It can be argued that after Leonta, Cyclone Althea, 24 December 1971, was the most devastating cyclone to hit Townsville. During the cyclone three people were killed, ninety per cent of the homes on Magnetic Island were destroyed or damaged and ten per cent of homes in the city were damaged. Surprisingly, however, the School suffered very little damage with the exception of the Maurie Blank Building which was again unroofed. The damage bill came to $40,000 and this amount was covered by insurance. A working group led by Mr Phil Brazier, Chairman of the Trustees and the Deputy Headmaster, Burke von Wald, worked during the January period to get the School back into working order. They were aided by many staff and students. The effort was so successful that there was very little loss of school time once the School year got underway.

Cyclone Tessi, 2 April 2000, was a category one storm and caused very little damage to the School. In some respects, it was more of a nuisance storm as power was lost for some time and the catering staff had to look after well over one hundred and fifty boarders. It was a credit to their ability that they were able to cope with the help of two gas barbeques. The boarders were also helpful, clearing up a mass of broken tree branches and other debris left by the cyclone.

Cyclone Yasi was a far more serious cyclone than Tessi causing much damage to the School grounds and sail cloths. However, as with the many cyclones that had affected the School, the current staff and students soon rallied around and worked assiduously to put the grounds back into some respectable shape. In doing this they have followed the wonderful spirit and caring of past students who have done the same since the first cyclone hit in 1896.

MR BILL MULLER
School Archivist