



# Love Where You Learn

*A Newcomer's Guide to Mowbray Public School*



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## Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the Cameragal people who are the traditional custodians of this land. We would also like to pay our respects to the Elders of the past, present and future for they have strong beliefs and connections to this land.

We must always remember that the land this school is now on once belonged to the Aboriginal people whose culture we must always respect. Under this concrete and asphalt this land is, was and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.

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## Mowbray School Song

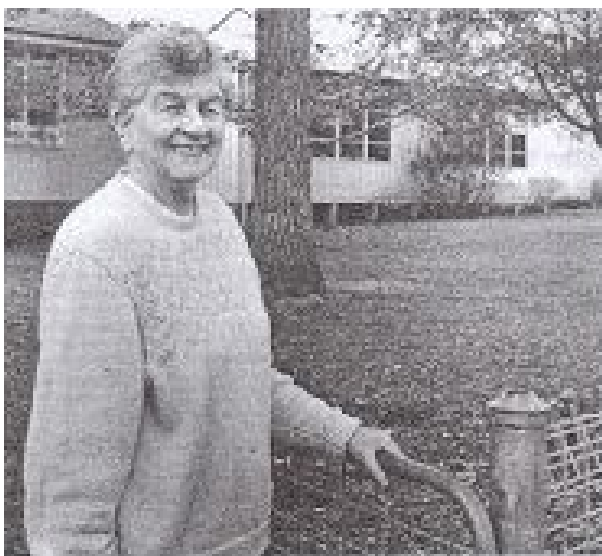
Day by day  
we are learning to grow  
hand in hand by  
sharing what we know  
aim to excel by effort  
do your best and  
through life face every test  
be always strong and wise  
remembering with pride  
our days at  
Mowbray school.

Did You Know?

The current Mowbray School song was written in 1993 by former parent Jocelyn Brigden.

# The Maker of Mowbray Public School

## - Leila Stewart



Leila Stewart is the maker of Mowbray School.

In 1949, Leila moved into the Mowbray West area with her husband and three kids - two girls and one boy. The area had very few houses back then with patches of bush and one small grocery store. Leila recalls picking wildflowers including beautiful flannel flowers, Christmas bell flowers and Christmas bush along Avian Crescent which was all bush. The children in the area would play in the bush for hours, exploring and building cubby houses.

The children in the area would play in the bush for hours, exploring and building cubby houses.

### - 1947 aerial photo of the Mowbray West Area.

The closest school for the children in the Mowbray West area was Chatswood Public. The only transportation was by bus. The buses often broke down or never turned up so the children would have to walk all or part of the way to and from school. That's 4km!



Did You Know?

Look carefully-there used to be a road called Kingsford Smith Street in the middle of the oval.



The teachers would dismiss the kids from school without checking to see if the kids from the Mowbray Road West area got on the bus safely. Children were often left outside the school needing to find their own way home. One day, Leila's five year old son was left outside Chatswood School crying because he missed the bus and was too young to walk home. A local policeman found him crying outside the school and took him home.

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That's why I started Mowbray School because I was so hopping mad to think that had happened to him.

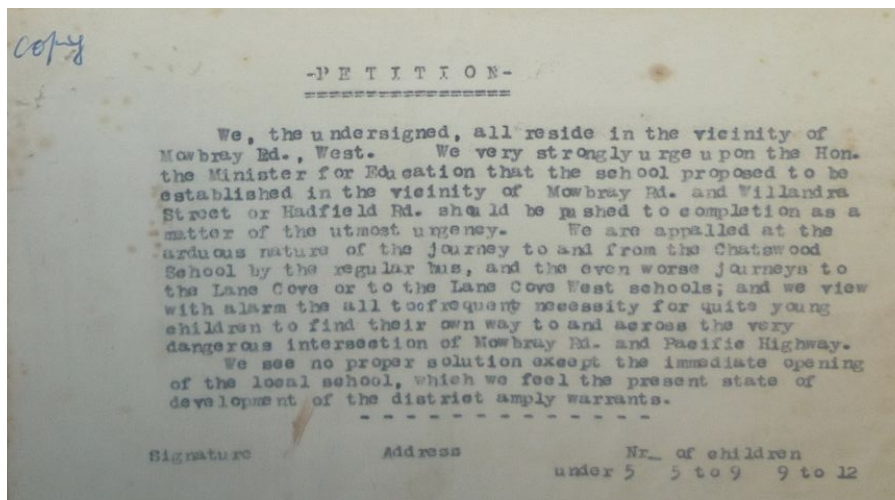
- Leila Stewart

”

Leila organised a petition for the urgent need for a school in Mowbray Road West. Leila's husband typed the petition and it was left at the local grocery store for people to sign. Leila then walked around the district to collect more signatures.

- Copy of the original petition to start a new school in Mowbray Road West.

By 1951, the district had grown with lots more families moving to the area including 100 new houses. Combined with the unreliable transport, the time had come for a new school.



Leila gave the petition to her local member for Lane Cove Mr Ken McCaw who brought it to the attention of the Minister for Education in the NSW Parliament. Over a year of many setbacks and hard work, a School Establishment Committee was formed to oversee the formation of the new school. 35 parents met to vote on a new name for the school. The winning vote was for Kamilaroi School which was the name of the local Aboriginal group from the area.

Then one day, the school inspector called Leila, who was president of the School Establishment Committee, and said the new school couldn't be called Kamilaroi because there were other Kamilaroi schools. Leila was very disappointed but was told to think of a new name immediately because the school had to be registered the next day.

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So I said well what about Mowbray School and he said - that'll do. So that was it. That's how we called it Mowbray School.

- Leila Stewart

”



Mowbray School finally started on July 21, 1952 with 20 students - 14 boys and six girls. It was officially opened by Mr Ken McCaw at the school's first fete on October 25, 1952.

- 1952 photo of foundations of the first classroom at Mowbray School.

- Local newspaper articles.

Nov 22. 1951

## CHATSWOOD WEST INFANTS SCHOOL

### MR. McCAW PRESSES MINISTER

At a recent meeting of Parliament Mr. McCaw, M.L.A., approached Mr. Heffron, the Minister for Education, and stressed the growing need for a new school in Chatswood West. Mr. McCaw, in his address, asked: "Is the Minister for Education aware that there is a great growing need for a new school in Chatswood West, where the Department already owns land? Have strong representations been made to the Minister recently for the building of the new school that is needed? Will he say what is the present position, and how soon the school may be expected?"

In reply Mr. Heffron stated, "There has been a definite demand for an infants' school at Chatswood West, where the Department has acquired land for a school. Although it will not be possible to construct a permanent building immediately, it is proposed to provide a two-room temporary building so that classes might be held from the beginning of the first school term next year. I shall advise the hon. member by letter in more detail what is proposed."

Although only a temporary dwelling, the new school will definitely relieve the acute schooling situation at Chatswood West.

10.4.52.

## New School Delay

Mr. K. McCaw, member for Lane Cove, is in receipt of the following letter from the Minister for Education.

I refer again to your personal representations on behalf of the Kamilaroy School Establishment Committee (Mrs. G. S. Lewis of 5 Willandra St., Lane Cove, Hon. Secretary) regarding the need for the erection of an infants' school on the Departmental site at Chatswood West.

The delay in providing school facilities at this centre has been occasioned by the late delivery of prefabricated aluminium buildings from the United Kingdom. However, these have now arrived in this country and the contractors are proceeding with the erection of the buildings on their respective sites. I am hopeful that the new Chatswood West School will be ready for occupation during this term.

Cumberland. 1  
 Brelong 8  
 Mowbray Rd West.  
 Mowbray Park. 11  
 Kamilaroi. 13  
 Dalton. 2

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Kamilaroi.  
 Mowbray Park.

Voting for the name of school  
 Kamilaroi was chosen.

- 4th February, 1952. 35 parents voted for the name of the new school. Kamilaroi was the winner with 13 votes but later changed to Mowbray.



- 1986 North Shore Times article on Leila Stewart.

NST 25/6/86

## School a mother started

**She talked authority to setting it up . . .**

LEILA STEWART gets "a great kick" of pride every time children in the local primary school uniform walk past her door.

For it was Mrs Stewart who, against all odds, managed to talk reluctant education authorities into setting up the school more than 30 years ago.

She has proudly seen Lane Cove's Mowbray Road Public School grow from 29 pupils who started in 1952 to today's enrolment of more than 300.

Mrs Stewart had not long moved to Mowbray Road in 1950 when she became concerned for her five-year-old son's safety travelling to and from school.

Her two older children were content to travel the four kilometre journey to Chatswood Public School, often walking when the bus broke down or failed to arrive.

Her youngest son was frightened at the prospect of being stranded so far from home.

"One day the police brought my son home after finding him crying at the bus stop near the school," she said.

Mrs Stewart learned that

land in Mowbray Road had been earmarked for a school, but some local residents discouraged her efforts to have the school built.

"In the beginning they (other residents) said I couldn't get the school going because others had tried," she said.

The determination of Mrs Stewart, however, surprised many people.

She organised a petition which was signed by all local residents. "Somebody suggested I approach the local member for Lane Cove, Mr Ken McCaw, but no one was prepared to go along with me," she said.

"I finally found someone to give me the moral support I needed and went to see Mr McCaw."

Mr McCaw promised to take the matter up in Parliament and before long plans for the school were being prepared.

At a public meeting in April 1952 Mrs Stewart was elected president of the school establishment committee.

Later, as a member of the mothers' club, she helped design the school uniform and

decided on the colors, royal blue and dark grey.

"Although the design of the uniform has changed a little over the years, the colors are still the same," she said.

The school opening was delayed until a wharf strike in England ended and the pre-fabricated school room could be shipped to Australia.

"A lot of people became upset at the delay and sent their children to other schools," Mrs Stewart said.

Classes eventually began in the second term of 1952 with 14 boys and six girls.

Mr McCaw was invited to open the school on July 21 after presiding at a meeting to form the Parents and Citizens Association. Mr Bruce Haldane was unanimously elected president.

LEFT: Leila Stewart at Mowbray Public School . . . for so long just a dream.

WILSON  
For the Mowbray  
SCHOOLS  
- Mowbray  
Public School - J





- Construction of the Leila Stewart Amphitheatre. Opened in 2002 for the school's 50th Anniversary.



# Environmental Education and Community Information Station



Designed, built and donated by Mowbray parent and artist Edward Shimada.

This is not just your average noticeboard. It is a bird sanctuary with nesting boxes, a weather station, a nesting periscope and an underwater palace! It was designed and constructed in 2005 by former Mowbray parent Edward Shimada when his daughter was in Year 5. It's made from recycled materials and was inspired by a Japanese folktale called Urashima Taro.



Designed,  
Built and  
Donated  
by  
- Edward  
Shimada



## Very Important Parts of the Environmental Noticeboard

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- This is the turtle in the underwater palace.



- This is the nesting periscope.



- This is the weather station.



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# Inspired by the Japanese Folktale

## - urashima Taro



*Illustration by Burte, 2020.*

### The Story of Urashima Taro

- Retold by the Year 2 Student Historians

Urashima Taro was a fisherman from a small village in Japan. One day, Urashima Taro saw some boys poking a poor turtle on the beach shore. Urashima Taro offered the boys his daily catch in exchange for the

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turtle. The boys agreed to the deal and gave Urashima Taro the turtle. Urashima Taro set the turtle free into the sea. The next day, Urashima Taro was fishing and heard a voice coming from the sea, “Urashima Taro, Urashima Taro my son”. The voice belonged to the turtle he had set free. The turtle said to Urashima Taro, “Because you saved me, I would like to invite you to the underwater palace”. Urashima Taro agreed and climbed onto the turtle’s back.

A few moments later, Urashima Taro was smoothly swimming down, down, down, deep into the ocean. They soon arrived at the entrance to the underwater palace. There were two swordfish guards by the gate entry. They let the turtle and Urashima Taro through. The turtle said, “You can walk safely here now Urashima Taro”.

The underwater palace was filled with beautiful coral buildings of orange, red, pink, blue, violet and yellow. Seagrass waved along the sandy paths while sea creatures stared curiously. Soon they came to a majestic palace with a windy staircase and huge red coral doors. The red coral doors swung open and in front of them was a king sitting in a large orange throne. The King addressed the turtle, “Is this the fisher who saved you?”. The turtle said, “Yes, your majesty”. The King said to Urashima Taro, “Because of your kindness, my daughter will guide you around the kingdom”. The sea creatures celebrated with music. Crabs played the base, seahorses played the trumpet and the octopus played the bongo drums.

One day Urashima Taro started to miss his family. The princess sensed his sadness and gave him a black box with a red ribbon. The princess told Urashima Taro, “As long as you do not open this box, happiness will remain”. Urashima Taro climbed onto the shell of the turtle and was swiftly returned to his village.

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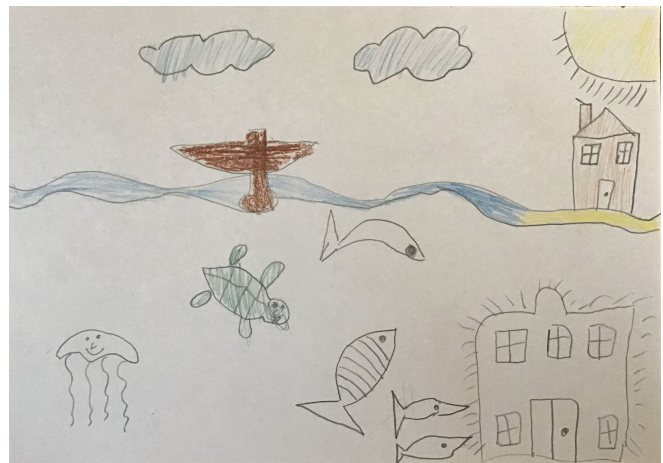
Urashima Taro searched for his family to tell them of all his adventures but could not find them anywhere. Some old bearded men who had heard the story of Urashima Taro told Urashima, “Your family has all died because it has been over 300 years”. Urashima felt left out and sad because he missed his family.

Urashima Taro thought happiness was inside the box. So ignoring the princess’ warning, he opened the box. Then some black smoke swirled around him. Urashima Taro grew a long grey, thin beard, his hands became numb and crinkly and he had knobbly knees. Urashima Taro hobbled slowly along the shore as an old, lonely man.

The End



*Illustrations by Hugo (above) and Nuoyi (right), 2020.*



# My Nan Was A Teacher At Mowbray!

- by Charlotte



My nan was a school teacher at Mowbray Primary School as it was called back then. It was the second school she taught at after teachers college. She loved teaching and declined an arts scholarship at Sydney University to study at Balmain Teachers' College. She was a teacher at

Mowbray for 18 months in 1968 and 1969. Her last day at Mowbray was the 23rd September 1969.

She taught Year Three and her class was called 3W because her name was Moreen Westerland. So over 50 years later at Mowbray, our classes still have the same name format where our class is named after our teacher.

## The Uniform

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The girls' uniform was a grey dress with a short sleeve shirt with three buttons and a white collar. They also had to wear white socks pulled right up to the knee. The boys' uniform was a grey shirt, black tie and grey socks that were pulled up just below the knee. The boys' sports uniform was a white short sleeve top with grey shorts and white

socks that went just above the ankles. The girls' sports uniform was the same except they wore a skirt. My nan had 23 students in her class, so similar to what we have today.

After my nan left Mowbray, she went to Gundagai for two years, then Narrabri, where she met my Grandpa and stayed teaching there for the rest of her life. She still lives there now but is in a nursing home as she has Alzheimer's Disease.

“

I sometimes wish I could ask her questions about my school but I can't, so I just tell her about it.

- Charlotte

”



- 1968 Class 3W  
Mowbray Primary  
School. Teacher:  
Moreen Westerland.



Did You Know?

The current school uniform was introduced in 1975. The Mowbray Crest was designed by student Karen Llewellyn in 1958.

# The Punishment Book

Here we have the old Mowbray punishment table.

Name	Age	Nature of offence	Amount of punishment	Date
Cross, Harry	9	swearing	1 STROKE	21/10/1955
Graham, Les	9	Rock throwing, fighting	1 STROKE	21/10/1955
Cross, Harry	9	lying, questioning	1 STROKE	24/10/1955
William, Sew	8	Swearing	2 STROKES	29/9/1957
Gregory, Flew	12	Rock throwing	2 STROKES	28/9/1957

I know it is hard to believe that this beautiful school once had the cane! So you are probably wondering why we had the cane?

Well back in the early days of Mowbray, you were really expected to behave quite well. If you didn't, you got the cane!

As you can see Harry Cross was naughty... always up to mischief in that brain of his. Les Graham was a tiny bit better than Harry. Only once you see his name on that chart.

The bits highlighted in yellow say 'stroke'. This means that one stroke meant the naughty student was hit once with the cane. So if you see five strokes, it means they got hit five times.

You are probably saying to yourself, that is super strict because it was strict back then.



- By Hugo and Lawson



# Mowbray Public School Then and Now

1962



- Mowbray Rd and Willandra Street Corner

2020



1962



- View of the school across Mowbray Rd

2020



# Mowbray Public School Then and Now

2012



- Mowbray Rd and Willandra Street Corner

2020



2012



- View of the school across Mowbray Rd

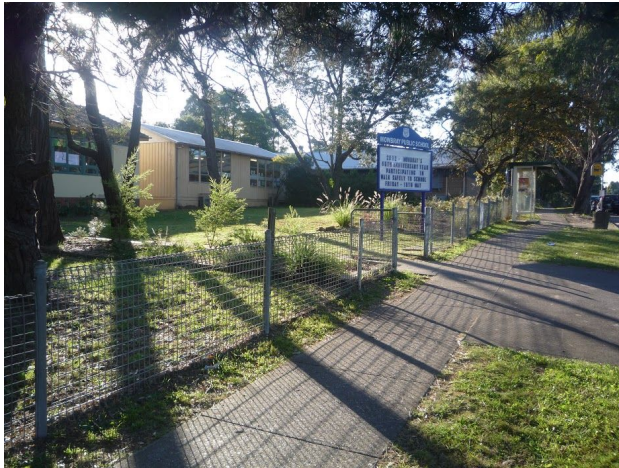
2020





# Mowbray Public School Then and Now

2012



- View of the school along Mowbray Rd footpath

2020



2012



- View of the play equipment

2020





# Mowbray Public School Then and Now

2012



- View of the hall

2020



2012



- View of a Year 1 classroom

2020





# Introducing

## - The Year 2 Student Historians



This Newcomer's Guide to Mowbray Public School was researched,  
written and compiled by:

Front (sitting from left): Nuoyi, Meleiah, Sara, Lawson, Charlotte, Yug

Back (standing from left): Hugo, Burte, Rebecca, Gabriela, Kaylah, William