

A Year that Began With Rain and Change

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The 2026 year began in a way few of us could have predicted. Rain started falling on 20th of December 2025 and continued relentlessly until 7th of January. In just 18 days, we received more than 700 millimetres of rain — the equivalent of almost two years worth of rainfall in a fortnight.

Initially, the rain was warmly welcomed. A wet Christmas is a rare gift, and there was something special about celebrating the festive season with green paddocks and full watercourses. As the days passed, however, it became clear that this extraordinary weather event would also bring significant challenges.

With roads closed and movement limited, the enforced pause brought an unexpected opportunity. Confined to home, we turned our attention to one of the great annual rituals for boarding families — sewing on school name tags and labelling what felt like everything. This year marked our second “bout of boarding,” but with a new chapter beginning, our son heading into Year 7 at The Southport School on the Gold Coast.

Although the bags were packed and labelled early, there was simply no leaving while the rain continued to fall. When the water finally subsided enough for a vehicle to reach the road, the car was loaded and ready. Then, just one day before our planned departure, the clouds gathered again, threatening another downpour. Trusting our instincts, we made the decision to leave earlier than planned, arriving at Longreach late that evening — only to wake the next morning to find the road had closed behind us. It was a timely reminder of how quickly conditions can change, and reassurance that the decision to leave early was the right one.

After a week on the Gold Coast — filled with rest, adjustment, and the making of lasting family memories — it was time to step once more into the familiar yet ever-changing world of boarding life. The rollercoaster of highs and lows, excitement and uncertainty, had begun again.

We were fortunate to attend Zander’s first regatta, where he competed in a Year 9 boat as their cox-men. It was an incredibly rewarding experience, meeting other families at the beginning of their own boarding journeys — many of whom I am sure will become familiar faces in the years ahead.

Then came the hardest part. With emotions swirling, we left our youngest to continue his journey at boarding school and returned home to begin a new chapter of our own. After 23 years of children filling the house with noise, activity, and learning, we arrived home to an empty schoolroom — quietly waiting to be repurposed — and a long list of work that had patiently been on hold.

The year began with rain, but it also began with reflection, resilience, and transition. Like so many rural families, we continue to adapt to the changing seasons — both in the landscape and in life — grateful for the opportunities ahead and ready for whatever this new chapter brings.

