

# Technology coup

## Chatham one of four State schools to pilot innovation project

CHATHAM High School is celebrating a technology coup.

It is one of four schools from across New South Wales – and one of 20 across the nation – chosen as a Microsoft Partner in Learning pilot school for 2011-12.

Now in its second year, the program rewards innovative, forward-thinking schools by working closely with them to help inspire creative thinking, discover best practices and create models that any school, in any system, can use to develop 21st century learning.

Each year, state departments of education select 20 schools from across Australia to work with its experts and other innovative schools in an intensive process of reform.

The core offering of the Partners in Learning initiative is the Innovative Schools program – a collaborative partnership between Microsoft Australia, Australian state governments and Australian schools.

The Innovative Schools program uses grassroots, classroom-tested experience to develop models any school can use to integrate technology into their classrooms and make student learning more accessible, relevant and engaging.

More than 20 schools applied to become a “learning pilot school” in 2011 and Chatham High School was one of just four successful applicants.

Chatham High teacher Kylee Owen, who has experience in the program after implementing it in her previous role at Bulahdelah, and operational paraprofessional technology teacher, Melissa Barry, will drive the program.

“We had to show an example of innovative learning we had done in the past and propose an avenue of innovative learning we have planned for the future,” Kylee said of the application process.



**Helping develop best practices for schools of the future: Melissa Barry (left) and Kylee Owen are excited about creating a true 21st Century learning environment for Chatham High students.**

“As an example of what we had done we used our joint project with the Manning River Times and our proposed new innovation is the CHACE (Chatham curriculum extension) class we plan to start next year.”

The year seven class will cater for academically gifted students with a specific technological approach to create truly 21st

Century learning environments.

“We’ve sent out information to primary schools and we have already started viewing applications for the class.”

Positions in the class will be highly sought after and will require a principal’s recommendation.

“We have a lot to do with local primary schools and are looking

forward to engaging with them through this program,” Kylee explained.

Melissa Barry will be employed for two years and will utilise her eclectic skill set in over seeing the program having worked for the Electroboard Smartboard company. She is also a fully qualified primary school teacher.

“We’re looking forward to util-

ising the students own tech knowledge because they are the most tech savvy generation of students we’ve ever seen,” Melissa said.

“We’re looking forward to using this program to bring a lot of our ideas and our students ideas to fruition.”