and has experienced the power of God in the church plant. “The church members serve the Lord with love, care, forgiveness and unity,” he says. “I believe the church is the family of God. Because of this reason, the Newcastle Samoan Church Plant loves to build up a friendly church where every member loves and connects to each other in a powerful way.”

The aim of the church plant is to continue reaching out to the community, proclaiming the Gospel in order to save souls. “We love to study the Bible with people and baptise them when they believe in God’s saving grace,” says Talai. “This is the amazing way to develop and grow our church plant. Hopefully it will become an established church in the near future and will keep saving the lost, getting people ready for the return of the King of the universe. This will be a better celebration than the one-year celebration of the Newcastle Samoan Church Plant.”

— Talai Mohr/NorthPoint

Re-baptism at Ourimbah

On Sabbath, 15 November 2014, Grace Mondy was re-baptised by Pastor Eddie Mackie. Grace gave a wonderful testimony, telling Ourimbah Church members that she had been baptised originally in a river in the Philippines, but over the years had wandered away from God. Grace’s entire family and her friends were there to witness this special service.

Before she stepped into the water, Grace, Pastor Mackie and Mitchell Strachan (College Assistant to the Pastor) sang together an a capella version of How Deep the Father’s Love for Us. The last verse says it all:

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from his reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

This very happy celebration of Grace’s new life was followed by a special luncheon to which all were invited.

“My grace is sufficient for Thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

— Margaret McCrow

Memorial member’s paraphrase a Gift

In 2012, inspired by the story in the March edition of Adventist World of a South Korean Adventist who had written the Bible out by hand, Avondale Memorial Church member William (Bill) Ackland commenced writing a paraphrase of the Bible on 19 March of that year.

After more than two years of work on the project, The Gift was launched in November 2014 at a special dedicatory program held at the Alton Villas Activities Centre. The program featured special items from a number of talented performers, readings from the paraphrase and a dedicatory address by Bill’s son Pastor Nigel Ackland.

According to Bill, the name The Gift reflects how the Word of God is a gift and that Jesus is a gift from God. Finding early morning writing sessions best, Bill says, “I was determined to never commence a session without prayer for guidance from the Holy Spirit. I thank God for His blessings in the work — there was so much joy in finding meaning in the stories and illustrations of the Old Testament.”

Bill also thanked his wife Barbara for supporting him through the project, noting that she was very understanding of her husband, who would “go missing” for several hours per day. He also thanked friends who helped to edit the manuscript of more than 1000 pages. Bill’s love of statistics saw him keep records, which showed almost 75 per cent of the Bible is contained in the Old Testament; Jeremiah is the book with the most words; 2 and 3 John have the fewest words; and the books of Moses make up slightly more than 20 per cent of the paraphrase.

— Adele Nash

Bill can be contacted via (02) 4977 3400 or <backland@hinet.net.au>.
Avondale Memorial Church members Roxley Vollrath, his wife Lorna and son Ben joined a group of tradies and volunteers, led by Sydney electrician Brett Partridge and Pastor Alex Currie, who went to Tenakoga Adventist High School in the Solomons on a service trip in September last year. The group was also made up of members of Kellyville Church, and 15 Year 11 students and two teachers from Hills Adventist College.

When Pastor Currie and Brett visited Tenakoga in September 2013, they were concerned that the lack of water for drinking, washing and laundry activities, and the inconsistent electricity supply, were adversely affecting education outcomes. They decided to raise funds to bring a team from Australia to improve the school’s water and electricity infrastructure. The project came to fruition in late September 2014, with all donated funds being used in improving the school’s infrastructure.

“Tenakoga Adventist High School has undergone a massive transformation,” said school Principal Gibson Apusae. Tenakoga Adventist High School is located approximately two hours by road from Honiara in North East Guadalcanal. Most of the school’s 220 students come from the surrounding communities of Geza, Govu, Goghede, and Ghombua and Salalamarau villages.

“Before the transformation, we had limited fresh water, limited electricity generation capacity, and staff and students had to walk the 300 metres to the river for washing and bathing,” Gibson continued.

Now the Tenakoga campus has been transformed in an amazing way. “It’s hard to comprehend the scale of the transformation,” Gibson said enthusiastically. A solar pump has been installed to pump water the 380 metres to three 10,000-litre storage tanks. In addition, 1.3 kilometres of water pipe has been laid to transport the water around the campus and to staff houses. Then there’s the new 42KVA generator, and 30 electricity poles and 1.5 kilometres of cable that has been strung to transport power around the campus and to staff homes. Most of the electrical infrastructure has been inspected and upgraded where required.

One further project will provide substantial drinking water for the school community. While a limited amount of water was captured previously, Roxley installed more than 200 lineal metres of guttering and six water tanks, which should give the school about 30,000 litres of fresh water once the rains come.

“In addition to these projects, the boys’ ablution block has been substantially completed,” said Pastor Currie. “This provides the boys with functioning showers, toilets and urinals, as well as laundry area, whereas in the past they had to go to the river for bathing and the washing of clothes. Material for the girls’ ablution block has also been provided, and this project should be commenced in the coming weeks by men trained during the construction phase, as well as members of the local school community.”

“The work could not have been completed in such a short time without the assistance of the local school community who provided labour and vehicles,” Gibson said. “We are grateful for all of the assistance we received in our Tenakoga Transformation Project. What has been achieved has been beyond our wildest dreams, and we are extremely thankful for all of the support we have received from Australia and the local community. All of this infrastructure will help us improve the educational standards of our school.”

Presley Lossi is a timber merchant in the Tenakoga region with two children, Jelrah and Ian, both in Grade 1 at Tenakoga Adventist High School. “As a parent, I was excited by the Tenakoga Transformation Project and felt that I had to be involved,” Presley said. “I worked at the boys’ ablution block for most days, and I provided my truck to collect stones and gravel from the river for concreting.” He added, “A project like this boys’ ablution block is very expensive. Our school could never have afforded these facilities, and we’re grateful to the team from Australia who provided the funds, materials and expertise. I’m very proud of what the Australian team and our community have achieved together”.

— Ken Long
The annual North New South Wales Conference’s Grey Nomads Camp for 2015 will be held at the Adventist Convention Centre, Stuarts Point, NSW from 8 to 16 May, 2015.

The camp is open to Grey Nomads from across Australia, and is an excellent opportunity for retirees to meet and fellowship together. Dr David Jamieson, minister from Aldergrove Church in Vancouver, Canada, will be the guest speaker.

Applications are now available at http://nnsw.adventist.org.au. Please note applications close 13 March, 2015. For further details, phone (02) 4944 3220 or email greynomads@adventist.org.au.