



### **GAWLER HIGH SCHOOL**

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (16:38): Today I rise to speak on behalf of students of Gawler High School. I want to read into the record a statement I have received on behalf of the students of Gawler High School prepared by Shannon Trezise. Shannon is a year 11 student ambassador at Gawler High School. The statement relates to the media's treatment of an incident that occurred at the Evanston Railway Station some time ago and also the impact that the media have had on the school, particularly the students. He states:

As a reputable student of Gawler High School, I am writing to say that I am appalled by the negative media attention and disappointed by the response by TransAdelaide concerning the fight that happened a month ago at the Evanston Train Station between 2 Gawler High School Students after school had finished and beyond school jurisdiction and therefore not the responsibility of Yard Duty Teachers.

The media presented incorrect information to the public and as a result, misrepresented the true situation. Some of the information was completely wrong and they were not even willing to check that the information that they had was ever correct. I wish to stress that out of the 800 approx. students who attend the high school two students have brought the school into disrepute. I want to let you know of the good things that the students do for the school community and the wider community.

Last year we celebrated our 100<sup>th</sup> year of success at Gawler High School. We have many successful and notable alumni, such as Max Fatchen, Darren Lehmann and Lisa Martin-Ondieki. More recent success stories include Matthew Harmati, who represented the State on the Premier's Anzac School Prize Tour attended by Dr Jane Lomax-Smith ....[and he] has also been recognised by the Gawler Town Council for the Gawler Rural Ambassadors' Youth Award.

Anthea Wright, a past student, won the Gawler Young Achievers Youth Award 2005 and again in 2007. She also won the Australian National Scholarship Vocation Award for her VET course in Printing and Graphic Art and Principal's Award for 2005 for artistic contributions to the school. She will be graduating from UniSA with the Bachelor of Visual Arts, specialising in New Media. At the moment, she freelances as a visual artist, having also won the Gawler Mayor's Award for 2007.

There are other students currently at Gawler High School who excel in a range of studies and programs. Another one is Blayze Williams, who has recently won the 36<sup>th</sup> National Appaloosa Horse Show in Dubbo this year. The students [at the school] are offered the most up-to-date programs in all subjects and get involved in many community-based opportunities such as the Questacon Science Program. Year 10 students attend the University of SA Mawson Lakes campus to learn about university life and there are many other opportunities from sport to IT; students run our dynamic school website, with a help of the IT staff.

We [that is, the students of Gawler High School] are proud to say that we are a 'Green' school, having Sustainability Committee.

In 2006, a group of students decided that they want to stop talking about how they could change the global warming problem, and started the Gawler High School Green Crew, who have developed ways to reduce, reuse and recycle resources that we use within our school. ..

Many of our students are proud to say that they come from Gawler High School.

The incident at the train station sparked blogging through the intranet and mobile phones which demonstrated that many students were horrified at the behaviour of principally two students who have given the school a 'bad' name.

In response many students who participated in writing forums to show positive reactions to what happens at Gawler High School, rather than the negative spiel of the media.

Here is an extract from one of the forums:

'I'm disgusted at the way the media are inflating this incident and giving our school a bad reputation...Incidents like this occur, but never as serious, at nearly all schools, including private...what about the positive things, like our fantastic rugby team,

our successful recycling programs, and our great academic success...they don't focus on how much Gawler High supports its students in every field ...

It goes on. The statement continues:

As a member of the student community, I would like you to consider the valuable learning which takes place at Gawler High School, and realise that the negative media coverage has caused a great deal of damage in the community to our school's reputation.

The students are very proud of their school and want to bring to the attention of the community that media does actually hurt not only the students but also the school.

On a personal note, I would like to wish Kim Budimin from the Minister for Health's office a very happy birthday. She is always very wonderful and helpful whenever need information and assistance from the minister's office.