

The Grevillea



KATHERINE
HIGH SCHOOL

Every Person, Every Opportunity



Katherine High School captains Xzander Harnas and Layla Jennings are leading by example in 2026. Both Year 12 students have overcome nerves, developed their public speaking skills and proudly represented KHS at community events while balancing demanding study loads. **Full story – Page 7.**

LEADING THE WAY



RESIDENT PYTHON
PAGE 3



LOCAL JOBS IN FOCUS
PAGE 9



ATHLETICS CARNIVAL
PAGE 18 & 19

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

OUR SCHOOL *values*
AND WHAT THEY MEAN...

Effort

We put our
best effort
into our **work**
and **behaviour**

Inclusion

we include
everyone regardless
of **difference**

Resilience

We are **resilient**
when faced with **learning**
and **behaviour** challenges

Respect

We show **respect** to
ourselves, other people
and **property** at all times

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

**Nick Lovering,
KHS Principal**

I hope you enjoy reading the first edition of The Grevillea, Katherine High School's new school newspaper.

This publication, written and edited by our Manager of Wellbeing and Media, Guy McLean, provides an opportunity to celebrate student achievement, showcase school activities and strengthen connections across our school community.

Semester One has been both productive and rewarding, with a continued focus on consistency, engagement and the delivery of key priorities aligned with the Department of Education Strategic Plan.



NICK LOVERING

Across the school, staff remain committed to delivering consistent, high-quality teaching practice. Our ongoing focus on analysing behaviour data to inform classroom strategies has

contributed to a significant reduction in suspensions, reflecting stronger classroom environments and clearer expectations for students.

Student voice continues to grow at Katherine High School. Our student leaders recently commenced work with the Northern Territory Learning Commission (NTLC), contributing to the ongoing refinement of our School Wide Instructional Model (SWIM) and helping shape teaching and learning practices across the school.

Student engagement has remained strong throughout the semester, supported by a wide range of programs, activities and learning opportunities. Our ANZAC Day assembly was an important occasion

to reinforce the school's core values of respect, responsibility, pride and inclusion.

Programs and events including the SANTOS Cup AFL competition, Clontarf Rough Diamonds Camp, Biology and Outdoor Education field trips, and the school's annual Athletics Carnival have all provided valuable opportunities for students to challenge themselves, build connections and strengthen their engagement with school. These experiences play an important role in promoting attendance, wellbeing and school pride.

Katherine High School also continues to strengthen pathways that support successful transitions into

training, further education and employment. The Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF) program has now commenced onsite delivery with visiting trainers and has already attracted strong student participation. The program is helping improve literacy, confidence and engagement for many of our young people.

At the same time, work continues to expand the school's role as a regional hub for flexible and industry-aligned learning. This includes the ongoing integration of the Katherine Flexible Learning and Engagement Centre (KFLEC), which supports students requiring alternative and flexible pathways to success.



Science teacher Thomas Hennessy provides Year 10 students Joshua Sam (left) and Tully Rankin with an up close introduction to to know Oen, the Oenpelli Python

OEN IS A HIT AT KHS

Students and visitors to Katherine High School are getting the rare opportunity to meet one of the world's most extraordinary reptiles.

Oen, KHS's resident Oenpelli Python, belongs to one of Australia's rarest snake species, found only in the sandstone country of western Arnhem Land. Often described as the rarest python in the world, the species is rarely seen in the wild and is listed as vulnerable.

What makes Oen even more special is that he is one of only a handful captive Oenpelli Pythons that can be viewed by the public, giving students a unique chance to learn about a remarkable Territory species without leaving the classroom.

WELCOME TO THE GREVILLEA

**Guy McLean,
Editor**

Welcome to the very first edition of The Grevillea!

We've created this new semesterly newspaper to celebrate all the great things happening across the Katherine High School community and to shine a light on the people, achievements and stories that make our school such a special place.

This publication is about more than just sharing news. It's about building a strong, positive narrative around our school and recognising

the excellence, effort and achievement happening every day in classrooms, on sporting fields, in the arts, in the community and beyond.

Katherine High School is full of talented, resilient and inspiring people, and we want The Grevillea to become a place where those stories can be shared far and wide.

Having spent decades covering stories as a news reporter across the Northern Territory and interstate, I'm incredibly excited to help launch this unique school publication from the ground up. Throughout my career, I've learned that the best

stories are often found in local communities - and there are certainly no shortage of great yarns waiting to be told at KHS.

Whether it's a student achieving success in the classroom, a teacher going above and beyond, a sporting triumph, a cultural achievement, community service, leadership, creative talent or success outside of school, these are the stories that deserve to be celebrated.

But we need YOUR help.

A newspaper works best when it belongs to the whole community, and we'd love

to hear from students, staff, families and community members about the people and moments worth sharing. If you know someone with a story to tell, please let us know. Chances are there are many incredible achievements happening quietly every day that others would love to read about.

We're also particularly keen to see students become part of future editions of The Grevillea. A school newspaper offers a rare opportunity for young people interested in storytelling, writing, editing, photography or design to develop real-world skills and gain insight into what

working in media can be like.

Budding writers can help interview people and craft stories. Aspiring photographers can capture the moments that matter across our school community. Students with an interest in layout, design or digital media can also play an important role as the publication grows.

Most importantly, we hope this newspaper helps strengthen connections across our school community and gives everyone plenty of reasons to feel proud of Katherine High School.

Enjoy the newspaper!



Katherine High School students paid their respects to those who have served and sacrificed during a special ANZAC Day assembly in Term 2. Students took part in commemorative proceedings, reflecting on the courage, service and legacy of Australia's defence personnel while honouring the ANZAC spirit and its enduring importance to future generations. Image – Amanda Tootell, KHS

MINISTER HAS STRONG FOCUS ON VET LEARNING PATHWAYS

Jo Hersey, Minister for Education and Training

I am delighted to contribute to the new Katherine High School semester newsletter highlighting our students' achievements, and what's happening in the school community.

Term 1 had a rough start, a 19.2 metre flood in March, school disruptions, the High School becoming the evacuation centre amongst everything else.

I would like to thank Principal Nick Lovering and all the teachers and students for your commitment during the floods through either working in evacuation shelters, teaching in pop-up schools, cooking meals for flood evacuees in shelters or looking out for one another in our times of need.

As things have returned to normal after the floods, there's a range of things happening in my role as Minister for Education and Training and



Jo Hersey

Member for Katherine within the school community that I'm excited to share with you.

This year, we got confirmation the Federal Government has approved the relocation of the Katherine Trade Training Centre from the CDU Rural campus to have it located between Katherine High school and MacFarlane Primary School.



Minster Hersey met with KHS student leaders during a post-flood visit

This relocation was something I fought very strongly for.

Having Trades Training opportunities directly next to a high school, where there is existing infrastructure, and students, just makes sense.

It will be accessible, practical, and aligned with real local

employment opportunities, because as a government and as the Minister for Education and Training, we want to create real pathways to jobs for our students, and that means getting more students into Trade Training.

We are on the cusp of a mining boom with safe and

well-regulated gas from the Beetaloo here in Katherine, we are grabbing the chance to rebuild our economy with both hands.

As a tradie and former small business owner myself, I want to see more school students entering trade training pathways, that is why I have a strong focus on VET in schools and am always looking at ways to strengthen those pathways.

We are bringing careers counsellors into schools, and VET in schools coordinators – watch this space.

As we round out the end of the term and finally hit beautiful dry season, I hope you all stay safe on the roads if you're travelling and get some time off to enjoy our Territory lifestyle.

If I can ever be of assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office, and to keep up to date with what I'm up to and for any future announcements, you can find me on Facebook: Jo Hersey-Member for Katherine.

WE'RE A HIDDEN GEM SCHOOL

Katherine High School has been recognised as one of the Northern Territory's top "Hidden Gem" schools, reinforcing the message that educational excellence is not limited to major cities or affluent suburbs.

The recognition proves families don't need to take on a massive mortgage or pay expensive private school fees to access quality education.

KHS ranked fourth overall in the Northern Territory - and first among NT Government face-to-face schools - in a new report compiled by School Rank Australia. The rankings combine NAPLAN performance data

with housing affordability, highlighting schools that deliver strong educational outcomes in accessible communities.

With Katherine's median house price sitting at approximately \$335,000, the report challenges the long-held belief that parents must buy into expensive postcodes to secure a quality education for their children.

SchoolRank.com founder Liam Maurer said the findings highlighted a growing disconnect between school quality and property prices.

"The idea that you have to buy into a pricey catchment

to get a good education is one of the most costly assumptions in Australian real estate," he said.

"You don't need private school fees on top of a big mortgage to get a strong education."

Katherine High School Principal Nick Lovering said the ranking reflected the dedication of staff, students and the broader school community.

"The ranking proves parents don't need to pay huge school fees or live in an expensive area to access quality education for their children," Mr Lovering said.

"We've always known Katherine High School punches well above its weight and this report confirms that."

Mr Lovering said KHS continued to invest heavily in student opportunities and learning environments, ensuring students could access facilities and programs comparable to schools anywhere in Australia.

A major highlight is the school's new \$15.4 million STEAM Centre, which will deliver world-class science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics facilities, including purpose-built classrooms and a tiered performance space.

"Our students deserve access to the very best learning environments and opportunities, regardless of where they live," Mr Lovering said.

"The new STEAM Centre will be a game changer for Katherine High School and for education in our region."

Beyond the new development, KHS already boasts specialist facilities including a multi-purpose gym, five science laboratories and advanced technology suites supporting automotive, engineering and construction studies.

GAINING GOLDEN INSIGHT

Students from Katherine High School, Kintore Street School (Katherine) and Warakirri College in Sydney recently visited Vista Gold's Mt Todd project, Australia's largest undeveloped gold resource. Students explored open-cut mining processes, took part in a hands-on mine development simulation, and learned about the many career pathways within the mining industry. The interactive experience provided valuable insight into the journey from exploration to production.



KHS OPENS DOORS IN FLOOD CRISIS

Katherine High School played an integral role in the town's flood response earlier this year, providing shelter, support and stability as two major flood events battered the region and displaced hundreds of residents.

Katherine endured its worst flooding since 1998 in March when the Katherine River peaked at 19.2 metres on March 7, rising above the deck of the Katherine Bridge and forcing widespread

evacuations across the region. A second major flood threat later in March saw water levels again rise above the major flood mark following heavy rainfall from ex-Tropical Cyclone Narelle.

As floodwaters cut roads and inundated low-lying areas, Katherine High School's gymnasium became an evacuation shelter for vulnerable residents, stranded travellers and families forced from their homes.

KHS staff worked alongside emergency service personnel and disaster management teams to provide bedding, meals and day-to-day support for evacuees throughout the emergency.

Recognising the disruption to young people's learning, staff also established a pop-up school inside the evacuation centre to cater for school-aged children sheltering with their families.

Member for Katherine and Minister for Education and Training Jo Hersey praised the efforts of education staff and emergency workers during the crisis.

"As Minister for Education and Training and the Public Service, I could not be more proud of our Education staff, teachers, police, nurses and public servants who all worked together in times of emergency," Ms Hersey said.

"For all of our working together, we have a resilient community, and our recovery has been that much better for it.

"Thank you for your sacrifices during the floods, and for your genuine care and compassion for flood evacuees. On all occasions when I visited evacuation shelters, people said they were always very well looked after and taken care of by the staff and community groups."

PARTNERSHIP BRIDGES CITY-COUNTRY DIVIDE

A growing partnership between Katherine High School and Warakirri College has continued to strengthen, with students from the New South Wales school travelling north during Term 2 for a six-day visit to Katherine.

The visit followed an earlier interstate excursion where Katherine High School students travelled to Sydney and Canberra as part of the schools' City-Country Partnership program, designed to build cultural understanding and broaden educational opportunities for students and staff from vastly different backgrounds.

Eighteen Year 10, 11 and 12 students from Warakirri College's Campbelltown South campus immersed themselves in life in the Northern Territory, taking part in classes at Katherine High School, cultural activities and outdoor adventures across the region.

The group visited Nitmiluk Gorge for a boat cruise through the ancient sandstone landscape, explored Edith Falls and Katherine Hot Springs, visited Barruwei Lookout and attended the Katherine Outback Experience. Students also toured the Katherine Research Station and attended an open day at the Mt Todd Gold Mine project.

Warakirri College Year 12 student Noah Costa said the trip exposed students to a completely different way of life.

"It's so different to where we come from," he said.

"There's so many trees and it's literally an outback location. There's not a lot of buildings here. In Sydney there's just so many people all over the place and here there's not many people."

Noah said the Nitmiluk Gorge tour was one of the highlights of the trip.

"The gorge was beautiful," he said.

"We were on the boat tour for about an hour and the scenery was amazing. We learned about the rocks and how it's been formed over the years and how crocodiles actually ended up in the gorge."

He said students were also amazed to learn about Katherine's recent flooding events.

"The bridge that we crossed when we came into Katherine, that's massive, like 20 metres high, and apparently the water was flowing over the bridge," he said.

"I just found it unbelievable that the water could come up so high."

Fellow Year 12 student Emily Rushmer said the quietness of Katherine stood out immediately.

"There's always noise in the city and it's never quiet at all," she said.

"But when you walk around up here you can hear things that you wouldn't normally hear in a big city. It's really quiet and peaceful."

Students also met with local Aboriginal elder Aunty May Rosas, who shared stories about her life, including how her family hid her as a child to prevent her being taken away during the Stolen Generations era.

Emily said the talk left a lasting impression.

"It made me think about how lucky I am," she said.

"It made me realise that people go through a lot, but look at her — she does her talks and they move people and show people that you need to keep going and never give up."

"She said she had to hide in bushes near the river and had to learn to do things just to survive."



KHS Cultural Advisor Aunty May Rosas provided Aboriginal insight to Warakirri students during their stay in Katherine

Emily said the visit had even made her consider living in Katherine one day.



Year 12 students Mary Purdie and Xzander Harnas during the visit to Parliament House in Canberra

"I think I would live up here in Katherine," she said.

"It's nice because you have a lot of opportunities, the community is great and the weather as well."

"The only thing that worries me is I'm terrified of floods and those types of things, but I think I could live here."

Katherine High School Senior Teacher for Partnerships Thomas Hennessey said the exchange was benefiting both students and teachers by providing opportunities to share ideas and learn from different educational settings.

purposeful learning and how we check for understanding," he said.

"The teachers found it really interesting to see how classes operate at Katherine High School and our students also benefited from working alongside students from a completely different environment."

Mr Hennessey said the Territory landscape and wildlife had also made a strong impression on visitors.

"We took them to the Katherine low-level river crossing and gave them a guided tour of the wildlife of the region," he said.

"The landscape and wildlife in NSW is worlds away from what we have up here in Katherine."

He said the Mt Todd Gold Mine visit was another standout experience.

"It was just a fantastic experience. We learned a lot about the geology of the region."

The Katherine visit builds on the successful excursion Katherine High School students undertook earlier this year, when 17 students and three staff travelled to Sydney and Canberra despite major flooding impacting the town.

During that trip, Katherine students joined classes at Warakirri College's Campbelltown campus and

participated in workshops with the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation focused on strategies for teaching vocabulary to young learners.

They also visited Waranwarin Early Learning Centre to observe the teaching methods in practice before exploring Sydney landmarks including the Opera House, Harbour Bridge and Taronga Zoo.

The group later travelled to Canberra, where they joined students from Warakirri College's Redfern campus to tour Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial.

Another memorable moment came during a guided night walk through Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, where students spotted endangered native animals including Eastern Quolls and Eastern Bettongs.

Mr Hennessey said the partnership was continuing to create important opportunities for students from both schools.

"This partnership is about creating opportunities for students to learn from each other, challenge their perspectives and build relationships beyond their immediate communities," he said.

"It's been incredible to see students from Katherine and Sydney to connect so strongly despite coming from such different environments."

"It's also about exchanging ideas on classroom management, how we deliver



CATTLEMEN'S CONFERENCE

A huge shout out to the NT Cattleman's Association for hosting students from Katherine High School at its annual conference at Darwin Convention Centre. Year 10 and 11 students undertaking Certificate 2 studies in Rural Operations listened to presentations from young people working in the cattle industry, getting insight into the vast and varied career options which exist in

agriculture. NTCA CEO Romy Carey posed for a picture with our students and praised their attendance.

"This event really showcases the breadth of what our industry can provide in a workforce perspective so it's tremendous to have students from KHS here and we thank them so much for travelling such a long way to visit us and take part."

KHS SCHOOL CAPTAINS SHARE THEIR STORIES

For Katherine High School captains Xzander Harnas and Layla Jennings, stepping into leadership wasn't something that happened overnight.

Both Year 12 students had their own reasons for nominating for the role, but they share a common goal — representing their school with pride while encouraging younger students to challenge themselves and make the most of every opportunity.

For 17-year-old Xzander, becoming school captain had been an ambition for years.

"When I was younger I kind of always wanted to do it," he said.

"I really looked up to all the school captains before me and thought it was something that I'd like to do."

One of the biggest challenges has been learning to speak confidently in front of large groups — a skill he says has improved dramatically throughout the year.

"It was hard at first but it gets easier as you go," Xzander said.

"You just have to put in the effort. It's definitely given me confidence. I feel like I can speak clearly in front of people if I ever need to take a speaking role and talk to people in a crowd.

"I was a bit nervous at first but I just pushed through



Xzander Harnas

and tried to speak as clearly as I could so people can understand."

The role has also provided opportunities to represent Katherine High School at important community events across town.

"You get to go to places and events where you're representing the school and I quite enjoy that," he said.

"Sometimes you never get to experience these types of events, so attending these things opens your mind a bit. Not a lot of people get to do it and get that perspective.

"On Anzac Day we had to lay a wreath and that's a big responsibility that not everyone gets."

Away from school captain duties, Xzander is working towards his ATAR while keeping his future options open.

"I might end up taking on an apprenticeship and have my ATAR as a backup just in case I want to do something else in the future," he said.

A regular at the gym, he says exercise provides an important outlet during the busy final years of school.

"It's a good stress relief."

While he may eventually spend some time away, Xzander believes Katherine will always be home.

"Most of my family lives here," he said.

"I might move away for a bit but I'll probably end up coming back."

Fellow captain Layla Jennings also saw the role as an opportunity to challenge herself and develop new skills.

"It felt like something I should try for," she said.

"It's a great opportunity and will look good on my resume."

Like Xzander, one of the biggest areas of growth has been public speaking.

"Part of the reason I nominated for school captain



Layla Jennings

Layla is currently studying a science-focused pathway but is keeping an open mind about her future career.

"I'm thinking about maybe going into law and developing legislation here in the Northern Territory," she said.

Like many young people growing up in regional communities, she hopes to experience life elsewhere after school but remains deeply connected to Katherine.

"I've grown up here, my parents grew up here and my grandparents stayed here for most of their adult lives, so Katherine is a big part of my life and me as a person," she said.

"I'd like to go down south for a couple of years to experience a different life, but Katherine will always be home."

Both captains have simple advice for younger students who may be considering putting their hand up for leadership positions in the future.

"Just do it — it's not something to be scared of," Xzander said.

Layla agrees.

"Go for it if you're happy to put in the time and work," she said.

"Just make sure that you know all your responsibilities before you go into it."

was that public speaking was a real problem for me," Layla said.

"Before I did my first speech I was so nervous but as you continue to do it over time it feels a lot less intense and I've overcome that fear."

Balancing school leadership responsibilities with a demanding ATAR workload has required careful planning and discipline.

"I'm always trying to balance my school captain responsibilities because I have quite heavy coursework," she said.

"I'm working to tight schedules and I follow my schedule closely."



KHS POLICE OFFICER IS A CRACKER

Long before she was building connections with students at Katherine High School, Senior Constable Tanith Blair was cracking whips - and winning national titles.

Katherine High School's School Based Police Officer (pictured above) has a background unlike most, with her early years spent on a 2000-acre Angus cattle farm in Whorouly, in northeast Victoria. It was there Tanith first picked up a whip, learning the skill as part of everyday farm life.

"It started as something practical," she said. "We used whips when working cattle, but it also helped pass the time when you were out in the paddock. Then it became something I really enjoyed."

By the age of 12, that enjoyment had turned into success, with Tanith winning the Australian Ladies Whip Cracking Championship - defeating her own mother in the process.

"I don't remember exactly when I first won, but I was pretty young," she said. "I held that title for a number of years before I retired around 18."

Tanith's talents took her beyond the paddock and into competition arenas across the country, including events at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. She also performed demonstrations, even cracking a whip in front of visiting royalty.

But whip cracking was just one part of a childhood deeply rooted in rural tradition. From the age of three, Tanith was riding horses, and by just seven

years old, she was taking part in cattle drives to the Bogong High Plains.

Each December, her family would move large mobs of cattle - once numbering up to 1,400 - on a week-long journey from Whorouly through Bright and up into the high country. The process would repeat in autumn, with families returning to muster cattle before the winter snow set in.



A young Tanith (right) is pictured with her parents Max and Leanne and brother Justin

"It was just part of life," Tanith said. "You learnt responsibility early, and you worked as part of a team. Those experiences really shaped who I am."

After attending Whorouly Primary School and Myrtleford High School, Tanith left school after Year 11 to work at Little Plains Stud, a thoroughbred horse breeding and training facility. There, she helped foal mares and prepare young horses for racing.

However, her long-term goal lay elsewhere.

"I always wanted to join the police," she said. "I wanted to help people and make a difference."

It wasn't a straightforward path. After initially leaving school, Tanith returned to complete Year 12 while continuing to work, and applied multiple times before finally being accepted into the Victoria Police Academy in 1999.

"It took me three years to get in," she said. "I had to keep working at it, but I was determined."

Tanith graduated in 2000 and began her policing career in Melbourne before moving to regional Victoria, where she spent most of her time in general duties. Her work ranged from frontline policing to communications, where she helped coordinate responses across large areas and answered emergency calls.

In 2008, she made a life-changing move to the Northern Territory.

"I'd never been to the NT before," she said. "I left Victoria in a frost and arrived in Darwin in 25-degree heat - it was a bit of a shock."

Tanith's career in the Territory has included roles in Katherine, Darwin's Mounted Unit - where she conducted patrols on horseback - and more than eight years working as a School-Based Police Officer across Palmerston and rural areas.

Now based at Katherine High School, she's focused on building trust and breaking down barriers between young people and police.

HIGHLIGHTING LOCAL CAREERS



Alex Narkle has his sights set on a defence career

Hundreds of students gathered at Katherine High School for the annual Big Rivers Youth Expo, connecting with local employers and discovering the wide range of career opportunities available across the region.

The popular event brought together more than a dozen organisations, with interactive stalls giving students the chance to ask questions, explore different industries and learn firsthand about potential career pathways. Emerging local musicians also provided entertainment throughout the day, helping create a vibrant festival atmosphere.

Students from schools across the Big Rivers region attended the expo, which has become an important opportunity for young people to engage directly with employers and training providers.

Year 9 Katherine High School student Alex Narkle said the event highlighted just how



Grace Toohey, Brighty Muleke and Makayla Paech were keen to explore local employment opportunities

many career options were available to young people.

"It shows students who might be looking for a job all of the options they have," Alex said.

"They don't just have a few options, there's heaps of different things you can do for a career. It shows that

students can go anywhere if they put their minds to it."

Alex spent time speaking with defence personnel at the expo and said the conversations reinforced his ambition to pursue a career connected to the Australian Defence Force.

"I'm going to the air force," he said.



Brooke Brenner

Katherine High School Assistant Principal Brooke Brenner said the expo played a valuable role in helping students connect classroom learning with future employment opportunities.

"Events like the Big Rivers Youth Expo give students the chance to see what opportunities exist right here in our community," Ms Brenner said.

"It's one thing to hear about different careers in the classroom, but it's much more powerful when students can meet people who are actually working in those industries, ask questions and hear about their experiences firsthand."

Ms Brenner said exposing students to a broad range of industries was important in helping them make informed decisions about their futures.

"We want our students to understand that there are many different pathways available to them after school," she said.

"When I was talking to the defence personnel at the Expo, they were telling me there's a lot of different jobs to think about. Security work on defence sites is a job we spoke about that I hadn't really thought about. There's just so many options and the day really opened my eyes."



FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAY HAS HELPED DAEMON THRIVE

For Daemon Randell (pictured above), finding the right learning environment made all the difference.

The 19-year-old former student at Katherine High School thrived after moving across to the Katherine Flexible Learning and Engagement Centre (KFLEC), where a more relaxed and hands-on approach helped him reconnect with education and prepare for the workforce.

Now Daemon is working with Katherine Town Council on the mowing crew, maintaining sporting fields and helping keep the town clean - a job he says he loves.

"It's really good," Daemon said.

"I've been working since I was 13 years old and when I got to grade 10, I realised school wasn't for me. I'd rather get up and get ready for work and do what I need to do."

KFLEC, an annex of Katherine High School located in Katherine South, provides tailored learning programs for students experiencing vulnerabilities or additional needs. The centre focuses on literacy, numeracy and social support while helping students transition back into mainstream schooling or into employment pathways, apprenticeships and traineeships.

For Daemon, the flexible structure made all the difference.

"KFLEC was good for me," he said.

"They change everything so it's not a normal school environment. You can do your work with one-on-one help and for me, it was a lot better than normal school."

The balance between classroom learning and practical activities helped

Daemon stay engaged.

"In the morning we would do a couple of hours work but it's not just about schoolwork at KFLEC," he said.

"Once you've done your work in the morning, in the afternoon, you can have a bit of fun."

One of his favourite memories was learning to cook alongside KFLEC mentor Mal Fox.

"I enjoyed learning to cook with Mal, but he just eats everything you cook," Daemon laughed.

"Mal's good, he's known me since I was a young buck and he was always keen to give me a hand with whatever I needed, even outside of school."

"Now that I've finished school he still comes by and says g'day and asks how I'm going."

Daemon said the practical life skills taught at KFLEC still help him today.

"It was great learning life skills and learning to work by yourself and in groups and we used to do a bit of gardening here and there," he said.

"I didn't think I'd ever do that for a job but here I am."

These days, Daemon spends his workdays helping maintain Katherine's parks and sporting grounds.

"I'm with the Town Council and work mainly on the mowing crew," he said.

"We look after all the footy ovals in town and get around town collecting rubbish and taking it to the dump."

"I love it - come payday I can buy whatever I want."

Daemon encouraged other students struggling

in a traditional classroom environment to consider flexible learning pathways.

"If the classroom's not working for you and you get the opportunity to go to KFLEC, just go for it," he said.

"It's flexible learning in the classroom but you're also outdoors for the rest of the day."

Outside of work, Daemon dedicates his weekends to rugby league and supporting younger players from Katherine.

Every Saturday he travels by bus to Darwin, where he helps supervise and support the Katherine Cowboys under-14 and under-16 teams.

He also plays senior rugby league with Northern Sharks, with the Cowboys currently not fielding a senior side.

SALONI SECURES STEM SCHOLARSHIP



(Left to right) Manas, Mandavi and Saloni Thapa, Matthew Kennedy and Darren Scragg from Northrop Grumman and KHS Head of Campus Breanna Bowen

Sixteen-year-old Katherine High School student Saloni Thapa has been awarded the Northrop Grumman Katherine High School Scholarship, opening the door to valuable industry exposure and future opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The Year 11 student is the second recipient of the scholarship, following current school captain Layla Jennings. Saloni said she was excited to learn more about the cutting-edge work taking place on her doorstep at RAAF Base Tindal.

"I'm really grateful and excited."

"I know I love science and I definitely want to do something to do with science in the future, so I think it will give me a chance to see what it's like in the real world and

see if there's something I'm interested in within STEM."

The scholarship is supported by Northrop Grumman Australia, a global defence technology giant which provides maintenance and support for the MQ-4C Triton remotely piloted aircraft system based at RAAF Base Tindal.

Northrop Grumman Australia Program Manager, Triton Sustainment Matthew Kennedy said the scholarship was designed to encourage local students to consider careers in the rapidly growing defence and technology sectors.

"We're very fortunate that the program we run with Triton is based out of RAAF Base Tindal near Katherine, so we've got a really strong workforce here supporting operations of the aircraft," Mr Kennedy said.

"We're keen to promote an education pathway that gives students an opportunity to potentially join a company like us, creating a job pathway here locally so students can stay, learn and work in a highly technology-driven sector without necessarily having to leave the region."

Mr Kennedy said the scholarship provided practical support for students, including assistance with resources such as tutoring and equipment, while also allowing them to gain a greater understanding of careers available in the defence industry.

"During the interview process it was very clear Saloni was passionate about continuing in the STEM field," he said.

"She was very well researched, very inquisitive

and asked a lot of really good questions of us and displayed some really strong attributes."

Saloni said she had been nervous during the interview selection process but was thankful to have been chosen.

"I think it's a really great scholarship opportunity. It's inspiring for me and also for other students that win the scholarship in the future and I'm really grateful to have this opportunity."

Saloni's parents Manas and Mandabi, said the scholarship would provide Saloni with valuable exposure to potential career pathways.

"It's a big achievement not only for her, but for us as a family – we're all very excited," proud mum Mandabi said.

"She's young and still trying to figure out what's right for her and I think this opportunity can show her how things work and help her find what may be the best career for her in the future."

The scholarship continues to build on the strong relationship between Katherine High School and Northrop Grumman Australia, with inaugural recipient Layla Jennings previously spending time at the company's Brisbane facility to gain a greater understanding of the diverse career opportunities available in the defence sector.

KHS Head of Campus Breanna Bowen said the scholarship was a valuable opportunity for students to gain real-world exposure and make informed decisions about their future careers.

STARS SHINING BRIGHT

Tamara Rosas, Stars Academy Program Co-ordinator

This semester, Stars Academy students have been actively involved in a wide range of activities aligned with our pillars of Healthy Lifestyles, Wellbeing, Community, Education, Training, and Employment.

Throughout the semester, mentors organised several volunteering opportunities within the local community, providing students with meaningful ways to give back while developing valuable life skills and strengthening community connections.

As our town prepared for a second flood event, mentors took a small group of girls to assist with sandbagging at a local childcare centre. This experience provided students with the opportunity to contribute to an important community response while demonstrating teamwork,



Tamara Rosas

resilience, and a willingness to help others during a time of need.

Students also volunteered at primary schools such as MacFarlane supporting the younger students with class room work and Katherine South Primary School, assisting with the Mother's Day stall and supporting netball training sessions



during recess breaks. Through these activities, the girls displayed enthusiasm, leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. They expressed a strong sense of pride in being able to contribute positively to their community and serve as role models for younger students.

Overnight camps continued to provide valuable learning

and personal development opportunities. Our Year 12 students were invited to attend a Stars Induction Camp, designed to give them insight into what Year 12 may look like, the challenges they may face, and strategies to help them navigate these successfully. Students also participated in engaging workshops, including Hoops for Health and Headspace

sessions. This semester, ten students attended a Stars netball carnival as a reward for maintaining high attendance throughout the term.

We also recognised and celebrated several significant events during year level contact times, including International Women's Day, Harmony Day, Easter, Mother's Day, National Reconciliation Week, Anzac and Mabo Day. These were introduced through informative sessions that highlighted their significance and relevance. Students then participated in activities designed to celebrate their understanding of each event. We have also collaborated with the ladies from KWILS delivering a Youth & Sisterhood program and Herd to be Heard with Bronagh Crawley all girls had a great time learning from both programs.

Stars hope everyone has a safe holiday and we can't wait to see what semester two brings.

DEADLY DEBUTS

Katherine High School Stars Academy students Shalya Andrews, Jade Huddleston and Jessie Huddleston are making their mark on the football field after all three debuted for Eastside Football Club's women's team in the Big Rivers Football League this season.

The young footballers have stepped up to senior level with confidence, impressing coaches with their skills, commitment and willingness to learn.

Eastside women's coach Kym Bracken said it was exciting to see more young women embracing the game.

"It's good to see these young girls playing footy. It's another way for them to keep active and be around good team spirited people and positive role models," she said.

"They've definitely got the skills and, importantly, they're coming to training each week and developing every week."

Bracken said the trio were helping inspire the next generation of female footballers and could become important role models for young girls considering taking up the sport.





Emerging KHS AFL stars (from left) Chad Anderson, Terence Runyu, Jack Rankine, Thomas Lurda and Dre Jackson flew the local flag at the recent NT Clontarf Academy All-Stars Carnival held at the Showgrounds. KHS students represented the combined Top End North All-Stars team which went through round robin games undefeated before going down narrowly to Top End South in the grand final

BUSY FIRST SEMESTER FOR KHS CLONTARF ACADEMY

**Duane Von Senden,
KHS Clontarf Academy
Director**

This term, the Clontarf program had an important focus on health and wellbeing, covering social and emotional health, physical activity and making positive lifestyle choices.

Our camps, contact times and activities all reflected this focus. Early in the term, School-based Police Officer, Senior Constable Tanith Blair delivered Online Safety sessions, followed by Respectful Relationship lessons covering consent, personal boundaries, healthy and unhealthy relationships, decision-making and help-seeking strategies. Our senior



Duane Von Senden

boys also participated in mental health and wellbeing sessions facilitated by Zach Richards from Headspace.

Our weekly morning training sessions and after-school activities remain a key part of our program, helping us engage with and build strong



clontarf
foundation

relationships and trust within our boys. Activities range from morning runs along the Low Level to Hot Springs loop to hosting other Clontarf Academies for sport. Friday Footy, Kick the Board and Dodgeball continued to be favourites, keeping students active and engaged.

Camps were again a major highlight throughout the term. In Week 3, we held our Rough Diamonds camp in and around Katherine, providing an opportunity to connect with boys we don't see often enough, with fishing and setting cherabin traps proving popular.

In Week 7, our middle school boys travelled to Kununurra for the Clontarf Northern AFL Carnival, finishing undefeated to claim the Oval 1 title. Congratulations to Terence Runyu, Jayshaun Bara, Walker Huddleston and Jaxon Scott, who were selected in the NT All-Stars team that faced the WA All-Stars in a tight contest - NT winning by a goal.

Our final camp was the

Week 8 Health Camp in Darwin, where students participated in the CSC Clontarf Bush Run for the first time, attended a Hoops 4 Health session focused on nutrition and wellbeing and enjoyed a range of healthy and engaging skill sessions at a morning training with our Nightcliff High Academy.

Alongside strong support through the schools Homework Club, transition visits to McFarlane and Clyde Fenton Primary Schools and a visit to the local radio station, these efforts contributed to an Academy attendance of 68% for the term which is 13% higher than Term 2 last year. A fantastic result as we look ahead to another exciting term in Term 3.

CLONTARF DIRECTOR STILL KICKING GOALS

Duane Von Senden is still getting a kick out of playing footy at the ripe old age of 40, all while setting a shining example for the young men he mentors.

The Katherine High School Clontarf Academy Director is still pulling on the boots - and still winning. Duane recently helped Jabiru Bombers claim back-to-back NTFL Division 1 premierships – defeating Tracy Village in the season decider.

But this achievement was about far more than silverware and a premiership flag – Duane’s also proud to set an example for young men he works with.

“It shows these young fellas that a healthy lifestyle can obviously prolong your life, but it can also extend the time you do things that you love doing,” he said.

“And for me, that’s playing football. If you’re eating well and exercising regularly, you

can keep playing footy until you’re in your forties - and you can do the things you love doing, even things like fishing and camping, a lot later in life and for a lot longer.”

Duane’s journey in the game stretches back decades - from his early days with Eastside in the Katherine league, to stepping into the Wanderers senior team, and later establishing himself at SANFL level with Woodville-West Torrens. These days, the pace might have changed, but the passion hasn’t – and Duane has no plans to retire any time soon.

“Jabiru not only have their A grade side but also a B grade team, so as I get older I might start playing in the B grade side and that’s totally fine with me because I just want to keep playing for as long as I can.”

Duane wasn’t the only KHS Clontarf staff member strutting his stuff for the

Bombers on the big stage at Marrara.

Year 7 mentor Liam Holt-Fitz also played - and dominated, booting four of Jabiru’s seven goals in a best on ground performance.

Having previously starred in premier league grand finals for Nightcliff, Liam said playing in the same team as retired Hawthorn champion Cyril Rioli was a highlight of his season with Jabiru.

“I wasn’t going to play at all until Duane hit me up to come and have a run just for the love of the game. He also told me Cyril would be playing,” Liam said.

“I grew up just watching him on TV, and to actually be playing out there with Cyril was unreal — he just makes it look so easy out there,” he said. “Being in the same forward line as him, he just always gives you the ball and passes it off.



KHS Clontarf Academy staff Duane Von Senden (right) and Liam Holt-Fitz with the spoils of victory

OUR JUSTIN SHOWS CLASS IS PERMANENT

Katherine High School’s very own Olympian Justin Anlezark has proven class is permanent, claiming two gold medals at the Oceania Masters Athletics Championships in Darwin during May.

Justin, who works at KHS as the school’s Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) Officer, competed in the 45-49 years division and won gold in the shot put with a throw of 16.33 metres before backing it up with another gold medal in the discus with a throw of 41 metres.

He previously competed at three Olympic Games and made history with a fourth-place finish in the shot put at the 2003 World Championships — still regarded as one of the best results by an Australian male in a throwing event at world level.

The achievements in Darwin were even more impressive

given the interruptions to his preparation caused by the major flooding across Katherine earlier this year.

“I threw 21 when I was in my prime at the Olympics, so to throw more than 16 metres after very limited training due to our flooding earlier this year was pleasing,” Justin said.

“I could do weights which was good, but I only did about eight weeks of throwing because of the floods.”

Despite stepping away from elite competition years ago, Justin said the competitive drive never disappears.

“You never leave it. Once you’re an Olympian it’s stuck in your system,” he said.

The Oceania Games also provided a chance to reconnect with familiar faces from his international athletics career.

“I got to catch up with Olympians from the Solomon



KHS staff member Justin Anlezark showed class is permanent at the Oceania Games in Darwin

Islands and New Zealand who I competed against 20 years ago,” he said.

“It was brilliant. It’s like an old family because you toured around every year on the athletics circuit with them.

“It’s one of those magical things about sport - being involved in it but also going back and enjoying competing. It doesn’t matter how old you are as long as you have the ability and the drive.”

Justin said remaining active through athletics continued to play an important role in his wellbeing.

“It’s good mental health for me staying fit and athletic and doing something that I’m passionate about,” he said.

While shot put remains his pet event, Justin enjoyed returning to discus competition.

“I did a lot of discus at high school but then I basically mastered the art of just throwing shot put,” he said.

“To do discus was great. It’s sort of my fun event and my shot put is my switched-on serious event.”

Justin is now preparing for upcoming athletics meets in Darwin and the Northern Territory Athletics Championships later this year.



LEAGUE LEGENDS

Katherine High School's Under 16 Schoolboys Rugby Cup team showed plenty of grit and determination despite going down to a bigger and more experienced MacKillop College outfit in Darwin. The students never stopped competing, displaying resilience, toughness and school pride throughout the contest. Year 10 student Clayton Ellis is pictured delivering a pass as KHS looked to create attacking opportunities. While the result didn't go their way, the team represented Katherine High School with distinction and gained valuable experience against quality opposition.

HAYES HAS HIGH HOPES

Katherine High School's Hayes Avenell will take a major step in his rugby league journey when he represents the Northern Territory at the Australian Secondary Schools Rugby League Championships in Coffs Harbour in July.

The 16-year-old Year 10 student earned selection in the Territory squad after years of dedication to his sport and stands out as the only player selected from a club outside the greater Darwin area.

Hayes has shown enormous commitment to his development, regularly travelling by bus with his Katherine Cowboys teammates to Darwin to compete in the NRL NT Under 16s competition.

The achievement is especially rewarding after he narrowly missed selection in 2025 and made it a personal goal to earn a place in the squad this year as a top-age player.

"It's something I've wanted since last year," Hayes said.

"I missed selection last year but I've finally made it."

A talented fullback who is also comfortable moving into the centres, Hayes knows the championships will provide his toughest challenge yet.

Some of Australia's best young players will be in attendance and NRL scouts will be watching closely for future stars.

"It's my first time playing at national level and I know it won't be easy at all," he said.

"It's going to be a lot colder and the players are going to be bigger, faster, stronger. They'll be more advanced and there are some kids there that have NRL contracts already. It's a good chance to see if you can get recognised."

Hayes said the support of the Katherine Cowboys had played a huge role in his development.

"The Cowboys have been good, supporting us and getting us up to Darwin each week and having everyone show up to training so we can get a team together to play," he said.



Hayes Avenell has been selected to fly the KHS flag at the national schoolboys rugby league titles



A smoking ceremony was held at Gardens Oval ahead of competition in the inaugural Santos Power Cup



Port Adelaide star Sam Powell-Pepper (centre) proved a hit with KHS students

KHS STUDENTS IMPRESS AT SANTOS POWER CUP

Katherine High School students have helped make Territory football history, travelling to Darwin to compete in the first-ever Northern Territory Santos Power Cup - an AFL program backed by Santos and the Port Adelaide Football Club promoting education, leadership and healthy lifestyles through sport.

The three-day carnival brought together students from across the Northern Territory, giving young players the chance to test themselves against strong competition while also building connections, confidence and leadership skills away from the classroom.

The trip began in style with an opening ceremony at Pee Wee's at the Point, where more than 200 students mixed with players and staff from the Port Adelaide Football Club. Students also enjoyed a live performance from Indigenous hip hop artist Kobie Dee before the football action got underway.

On the field at Gardens Oval, the KHS boys made an immediate impact with a strong opening win over Nightcliff. The side backed it up with another impressive victory against Yipirinya College and pushed several highly fancied teams in close contests throughout the carnival.

KHS Head of Enrichment Jake Davis accompanied the students and said several players stood out for the way they competed across the tournament.

"Mundy Scomparin was outstanding in defence all week and showed a lot of composure under pressure," he said.

"Chad Anderson gave us a really strong target with his contested marking and Dre Jackson brought great energy with his speed and pressure in the forward line."

Jake said he was most impressed by the way the students supported each other and represented the school.

"Not only did the students compete really strongly on the field, but they also represented Katherine High School with pride and maturity the entire trip," he said.

"The way the boys encouraged each other and connected with students from other schools was outstanding."

The school's female representatives combined with students from Yipirinya and Ltyentye Apurte (Santa



KHS students (from left) Daena Thompspon, Shaliyah Andrews and Mary Purdie with Port Adelaide AFLW players Sachi Syme (far left) and Ashleigh Woodland

Teresa), with Mary Purdie and Shay Andrews impressing in defence while Daena Thompson lit up the carnival with her pace and goal kicking ability.

"Daena's speed and attack on the ball were a real highlight, while Mary and Shay worked incredibly hard in defence," Jake said.

One of the biggest highlights came away from the football field when KHS students appeared live on Channel 7's Sunrise program during two weather crosses at the Darwin Waterfront alongside AFL players from Port Adelaide and the Gold Coast Suns.

Year 10 student Junior Baker-Hall said the experience was one he would never forget.

"It was pretty cool we got to watch the sun rise and got to be on television," Junior said.

"Quite a few people saw it and my families were watching as well."

Junior said meeting AFL players and bonding with teammates made the trip extra special.

"It was a really fun few days and all the boys had a great time up there," he said.

"Getting to meet the players was the highlight for me.

They liked us being there and made us feel really welcome."

Junior said the camp also helped students build stronger friendships away from the classroom.

"It was good to get to know all of the boys better away from school and it was good to mix with other kids from other schools," he said.

Jake said the inaugural NT competition was a fantastic opportunity for regional students.

"For many students, this was about much more than football," he said.

"It gave them a chance to travel, experience elite-level AFL environments and create memories together as a group."

Students capped off the week by attending the AFL clash between the Gold Coast Suns and Port Adelaide at TIO Stadium, rounding out an unforgettable experience.

Junior already has advice for students hoping to earn a spot on next year's trip.

"Stay at school, learn and stay in all your classes and get a good education so you can go on this camp," he said.



Chad Anderson and Dre Jackson took pride in being part of the inaugural Santos Power Cup



Chad Anderson excelled in the long jump



Goldie Ganley lets fly in the discus event



Rylie Fankhauser shone in the sprint races

FLORA CROCS REIGN SUPREME AT KHS ATHLETICS CARNIVAL

School spirit, friendly rivalry and plenty of participation were on full display as Katherine High School students took to the track and field for the annual Athletics Carnival during Term 3.

Students proudly represented their houses throughout the day, competing in a range of track, field and novelty events while dressed in vibrant house colours.

After a day of spirited competition, Flora Crocs emerged as overall champions, finishing ahead of Roper Redbacks, Daly Dingoes and Edith Emus.

The carnival provided students with an opportunity to showcase their talents outside the classroom while strengthening connections across the school community.

KHS Assistant Principal Lauren Chapman said athletics day remained one of the most important events on the school calendar.

"It brings together students from across our school community," she said.

"The positive and inclusive environment allows students to connect with students they may not normally connect with and it allows students to shine in a non-academic field."

The school's house system has played a key role in building enthusiasm and participation, with friendly rivalry helping create a strong sense of belonging and school pride.



House colors were the order of the day as students embraced the KHS Athletics Carnival

"The house model encourages participation from students who may not have previously been inclined to get involved, while building school spirit through house rivalry," Ms Chapman said.

"The participation levels, including the effort students put into dressing up in house colours, reflects the positive impact the house system has had on our carnival days."

Participation was a standout feature of this year's event, with students embracing everything from sprints and field events to novelty competitions.

"The enthusiasm for house colours and the willingness of students to get involved really set the standard for participation in these kinds of events going forward," Ms Chapman said.

"There was a real atmosphere of just having a go and having fun, which was reflected in the participation rates across field events, sprints and novelty events."

One of the biggest highlights was the ever-popular races between students and teachers, which drew plenty of laughs and vocal support from spectators.

"They're always a highlight," Ms Chapman said.

"It's a great opportunity for students and teachers to have some fun and build a different dynamic outside the classroom."

There's also nothing quite like the bragging rights afterwards, whichever way the race falls."



Rylee Payne prepares to propel the javelin



Leigh Kariko sets a solid pace in the staff versus students 100m relay



TERENCE GETS A TASTE OF SENIOR FOOTBALL

Terence Runyu (centre) with Clontarf Academy mentors Troy Gillett (left) and Liam Holt-Fitz ahead of his senior football debut



Katherine High School student Terence Runyu has announced himself on the senior football stage, making an impressive debut for the Katherine River Saints in Round 1 of the Big Rivers Football League season.

Aged just 15 and currently in Year 9, Terence stepped up to senior level football against Arnhem Crows - requiring a special exemption to compete against adult opposition due to being under 16.

Any nerves quickly disappeared once the game began.

The Saints controlled the contest early before powering away to a comfortable 35-point victory, with Terence looking right

at home amongst older and more experienced players.

The highlight came when the young forward kicked a goal in his very first senior match.

After taking a strong mark deep in the pocket, Terence calmly went back and slotted a difficult drop punt from a tight angle, sparking huge celebrations from teammates and supporters alike.

"He celebrated with the big double bicep pump and the whole team ran to get around him," Saints teammate and KHS Clontarf mentor Troy Gillett said.

"He was very comfortable playing against men. It was a pretty tough shot and he just went back and kicked it straight through."

The moment was made even more special given many of

Terence's family members from Barunga were playing for the opposition.

"It was nice, everybody else started cheering for me and all my family liked it — my mums and dads, sisters and brothers - and that was great, emotional happiness," Terence said.

"It was tough because the other mob is my family and they got a shock to see me playing on the other team, but after the game they were excited for me and congratulating me and they all got photos with me."

Terence said pulling on the senior jumper for the first time was an experience he will never forget.

"I liked it. My first time playing for the seniors made me feel like I'm becoming a man," he said.

"I was pretty nervous but really excited at the same time, but once I started playing I enjoyed it, it was good."

Troy, who mentors Terence through the KHS Clontarf Academy, played alongside the teenager in the Saints forward line and helped guide him through his first senior appearance.

He had encouraged Terence to embrace the opportunity and supported him in attending training sessions leading into the season opener.

For KHS, Terence's debut is another example of students embracing opportunities, showing courage and developing leadership on and off the sporting field.