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Amber back at schools

By **Rebecca Belt**

MCCARTHY Catholic College's music department was boosted with a donation from Austar on Wednesday and a performance from country singer-songwriter Amber Lawrence.

The visit was part of the Austar for Schools program which has involved Amber visiting high schools in Armidale, Tamworth and Gunnedah.

Austar has donated \$2000 for school equipment and a guitar to each school during the visit, to boost their music programs.

Amber said the visits were made worthwhile when the students come up and say they enjoyed the performance.

"Hopefully, by the end they will think country music's okay as well," she said.

"I also hope they are learning some-

thing about the music industry and chasing their dreams."

The visits were a chance for Amber to share her story of getting into the music industry and giving up her fulltime job as an accountant to chase her dreams.

Amber first became involved with Austar for Schools after she had been visiting schools independently when she visited small towns.

"It is so rewarding and the primary kids are amazing," she said.

"With this program, the schools get money and a guitar. Austar does so much for country music; where would we be without the Country Music Channel?"

Catch Amber back in town for the Country Music Festival in January.



Money and music: Amber Lawrence at McCarthy Catholic College with music and drama teacher Deborah Fullwood and Austar's Jill Stewart. Photo: **Geoff O'Neil** 211009G0R06