

Peer tutoring brings dual benefits

YEAR 11 students at Chatham High School have spent the year forging relationships with their younger peers through a tutoring program that's strongly benefited both groups of students.

This was the first year peer tutoring has been introduced to the school through a partnership with TAFE, that has seen year 11 students become tutors for year seven students at the school.

Once a week the pairs get to-

gether to go over reading material and texts from either geography or English classes and the results speak for themselves.

Program coordinator Judi Wood said the year seven students have all shown strong improvements in their confidence and reading skills and she believes this is helped by the smaller age gap.

"There's more engagement between the year seven kids and the

year 11 students because of the smaller age gap," she said.

"They've all developed great relationships with each other and the younger students especially, really look forward to their sessions each week."

The program was open for all year 11 students to volunteer and Judi said those chosen were not necessarily based on their academic abilities, but their ability to engage with others.

Sarah Bowers and Heidi Longworth have both enjoyed being tutors for their year seven

students and are urging next year's year 11 students to take up the opportunity.

"It's helped my confidence as much as my year sevens," explained Sarah.

"It's just a really rewarding experience, especially once we'd established a good connection."

Heidi enjoyed watching the progress of her students.

"It's been amazing to watch them grow," she said.

"It's a really good opportunity

for us to engage with the younger students."

The program will continue again next year thanks to the continued partnership with Kate Fazio from Taree TAFE, and year 11 students will receive two days training before the program begins, just as they did this year.



Heidi Longworth and Samantha Jones.

NRL players visit Chatham

NRL players Tyrone Roberts and Will Smith from Newcastle and Issac Gordon from the Sharks were special guests at a Close the Gap initiative held at Chatham High last week.

This was the first time the event has been held and Chatham High's head teacher of Aboriginal Education, Craig Mitchell, hopes it will be held annually.

He said the three NRL stars spoke with students about the value of education and staying in school. They were also involved in various activities including touch football, throwing hoops and passing the ball competitions.

"They were all happy to help out," he said.

Mr Mitchell said it was also an opportunity to primary school students to meet peers in years 11 and 12 who can act as mentors and role models.



Sarah Bowers and Bianca Jobson reading together.