

Help TSHS obtain grant for building a Replica Red Baron

A whole new beginning for Toogoolawah State High School! The Aviation Structured Work Experience Program at the school is an exciting initiative for 2014! Year ten to twelve students from the school were invited to express interest for one day per week (Wednesday) to attend a structured work experience at Watt's Bridge Airfield Inc. In school term one, six students were selected under the mentorship of the staff and volunteers from Watts Bridge Airfield Inc to assist in the building of a privately owned reproduction WW1 Vintage Plane. The school is looking to extend the community partnership with Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Inc by building a flying replica of the Red Baron's famous World War 1 tri plane. This would provide the additional student places and long term structured work experience during 2014 and 2015.

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Inc is located near Toogoolawah. The runways and associated infrastructure were originally built in 1942 as part of the Australian World War 11 defence program. At the cessation of hostilities the airfield was no longer required by the military so the buildings were removed and the field returned to agriculture use. In the early 1980's a small group of dedicated pilots 'rediscovered' Watts Bridge. The runways were completely overgrown, the site being used to graze cattle. The enormous potential for the airfield was immediately recognized. The long and arduous task of reclaiming the airfield runways and taxiways was commenced. The airfield was officially recognized as

having significant historical importance and was formally renamed as the 'Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield'. The vision for Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield is to position it as the long term centre for all forms of recreational aviation in South East Queensland. The development plan places great emphasis on recreational aviation activities, to ensure easy, open and affordable access for all aviators.

I had the opportunity to visit the airfield last week and met up with Bruce Clarke who is the President of the airfield and the six Toogoolawah High School Students there who were working with two licensed engineers. The students were into their second week at the airfield and had been tutored in many things during their two weeks there. They were assisted by Craig Thomsen, John Innes, Ron Dunn and of course Bruce (Clarke). The students are Hannah Bulow, Nick Falla, Steven O'Hare, Josh Pude, Max Sabti and Tyson Garrick.

Bruce said, We now have many who visit here and wish to join. It is great recreation, and not very expensive, just the price of a second hand car and with a bit of work you can have your very own WW1 fighter! This program with the school is a Watt's Bridge initiative and it is certainly a privilege to be able to help the school. Of course, we have to wait to see if the school can secure a grant for the purchase of the kit, and when and if they do they will be able to build their very own Red Baron which will be able to fly." Toogoolawah High School is seeking letters of support from the community to apply for a grant from our local Federal Member, Shayne Neumann MHR for Blair, for a grant of \$30,000 under the ANZAC Centenary Local Grants Program. The school needs support from the community for this application to succeed. The school is seeking letters of support from everyone for this very worthwhile grant. Deputy principal of TSHS, Mr Ross Jardine, said, "If we are successful with a grant there is a company in America that produces a replica kit for WW1 aircraft including one for the Red Baron. We are very excited as the community support has been outstanding. We have already received a great number of letters of support for this grant application. Some have come from parents, staff, community organizations and general members of the community.



TSHS Principal Stacey Beu and Deputy Principal Ross Jardine with a model of the Red Baron



Tyson Garrick and Craig Thomsen taking some measurements for one of the planes at Watts Bridge



Bruce Clarke supervising TSHS student Steven O'Hare



Bruce Clarke President of Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield



Toogoolawah High Students Nick Falla and Hannah Bulow at Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Inc



Josh Pude and Max Sabti hard at work



TSHS students Max Sabti, Josh Pude, Tyson Garrick and Steven O'Hare under the supervision of Craig Thomsen (Watts Bridge)



Bruce and Mary Clarke, John Innes, Craig Thomsen and Ron Dunn who are helping the TSHS students (In front of a WW1 Pup Replica)