## Project Title:

**STELLAR - Students’ Thoughts magazine**

### Project Description:

When the school was offered a small grant to ‘do something’ with literacy, it seemed that the best idea was to encourage as many students as possible to write about the issues that mean the most to them. On July 23rd for 20 minutes during Roll call / DEAR, every student in the school was asked to *Drop Everything and wRite.*

Every piece of writing was read and the most passionate, original, quirky and candid writing was selected to be ‘polished’ with a teacher employed for two days for this specific purpose. These edited texts were then edited again to correct glaring grammar, vocabulary and spelling errors.

Students were invited to submit photographs to be included in the magazine. So many students have written with great love, seriousness, empathy and compassion, that the project became bigger than originally anticipated. The magazine was distributed to each DEAR group, the P&C, our Literacy week guest of honour, Libby Gleeson and is for sale to all our students for $2 to cover extra printing costs.

### School. Region:

Birrong Girls High School, South West Sydney Region

### Contact Person:

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### Number of students, teachers, parents, other community members directly involved:

- 840 students submitted work
- 200 students had work published in the magazine
- Teacher’s Aide contributed illustrations
- one casual teacher and the deputy, selected, edited, mentored, proofread, collated, typed and submitted work to be printed. Every Roll Call teacher facilitated students writing during DEAR.

### Intended Literacy and or numeracy outcomes:

- To encourage every student to write about what is most important in her life
• To help students edit their own work, to polish and rewrite it for publishing under the guidance of a teacher
• To encourage students to read about the authentic concerns, passions, histories and fleeting thoughts of their peers.
• To publish student work in a form which celebrates their achievements for distribution to students, school community and visitors
• Numeracy (Reach for the Stars) Project was run by the maths faculty with great success and the synchronicity in the project names and the school motto, Ad Astra, was helpful in creating a unified focus for literacy/numeracy week.

Evidence of achievement of intended literacy and or numeracy outcomes:
Finished product of the magazine, comments from students, staff, P and C and members of the community.

Feedback:
This project has been so successful that we hope to repeat it with a different theme in 2009. The grant was the impetus to conceive the project and complete it in a very short timeframe.

EDITORIAL in STELLAR

When the school was offered a small grant to ‘do something’ with Literacy, it seemed that the best idea was to encourage as many students as possible to write about the issues that mean the most to them. Thus, the idea for STELLAR was born. We hoped that with the grant we could publish a selection of students’ writing in a magazine which would provide a snapshot of the wonderful eclectic character of our student body in 2008.

This was not an entirely original idea. A number of photographic books have worked from the same premise. To provide a snapshot of our planet at a certain moment in history, editors have employed hundreds of photographers to take photographs in different countries around the world at a particular moment in time to create a mosaic of the world at that instant. This is what we hoped that STELLAR, our magazine, might achieve, a mosaic or word collage of our students’ worlds at a particular moment in time.

So on Wednesday, July 23rd 2008 for 20 minutes, during DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), we decided to ask you to Drop Everything and Write. Every piece of writing was read and the work of students that was most passionate, original, quirky and candid was selected to be ‘polished’ with Ms Fountis. All the polished works were again edited (the editor’s prerogative) to edit some glaring grammar, vocabulary and spelling errors. We also invited students to submit photographs. Although only three students submitted their pegs, the quality of the work submitted was so inspiring that all the submitted photos have been used. Our teachers’ aide, award winning artist, Ghazi Younes, kindly provided some ink illustrations to accompany some of the writing.

The contributors have been listed at the back of STELLAR and the writing appears without the name of the author next to it. Much of the writing was so personal, candid and heartfelt that we wanted to ensure that the authors were able to feel confident that their writing would be read for its content rather than as a means of finding out something sometimes too personal about the writer.
So many students have written with great love, seriousness, empathy and compassion. We hope you enjoy reading the thoughts of your fellow students at BGHS 2008. Hopefully by gaining an insight into the lives of your friends and peers you may understand what Atticus Finch meant in the famous novel To Kill A Mockingbird, when he said to his daughter, Scout… If you just learn a single trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it.

Congratulations to all those students who have had work published in this first edition of STELLAR and thank you to all the students and staff of Birrong Girls High who helped bring STELLAR to life.

Ms Crossan

**Year 7**

*To this day I will never forget that moment …*

The rain was thundering down on the car roof, pistolling down like bullets. The lights flashed bright fluorescent colours, green, red and orange, the sound of beeping horns, and tyres screeched to a halt.
The windscreen looked like it had a layer of mist frozen to it, and felt like it too.
Shivering, I clenched my teeth together, arms wrapped around my legs and I was ready for school.
Green for go, driving down the street, a long line, everybody waiting to go. Next second, all I noticed was I was stuck like a magnet to the door. Everything happened too quickly for me to take in.
An angry but worried driver, standing outside his car, was looking at the scratches and dents in his car. I could see everything from the window. I was scared. Shivering… Before I knew it, there were police and ambulances everywhere.
Mum didn't know if she should tell Dad immediately. Would he be alarmed? People raced to get me out of the car as soon as they could. I was in pain, but not seriously injured. The only damage to my body was a stinging scratch from the seat belt buckle.
Next thing, Mum and I were in the hospital, waiting to be checked by the doctor.
After waiting for a while, we were finally brought into the doctor’s room. The doctor’s cold hands were checking my pulse. All that was going around in my head was the thought of home. After a long, brutal day what more could a kid want?
To this day I will never forget that moment and all that I can say is “it is now over.”

*All my heart*
My parents and siblings
I love them with all my heart
Mum’s a gambler
Dad’s a smoker
Nothing can stop them
I wanna change them
Growing up for me is a pretty hard thing
They’re growing old
I’ll soon miss them very much
I don’t wanna live with a broken heart
Brothers and sisters work all night and day
Hard for them … very much
My friends love my personality
They don’t really understand my problems
They think I’m cheap on excursions
Always with a never smile
But still I love them and will, still work hard.

My Grandma
I always wished that I had met my Grandma. She passed away when my oldest sister was about one year old, that was about 23 years ago. I only have one photo of her and she is holding my oldest sister, of course, my sister was a baby. She was sitting on a couch next to the television. I have hidden the photo in a cupboard with a lock. It’s with all my other photos but I like this photo the best. I love my Grandma and wish that I could have met her.

Bondi Beach Rescue
One day at Bondi beach I was swimming peacefully with my friend. There were lots of life guards around. We didn’t notice how the current swept us away from between the flags. When a big wave, about 3 metres high took us away even further from the flags, we still didn’t realise that the life guard was waving at us and shouting at us to get out of the water. The lifeguard swam out closer and closer towards us. She was trying to rescue us. My friend and I did not think that we needed help but we felt the current was strong. The life guard with a red and yellow uniform rescued us from the deep water and guided us back onto the sand. Whenever I remember this story I keep thinking that I really did need help because I would have been carried out to sea with my friend without that life guard’s help. This is the day I will never forget. Now I always try to swim between the flags and in the shallow water.

People Perish
I began to read a book about 9/11 earlier this year. It was then that I realised how many people had died because several men sought revenge. On the 11th of September families, children, women and men boarded flights all around America not knowing their fate. In the morning the hijackers boarded the American airline planes. During the flight they decided it was time and they crashed the planes into the world trade centre. After I finished reading the book I watched a documentary about this disaster. It showed burnt bodies, falling out of the great mega structures and more explosions from the burning fuel. The documentaries showed how a couple of minutes later another explosion occurred. It was the other tower. Both of the twin towers were falling to the ground. On this day more than 2000 people perished due to the need for revenge and the angry decisions of some men.
19 hijackers, 2,974 people died in the attacks. Another 24 are missing and presumed dead. The overwhelming majority of casualties were civilians, including nationals of over 90 different countries.

My Dad
This story is about one of the most inspiring people in my life, my Dad. He is the one who always shares his past experiences to teach me how to deal with hardships in life. My Dad has coped with such tragic situations that I surely could not endure.
When my Dad was little around my age, he lived in Vietnam. You could guess that life there was horrible and painful. Everyone was poor, always starving and doing hard jobs on an empty stomach.

My Dad accepted this but then his mother passed away when he was only twelve years old. At first everyone came to help, but then after they left my Dad started to feel the pain. He had no Mum who was there to look after him, tuck him into bed at night or to love him. Soon the Vietnam War started. My Dad had to flee the country on a boat, which headed towards Australia. Dad wasn’t even sure whether he would make it to land or not. He spent many days at sea with dangerous weather and aware that food was scarce but all he thought of was surviving the trip. Yes, he did make it, fortunately. He went to Melbourne to live with a friend he had met on the boat. When he finally reached Australia he had one important thing to do. Throughout the entire sea trip he had kept a small photo of his Mum. When he reached Melbourne he went to a photography store to enlarge the photo and bought a frame for it too. Ever since then he has always kept the picture with him.

Years after he passed this story down to me, telling me how he always remembered his Mum. He says that he talks to her and if I believe too, she will help me with anything. Since the day Dad told me this story, it has inspired me to treasure my loved ones and to make the most of the time I have with them. I know that I will always remember them.

My Flying Birthday in Year 4.

My birthday in year 4 wasn’t and ordinary get up and go to school birthday. This one was in Queensland! Walking into the kitchen I smelt the most wonderful smell I had ever smelt (ok maybe a slight exaggeration) Pancakes! …and there placing the last one on the plate was my Mum. She told me to eat them all because I would need all my strength to go Para Sailing. What was Para sailing? I wondered. It was 20 minutes before we arrived at the location where the parasailing would take place and my heart was racing. We stepped onto the boat and listened to the safety course as we went out onto the open water. When it was our turn to fly, my heart felt as if it was going to come out of my mouth! I was harnessed onto the sail with my sister behind me and we were moving. Nooooo!! I don’t want to die! OK, maybe this was an exaggeration too! I was rising, I was screaming. I was laughing. I was getting higher. I was 60 metes above the open water with nothing to stop me if I fell. I opened my eyes. The breeze bushed against my face. My sister was screaming like crazy. I looked out over the water for the first time in what felt like an hour. I was happy. I felt as though I could do anything except maybe jump off a bridge. Soon I felt myself coming down. Nooo!!! When I eventually landed I was laughing so hard it was as if I had a problem. When we reached the hotel I looked at the videos and pictures over and over again. I could not believe that I had actually flown. Night soon came, then dinner, then presents, then bed. When I finally went to bed, I fell asleep straightaway….zzzzzzzzz

The Most Special Human I Ever Met…

The most special human that I have met in my life is someone I grew to know, trust and love. His name was Nishanthan Samuel Saravanamuthy. He is my Dad’s sister’s son (my cousin). This is his story.

When he was 14 Nish was diagnosed with lymphoma. I was 6 at the time and my brother was 11. I didn’t really know what was going on. My sister who was 14 was put through a difficult time; having one of her best friends endure such a difficult experience. Nish was fighter. He beat his cancer twice, but then on the 1st of October 2007 the unthinkable happened. His eldest brother, youngest brother and my brother
went away for a picnic. It was the first day of the term 3 holidays. They were celebrating the oldest’s 26th birthday. I arose to the sound of a commotion. “Quick, Nish is sick, we have to go and see him,” my sister called pulling me out of bed. So Mum Dad, my sister and I headed to Westmead Children’s Hospital. We hurried down the hallway and pushed open the heavy doors of Camperdown Ward. We knew which room he was in and ran straight there. I remember the sick look on my Aunt’s face. She was sitting on his bed hugging him and crying at the same time. “Is he aright?” My Mum asked my aunt, walking to the left side of my cousin’s bed, touching his face. My aunt did not say a word. I immediately burst into tears. I knew that after 6 years of suffering it was his time. My father began praying, I kneeled at Nish’s bed. He was conscious but unaware of his surroundings. A friend of my Aunt’s came in and prayed as well. “Lord I will give you until 12 o’clock and than you can take him” my Aunty yelled out. Suddenly my cousin raised his arm weakly and cried a single tear. At 12.15 on the 1st of October 2007 my cousin passed away. I could not stop crying and I wished that I had been there more to spend time with him. Nish died with a smile on his face. He taught us so many things. My cousin, Nishanth Samuel Saravanamutha, will always have a place in my heart.

**What Would High School be like?**

In primary school I began to become a little worried about what high school would be like. I was feeling, “Oh my God, high school would mean that there would be pages and pages of homework and lots of assignments to do.” I also thought that there were going to be lots of bigger girls in years 11 and 12 teasing those of us in Year 7. Anyway, when I came to Birrong Girls High, it was really easy and no one teased me. There was only easy homework like title pages, question sheets, assignments and more. The playground had lovely seats like little chairs, with a gazebo shelters, and some silver seats. The playground looked like a park. What was coming to high school like? Not scary at all!

**Cooma**

The most important place I have been to that has taught me how to cooperate, forgive and most importantly have fun, must be Cooma. All my relatives and I shared one big motel and slept there for a few days. I cooperated with everyone and shared with everyone. These were the best few days of my life. It was great knowing lots of people who wanted to have fun just like me. It felt great playing in the snow. I put the past behind me and said, “The future is yet to come.” I realised that my worries could always be solved. It was so amazing knowing how fast fun days could go. To this day I continue to beg my parents to take me there again, and remind them of all the fun days we had there, but all they say is “the past is gone think about the future”.

**The Tears, the Cries of War**

My family came from the Vietnam War. The tears, the cries from the war, the hardships haunted my whole family as they found their friends, people faced with the edges of the soldiers’ bayonets all hoping to survive. These dull and dark memories remain in the minds of my family. The war is an experience that they will never forget.

**My mother is my inspiration…**

She is always there when I am in desperation. She keeps me warm with love and care, And her love is always there to share.
She goes to work every night
So that everything at home stays just right.
She pays the bills, expenses and fees,
And yet she is always smiling with glee
I have always looked up to her
And often think how lovely she is
To show her affection she gives me a kiss
She keeps me calm when I am hurt
Bandages my knee and flicks off the dirt.
Nothing can replace a mother’s love
A Mother is as beautiful as a dove.

My Grandfather, Walid
My favourite person will always be my grandfather, Walid. He is tall and skinny. He passed away last year on the 1st of January at the age of 72. The glasses he wore were big and round. He used to always take me shopping and buy me very special things. He had 7 children and 32 grandchildren. He always had a smile on his face even if he was sad. I miss him so much right now and hope he is still ok.

Angel
Like an angel that you are
Spread your wings so high and far
With a heart of crystal gold
Always letting your dreams unfold
So mellow and gentle never a put down
My own angel is the sweetest sound
This one angel is like no other
This one angel is my sweetest mother.

An Imaginary Place
If I could have an imaginary place that I could travel to every now and then it would be a place where it is very quiet and peaceful. Most likely it would be a forest. I would bring a book to read and lie against a tree trunk for comfort. There would be no one to disturb me. It would be better than my room where my noisy brother constantly disturbs me. I would like to hear the twitter and chirps of the birds and the sound of the wind whistling, making the tree branches sway back and forth. The grounds would be soft and dry. It would be extraordinary if such a place existed and if I could travel to it now and then.

Me 7G
I am happy
And also random
I like playing with friends
And having fun
I am addicted to chocolate
And I love my family
I like summer but not winter
I love holidays because I get to sleep in.
A Change in Life …
I believe a change in life could help the world and the people in it. By change, I mean: No wars, using less power and less electricity. We could do this by all working together and making a big difference to our lives. We could also stop animals from losing their homes by not cutting down forests and trees. I would like to become a teacher, when I am older.

The joy of living…
The joy of living in this world is the most wonderful thing that has happened to me. Why? Well, it is because my life is full of adventures and hard work. As well as making friends and going on vacations with my family I can see and hear and feel the love of Mother Nature. That is why my life is full of joy!

The Harbour Bridge
The Harbour Bridge inspires me because it is large and at night all the lights shine. Lots of people worked on it back in the days when it was being built. Now the Harbour Bridge is used for driving cars from one side of the harbour to the other.

Fluffy
As weird as it seems this is about a cat. Her name was Fluffy. She was there when I was born. I was there for her when she was dying. It seems heart breaking and at times I felt empty. Year after year I never ever thought about the fact that she might pass away. Hitting 13 she started becoming skinnier. She had cancer. It tore our whole family’s hearts apart. There was a point when she was too weak and I cuddled her so tight and didn’t want to let her go. I could not stop crying. When the time came, I looked for something to blame. I stayed silent thinking about her. I remembered all the things I did with her from the time I was a baby right up until I became a teenager. She had always been close to me, my Mum, Nan and I still think about her. No one can replace her.

Lebanon
I went to Lebanon and saw the new buildings that were going to help those who were dying in the war. These new buildings would help these people survive and be fed. The people in Lebanon were dying from bombs and they were being shot at. What really inspired me were the risks that the government and volunteers took, the way they risked their own lives for other people who were dying. The government had many volunteers who donated money and built these huge buildings. People there are living good lives and I am proud that now they have stopped the war.

The Most Awesome, Terrific, Interesting Person I have Ever Known…
Who lets me look through the shopping bags for snacks? Who can I talk to when my day is gloomy? My Mum. To me she is like an angel who is there whenever I need her, even though she occasionally yells at me. My Mum is the greatest in my family. She looks after my grandparents and the children. It seems that whatever work stacks up against her, Mum is always able to finish it perfectly. At night we often walk around the dark street talking about our day and I always complain about my brothers who annoy me a lot. Then we return home and watch television. We don't have similar hobbies or speak together formally. First she speaks
Chinese to me and instead of answering her back in the same language, I answer her in English. Somehow we both manage to understand each other and at the end Mum and I begin giggling and fall on the couch laughing our hearts out. For most parents and students this language problem and giggling might seem weird but it is actually true. Sometimes when she gets really angry I burst out laughing and instead of continuing to be mad my Mum calms down and makes herself a cup of coffee. My Mum is the most awesome, terrific, interesting person I have ever known and nothing is going to change the love I have for her.

**Inspired by the City**

I am inspired by the city because it has lots of buildings. Some are small and some are tall buildings. The city is fun to visit because there are many things you can do there like climb the Harbour Bridge, visit the Opera house or even have dinner in the restaurant where they have tasty and delicious food. You can also buy clothes, accessories and bags. The shops have good quality things. The city is beautiful and the view is fabulous.

**Friends**

Great friends we are  
Great friends we'll be  
Great friends forever  
Just you and me  
I'll understand  
And there I'll be  
From now until eternity

**My Uncle**

The most inspiring person in my life is my uncle. He is a scientist in America. To me he is a great role model. He inspires me to be the best person I can be and to strive to the best of my ability. When I grow up I want to follow in his footsteps because I know throughout his life he has done many things to save people's lives. He is so dedicated to his job that he moved to America just to be the head of the Johnson and Johnson company. He has visited many countries throughout his time so far as a scientist.

**Amira**

The person who inspires me is Amira because I have known her for two years now. She is like a sister to me and we share everything together. She will stay beside me forever.

**Zena**

The person that inspires me most is Zena because she is my best friend and she helps me. She always sits beside me and she tells funny jokes.

My Mum inspires me because she teaches me a lot.

**Year 8**

**My Family**
My family is really special to me. When I’m sad they have always made me feel better and they have always encouraged me to reach my personal best. This is especially true of my Grandad. He lived in Croatia, in Zagreb and I used to love to visit him and my Grandma. He used to talk to me about everything: his life when he was younger, his special memories and things that were important to him and that included me. He made me laugh with all his silly jokes and I always cried when I had to leave him to go home. In 2004 before I left Croatia to go to the airport he said that it may be the last time I would see him. He died a month later. I loved him so much. I wish things were perfect, I guess they aren’t.

My room is my special place.
It brings me peace when I’m troubled. It is the key for me to escape to another world. It is the key, which allows me to visit a place where I don’t need to worry about anything. I let my creative side loose and write short stories, or I read one of my favourite books. My room takes me to a peaceful, gentle world. It is a place where I can do my homework and not be disturbed.
I don’t consider my room, as just a 13 year old’s bedroom. I think of it as my world where I am in control. I think of the music I play as birds singing, my study books and the pile of books I need for school as my mountains, mountains which keep me safe. The window is my light, my sun. My bookshelf is just like a collection of cities that I can enter at any time I please. And my bed, my sky and stars because it is where I can dream. Without my room, I don’t know where I would be. I would probably be troubled and lost without any direction.

Wonderful, Amazing People
The intriguing thing about me is that I’m good at any thing that anyone throws at me. For example I enjoy and do well at sport, acting or singing. The most important people in my life are my parents and brothers and sisters. My mother is a very helpful person, who is very sweet and beautiful. She helps me and supports me through bad and good times. My father is also a wonderful father he likes to listen to all of his children and likes making us happy. My father sometimes goes to Africa in the holidays to help people and look after them. This is why my parents inspire me. Also my sister is someone who I am really close to, of course. We sometimes make fun of each other and also have fights but we work out our differences and move on to having fun. We do everything together like going to the movies and to camps.
I am also proud to be going to Birrong Girls High School because this school gives me great opportunities and great places to visit on excursions. BGHS also participates in a program that is organised by a woman called Jessica Brown. In this program, which by the way, is called Sister 2 Sister, we go to different places and we do different things. My big sister’s name is Tania.
I mentioned her name because you get a big sister who looks after you for the whole year. To me, all the people in the program are wonderful, amazing people and all these people are the ones who inspire me so, much.
Well here I am in Australia!
Well here I am in Australia, telling my story and the story of my family. I was born in Croatia, Vadice, in 1995. The war in Croatia was coming to an end, but I did not know this as I was just a little bundle in my mother’s arms. Croatia was a wreck and my Dad was not getting paid even though he was working. My mother did not have a job because she was a Bosnian and not a Croatian citizen. We lived with my grandmother for five years and money was becoming short. My aunts from America wanted to help us so they paid for our tickets to come to Australia. We were happy and prepared to leave. We said our good byes only to find that my mother was not allowed to leave the country.

We were sent back to our house and had to work out another way to escape. It was a month or so before anything changed. During this month I became sick and was sent to the hospital. It was not anything serious but my Mum was worried. I remember that she bought me all the things I wanted. I got a Barbie cup and a doll. I was extremely happy but my parents had to work hard for the money.

My Mum had not been treated fairly in her country so she came to Croatia were she hoped for a better life. Unfortunately, the Serbians disliked the Muslim Bosnians like my Mum. They did horrible things to them. My Mum was taken away from her parents with her sisters and put into a camp where they were scared and hurt. All the Muslim Bosnian boys were shot except the ones who were lucky (like my uncle) because they had been able to hide.

We finally did get over the border and eventually to Australia - all of us in one piece, my parents worked hard in Australia to become successful to make sure that each of us have a future. My Mum and Dad learnt English at TAFE and then completed different courses. My Dad, Zoran, has his own driving school while my Mum, Amira, is at university studying to be a higher level nurse (registered nurse).

My parents are my inspiration to do well in school and by their determination they have shown me that everything is possible if I work hard.

I wish I could be like Slash
I wish I could be like Slash, a guitar legend. Everything seems so perfect for him. He is everything I want to be. Watching Slash on Youtube, reading articles about him inspires me to become more serious about music. Fame is something that I wish could happen to me. A dream … I hope one day everyone will know my name, read about me, admire me like I admire Slash.

Music is my only escape, when I feel down it's something that I find comfort in. It is something that I can relate to. My family argues most of the time, something I wish I could stop. It gets to me. If it happened to anyone else I bet they would understand. I know I can do much more, it’s what keeps me going. Being stuck in the suburbs is not something I want for my future. I know inside that I’m a rock star. It will happen. As I said before, MUSIC IS MY ONLY ESCAPE.

My Necklace
The thing I treasure and love is my necklace. It's really important to me because it was given to me by my Grandmother. She gave it to me when I was born. The necklace is real gold and has my name engraved on it. I only like wearing it on special occasions such as weddings, parties, etc. It means a lot to me.
Musicians

Musicians really inspire me with their tunes and lyrics. My favourite all time band is DBSK. Their songs and lyrics are about love and life and this group makes me feel that whenever I listen to their songs all my sorrows fade away. Their fan club is the largest fan club in the world, even in the Guinness Book of Records 2008. Their fan club is called Cassopeia. The reason for this is because they are five shiny stars singing and dancing to their own inspirational music. I feel that everybody should listen to their music because they are a very amazing band!

DBSK

The first day I heard the band called DBSK was the best day of my life. DBSK is my favourite band. Their songs are meaningful to me and I love them. DBSK lead me to the world of kpop (Korean pop). DBSK have fans all around the world. Their fan club is called Cassopeia. They performed in China, Japan and Thailand and now they are really popular in Japan. Cassopeia in Korea have around 8 million members, so if I were to estimate how many DBSK Cassopeia members there are around the world, if I were to try to calculate the size of their fan base, it should be around 90 million!

My Diary

One of my most treasured objects is my diary. It is filled with all my special thoughts, secrets and memories. I’ve had my diary for at least six years and I love reflecting on what I wrote in my diary in the past. I have the key hidden away from anyone else especially my sister. It was given to me as a present for my 7th birthday from my Mum and I’ve been writing in it ever since. It is a good way of storing my thoughts so I will never forget them. I know I will treasure my diary for the rest of my life because it is special and it was given to me by a very special person.

An Anchor for the Storms in Life

A place where I to find an anchor for the storms in life is hard to find - but I’ve finally found mine. A meadow, a beautiful meadow I’ve been to, with violet and white flowers swaying in rhythm with the wind. It is a meadow within a forest which no one can find, except me and my best friend. With the sun shining overhead, my friend and I lie in the soft grass with the sun over us and we relax. It’s the only place where I can escape the stress and pressure in life and it’s a place where my imagination can run wild. This meadow means a lot to me, it means everything. The first time I found myself there was the most amazing moment of my life. While the sun was shining overhead with the shadows of the trees surrounding me and my friend, it felt like the whole meadow was sparkling. It was truly amazing.

Music suits our every Mood

The thing that inspires me the most is the music I listen to. Music suits our every mood and it makes me happy, relaxed and prepared for anything that comes my way. Music is pretty much my life because the lyrics are so meaningful to me and the combination of all the sounds found in music is like a big boom! To me it’s extremely brilliant. Music takes me to my own little world away from reality. Rock on people!
My Dad
The most important person in my life is my Dad because Dad is nice, calm and caring. If you have any questions, my Dad will listen. My Dad is a man that you could not have arguments with because he’s not that kind of person. He is not the kind of person who likes to have fights. My Dad is always smiling and likes people to have fun. That’s why the most important person in my life is my Dad!

Soccer!
I love to play soccer! Ronaldo the soccer player inspires me to play, he makes me want to practise to be good enough to represent my country, get fit and exercise. Every time I play soccer I become really excited. My Dad inspires me to do well in school because I can see how well he has done.

Authors
I am inspired by stories that people have written to express themselves, to share their thoughts and to allow others to relate to them. Books, stories, fairytales … all create other worlds for us to enter. They inspire me to try and find a way in life to make my experiences like a story with its ups and downs and emotions, but in the end, the difficult thing to do will be to guarantee a happy ending.

Skateboarders
One of the most inspiring places in my life is a skating park for skateboarders. I find this place fun because I love skateboarding and because it is a place where many teenagers gather around to talk and simply just have fun … and of course to skate as well. Even though I’m not much of a skater myself, it’s the type of sport that I like getting involved in. It’s something I can do and also feel comfortable doing it.

When Sadness, Stress and Problems Loom…
When sadness, stress and problems loom over me I tend to go to a place, a place where it is quiet and peaceful. It is a place where nothing goes wrong, a world where it is just warm and comforting. This imaginary world keeps my mind away from the stress and problems of everyday life. I call this my imaginary heaven, where there are lush green grasses, paths made of glimmering gold and where rivers flow like milk and honey. I imagine my self under a tree, where the warm sun is peering down through the leaves. This is my comfort. This is my place.

Problems occur to Everyone
Problems occur to everyone, no one can make them “not happen”. It’s more about knowing how to deal with them and knowing how important it is to turn to the right people. My life is not the easiest in the world and I have made plenty of mistakes and some of them much bigger than others. In Year 7 I met this girl in my class, who was like me and we instantly became friends. After a while I abandoned my friends to be friends with her. Soon after I realised she wasn’t who I thought she was. I went back to my other friends, with my sincerest apologies, and lucky for me they accepted me back.
Problems are just around the corner, One after another…
Many children my age get to a particular stage where problems are just around the corner, one after another. It’s very difficult sometimes; dealing with these problems, when they speed, racing towards you. In every dark room, there is a small, dim candle which maybe… x to minus a very big number (ask your maths teacher about this) … but is still a source of light. (I’ll take whatever I can get). If you trust the light, like I do, then wherever you are, what ever you have faced, there’s always someone or something you can depend on and that for me is the warmth, love, comfort of my family.

Mother-Daughter
The most inspiring person to me is my Mum. We both had the best holiday in the 2007/08 holidays when we went in a holiday to India. It was just us two and we went for 2 months. I met many new people and relatives as well as catching up with friends. We went on a 10 day tour to Rajasthan with my Mum’s sister’s family and my grandparents. It was sooo much fun! During this visit, one of my uncles came from America. Mum hadn’t seen him for 17 years! It was such a wonderful reunion. Before our flight back home, we attended my Mum’s cousin’s daughter’s wedding. It was my first Indian wedding and I had such a wonderful experience. The actual ceremony was the night before our flight so we had to leave early. My Mum and I had such an extraordinary time and we were both very upset to be leaving our relatives. The relationship we have is mother-daughter and really good friends.

Shazia
I had a friend in Pakistan and her name was Shazia. She was my best friend when she found out that I was leaving for Iran and coming to Australia, she cried. I was really sad to leave her alone. We went to Iran and it wasn’t fun as I didn’t see her for one year. Then when we came to Australia, I wasn’t happy either. After arriving in Australia I didn’t see Shazia for 2 years. I was very sad but then my Dad said that we were going to Pakistan in 2009, so I was a bit happier. It seemed now as if I might see her again.

Figure Skating
The thing which is important in my life is figure skating. It is my favourite sport, hobby and recreational activity. I’ve skated practically since I could walk, I love it and I would never trade the opportunity for anything! I skate multiple times a week and almost everyday in the holidays. Skating is my life. All my books, diaries and even my room, all are full of figure skating pictures, decorations and anything skating related. Most people would say I am obsessed or “a skating freak”, but most people aren’t lucky enough to experience the joy of figure skating. There aren’t a lot of people around here who figure skate so not everyone understands the commitment, sacrifices and dedication. As well as that, it is great fun and very rewarding.

Stand out from the large crowd Mum
My Mum is similar to everyone’s Mum but she has something in her heart that makes her stand out from the large crowd. I know her care, encouragement and love will always be given to my brother and I. The things my Mum does can never be repaid enough, not even a hug, kiss or “thanks”. Her love is too special.
My Mum is my inspiration for the rest of my life and I hope I will succeed like her. I think my Mum is the best Mum in this world. What do you feel about your Mum?

All I have is my family...
All I have is my family and its history. When I was growing up as a young girl it seemed like a dream, I felt fortunate because I had parents who loved me and gave me everything I needed and wanted. As I became older I started seeing more things, by the age of 10 my parents started to fight. When he came back for Lebanon, my Dad was threatening my mother and trying to force her to take his advice all the time. My Mum was threatening to leave the house. When I was in year 6 my Mum kicked him out for two weeks. I constantly fight with my Mum, asking for a little freedom but still don't have it. As a Lebanese Muslim, I am never allowed to talk on MSN or Facebook, go to camp, go shopping or to the movies with my friends but I get by everyday hoping for something, maybe something that will help my Mum to stop being so uptight.

...Hope is like stars...

...High school is a ladder
You start at the bottom and climb your way up to success...

Television
The most inspiring thing that has happened in my life was when I first watched TV. I was around 3 years old. This was an inspiring moment in my life because it would lead to other things. The TV is like my sanctuary. I can get away from everything that is happening in my life. When I am sad, I watch comedies so that I can feel better. When I am in a good mood, I watch dramas and crime shows because these are the types of shows I enjoy. That is why I treasure the TV.

My Play List
When I listen to music, all my thoughts seem to go away. Whether I am angry, upset, happy or excited, there is at least one song on my play list that I can listen to, to make myself feel better or make my worrying thoughts go away.

My sister
When I am upset and depressed, I go to my friends to get some help sometimes. When I am sad I sit by myself and think about how other people who are poor need food and money and I think about how I'm just sad because I didn't get my way. When I am in pain I tend to eat lots of unhealthy food. My sister has given me lots of advice and I appreciate it very much. I look up to my sister, like I look up to my mother. Sometimes when I'm sad I think of my future and what I'm going to become and what I'm going to achieve.

Tupac Shakur
I love Tupac Shakur. He is the best rapper out. His songs have meaning to them and he is also a poet, which surprises me because I love poetry.
Tiago
There is a special toy dog in my life. I won it at Luna Park on the 14/7/08. I named it Tiago; ever since than it sleeps next to me and I hold it’s paw.

Casper
My dog’s name is Casper. He is 12 years old in human years (doggy years are different). He is white and he is a Maltese terrier. He is really special to me because he was my aunt’s dog and she had him for 10 years. I have only had him for 2 years. I give him food and comfort all the time. He also likes to go for walks after school to the park. He enjoys playing fetch there. I chuck the ball and he likes to run after it. He is so special to me, because he is really cute and I love him.

Something which is important to me is sport. This is important to me because it’s fun and active.

She gives me ideas and teaches me right and wrong
The person who inspires me is my Mum. This is because I love her so much, she helps me and inspires me. An incident happened this year, when we had public speaking. I was supposed to talk about the object that I chose which was a teddy bear. I read my speech to my mother and she told me to use my laptop. I agreed. I was accepted into public speaking and went to the district level. For my whole life before this I was a terrible speaker. My Mum always gives me good advice. She gives me ideas and teaches me right and wrong. In the holidays, I decided to help her. I helped her with the laundry and when I finished I was exhausted but she was still cooking and had not sat down for a second. My Mum always makes me feel special and wanted. When I improve my test results, like this year and last year, I make my Mum proud. This year I am much better than last year. Mum rewards me when I do well and tells me how much she loves me.

My Own Room
When I was three I got my own room. My Aunty drew me a poster with my favourite characters from the Lion King; Simba and Nala. She put “Dunia’s room” on the poster and that really made me happy even though I could not read. I really loved Simba and Nala and I still do. My Aunty put sticker on the poster. They were stickers of cute little bears and flowers. It was very cute. I have the poster hung on the back of my door and not on the front because I now share a room with my sister. I have put the poster on the back of the door for me to see. If on one else sees it, I don’t mind because it doesn’t mean anything to them. I loved my poster when I first received it and I still do!

They Always Keep a Smile on my Face
The most important and inspiring people in my life would have to be my family. They love me unconditionally, they are trustworthy and are just always there for me. My family supports me in all that I do. They encourage me to strive for my goals and they always keep a smile on my face. We may have our ups and downs but we all share a memory that none of us will ever forget. I would not know where I would be right now if my family were not here guiding me each step of the way. I love my family.

Year 9
My favourite quote is:
…Beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes right to the bone…

Err… what should I write? I’ll just write about what happened yesterday. Well it didn’t go too well because I found it quite stressful. Now the holidays are over I had to start waking up at 8am everyday again. Coming from someone who was used to waking up at 12 20, throughout out the holidays, it is a difficult change to adapt to. Having said that I can not stand the cold every morning, it is bloody freezing cold – it feels like minus100 degrees Celsius. This is why I would prefer staying at home like I do during the holidays. Why wake up early when you could stay warm in bed all day?

As the days go by I still wait
As the days go by I still wait patiently until my father fully recovers and gets back to normal after the major stroke he has suffered. It was a shock to the family as he was a very healthy and strong man who never entered hospital and rarely become sick. Yes, it was a shock and yes, it was not an easy thing to experience, but it has allowed me to become a stronger person and that is all because of the wonderful people who supported me throughout that period of time.

Lawn Bowls
I watched on the side, interested to know what the kids my age were playing. My Dad said “Do you want to have a go?” and that’s all I remember about being inspired to play Lawn Bowls. Ever since then, I have entered competitions and have experienced the highs and lows. I have been selected to play in the school team and in the Sydney South West team. I have done this with pride. My experience has enabled me to become confident and interested to learn more about the sport. I have encouraged friends and relatives to have a go and have let them know that it is not just a game for “old people” There are many juniors playing and my advice to you is “Have a go!”. If I am ever upset or depressed I will always go down to the local bowling club and have a roll.

Bravery and Courage
Many people do not understand the reasons why so many people from Vietnam wished to migrate to a different country. They do not understand that we migrated because of a war and for a better lifestyle. Back then during the war many men were put into gaol, simply because they did not follow the communist ways. If people would talk about freedom or democracy soldiers would come and take them away at night. They would treat the people they had arrested cruelly far more cruelly than you could imagine. Many people hid in the jungle and with their belongings they tried to escape to a different country in a small boat. The boats were usually filled with too many people. If these people were able to hide themselves from the communists they were lucky. It was a very dangerous yet incredible journey for the many Vietnamese people who eventually came to Australia, America and all the other countries to which these people migrated. Many who were not able to hide from the communists were often beaten or even murdered. I acknowledge the bravery and courage of our people as they searched for freedom and democracy.
Broome
The most inspiring place that I have been to in my life was Broome. I visited Broome in 2006. The place is spectacular and the scene of the beach at Roebuck Bay is amazing. I remember being shocked at how the people live in Broome. They are harmonious people who greet each other peacefully. One thing that I will never forget about Broome is having lunch with my family and an Aboriginal man who told us a bit about his history and the best places to fish in Broome. This man was polite and showed us his dog, which was a golden brown colour. He told us that in Broome, you should take great care when fishing because there are crocodiles around! From this encounter I learned how people come together as one and share their experiences.

My Mother Always Motivates Me
My mother is the most inspiring person in my life. She is the only person I would take directions from. When I was about seven, my parents separated and my Mum was left to take care of my bother and me. She basically had no job nor any real qualifications as over the years as she had become reliant on my father. So just to ensure that my brother and I were able to remain happy she was forced to work at two tiring jobs. She always motivates me to work hard at school so one day I will not end up having to depend on a man like she did. She taught me that a woman is capable of supporting herself without the help of a man. Some would see her talks as lectures, but I see them as words of wisdom.

I am Actually Improving
Yesterday in history, we were completing speeches on conscription and we had to choose whether we were for or against it. I was opposed to conscription and provided some good arguments. Ms Annous said that I had delivered my speech using a clear, strong and emotive voice. She also asked if I was participating in debating. The answer was “no”, since I do not like public speaking. Ms Annous advised me to do it. This inspired me to think about joining the debating team next year. It also mad me feel as though my public speaking skills have improved since Year 7. In Year 7 I used to become very shaky and worried whenever there was mention of a speech. Now I feel as though my public speaking skills are improving and this has made my confidence during speeches rise. This means that my marks are improving. Ms Annous was able to give me positive feedback which has helped me to see and acknowledge that I am actually improving.

Moving to Australia
The most important story of my life so far is the story of moving to Australia. Following my Grand father’s will, my family including Dad, Mum, sister and I moved to Australia three years ago. From then on my life was very difficult and we all experienced many new things. I learnt the world’s most popular and vital language, English. I learnt how to eat meat pies, how to fit in at school and how to enjoy being in Australia. I faced many difficulties and had hard times but they all gave me many insights into the world and into other people.

Faith
Faith is my angel. Each night I hold her small metal body in the palm of my hand and each night I pray, for the trouble I feel, for the sorrows of those I love, for the hope of every day. She helps me to keep strong, to keep Faith.

Should Appreciate the Things I Have
I have come to realise that I should appreciate the things I have. Why? When I visited my home country Vietnam, I looked at the people on the streets and in the markets in the district where my parents lived. I looked at them and realised that they do not have half of what I have. I have learnt to make to most of what I have got and to appreciate living in Australia because I do not have to deal with the daily stress that the people in Vietnam have to endure to get by each day.

Sometimes Being in the Classroom is like Being at Home
The back of the classroom is filled with Egyptian drawings. There is a large whiteboard at the front of the room and a little blackboard beside it. There is a poster of well known landmarks. The air conditioner blows my hair and all my sheets of writing away. The classroom is stuffy. Someone opens the window. The tables are blue and the chairs are green. On the whiteboard, the teacher writes the homework. I sigh, the bell rings, everyone packs their bags and tears towards the door. It reminds me of a pack of bulls. Sometimes being in the classroom is like being at home.

“a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”
As they say “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” When my Grandma was a little girl she grew up wanting to be a teacher. In her childhood years she grew up dancing and enjoyed this activity. Though her mother was hard on her, she had many friends and was the eldest of the four siblings in her family. As the years went by she had fewer opportunities to become a teacher. Although my Grandma’s dream to be a teacher never actually came true she became an inspirational lady who taught many generations the right path, including me.

Parents
Parents are my courage,
Like gifts in a package
Parents are my guides
In my heart they reside
A never breaking bond
Parents are my diamonds
Parents are my gold
They are the people who will
Help me when I am old.

Remind Me of How my Life Was
At the age of five I received many gifts that I still treasure today. Some of the gifts were from overseas and from people that I’ll never see again. My expensive gifts included necklaces, toys, jewellery and also movies. One of the most memorable movies was The Lion King. It was part of my childhood. I also enjoyed wearing the jewellery to make me happy. Many of these things are too small or childish for my age but I still keep them because I like to keep these many things to remind me of how my life was when I was a little kid.
Australian Representative Female Soccer Player
The thing that is most important to me is to become an Australian female soccer player because this country is wonderful and it has given me a better life. I have the opportunity to go to school and find a good job and have future to look forward to. I want to say Thank You for everything. This is a great country! One day I felt like I did a great job because I received the runner up award for Young Sydney South West Refugee Sports person of the year! I was so proud of myself. Now I am setting my goals and the first thing on my list is to finish school, then I will start my career, but I am working on it now. My other goal is to go back to my country, Sudan, to visit and to share something that this country has offered me – opportunities!

My Best Friend
My best friend is a very important person in my life. She gives me happiness and comfort. When she is there I feel so happy and I have nothing to worry about. I wonder sometimes where I would be without her. All the memories we share will stay with me forever. I will never know how to ever repay her for all her caring, kindness, funniness and everything. She is like family to me. Once for my birthday she gave me a best friends' necklace. She is the best friend anyone could have!

My Grandfather Dawson
My grandfather Dawson is the inspiration of my life. He is the one person I hold dearest to my heart. Even though we do not live near each other, he has a heart that listens to my problems, situations and my fears. Ever since I could remember, my grandfather would always help me overcome tough and impossible situations and obstacles. Our life together has been similar to an adventure. I have come to trust and appreciate his advice and what he has done for me.

My family may not be perfect…
Families are supposed to be all about support, love and loads of other things. Some families have problems, crazy problems leading to a thousand arguments. My family are the most important people in my life. They motivate me, make me a better person and make me who I am today. My family may not be perfect or the happiest lot – but it is what I learn from them and the memories that we share together that make us a good family.

Someone you could rely on and trust …
There is someone that is very special and important to me. She is now, however, deceased. She was a very generous person, someone you could rely on and trust. I always took her for granted. However, just before she passed away, I realised that I loved her so much and I did not want to see her suffer. After her death I knew I had more responsibilities than before. I remember how she told me “not to cry anymore” and to “be strong”. She gave me strength and I realised that I was following in her footsteps. As I matured and I helped everyone just as much as she did, I realised that I still have a lot to learn. I miss her dearly too. Even though she has passed away, I know that she is never really gone if I remember her in my heart and mind.

What the World Would be like Without…
Whilst walking to school I sometimes think about what the world would be like without war, money or poverty. I think about what a difference it make to our lives. How would the world go round? Would people still appreciate others as much?

Fun, crazy and they know how to enjoy life…
My friends are the most important people to me. They are fun, crazy and they know how to enjoy life. They make even the worst situation better. They are stupid, serious, silly and intelligent. They make grey days a rainbow for me. Whenever I am sad they are there to console me. They are my best friends.

Places of Shared Beliefs
One inspiring place in society would be a church, temple or a mosque. Somewhere where people can share the same ideas and connect with their peaceful and religious side. They could share their beliefs with other people who would listen.

The quiet place within…
The quiet place within me is a garden full of roses.
A place where there is no sorrow, no hunger, no death but only eternal life
A place with no sickness and no troubles
A place of adventure, full of fruits, animals and the oceans
A place where I could feel safe and sound
A place out of this world
An extraordinary place, a place different from all places
A place where happiness brings me joy when I hear the birds sing
A place which I could feel is home
A place which I could call home
A place where I could have new friends and new adventures
And that special place is Paradise
A place of beauty and happiness

The most treasured object in my life…
The most treasured object in my life and which will be for the rest of my life, is a ring which was given to me by my Grandma. She gave it to me with love from the bottom of her heart. The ring that I was given was apparently my Great Grandma’s ring. She passed it onto my Grandma, who then gave it to me as a sign of love. Ever since she gave me the ring, it has not been removed from my finger. Every time I look down at the ring. I remember my loving Grandma. I shall never ever remove this ring from my finger

School Work
The most important thing in my life is my school work…because it will get me somewhere in life, if I put my mind to it.

Grandpa –
He may be old and wrinkly
But to me he is a treasure
Brown eyes twinkling
Smiling at me with pleasure
Features changed to sad and teary
Sitting on the hospital bed
Face looking weary
My hand on his head
No motion in his chest
Finally he is at rest.

But I do have music…
I don't have a place I go to or someone I talk to when I am upset, but I do have music. My music is my best way of escape. It is good for every mood; happy, bored, sad, energetic...music goes with any emotion and because my emotions vary so much so too does my music. Energetic – a little bit of Hixxy, sad – a little bit of Angus and Julia Stone, happy WHAM and bored anything will do (except Rob)

My sister is my anchor...
My sister is my anchor an ever since I was a little girl she would tell me stories of wonderful things. She would open my imagination and help me to believe that anything is possible. When I started at high school I ignored her because I thought she was “so perfect”. Not until recently have I understood what her presence means to me and how I do not sometimes actually fully appreciate her friendship and our sisterly bond. She listens to me, forgives me and for these reasons I will love her until eternity.

Reach for the stars always and forever
“if you don't land on the moon you might just fall on the stars.....

Amazing
Determined

Ability
Striving
Testing
Revealing
Acknowledging

BGHS - “Reach for the Stars”.
The thing that is inspiring and important in my life is the day when I came here to Birrong girls High School. I experienced and learnt many things which I had never learnt in my life. Coming here to BGHS showed me right and wrong, how to respect, how to communicate and how to believe in myself. In my life I work though many problems. This has caused my low self esteem but coming here to Birrong Girls has showed me how to be positive and achieve my goals. BGHS is one of my most inspiring and important places. I hope to “Reach for the Stars”.

My life isn’t easy...but my sister has been my inspiration
My life isn’t easy. My family and I have to struggle through life and my parents don’t get along. I didn’t grow up in a loving family. My mother has to look after my niece and my father has a physical disability so the family relies on each other. My sister inspires me a lot. In her school life she was completely independent and did not get any help with homework or assignments. She had to work to earn money to go out with her friends and now she is 21. She has changed her life around. She is successful in her job and has a family now. She has climbed over many obstacles. She has even finished TAFE! She inspires me to do well in my future. She shows me that anything is possible.

My Garden
The most inspiring important place in my life is my garden. My garden is a peaceful sanctuary overlooking large green bushes behind with all types of different plants. Not only is it the best place to study, but it is a place where I come to collect my thoughts and find answers. With the luscious pink flowers that fall on the pond, the
goldfish that swim happily in the water – a peaceful well being overcomes me when I am there.

Who is important to me?
The minute I was born on the 30th of November, 1993, I was born into the world with a friend, my twin sister. From the moment I drew my first breath I had an instant friend. For fifteen years we have shared our highs and lows with one another. We learnt to walk together, speak together and we even got the chicken pox together! I know that we all lose and gain friends all through our lives, but if there is someone I can depend on to be there all along, I know it is my twin sister!

Sitting here alone in DEAR made me remember…my open hearted friend
Sitting here alone in DEAR made me remember the open hearted friend who left me with great challenges to face. The challenge to put effort into my school life, the challenge to find joy with other friends and the challenge to keep the promise, never to forget her. She inspired me to begin a new year full of great achievements. I don't see her as often as before But I trust and love her. I hope she will remain my special friend. Her belief in me is greatly appreciated.

The most inspiring thing in my life…
The most inspiring thing in my life, the thing that I most believe in, is knowing what is important and believing in yourself, so that you can face challenges and do better.

LIFE LOVE HOPE
Like a bird, isolated in an empty cage
Everyone needs and wants a nice life with love and hope but when tragic situations cover it all up you feel useless, unwanted, unloved, like a bird, isolated in an empty cage. My friends help me overcome this isolation, the isolation we all feel sometimes. My friends give me the love and hope to live and make something out of my life. They mean a lot to me my friends.

Year 10

My Parents are my Heroes
I am 15 years old and have lived my whole life in Australia. I have never travelled so all I know of the rest of the world is what I have heard from others’ experiences, from TV and from the news. My parents are my heroes and they are amazing individuals. They migrated from Lebanon for a better life here. They have worked extremely hard to support our family. Their constant advice to me and my siblings is to do our best. They tell us that education is very important to ensure that when we grow up we can be successful had have many pleasures that they did not have the opportunities to have. My parents are my inspiration and the diving force that keeps me going everyday.

My Sister in Law
The person who inspires me most is my sister in law. She is a very strong and brave woman who has battled cancer while raising a newborn baby. It has been a very difficult time in her life. Her struggles have effected the way I have thought about my life. I have realised that nothing is worse than knowing that your future and life could
be over suddenly. This has been a time when my family has become closer and more supportive of one another.

Conflict for the wrong reason?
Have you ever been involved in a conflict for the wrong reason?
During my school days I had an argument with some people at my school. We hated each other for the wrong reasons. I thought the fight between us was about me talking about another girl or about her family but then I heard from one of her friends that we were fighting because she believed that I took her boyfriend away from her (which was not true.) Now my parents do not trust me. I have one question to ask you. Would you rather fight over a boy and lose your family’s trust or keep their belief in you? I decided to end this problem. I told the girl if this fight is about a boy then I did not want to fight because it was not worth losing my family’s trust in me.

Challenges
Coming from a non Australian family, I am able to understand the hardships and challenges my parents and grandparents went through in their lives. My parents were born in Vietnam, during the time of the Vietnam war. They travelled in boats to escape their country and home, and have managed to be successful today. Escaping Vietnam, my parents were lucky people who survived the harsh and rough conditions in the boats. In addition, they needed to adjust to a new country, having hardly any knowledge of the country. I believe that adjusting to a new country is difficult, but the challenges my parents and many others endured, is something that should be respected and acknowledged.

The Quest
The most important thing to me is the quest. There are many journeys in life that everyone must experience. Everyone has their ups and downs. It might be hard for some of us but I’m sure that everyone will survive their difficult times. It is important that no one gives up.

Family & School
Last time I met my friends and family was the time I had to say goodbye and that the last time I saw them. It’s been very hard to hide my feelings and emotions in life. I was adopted when I was 11 years old and by that time I attended Birrong Girls High School. Living in Australia was totally different for me, because back in my country the schools weren’t like this. My country was not as powerful as Australia. Things were different. I want to have a better life and live in a peaceful world. I do want to see my parents but it’s hard for me. Living in Australia is great and I love everything I do. For example, going to school. I wish that I could do better in the future to help my family and friends.

Opening the heart and understanding
When there is a situation in which someone or something is in need of the feeling of love, want or trust, the opening of one’s heart to the extent of their need is unimaginable. Nothing can hold back one’s understanding where they comfort another person and open their heart to listen to the emotions being expressed by someone in their time of need.

Imagination
Allows me to escape from the real world, where there are many issues in this century.
I seek imagination, where I am able to be myself and be in my own world. Creating and imagining my own places and people, inspires me and relaxes me to continue in reality.

Appreciation
As young teenagers we seem to forget to appreciate the most important people in our lives. We forget to appreciate our parents who have worked long and hard to get to where we are today. We forget to appreciate our families who have supported and loved us through all the hard times that we have been through. If we start to appreciate all the people and things around us, everyone will be much happier.

Believing, Joy, Challenges
I have learnt as a teenager that life is the most important thing and the way we use it has the most meaning. Life is full of challenges and obstacles and that is why I have learnt to focus on the important side of life and to believe that we should all aim high and achieve the best we can. My life is going to be full of love, joy, challenges and believing in what I want. It is important to aim the highest you can.

Love
Love - a fundamental need in life. It is something that gives life, hope and joy. It’s better to love than to never experience the feeling of how it feels to love someone.

Love, inspiration – My Aunty
The person who has inspired me is my aunty. My aunty was born in Lebanon and has lived there her whole life. She was happy. She had 5 children whom she loved. A few years ago however she was diagnosed with leukaemia and she was really sick, but she did NOT let that stop her. She did all the things she used to do before but each year her leukaemia spread and became more difficult to treat. This year in the hospital in Lebanon she died. Everyone loved her because she was a beautiful, caring and loving person.

Appreciation
Living with my parents, I have learnt to appreciate the little things in my life – even if it sounds corny. My parents have told me to be thankful with what I have, the education, the food and the privileges. I once asked my father, “Can we buy Krispy Kremes tomorrow?” He said, “Maybe.” He then told me about his childhood in Vietnam and how having condensed milk with spice was rare the same as it is rare for us to have Krispy Kremes.

My Grandfather
The person I’ve chosen is my grandfather, Daniel Charles Scott (my Mum’s dad). An extraordinary man with an unimaginable amount of knowledge. He left school at 13. He started work at a young age as well. At 18 he was married and 6 months later became a father for the first time. He had many jobs mostly to do with the electrical lines, and because of that he has been zapped and electrocuted an amazing number of times. Whenever we visit my grandparents, he is always happy to talk about any topic in history. His general knowledge never fails to amaze me and he is truly a legend in my eyes.
The Mona Lisa wasn't painted in a day
Chasing perfection is not impossible, it just takes a long time. Don't lose faith when things don't work out straight away. Don't lose your cool, people are much more bearable when they’re calm and collected.

Here I am stranded
Here I am stranded as I feel sick and distant from my true calling. I feel terrible due to this weather, my body feels weary and I am disillusioned. I'm worn out. I feel the urge, I need to get "into the real world". I don't know what the future holds for me and this is the reason why I feel somewhat “stranded”.
My friends and teachers try to cheer me up but it all depends on me and what I choose to take in from their information. I see a light, but then it is gone, swallowed up in the midst of daylight.
I am seeking a better life and the way I ought to achieve this is by following my heart and listening to my own beliefs.
Time will be on my side hopefully. I hope it’s with me for good so I am able to achieve and follow the light into my true destiny. I am close, eager and I can’t wait, I hope I have the strength to survive the struggles and obstacles and achieve success.

Nurses and Doctors
I would probably write about my family whom I love very much but the people I’m going to choose are the nurses and doctors who looked after me in the time when I was unfortunately ill. They inspired me to never give up and made me look at the better and happier side of life even though life has brought me a barrier which they helped me face. I also chose them because of the way they treated me and all the others in the hospital around me. I appreciate what they have done and I believe they have given me hope to never give up and to love life, to keep smiling no matter what life throws at you because as they say “if one door closes, it opens a window”.
The thing that is special to me is something which a close friend has given to me which is a friendship bracelet. I have kept it for years and years.
Forgiveness is a special and good thing to do for the people you love and care about.

Leather tights
… I dream of him in leather tights
riding on a motorbike.
He comes and saves me everyday…
Sorry didn't finish …

My sister Nessrin
The most important person in my life is my sister Nessrin. She inspired me so much because she was always there for me and told me what was right and what was wrong. My sister got cancer when she was 11, she fought the cancer and it went away and was in remission for 3 year but as soon as it ended, the cancer came back again. This time it invaded her whole body. The doctors tried and tried to cure her but it just didn't work.
During this time my 13 year old sister passed away because of an accident. Nessrin was upset and just couldn't do anything anymore but she still tried to fight the cancer until it got too much for her and it hit her really hard. She inspired me heaps because she never would stop fighting for her life and she was a very strong girl till she passed away.
My Mum
There are times where my determination has slipped, my self-confidence has dropped and when giving up was the only idea that was stored in my head. My head would be locked like a box full of pain and I would tense up. My Mum is the key to unlocking all this pain and she releases all the intimidation kept within me. When she's happy, I'm happy. When she smiles, I smile. As short as this piece of writing is, it doesn't show how much she means to me. Her place is in my heart and she will never be replaced.

I miss my family and friends in Vietnam
I miss my family and friends in Vietnam since I have come to Australia. I used to have a lot of fun in my country. I had the freedom to go here and there but here in Australia my dad worries about me when I go out somewhere. It is so far to go to the shops or anywhere! In Vietnam, my school was near my house but in Australia it is far. I am shy and scared to ask about words I don't understand.

My father
I have not seen my father for well over 8 years now. He left when I was in Yr 2, I think. Since then we've kept contact with each other up until the past 2 years. I have not heard a single word from him and truth be told, I'm not sure I want to hear from him.
He has put me through so much agony and pain. You'd think I wouldn't care, but I'm not as strong as everyone thinks I am. I find it hard to trust because of my father and I find it hard to trust myself.
It's hard to fit all my feelings and thoughts into 15 minutes but I guess I'm just speaking from the heart. My father has deceived me, lied to me, hidden things from me but worst of all has said that he didn't love me.
What type of father would say that to his own child? My father is sick. He is a paranoid schizophrenic, so he's not completely guilty for his actions, but I just can't find it in my heart to forgive him. It's not that easy.

My Mum grew up in a poor country
My Mum grew up in a poor country as a child. She was a refugee and left Vietnam for Australia when she was only 12. She had to leave Vietnam without her parents, only with her aunt, uncle and grandmother. She didn't know if she was going to see her parents again.
The boat only went to Malaysia so she had to get to Australia in another boat. When she was in Malaysia, she had an accident. In the middle of the night a tree fell through the house and onto my Mum. It damaged her kidney. She was sent to hospital. Being a refugee, she didn't have a lot of freedom. Relatives/parents couldn't visit the patients so my Mum stayed in hospital alone, in a country with a different language and she was only 12. After she got better, she arrived in Australia, again in a country with a completely different language. After a year or two, her parents were sponsored and came to Australia. This shows how lucky we are now, to live such a good life.

The most important woman in my life is my Mum
The most important woman in my life is my Mum. I idolise her and love her so much. My Mum is by herself right now in the Philippines since my brother, sister and I got
separated from her. My dad married another woman here in Australia and I was shocked when I heard about it.

I idolise what my Mum did for her kids. She gave us away to my dad and our step Mum to migrate here in Australia. I wasn't sure why she did it, but everyday I think about it. I realise why she sacrificed us so we could get a good education and a better life here in Australia.

Since we left her, 2 years ago, we have been back to the Philippines to visit her. My sister, brother and I had so much fun. We celebrated our Christmas and New Year with her like a happy family. Even though my dad wasn't there, I was happy because that time and for ever now, my Mum is my inspiration for my life, my career and my future. She'll always be in my heart, as my sister, brother and I will always be in her heart.

The most important people in my life are my friends
The most important people in my life are my friends. You can never find friends like mine. They're fun, funny, always happy and never create any problems. They can tell when you're upset and try to solve the problem. They are interested in their school work and have fun at the same time. I can say that they are the BEST!!

Even though we are parted by seas and lands
The most inspiring and influential person in my life would be my grandmother. Even though we are parted by seas and lands, she has struggled in her life, and tells me about how life was during the war. She tells me how lucky I am.

My grandmother had to finish school at the age of 8 and then look for work. She had to teach herself read and write. My grandmother isn't from an English speaking background. For her to learn English and Cantonese is amazing. She has taught me about life and to learn as much as I can as she never had the chance to even finish primary school.

Sport
Sport is something I love to do. It's enjoyable, fun and keeps me fit. Being healthy is important for me and doing lots of sport provides a great bonus. My favourite sport is athletics. I've been doing this for nearly 9 years and I still plan to continue. When I see ads on TV about the Olympics I become inspired to try and achieve better results to get to a high level.

A necklace handed to me by my Mother
The most precious object to me is a necklace handed to me by my mother. The necklace is so important to me because it was handed to me by a courageous and inspiring woman “my mother” before an operation. My mother has been through so much as she is disabled. She has one normal leg which is the left leg. The other leg is shorter with a broken knee, broken in 1999. Her left leg has an artificial joint in the hip. Which she had one put in when she was 14 and in 2004 she had the hip replaced because it was worn out. The doctor said the operation was successful but it wasn't and it got infected. So my mother was in and out of hospital. She had 2 other operations to fix the problem but instead her knee was ruined.

My mother still, until this day, smiles even after a tough life of staying in bed, being in and out of hospital for more than 5 years with 5 children and a grumbling husband.
Even though she has had her ups and downs she still keeps her head up. That is why the necklace is important because she is very inspiring in many ways.

**Somebody that means a lot to me…**
I’m writing about somebody that means a lot to me, who is a great person, inspires me, helps out with a lot of extra school events and is a great student and friend, my sister. Rima.

**I enjoy doing everything with my family…**
I love my family and being one of six children, five girls and one boy, I enjoy doing everything with my family. My parents had a hard time when they first came to Australia from their war torn country of Lebanon. They had no money when they first migrated and worked day and night to provide my sisters and I with the necessities to live.

**My parents**
My parents are role models to me. My dad was a teacher in Lebanon and hopes that one day I will go to university and succeed in any area I choose. My family is loving and caring. We go to parks, beaches, watch footy and cricket all year. I hope that one day I will achieve my dream and go to uni.

**A single mother**
My mother has been a single mother most of my life. My father passed away when I was about 8 years old. My mother was always my role model. She has been through a lot. My Mum was quite young when my father passed away and about 5 months later, my grandmother (Mum’s Mum) passed away too. So it was a hard 2 years for my Mum, both emotionally and financially. Now, 8 years after my father’s death, my Mum has managed to pay off most of our debts and has raised 5 healthy and respectful children. I really appreciate my Mum’s sacrifices and efforts to work through many obstacles and to raise such beautiful and kind children.

**Her identify will remain Anonymous…**
She isn’t like anyone else, she doesn’t need long beautiful hair to look stunning. She doesn’t need fancy, revealing clothes to be attractive. She doesn’t need to pretend to be somebody else, to be admired by others. She has a strong heart, she is someone who could carry on after being kicked around when she’s feeling down. Her aspirations are vague, but she knows what she’s doing, and she knows she’s doing it right. She has the mind of a genius and a sense of humour that nobody can copy. She does amazing things that make people stare in awe, and keep me in fascination. She has everything any girl wants; beauty, money, love and friends, but she doesn’t let the attention go to her head. Kudos to her for living her life the way she wants and not holding back. She is my hero in so many ways, yet her identify will remain anonymous.

**Although I’ll never admit it to her, my sister is a person who has inspired me…**
Although I’ll never admit it to her, my sister is a person who has inspired me in more ways than one. She is annoyingly outspoken, a trait she could do without but this is also part of her charm. She is an independent and strong woman, even with a boyfriend, and it is this type of person I wish to become. She learns French at university and as a part of her course has had the opportunity to study abroad in France. This is something I wish to achieve but in the langue of Japanese and the country of Japan!
She unwittingly encourages me to do my best. Even though my parents don’t want me to go off to another country in the future like she did, she tells me not to mind them and that I should do whatever I like, whatever makes me happy. She is a graduate of Birrong Girls High School and it was because of her that I wanted to attend this school. She is a great person who has taught me many things and inspired me to do great things.

**Reema**

I've always looked up to Reema and I admire many things that she does. She is great in school, and although she doesn't handle the stress too well, she still manages to cope and do better than many other girls in her grade and I look up to her for that. Unlike most people I know, she cares a lot about school and she tries to help out with whatever she can, whether it be something to do with school or our community. Reema is probably the only person I know who actually really cares a lot for the environment; she is president of environment team and although I make fun of her about it, I really think it’s amazing. I look up to her because of how well she does at school. I think it’s great and I’m incredibly happy for her. I think it would be a miracle if I were as good at school as she is. Reema is an important person to me and she does play a big role in my life.

**About 6 years ago I lost 2 of my Dear Sisters**

About 6 years ago I lost 2 of my dear sisters; one of them was 8 years when she died, the other was 10. Birrong Girls High School has helped me cope with the difficult time I went through when they died. The teachers were very supportive but the hardest time came when I hit Yr 7. I got bullied but my Year Advisor helped me through that. I was also grateful for the support of my teachers. Birrong Girls has helped me through my years in the school for which I'm thankful. Thank you Birrong Girls High School.

**Books**

To me, the most important and inspiring things are books because when I sit down somewhere quiet and read, I feel like I have so much freedom inside of me, especially when I read a fantasy story. If the book is a true story, I experience hope, faith, giving with the heart and love.

The most inspiring book that I and others can relate to is *Burned Alive*. It is a chilling novel about a 16 year old girl who lives with a very abusive family who attempted to kill her by throwing petrol all over her and setting her alight. If the family did not succeed they would bring shame to the family. I can relate to this novel because my life is so similar to the main character. This novel inspires me so much and gives me a better understanding of women’s rights because that’s what the novel is about. I hope that if people have read this book they will feel the exact same way.

**My mother, Tulin,**

My mother, Tulin, would be the most important, inspiring and intriguing person I know. Not just because she's my mother but because she is everything to me. Being a single parent she spent most of her life working to support our family and has been a father, a brother, a sister, my mentor, my role model and my best friend. Most people believed she couldn’t cope with looking after 2 children but she proved she was strong, working in some of the worst conditions over the years. I am forever grateful to her.
Forgiveness
Forgiveness; eleven letters, one word yet the hardest thing to do. Forgiveness isn’t the issue … it’s forgetting what hurt you.
Hurt; a four letter word describing so much, a word to express the damage one has experienced.
Trust; a five letter word which holds the key to greater friendships. Opens the door to a better place, a better day, a better life.
Happiness; a nine letter word to describe the reason we smile and laugh.
Love; four letters, one word. How does a person describe love?
- is it the look a mother gives her newborn child?
- the way a man holds his grieving wife?
- the way he looks into her eyes and sees the world?
- the way he listens to her laughter and cherishes every moment?
- the way he makes her smile through her eyes and laugh from her heart?
... the thing is love has now meaning. It’s a concept used to define the bubbly sensation,
chills down your spine,
smiles on your face,
butterflies in your stomach …
the heart racing moments that create anticipation.
Love is indescribable, uncontrollable and unconditional.

Sahar
I would like to write about my friend’s mother. My friend’s mother’s name was Sahar. She was about 21 years old when my friend was born. My friend’s Mum lives in the Palhumbri Ghanzi district, Afghanistan. This was a small village where each village family has one or two sheep or cows. My friend also had 2 older and 2 younger sisters. My friend’s Mum’s life was very difficult because she cared for young children and had little money. Because of the civil war, my friend’s father had to flee to save his life which meant her mother had the responsibility of looking after her 5 children on her own. She was also very sad because her husband was not there and she and all the children missed him very much. When my friend was about 8 or 9 years, her mother became ill and was ill for a very long time. Unfortunately she did not get better and died. I remember my friend’s mother as tall with pale skin, long dark hair and she was very pretty. She was very kind and looked after her family very well. She liked to sew, knit and get together to talk with her friends. She was still very young when she died after a very difficult life. When my friend’s mother was being buried at the cemetery, her oldest brother, Ali, was captured by fighters and died. My friend’s other 2 sisters have been reunited with their father in London. She still wishes her mother was with them. Now they all have a good life in London. A good life, food, money, car, friends and my friend is getting a good education. These are things her mother never had. I remember her mother did everything for her and she misses her mother very much.
I am a half Vietnamese and Chinese-Australian girl

My parents are both refugees from Vietnam and moved to Australia as a result of the Vietnam war. My Mum is from Chinese descent and was born in Vietnam. Her father had moved to Vietnam as there was famine, less career opportunities and the Communists were beginning to take over China. When war broke out, my grandfather was seriously ill, one of his wives had passed away and his other wife was struggling to support their 8 children. My Mum had already moved over to Australia as a refugee by then.

As for my dad, he had just graduated. He wanted to become a pilot but was forced to either study horticulture at uni or fight in the Vietnam war. My dad chose to study horticulture, something completely different to what he had intended to study. The war became worse and he too, moved to Australia as a refugee.

Now it's my turn. I am a half Vietnamese and Chinese-Australian girl. The fact that I was born in Australia and did not have to go through what my parents endured is very important to me.

My Mum and I decided to go fruit shopping…

My Mum and I decided to go fruit shopping and when it was time to pay for the fruit, I saw a yellow piece of paper which I thought was rubbish. When I got nearer, the yellow piece of paper turned out to be a $50 note. I was so happy and excited but I knew this money wasn't mine so I gave it to the cashier but the cashier lady said it was my lucky day and I could keep it.

I used that money to buy my Mum a present which made her smile and that is what I value most, my Mum's happiness.

In my bedroom with the music on

A place I like to be is in my bedroom with music on. I think about the good things and the bad things that happened during my day. If that doesn't make me feel better, I just put on my joggers and I run around the block. This makes me feel better physically and emotionally and all my stress disappears. While I am jogging, I think about how to jog up that hill that has always been my goal. I just push myself and push myself so I feel good about myself for reaching my goal.

Year 11

The two most Influential People in my Life

I would not be the person I am today without the guidance of the two most influential people in my life. Firstly my Aunty Pauline who is a Drama English and History teacher has helped me thought my entire school career. She not only has helped me through school but she has also been there at the hardest times with my family. She is my guidance in helping me to plan my career path, she has inspired me to become a teacher. Without her I would not have the enthusiasm and work ethic that I now possess. Last but not least my other inspiration is my Dad! He is probably the funniest but strictest parent I could ask for. He is so much like me in a lot of ways and he always has my best interests at heart. He has also created my passion for cooking, which is my favourite hobby.
I like cheese

...Permanence is impermanent – nothing lives forever and that acceptance is the way to go

When I was little I fell down but I got back up again....

You have to make mistakes...
If you want to learn in life you have to make mistakes so you can learn from them and better yourself. In order to succeed in life you have to believe in yourself and have faith in your goals. To reach your goals you have to put in 110%. There is no point having goals and putting in 40%. You know what the end result is going to be! If you surround yourself with people you love, family and friends, you will live a healthy and happy life.

They were amongst the many boat people...
My parents have overcome much difficulty migrating to Australia. They were amongst the many boat people who were fortunate enough to successfully arrive here. Many people did not make it. Some boats were raided by pirates who not only took all the money and jewellery they came upon but also raped the young girls. Travelling by boat for some was a nightmare with people starving and dying – there was no food. Being boat people meant enduring unimaginable hardships.

I close my eyes feeling both lids tighten against the world...
I close my eyes feeling both lids tighten against the world I am about to enter. My body escaping the dry land beneath my feet, slowly I float as if I were a speck of dust searching or a place to rest. I listen to the water on the sandy shore trickling down as if these were the last drops left on earth. It sparkles and the light hurts my eyes. I step onto a cloud that lifts me ... looking down at a dream ready to be stolen from my imagination. The sky seems so close yet when I attempt to touch it ... it is so far. My mind, my soul, my body seem ethereal. I feel lustrous and my skin feels fresh. This world I must leave – I have come before my time. I close my eyes, feeling both lids loosen and I see this world I have to call reality.

I know a woman who is capable of appreciating and believing in the whole world...
I know a woman who is capable of appreciating and believing in the whole world, not just her society or race. She inspires me every single day. She bathed me when I was young and helped me understand and develop into the person I am today. If she were the Prime Minister everyone would look up to her because is is one of a kind. She has fought through hard times and has learnt through her mistakes. She teaches me and warns me about how humans can be so overly needy or can lose control. She teaches me to be patient and to have empathy for every single person. She believes in me and never pressures me to be anybody I am not. My thoughts and love for her are so strong. Without her I’d feel so alone, so lost. We experience many different places together. She is a woman with eight children, blessed with a beautiful family, she is my mother, one and only. She can never be replaced.
I have learnt some important things in life…
The most important inspiring and intriguing people are the people around me as I become older. I have learnt some important things in life and I have also undertaken various challenges which have given me many benefits whilst at the same time these challenges have forced me to make many extraordinary sacrifices. The most intriguing place I have been to in my whole life would have to be Japan. Being in Japan has inspired me to have a better understanding of the culture there and it has opened up new possibilities for me in life. I have gained a better appreciation and new perspectives on life. I value these things, they have helped me to become a better person.

It is hard to believe where life can lead us and how fast time can travel…
It is hard to believe where life can lead us and how fast time can travel. The memory of my childhood reminds me of a person whom I truly love and value. My grandfather is the person who inspires me so much that I will never forget how he has influenced my life. It was back when I was quite young. The memory of an easy going, humorous and thoughtful grandfather comes to me with softness. He, unlike some other grandfathers, is quite positive. He loves to tell jokes during dinner though they are sometimes quite lame. My parents sometimes complain about his behaviour but I find it really humorous. What I understand from my grandfather is that he is simply a friendly man who cares for his family’s joy and happiness. As the head of the family he solves family problems quite differently to the way my father does.

On September 7th 2006 there was the most true angel born…
On September 7th 2006 there was the most true angel born, and his name is Titabo junior… I always seem to wonder how something so little can bring the joy my nephew has. Even though his creation and his beginnings were unknown to anyone but my sister because she was fearful of the consequences of having a baby before marriage (as this is strongly inappropriate because my family have a strong Catholic faith). I am thankful she did not abort him because if she had the million memories I now share with him would simply not be there. Every day is such a joyous, happy time as all 10 children in my family and my parents just watch him dance, sing and entertain us as he is intellectually smart but also a joy to watch. I never realised how much he inspired me until he fell sick. He was shivering badly and was very cold. The trip to Bankstown Hospital was the most terrifying ride of my life, with my whole family silent, scared … fearful of something terrible which we feared might happen. Luckily he was only sick for a week and he recovered fully. He is a healthy baby once again. I thank God that he is with me today. Life would not be worth living if it were not for him.

My favourite place in the world…
Most people fantasise about going to a place where they can unwind and feel free, where there is beauty and nature, a quiet little sort of place where their minds can wonder to. Not me! I would rather a place filled with a thousand familiar faces. Everyone would recognise one another and get along. A place where all the parts of life would come together; family, school, friends — all of these would combine to make a favourite place. Loud music, food, drinking this to me would be perfect relaxation. The people that matter to you are the most important part of life…the only thing that counts. Within such a place with its special mood and atmosphere I would like to find myself.
The death of a young friend...
The death of a young friend in the past has inspired me to realise the fragility of life and how suddenly life can disappear. This experience has allowed me to rethink how I have lived my life, to see every day and moment being lived in a worthwhile way. When I heard about my friend's death, I, at first, thought it was a joke, but it was real. People are often ignorant to the reality of existence. We never value things until they have permanently disappeared, even though we hope, wish and endure pain. This is what I have learnt from experiencing the death of a friend.

World Youth Day 08
World Youth Day 08 was a once in a lifetime experience for me. World Youth day is a world event which takes place every three years. It is held in different countries. In 2008 World Youth day was held in Australia and it was a blessing to be part of it. My experience was that of an adventure. I have happy and cherished memories which I will keep forever. The whole experience was inspiring. I met people from all corners of the world, different nations and different races. It was amazing how one event could bring all these people together and help create world peace. The joy and smiles everyone had on their faces clearly showed the harmony and joyous freedom everyone was experiencing.

Romance… The most important person to me is my everything
The most important person to me is my everything, because he is the only person who makes me happy every time I am with him. I always think about him, every second, minute, day and night! Although sometime he and I argue, we know deep inside that we really care about each other. The person that I am talking about is my one and only boyfriend, Kevin… Every time he is with me, he always completes my day and I feel as though I am floating on air because of too much giggling… he is so important to me.

Forgetting Problems
As life passes every day you are faced with problems and issues. The choices you make, to deal with these conflicts and issues will alter your experiences. Confronting a problem isn't always a good idea as you might get carried away, making a big deal out of nothing. Sometimes if you “don't let it get to you, try to just forget it” you will have less to worry about. Why make yourself miserable when you can just move on with life? There will be less complications, you may learn to not care about the things that will upset you. Life is short so live it to the fullest.

To me the most inspiring people in my life are my Grandmothers
To me the most inspiring people in my life are my Grandmothers. They have both lived through war as children; experienced the pain and suffering it brings and the loss of those dearest to them. They both truly understand the value of freedom and they try to teach my siblings and me that materialistic things have no real value. Family and freedom are priceless.
One of my Grandmothers lived in Berlin during WW11. My other Grandmother lived in Finland while Russia was fighting the citizens there. Their cities were bombed and my Grandmother’s father who managed to survive was left with emotional scars. He never recovered fully. These women have taught me the importance of many things.
They have helped me to realise that I am a very lucky person, living in a safe country with everything I need.

Year 12

The window in my room...
It faces the backyard and it is always interesting to see the slight changes that appear as I gaze through it. These changes are sometimes yearly; the changing of the colours of the neighbours' tall tree, the changing of the weather, from sunny blue skies to hail and a culmination of lightening and thunder. Then there are other minor changes over the years. Some of these changes are man made like the erection of two carports or even the newly painted garage. Looking from the window in my room, I feel like a traveller moving (sometimes backwards and at other times forwards) through time as I observe the world through the same white wooden frame.

The most important thing in my life at the moment...
The most important thing in my life at the moment is my education and pursuing my dream of becoming a chef. I want to work with the most inspirational famous and talented chefs in the world and expand my knowledge.

What has not been written before by philosophers or people of wisdom?
I don't think that I can write anything that has not been written before by philosophers or people of wisdom. At this early point in my life, at almost 18 years, I have an extremely sentimental view of the world. I believe in the power of love and understanding to create peace in the world. While there are forces working against these things I hope that love and peace will prevail with the help of humour and laughter.

Our Dreams – the place called a Dream
Somewhere far away from us I go to enjoy the specialties of life. I live in peace, harmony and equality. There is no fighting, no death, no anger and the cool breeze on my face brushes away the hair from my cheeks. I feel as though I am flying with big white fluffy wings. I feel like and angel. This place is called a DREAM, as life could never create feelings like these, not love, not hate – only the wants of the dreams in ourselves.

The bigger picture … trying to see the bigger picture
The bigger picture … trying to see the bigger picture. 10 weeks left of school and I am still trying to see the bigger picture. I have decided to not let the HSC take over the bigger picture. Sanity, friends, family can not be lost with in this bigger picture just because of one year of my life. Yes, the HSC has priority but I will not give into the pressure I will not let it overwhelm me. I am learning to see the bigger picture.

Inspiration to take my education further
My parents both went to university. Looking up at them gives me inspiration to take my education further. Education will certainly help me elevate myself mentally and
socially. I want to be at the very top. I want to be successful and be an inspiration to others.

The quiet place within…
The quiet place within, the gentle breeze that flows throughout your own private sanctuary… Nothing breaks. You flourish within your own thoughts. Ideas grow liked soft grass in spring. I wonder where these things go when they disappear. How many shards escape when things break? Everything passes you by. Slowly enough to allow you to appreciate it, fast enough to overtake you… problems become nothing but pebbles in your path. You are on your own in the world you have created.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED…
DUST YOURSELF OFF AND TRY AGAIN.
This is inspirational because no one is perfect and this quote applies to everyone! There are always mistakes to make and chances for you to get back on your feet and try again.

The wisdom of Year 12 … Even if you fail in a test…
Even if you fail in a test, you should not lose hope and give up. It is important to try harder in the next test and to ask for help from teachers and friends, if there is something that you don’t understand.

“Adversity can make you a better person” Mauric Hor.
Mauric Hor is my boss and has become a very good friend to me over the time that I have worked with him.. I have learnt so much from this wise man and will forever look up to him as an inspiration and motivation for my own life.

Travel
I have always been interested in travel, mainly to build up an understanding of the diverse cultures and people around me and also to find the answers to why there are different attitudes which people have towards different things….

What inspires me to do well…
What inspires me to do well at school are my parents who believe in me and the teachers who encourage me.

The last year of my secondary schooling
This is the last year of my secondary schooling. Next year will be a new year of exciting experiences. I aspire to go to university and take paths to make a real difference, to make this world a better place. I believe that everybody has a voice and that everybody can make a difference.

TIME
… Only if I had used my time wisely…
The little study times could have added up and made a lot of difference…