

SPECTEMUR AGENDO

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NEWCASTLE
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL





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FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



We are all most familiar with our School motto. For well over a century, in some form or another, it has adorned the walls and halls of Newcastle Grammar School. To bestow the motto was, in all likelihood, one of the first tasks undertaken as the School sprang to life atop the coastline of Newcastle.

The October 1938 edition of *The Mitre*, the NGS Newsletter of the day, reported that the Archdeacon of Newcastle, The Ven. H. A. Woodd reflected on the motto on the occasion of the School's 20th anniversary. He noted that those who had established NGS (then Church of England Girls' Grammar School) had desired that "Deeds, not words should be the guiding principle of the

School" – and spent considerable time in choosing a motto that would reflect such an objective.

The initial translation from the Latin of *Spectemur Agendo* was 'By our actions we are judged' later modified to 'Let us be judged by our actions' (From the Spirit, 2009). All this was, of course, before the advent of Google Translate, which reliably informs me that it should be 'Seen together in action'. However it is viewed, it is a noble sentiment and a great challenge to live up to, bestowed on the School community by Founders with great foresight.

The principles called upon by our motto are often evidenced around and beyond the NGS campuses. Recently, we have seen the remarkable Class of 2023 conclude their time as students at the School. They have been a great blessing to us all, leading NGS in a wonderful manner. A great mentor of mine often uses the phrase that "No school will rise above its Year 12". It is a perceptive and wise observation – one that I repeated to our outgoing senior year on more than a few occasions. They have used their influence to shape the culture of the School. They are outward-looking and have genuinely put the needs of others above their own individual aspirations. Their collective actions see them viewed in an exceptionally positive light.

At the various farewell events – from the Graduation Ball, Valedictory Service and Clap-Out, to the HSC results BBQ – there was an abiding sense of joy, albeit with a tinge of sadness that things were at an end. This is, of course, as it should be. For them, the NGS season is at an end – but another is set to begin and that is exciting. They are a capable, intelligent and resilient group of young people. Now they must head out into the world and be a positive influence on all those around them. It is not arrogant or conceited to ask and expect them to change the world. If not them, then who? Their efforts and experiences at school have led them to this point and we look on with great anticipation at what will come next.

And as is the way of school life, the next generation of school leaders and senior students take up the running. It is their responsibility to set the agenda and strive to do all that they can for their season. I am supremely confident that we will be able to reflect in an equally positive manner upon their actions twelve months hence ...

Spectemur Agendo

Mr Matt Macoustra
Head of School

FROM THE HEAD OF PRIMARY



I am filled with pride and gratitude for the remarkable achievements and growth witnessed in our Primary school. The academic year has been a journey of learning, discovery and collaboration, marked by several notable highlights that have enriched the educational experience of our students.

We have continued to uphold a strong tradition of academic excellence. Our students have excelled in literacy and numeracy, demonstrating exceptional progress and achievement. Through dedicated teaching, individualised support and a commitment to fostering a love of learning, our students have embraced new challenges and reached new heights in their academic journey.

We have placed a significant emphasis on STEAM education, igniting a passion for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Through hands-on experiments, collaborative projects and real-world applications, our students have honed their critical thinking, problem-solving and inquiry skills. The integration of inquiry-based learning has empowered our students to ask meaningful questions, explore diverse subjects and deepen their understanding of the world around them.

We recognise the importance of nurturing the whole child. Beyond

academic achievement, we have prioritised social and emotional learning (SEL), creating a supportive environment where students feel valued, understood and equipped with essential life skills. Our commitment to fostering empathy, resilience and positive relationships has contributed to the holistic development of our students.

The integration of arts and humanities into our curriculum has been a source of inspiration and imagination for our students. Through Visual Arts, Music, Literature and Cultural Studies, our students have embraced diverse forms of expression, cultivated their creativity and gained a deeper appreciation for the richness of human experiences throughout history and across cultures.

The Primary school community has continued to thrive through strong partnerships and a shared commitment to the success and growth of our students. The unwavering support of parents, guardians and community members has been

instrumental in creating a nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued and supported in their educational journey.

As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to providing a learning environment that fosters curiosity and critical thinking. We are committed to further enhancing our academic programs, nurturing the wellbeing of our students, and preparing them to embrace the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our exceptional educators, dedicated support staff and our entire school community for their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to our Primary school mission. Together, we will continue to inspire, educate and empower our students to become responsible, compassionate and enthusiastic learners.

Mrs Alisha Dyer
Head of Primary

“ Our commitment to fostering empathy, resilience and positive relationships has contributed to the holistic development of our students. ”



CLASS OF 2023

EXCEPTIONAL OUTCOMES

Congratulations to the Class of 2023. The final HSC results are outstanding, with some stellar individual outcomes across a broad range of subject areas. But more than that, we are proud of who you are and all that you will become. In your time at NGS we have seen well-rounded, thoughtful, compassionate and outward-looking young people who will be outstanding contributors to the world in the years to come.

This is the culmination of 13 years of school education. You have worked hard individually, and these results also reflect the collaboration of parents, teachers and peers. My grateful thanks for all that you've contributed to the life and culture of this community throughout the time that you have been at Newcastle Grammar School.

Well done to Alexander Macdougall, who achieved an ATAR of 99.35, Katherine Wang 99.15 and Jasmine Withford 99.15. Five NGS students made the All-Rounders list, which means they achieved 90% or higher in at least ten course units – Ruby Bush, Ruby Macdonald, Alexander Macdougall, Katherine Wang and Jasmine Withford. In total, 20 students received ATARs higher than 95: Sophie Allen, Eve Ashmore, Chloe Buchanan, Ruby Bush, Hannah Choi, Finn Devine, Oliver Flynn, Prakriti Goel, Ruby Macdonald, Aiden Manning, Katie Mejia, Isabelle Miteff, Sophie Moulds, Hannah Nicetin, Kalen Routley,



Angus Wills and John Zhang. In addition, more than 40% of Newcastle Grammar School students received an ATAR of 90 or above.

Three students were among the top 20 in NSW in their subject areas: Eve Ashmore in Design and Technology, Ruby Macdonald in Modern History and Alexander Macdougall in Engineering Studies. Based on these results, Newcastle Grammar School

is ranked 52nd in NSW, and more than half of the students received early entry offers to universities and colleges in NSW, Australia and internationally.

These outcomes are exceptional and showcase hard work, perseverance, dedication and a strong support network.

Mr Matt Macoustra
Head of School

“ ... more than 40% of Newcastle Grammar School students received an ATAR of 90 or above.

HSC ACHIEVEMENTS



Tully Agostino-Morrow
Design and Technology –
SHAPE



Eve Ashmore
Design and Technology –
SHAPE
Top 20 in NSW –
Design and Technology



Chelsea Buck
Design and Technology –
SHAPE



Ruby Bush
All-Rounder



Tobias Reimann
Music Performances –
ENCORE



Ruby Macdonald
All Rounder
Top 20 in NSW –
Modern History



Alexander Macdougall
Top ATAR
All-Rounder
Top 20 in NSW –
Engineering Studies



Alessandra Martinelli
Visual Arts – First Class
Art Exhibition



Rory Loong
Design and Technology –
SHAPE



Jasmine Seeney
Visual Arts – First Class
Art Exhibition



Jiawen Shi
Visual Arts – First Class
Art Exhibition



Katherine Wang
All-Rounder



Jasmine Withford
All-Rounder

ATARS ABOVE 95

Alexander Macdougall, Katherine Wang, Jasmine Withford, Ruby Macdonald, Ruby Bush, Hannah Nicetin, Eve Ashmore, Oliver Flynn, Chloe Buchanan, Katie Mejia, Aiden Manning, Finn Devine, Sophie Moulds, Hannah Choi, John Zhang, Prakriti Goel, Sophie Allen, Angus Wills, Isabelle Miteff and Kalen Routley.

In addition, more than 40% of Newcastle Grammar School students received an ATAR of 90 or above.



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2023

“Within our connected community, we shall embody respect, optimism and inclusivity.” This year’s motto of the graduating Year 12 class was reflected in the prayers spoken at the traditional Valedictory Eucharist held at the end of Term 3. “May this School be a place of discovery and sound learning, and an institution that endows each student with a sense of value and purpose, equipping them to use their various gifts and talents in the service of others.” – Ruby Bush

Head of School, Mr Macoustra, spoke about community, about the rites of passage that students participate in throughout their schooling journey, and those very important moments in life known as ‘lasts’.

“There are many lasts you’ll experience in life that you never know are actually the last until they’ve been and gone. You’ll never really savour that last time. So, soak in today, knowing it is your last (official day at NGS)!”

He continued, “Year 12, you stand at a metaphorical divide in the road. You will make decisions in the weeks, months and years ahead that will shape your lives. As a school community we thank you and wish you well for all that lies ahead on the paths before you. We are very proud of you. The NGS family will always be here to guide and support you whenever you need. You will be the people who shape the future of this nation.”

Mr Macoustra shared several examples of the significant impact that teachers and peers have made, observed during his short time here. “This place and, importantly, the experiences that have happened here – with these people – matter.”

“ You will be the people who shape the future of this nation.

Parents and the supportive student body eagerly celebrated the graduates as they made their way through the Clap Out Honour Walk. With flowers, cheers, hugs and tears, the Class of 2023 made their final journey from Christ Church Cathedral to the Horbury Hunt Hall, truly enjoying their last time as NGS students.

As the Class of 2023 become NGS alumni, another prayer spoken earlier in the day epitomised the values of this cohort. As they have grown in a culture of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence, may God continue to “Empower us with the will to become more selfless and the desire to serve the needs of the members of those communities in which we will live and work.” – Katherine Wang

So, Class of 2023, may you remember NGS with fondness, continue to work hard, live with integrity, and embody respect, optimism and inclusivity.

Go well.





CHESS

A TACTICAL DANCE

Each week, a world of strategy and intrigue unfolds at Park Campus – the Co-curricular Chess Program is a haven for aspiring grandmasters and novices alike.

As the chess pieces glide across the board, students engage in a tactical dance that turns lunchtime into a black-and-white battlefield. Each move is carefully calculated; the game unfolds, not only on the board, but also within the minds of the players, who are refining the art of patience, persistence and 'chessmanship'.

The Newcastle Grammar School Co-curricular Chess Program doesn't just teach students how to move pieces; it cultivates strategic thinking, promotes camaraderie and hones the skills of the next generation of chess enthusiasts. With specialist coaches, it offers a comprehensive approach, catering to beginners eager to learn the ropes and seasoned players keen to unravel the tricks of the trade.

Every session commences with an instruction lesson, where those new to chess receive guidance on the basics, while the more advanced players delve into intricate manoeuvres. The atmosphere is one of shared enthusiasm and mutual learning, with each student absorbing new knowledge and skills.

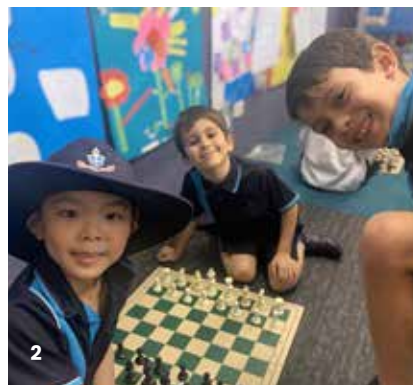
But it's not just about theory – the real magic happens when the boards come alive with the sound of moving pieces. Students engage in friendly yet fiercely competitive games, applying the lessons learnt in real-time. The highlight for many is the opportunity to enjoy playing against peers from various year levels, adding to the already inclusive atmosphere.

Beyond the School environment, our 'chessperts' embark on exciting journeys of competition. Round robin tournaments against other schools provide a platform for students to test their skills in an arena buzzing with

energy. Captains take charge, not only strategising their own moves, but also taking on the responsibility of managing their team's schedule. It's a lesson in leadership and teamwork.

Chess at Park Campus is not just a weekly activity; it is a thriving community that nurtures strategic minds and promotes friendships that extend beyond the chequered squares. It is a testament that, amid our fast-paced, technology-driven world, our timeless game continues to bring people together.

1. Year 2 students Jovan Price, Hannah Grover, William Corbett and Harry Llewellyn in Year 4 enjoy lunchtime chess.
2. Ready to start the next game are Matthew Xie, Charles Fiorentino and Beau Ellis from Kindergarten.
3. Ellie Goon and Sofia White-Sarich (Kindergarten) strategising their next moves.



PRIMARY LEARNING EXPLORATION AND INQUIRY

The learning journey for our Primary students this year has been marked by innovation, personalisation and a commitment to fostering holistic development. Our approach has not only focused on academic excellence but has also emphasised the importance of social-emotional growth, inquiry-based learning and flexibility.

The introduction of the 1:1 iPad program, for all students in Kindergarten to Year 6, has played a significant role in shaping their learning experiences. With the ever-changing landscape of education, NGS has embraced digital tools to enhance the curriculum and provide students with a diverse range of resources. This not only prepares students for their tech-driven future but also allows for more personalised and interactive learning opportunities.

Explicit teaching in English and Mathematics has been a cornerstone of the new Kindergarten to Year 2 curriculum, ensuring a solid foundation for academic success. In English, explicit instruction involves clearly articulating and modelling the components of effective reading and writing, including phonics, comprehension strategies and grammatical structures. This approach enables students to grasp fundamental skills systematically, fostering not only proficiency but also a genuine love for language and literature. Similarly, in Mathematics, explicit



teaching involves breaking down concepts into clear, sequential steps, providing students with a structured framework for understanding and applying mathematical principles. This focused method ensures that students develop a strong numeracy foundation, laying the groundwork for more advanced mathematical thinking as they progress through their education.

The School's commitment to explicit teaching in English and Mathematics reflects its dedication to academic excellence and equipping students with the essential skills needed for lifelong learning. We look forward to implementing the new Year 3 to 6 curriculum in 2024.

In line with the continued success of inquiry-based learning, our students have been encouraged to be curious,

ask questions and explore topics in depth. The integration of Kath Murdoch's six Learning Assets (Collaborator, Communicator, Contributor, Thinker, Researcher and Self-Manager) has provided a framework for cultivating a culture of inquiry within the classroom. Students regularly wonder, explore, deep dive, connect, communicate and reflect, fostering a love for learning that extends beyond traditional rote memorisation.

Personalised learning is designed to meet the unique needs and interests of each student, recognising that every child learns differently. This involves assessing students' individual learning needs, strengths and areas for growth. Having a student-centric approach not only enhances academic outcomes, but also nurtures a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation.

The learning journey for Primary students this year has been outstanding. Staff and parents working in partnership collectively contribute to creating a dynamic and enriching educational experience that equips students with the skills and mindset necessary for success in the evolving landscape of the 21st century.

“... NGS has embraced digital tools to enhance the curriculum and provide students with a diverse range of resources.”



Active participation in Science by Caitlin Baker and Aswin Sivathasan (Year 11) enriches understanding.

NURTURING EXCELLENCE THROUGH ACTION

In an increasingly dynamic and complex world, there has never been a time when education is more important. As we all navigate the challenges and opportunities afforded by technological innovation, schools must be agile and responsive to ensure our students are well-placed to participate actively and successfully as citizens of this world.

This year, all faculties have been working with the Association of Independent Schools staff members in designing deep learning activities that enrich students' educational journeys. Underpinned by our principles of excellence, this approach recognises the importance of the explicit teaching of core competencies alongside disciplinary knowledge and skills.

Our Languages and Literacy and Mathematics staff have been working hard to develop programs for the new syllabuses to be implemented in 2024. In addition, staff have been planning for the introduction of new subjects, including Psychology, Outdoor Education, Entrepreneurship, Physical Activity and Sport Studies (PASS), Accelerated Biology, and Earth and Environmental Science, which reflects the School's proactive approach to providing students with an engaging and relevant curriculum.

Newcastle Grammar School places a strong emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. From Stage 4 STEM units to exciting excursions

such as the Rocket Launch and Luna Park Physics Day, students are immersed in hands-on experiences that ignite their passion for these disciplines. Science Week, marked by engaging activities like escape rooms, virtual reality experiences and hydrogen explosions, showcased the practical application of scientific principles. Guest speakers, including potential Mars astronaut Josh Richards, not only enriched students' understanding of STEM, they also allowed students to actively participate and learn through immersive experiences.

Teachers create an environment that promotes critical thinking. This is evident within the Languages and Literacy faculty, where English classes delved into narratives like *Romeo and Juliet*, where critical analysis becomes a key component of the learning process. Gaming for Good in Year 10 English, Year 9 English documentary-making, film festivals and personal stories shared by individuals like local spokeswoman, Marwa Alkasim, all contributed to a rich literary exploration that enhances students' engagement with the world around them. Furthermore, multicultural experiences, such as the Japanese cultural activity day and the French Film Festival excursion, broadened students' perspectives.

Opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills is fundamental to the learning experience. Students in Creative and Performing Arts had many opportunities to

showcase their talents through musical and dramatic performances and the exhibition of their artworks. Of note this year was the Children's Theatre Project – NGS Playschool.

In Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE), students applied movement skills to a range of dynamic learning environments, including ball sports, contemporary games, aquatics and dance. Year 7 heard from the Hunter Melanoma Foundation before going to Newcastle Beach to learn about sun safety and first aid as part of their Healthy Moves unit. Our Year 8 students participated in the Our Futures study with the University of Sydney as part of their research into the impact of vaping on adolescents. Theory lessons enhanced our students' understanding of key competencies, strengths and aspects of the SEARCH framework, building capacity in character, self-awareness, emotional

regulation, stress management and interpersonal skills. The fundamental synergy between academics and wellbeing, emphasised in all subjects, is showcased in PDHPE.

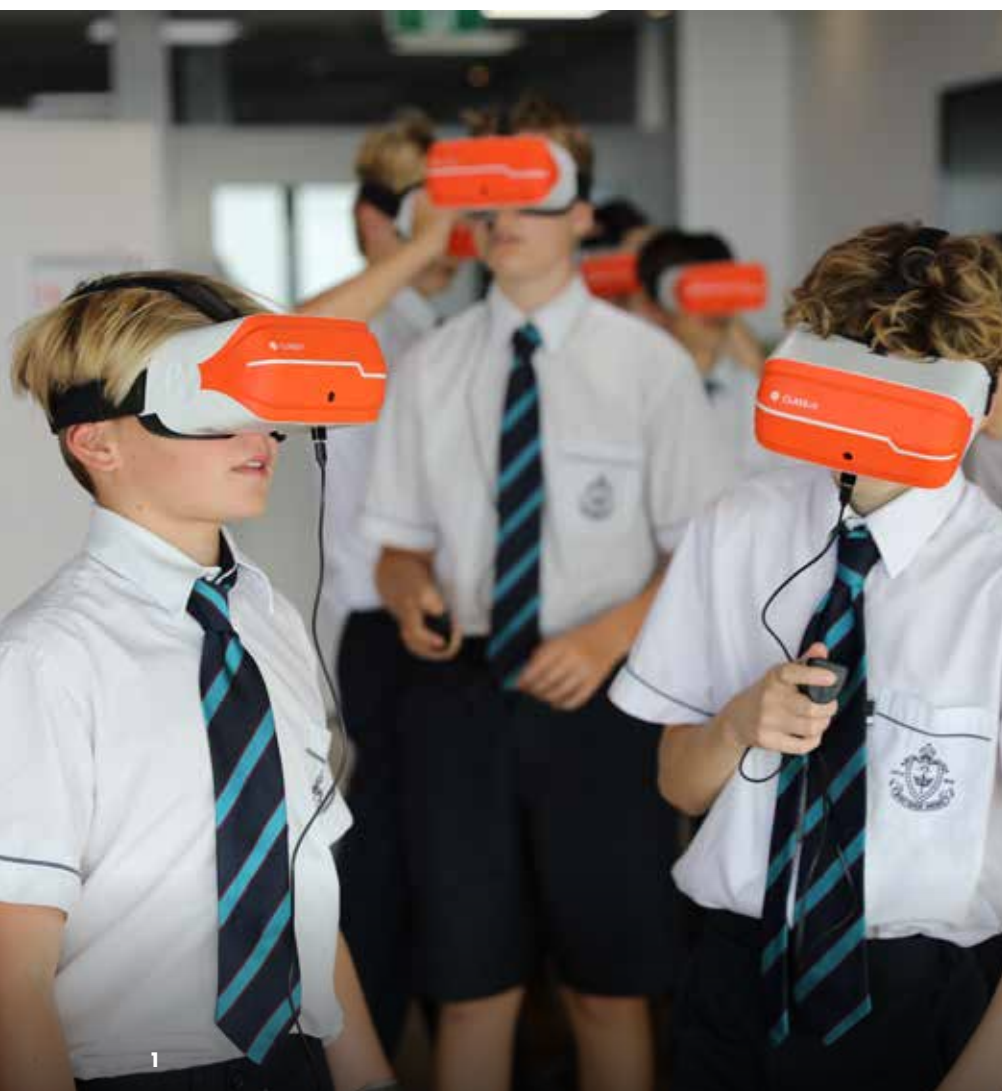
Our Global Studies faculty is passionate about the integration of real-world experiences and learning partnerships to enrich the educational experience of our students. Visits from Legal Aid, the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), and presentations by renowned figures like Lisa Blair (fastest person in the world to sail solo, non-stop and unassisted around Antarctica), contributed to a holistic education. Students have participated in innovative initiatives such as the \$20 Boss Challenge and the Hunter Young Business Minds Awards, developing their skills in entrepreneurship. Our Studies of Religion classes have engaged with prominent faith educators and



members of the Indigenous community to deepen their understanding of religion and spirituality in modern Australia.

The Learning Support Team works incredibly hard to provide academic and social support to students with diverse learning needs. They work with students and teachers in the classroom and on a 1:1 basis to ensure all students can engage in learning. This year, they have established a support group for neurodiverse girls, which provides a safe and supportive environment for students to explore a range of relevant topics.

Newcastle Grammar School prides itself on the outstanding learning experiences and opportunities for students to engage in as part of their studies. Underpinned by principles of excellence, our staff strive to design and implement learning experiences that develop our students' strengths, competencies, understanding and skills, providing them with a holistic education that prepares them for life.



1. Students exploring virtual reality.
2. Year 7 students Leila Morris-Bloom and Imogen Mejia playing Maths games.

ACADEMIC EXTENSION

ENRICHING MINDS

The Mparntwe Education Declaration reiterates the importance of an educational experience for all students that promotes excellence and equity, one that enables all students to become confident and creative individuals, successful learners, and active and informed community members. This commitment underpins our approach to teaching and learning and is reflected in many initiatives designed to meet the diverse learning needs of our students.

Students with high potential, giftedness or high performance within the academic sphere are supported by an outstanding enrichment program that provides them with access to a range of challenging and interesting experiences.



ENRICHMENT IN PRIMARY

For our youngest learners, opportunities for enrichment begin in Kindergarten. Students participate in activities specifically designed to provide additional curriculum challenge and breadth of learning through the provision of enrichment experiences in the areas of English and Mathematics, as well as through individual projects.

In English, students delve deeper into literature, exploring complex themes, characters, narratives and poetry with a greater degree of depth and complexity. This approach aims to cultivate an appreciation for language while encouraging critical thinking and creativity from an early age.

In Mathematics, children are presented with additional challenges through unique, real-life learning activities and competitions. These experiences stimulate creative problem-solving, the ability to communicate reasoning effectively, and the application of these skills to new and unfamiliar situations.

Additionally, competitions help children build self-confidence, handle pressure, teach resilience and promote a healthy rivalry amongst similar-ability peers.

Individual projects are interest-driven endeavours that require children to plan, assemble and present their projects, transforming them into experts in their chosen area of interest. In Stage 3 (Year 5 and 6), gifted students enjoy extension classes in Literacy and Numeracy, complete individual projects that are self-directed and aligned to areas of interest, and participate in various academic competitions.

This year, our Stage 3 Ethics Olympiad teams received Honours, achieving fifth overall, and Malachite Wills placed first in the Year 5/6 category in the National History Challenge. A number of students received High Distinctions and Distinctions in various Mathematics competitions, and twelve Year 6 students participated in the HICES Gifted and Talented Camp.



1

ENRICHMENT IN SECONDARY

High performing and gifted students in Secondary are provided with many opportunities for enrichment, both within their classroom through extra-curricular activities and through acceleration. Acceleration is an advanced learning pathway where students work towards outcomes beyond their age across domains of potential.

This year, our Stage 4 students have competed in the Future Problem Solving competition, Tournament of Minds and Ethics Olympiad with great success. One of our Tournament of Minds teams received Honours in the division, and another received the Spirit of Tournament award for excellent teamwork. More than twenty students participated in the Future Problem Solving competition where they were required to develop a futuristic piece of writing or performance that synthesised research, predictions of future trends on a topic and creativity. Seven NGS students progressed to the National Finals.

We also had 20 students from Year 10 participate in the University of Newcastle High Performing Students Program which provides the opportunity to experience tertiary education by completing first year university courses whilst still at school. Subjects spanned the fields of Business, Health Sciences and Programming. Our acceleration program provides exceptional students with the opportunity to grade skip in subjects of strength, including Mathematics, Business Studies, English and Languages.

This year NGS introduced an extensive range of Intellectual Competitions as part of the myNGS Passport program. These experiences provided students with the opportunity to enrich their learning and develop their talents in many areas, including Debating and Public Speaking, Write a Book in a Day, Free Thinkers Forum, Philosothon and the Da Vinci Decathlon. The NGS Enrichment Program, for students from Kindergarten to Year 12, is facilitated by Mrs Pickford, Mrs Parsonage and Mrs Howe.

1. One of the Stage 4 Tournament of Minds Teams 2023.
2. Florence Saker Year 8 obtained third place in the Future Problem Solving competition.



2

GLOBAL ART COLLABORATION

In an age when technology effortlessly connects people from different corners of the globe, Newcastle Grammar School embarked on a truly unique artistic journey led by our Artist in Residence students.

The White Wall Project, in collaboration with nine Round Square schools across the world, invited students to ponder the concept of perspective through art. The project's culmination is a visual and emotional mural – 68 diverse pieces of art amalgamated to form a compelling narrative of growth, failure and the beauty of diverse viewpoints.

The participating schools included Aleph School in Peru, Chittagong Grammar School in Bangladesh, GEMS Modern Academy in the United Arab Emirates, Newcastle Grammar School in Australia, RBIS International School in Thailand, St George's School Windsor Castle in the UK, St Paul's Co-educational College in Hong Kong, The Sagar School in India, Welham Girls School in India, and Whanganui Collegiate in New Zealand.

The project aimed to ignite creativity and foster global connections among young artists through the Round Square network. Students from these diverse schools were asked to consider the concept of perspective in their lives and expressed their thoughts through a variety of mediums, including digital art, watercolour, painting, collages, photography, and drawings. Once all 68 pieces of art were submitted, the Newcastle Grammar School community selected the most impactful pieces. This was no easy feat, given the depth and diversity of

the submissions. Ultimately, the NGS community chose ten pieces that resonated most profoundly with their perspective which were combined to create the final artwork.

In the world of education, the Round Square IDEALS of International Understanding, Democracy, Environmental Stewardship, Adventure, Leadership, and Service continue to be guiding principles for holistic development. However, at the heart of these ideals lies an unspoken invitation: the freedom to explore, imagine and create without constraints. The result? Art that transcends boundaries, challenges norms and embraces the beauty of a world united in IDEALS.

The culmination of this artistic endeavour is a testament to the power of collaboration and shared vision. In the final piece, a young person stands open to the nourishment given by a watering can, symbolising growth and development. The body of water, sourced from an artwork by one of the Thai collaborators, is a calming element in the piece. The golden hue filling the young person represents the warmth and growth of the sun, also drawn from the Thai artwork.

But there's a twist to the narrative. The young person, initially looking longingly to the watering can for inspiration, eventually realises that they are the true source of inspiration. This revelation is an allegory for the idea that we often seek external sources for inspiration when it actually lies within each of us.

The path the young person walks along was inspired by a group of students from the United Arab Emirates. Interestingly, these students initially considered their contribution a mistake and not aligned with their vision. However, this perceived failure became a powerful discussion point for NGS students. It sparked conversations about how we perceive and learn from our failures, ultimately shaping our perspective.

In the background, faint mountains symbolise the young person's future. With perspective, the challenges that lie ahead become more manageable. It's a reminder that through our unique journeys we gain the wisdom to navigate life's tribulations.

One of the most significant takeaways from The White Wall Project is the understanding that the perspective of others is as valuable as our own. As one NGS student aptly put it, "If you place yourself in someone else's shoes, does it change your perspective?" This question captures the essence of the project – the power of empathy, understanding and shared creativity in fostering global connections.

In a world that often emphasises differences, this collaborative project is a testament to the unifying force of art and the profound impact of diverse perspectives. Newcastle Grammar School's The White Wall Project has not only produced a stunning piece of art but has also enriched the lives of the young artists involved and reinforced the belief that, through shared creativity, we can create a brighter, more interconnected future.





WELLBEING: AIMING SKY HIGH

At the heart of the human experience is language. If we don't have a word for something, then how can we understand or express it? As we are often limited to the language that we are taught or given, schools therefore have a very important role to play in the development of language, in learning to become literate and our ability to make meaning of the world. Before we can be literate in wellbeing, just as we can be literate in Mathematics, English or even the rules of netball, we must first have a language for it.

Being conscious of and developing our wellbeing literacy is the single most powerful thing that we can all do for our wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Wellbeing exists in language; wellbeing literacy is a capability that involves intentional language use about, and for, wellbeing. Therefore, before we can start thinking about the strategies and interventions that can boost our wellbeing and allow us to be our best in all areas of life, we need a shared language to conceptualise them.

At NGS, Visible Wellbeing and the SEARCH Framework – Strengths, Emotional management, Attention and awareness, Relationships, Coping, Habits and goals – is our shared language for flourishing. Wellbeing is not an add-on or an afterthought, it is central to the holistic school experience. When our students apply their strengths, appreciate that resilience only comes after the hardship that preceded it, adopt a growth mindset, express gratitude and understand the importance of relationships, only then are they positioned to take on the challenges of their daily lives.

This year we continued to embrace wellbeing science and used it to guide our practice. Our whole school Visible Wellbeing theme for 2023, *SKY HIGH*, acknowledged that our lives are made up of moments of light and shade; both sunshine and storms are inevitable. While the clouds may come and go, the sky is constant and it is big and beautiful enough for all our struggles and all our strengths. *SKY HIGH*

looked, sounded and felt different for every individual. The NGS community embraced the notion of setting *SKY HIGH* goals, appreciating that with support, we can all do hard things.

Along with our House Term celebrations, year group activities such as Camp and the Year 11 Ball and Conference, and Positive Education lessons in Kindergarten through to Year 8, we have also continued to engage with the wider community to share the NGS whole school wellbeing approach. Our Wellbeing for Breakfast mornings, hosted over 500 people across five events, offered ideas around how workplaces and families can move from functioning to flourishing. It was also an honour to be invited to present a workshop at the Positive Education Schools Association (PESA) National Wellbeing in Education Conference, as well as at the International Positive Psychology Association World Congress in Vancouver, Canada. Our NGS wellbeing approach was also featured on the international *Challenges That Change Us* podcast and the PESA Spotlight Series. Furthermore, we also offer a weekly Visible Wellbeing blog covering a range of positive psychology topics.

There is not a panacea for our wellbeing; it is complex because it is meant to be. It rises and it falls. At NGS, we embrace the non-linear nature of our wellbeing and understand that caring for our wellbeing is connected to understanding and sharing our language. Wellbeing literacy really is the most pervasive lever we have to build a strong wellbeing culture. The positive consequences are undeniable: when we are feeling good, and functioning well, then we can work towards doing good.

Ms Marnie Thomas
Head of Positive Education

1. *Shortland Day at Hill Campus*
2. *The Visible Wellbeing Program begins with our youngest students.*



PRIMARY AWARDS ASSEMBLY JOY AND DELIGHT

The bells jingled and the choirs sang as Kindergarten to Year 6 students and staff celebrated an incredible year. Thanks to the many parents and friends who came along to show their support and gratitude at the annual Primary End of Year Awards Assembly.

Certificates were presented for achievements in English, Mathematics, Inquiry Learning, Representative Sport, Positive Education, STEAM, Gratitude in Action and Physical Education. Well done to all students who were recognised for their efforts.

We also celebrate what happens in the classroom, each day, for every student – the Kindergarten student who was struggling with reading but persevered and overcame; the new student who started mid-year and now talks about their many new friends; the naturally quiet and shy child who has developed the confidence to stand up in front of their classmates and present their research findings. These are reasons to celebrate. And to have every Primary student sing, dance, speak or play an instrument at this event was a joy. The delight of the children was evident and so was the pride on parents' faces.

Thank you to the Newcastle Grammar School community, the staff and, in particular, the students for making NGS Primary a wonderful place to be.



PARK CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

THE START OF SOMETHING NEW

There was a sense of excitement as representatives from various stakeholders gathered to ‘turn the soil’ at Park Campus at the end of August, symbolising the start of the development project.

A traditional Indigenous Smoking Ceremony opened the formalities, followed by speeches from Board Chair, Ms Catherine Wilkinson, Head of School, Mr Matt Macoustra and Head of Primary, Ms Alisha Dyer, with a concluding blessing from The Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart, Bishop of Newcastle. A special thank you to our guest students for helping to dig the first hole!

Since then, the project team has worked to ensure that a number of the major milestones have been reached and the development remains on

schedule. The fences along Union Street and through Park Campus were raised in preparation for the demolition of the old Administration block which also housed the Year 1 classrooms. Some trees were removed (many more will be planted in their place) and the new access road was created.

Viewing windows of various heights along the fence line allow even our smallest students to watch the trucks, diggers and construction workers to keep abreast of the development.

Mine grouting works occurred during much of Term 4, as thousands of litres of concrete were pumped 50m below ground level to the old mines underneath. As Newcastle sits over many kilometres of coal mines, this is a necessary requirement for new building works in the city. Silos were placed

onsite to facilitate this step and many of the students (and staff) were deeply engaged, curious and inquisitive about the activities and progress.

NGS continues to work with our neighbours throughout the development process, and we thank our partners – builders Core Project Group, SHAC Architects, project managers The APP Group and CBA – and the local community for their patience and support as we continue to minimise disruption while this world-class facility comes to life!

Thank you to the Board members for their work over several years to see this project come to fruition.

1. *NGS staff and guests in attendance.*
2. *Progress of the build as at February 2024.*



MEET THE BUILDING TEAM

A building project of this size requires a collaborative and engaged group of individuals to form a united team. Here we highlight just a few of the key leaders working with NGS to see the Park Campus transformation become a reality.

Jennifer Passfield

Project Manager – The APP Group

Jennifer's role is to coordinate all project activities, from organising design and planning approvals through to the engagement of the building company. She continues to work with all stakeholders to ensure the project meets its milestones and deadlines, adhering to all requirements.

"I love being able to deliver incredible projects that provide a benefit to the community. Seeing the excitement and joy on faces once a project is complete is my favourite part. I also really love getting to be out on site and seeing all the people who bring a project together – from the concreters through to the painters and joiners. All play such a vital part." she said.



Project Manager Jennifer Passfield

Jennifer is looking forward to seeing the rooftop play space come to life. "It will be amazing to see this additional play space on top of the building. The barrel vault rooftop structure is quite impressive. It will be a big day when the structure is lifted into place with a crane."

Fun fact – what should we know about the new building that isn't obvious at first glance? For the building to be structurally safe there are a number of screw piles (anchors) that need to be drilled into the ground to provide deep building foundations. These will be drilled in up to 30m and there are over 100 to be installed beneath the building.

Tom Elliot

Core Project Group – Project and Design Director

Tom is a co-founding Director of Core Project Group. His key focus in project management is alignment with the client's goals. Of his job, Tom says that he is very fortunate to turn up to work every day and be surrounded by great people who are extremely passionate about what they do, including staff, clients and other project stakeholders.

He is the Design Director on the Park Campus Project and loves that the role, " ... enables me to work closely with NGS and the broader stakeholder team. My job is to ensure that the detailed design continues to develop to meet the School's brief whilst also ensuring that the project team completes the building works on-time and on-budget."

Tom loves efficiency in design and the NGS Project is no exception. The additional 16 classrooms along with multiple indoor and outdoor learning zones, both on the rooftop and ground floor, combine to create a truly amazing facility.

"The new building at Park Campus doesn't just look fantastic, it incorporates ecological sustainable characteristics which is great for the students and the environment."

Courtney Knight

Director and Chief Financial Officer – Core Project Group

Having worked in the construction and development section for over 15 years, Courtney brings a wealth of industry specific commercial, legal, financial and analytical experience to Core Project Group.

He takes a hands-on approach to ensure continuity between project delivery and all indirect business functions. In collaboration with the project delivery team, Courtney utilises financial feasibility and assessment tools to assist in ensuring client and project commercial outcomes are monitored closely and targets achieved.

Courtney's background is in finance and commerce, so he is naturally drawn to the financial aspects, however, "working with such a broad range of interesting people and undertaking a variety of projects is what I love most." He enjoys the variety that his role requires: one day you might find him with a group of veterinarians at an equine hospital under construction, and the next he will be meeting with the manager of a hotel (or with the project team of a school).

"In my role at Core Project Group I'm responsible for all back-of-house functions including finance, accounting, IT, legal, insurance and HR. Over and above this, my role on the NGS Project is focused on supporting all key stakeholder groups involved and affected by the Park Campus project. This includes frequent and relevant communication with the design and project management teams, Park Campus staff, NGS Board and Senior Leadership Teams, banks, neighbours and other authorities."

"It's incredible to think that although the floor area of the School will increase significantly, the landscaped and play areas of the students will almost double. I find it remarkable how much additional functional space will be generated through such a considered design. Some highlights for me include the kiss-and-drop driveway, the new rooftop play space, and the vast open space from Union Street right through to Corlette Street.

Courtney believes, "The students will love the 800 square metre multi-sport play court on the roof top – it certainly won't be obvious from the street. There's nothing else like it in the Hunter Valley!"

Core Project Group Directors, Tom Elliot, Jamie Lind and Courtney Knight.



“ The students will love the 800 square metre multi-sport play court on the roof top ...

JOURNEY TO THE PAST WITH ANASTASIA

Being involved in a school musical production is a wonderfully bittersweet experience. It involves months of hard work starting with auditions, then learning lines and choreography, numerous rehearsals, set building, costume checks and more.

Yet it is over before you know it with only a handful of performances across only a few days. An amazing show on stage one-minute, turns into fond memories the next; it's an experience like no other, where friendships are formed, talent is nurtured and dreams are born. This is why students and staff love putting on high quality productions. *Anastasia* was no exception. The superb cast and crew, with students ranging from Years 5 to 11, embraced the epic

challenge of telling the historical legend of the Russian Grand Duchess, Anastasia Nikolaevna Romanov. After months of dedicated rehearsals, our students delivered a dynamic and spectacular performance at the historic Civic Theatre that wowed the crowd and left audiences wanting more. During the journey, students developed confidence, grit and showed a maturity beyond their years.

Congratulations to all involved. You created a truly wonderful show on and off the stage, and that's the magic of theatre!

Mrs Carla Holmes

Assistant Director and Acting Assistant Head of CAPA





DULILLI PROJECT

Through the initiatives of the Reconciliation Action Plan, Newcastle Grammar School embarked on a journey with Dulilli (a family of artists, art makers and cloak makers). Led by Kerri Clarke a Boon Wurrung, a Wemba Wemba woman born on Latji Latji Country and living in Wonnarua Country, and Wade Mahoney, a proud Barkindji man, these educators provided our primary students with an unforgettable experience told through stories depicted on one of their family cloaks.

The workshops explored the concept, meaning and value of 'belonging'. Students were guided to think deeply about their sense of belonging, of where, what and most importantly how they gain this feeling. Through these discussions, students began to share personal stories and experiences that helped to create their sense of identity through the journeys they have had and by doing so, creating their own cultural belonging and connection.

During the workshops, each student had the opportunity to hold and feel individual possum pelts (imported from New Zealand where they are considered pests). The possum pelts are stitched together to make an adult sized cloak. Some of these pelts the students held depicted murmurs of a story, whilst others remained blank as stories are yet to be transcribed. Students learnt about the materials used to draw the pictures as well as how these possum skin cloaks were used for a variety of reasons ranging from ceremonial dress to practical pieces of clothing used to shelter from the weather.



Each student designed their own paper possum pelt which included using ochre paint handprints to tell a story of a specific moment or moments that conjured strong emotions connected to people, to places and to culture.

The delight, wonder and engagement of our Primary students demonstrate the importance of making place-based connections as a foundation when creating a sense of belonging. As a community and as a school, we should harness the tools to build relationships and together, create our story of belonging to Newcastle Grammar School.

1. Anik Singh, Ellie Goon and Vanessa Seckold feeling the possum skin.
2. Year 4 hearing the story about one of the family cloaks.



“ ... students began to share personal stories and experiences that helped to create their sense of identity ... ”



ROUND SQUARE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE KENYA

Seven Newcastle Grammar School students joined 1,200 delegates from 160 schools across the globe to the Round Square International Conference 2023 *The New Africa* in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2023. The eight-day conference was centred on the IDEALS of Round Square with specific focus on Democracy, Adventure and Service.

Students were organised into groups where they engaged in activities guided by the key areas including:

- Democracy – keynote speakers, barazas (discussion groups) and a homestay family evening.
- Service – full day local community partnership activities in local primary schools and a cultural evening of performances from students celebrating diversity.
- Adventure – Nairobi National Park safari drive and camping overnight.

The delegates united for the opening and closing ceremonies which celebrated *The New Africa* and focused on global connectedness and understanding supported by amazing performances.

Our students had incredible experiences and made friendships and created memories that will last a lifetime. The global network of Round Square allows NGS students to engage in opportunities that lead them into a world beyond themselves, embracing their character strengths and providing them with further skills to equip them for the future.

It really was an outstanding conference, and just the first of many amazing in-person opportunities that will continue to be available to our students in the years to come.



1. NGS delegates explored the dunes in United Arab Emirates.
2. Year 10 student, Jack Martin, at a Nairobi primary school.
3. Camping in Nairobi National Park.

HSC MAJOR WORKS

The Higher School Certificate (HSC) is made up of many subjects within different faculties, with unique assessments across each subject. Many of these subjects involve examinations and assignments throughout Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) with a major exam at the end of the course worth up to 50 percent (sometimes 100 percent) of the entire grade for that subject.

Some subjects have a Major Work component: "The Major Work is a sustained, cohesive extended composition that demonstrates mastery of the composition process".

One part of the assessment is in the form of a final product (performance, piece of writing, physical creation or design for example), and another, significant aspect is the analysis of that work. The Reflection Statement reflects on and evaluates the creative process of completing an original composition. Students engage in extensive investigation of a subject of their own choosing to demonstrate the skills and knowledge developed throughout their courses.

A Major Work must communicate an idea that is conceptually profound, insightful or thought-provoking with a clear sense of audience and purpose

appropriate to the chosen form and style. The form of the Major Work must be chosen deliberately to contribute to the authenticity, originality and overall conceptual purpose of the work. Students skilfully manipulate and control the language features and conventions of their chosen form to create an engaging composition. The work must demonstrate a conscious and purposeful style that has been refined to ensure artistry and textual integrity.

Throughout the Major Work process, students are required to demonstrate their evaluation and reflection on their research and composition in various ways.

The processes of composition are recorded in the student's Major Work Journal and monitored by the teacher. The journal is an ongoing record, evaluation and reflection on the creative, investigative and drafting process and the realisation of an extended composition.

In 2023, more than 60 Major Works by 45 students were submitted for assessment across a range of subjects including Design and Technology, English Extension 2, History Extension, Music Extension, Science Extension, Visual Arts, Drama and Music.





Students who excel in their Major Work may be nominated by The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) to have their work showcased alongside the best projects from the state, acknowledging outstanding student efforts in their subjects.

Congratulations to Tobias Reimann for his nomination to ENCORE which recognises the exceptional major works created by HSC Music students.

SHAPE presents a selection of the most outstanding major works from HSC Design and Technology students, and this year NGS had four nominees: Chelsea Buck, Eve Ashmore, Rory Loong and Tully Agostino-Morrow. Chelsea created a textile coral bleaching awareness piece, Eve built a prototype Varroa Mite extraction system, Rory researched brain damage due to contact sport and developed an app and electronic solution to minimise brain injuries, and Tully designed a hiking cabin especially for beginners to encourage a smooth learning curve as they gain more experience exploring the outdoors.

Three of our students' artworks were selected to be showcased at the 2023 First Class exhibit at the Museum of

Art and Culture at Lake Macquarie. Congratulations to Alessandra Martinelli, Jasmine Seeney and Jiawen Shi. This exhibition embraces the diversity of media and techniques that represent the wide scope of the NSW HSC Visual Arts syllabus.

Thank you to our staff who continue to educate and support the students to reach their amazing potential. It was a pleasure to invite parents and students to the 2023 Showcase event to catch a glimpse of these quality projects. See a summary video of the Showcase at the link below.



Scan the QR code for an overview of the 2023 HSC Major Works Showcase evening.



CLASS OF 2023

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATION

The Year 12 Graduation Ball was a wonderful night of fun, gratitude and surprises. To conclude a fabulous year and reminisce about 13 years of schooling, the Class of 2023 enjoyed the Gatsby-themed evening joined by supportive family and friends. There were speeches, photos, a flash mob, gifts, music, dancing and laughter. Thank you to the collaborative community of teachers, parents, peers and the broader village required for each student to get to this point.

The words spoken from the lectern summed up the tone of the evening, and produced laughter, reflection and tears:

“We can now say it, congratulations – you are officially educated. While I hope and know that you will never stop learning – this is a moment. By walking across that stage, you have moved from one phase of your life to another.”
– Mr Matt Macoustra, Head of Newcastle Grammar School

“As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child – and our daughter is as much a product of NGS as of our family upbringing. And for that reason, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the teachers, administrators and staff who have tirelessly worked to guide and educate our graduates. Your dedication and commitment have

played an essential role in shaping these young minds and preparing them for the future. You have instilled in them a love for learning and for that we are immensely grateful – thank you.

“As parents, we have always wanted the best for you (our children). We’ve encouraged you to dream big, work hard and never give up on your aspirations. And now, as you embark on this new chapter of your lives, we have faith in your ability to make a difference in the world. We know that each of

you has the potential to achieve great things, to contribute positively to society and to leave a lasting impact.

“You will notice that there are moments in your life, magical moments just like this one, when you realise that life is a beautiful journey; but it’s up to you to make it extraordinary. To the Class of 2023 – go make it extraordinary!”
– Mr Richard Wang, Father of Year 12 graduate.

Thank you, Mr Wang. Well said.





PRIMARY SPORT EXCELLENCE

Semester 2 was action-packed for our Primary students who excelled in a variety of sports. They represented NGS in Snow Sports, Cross Country, Football, Netball, Mountain Bike, Cross Country, Athletics, Rugby 7s, Cricket, Basketball and Tennis.

The semester commenced with five NGS students shining at the Northern NSW Snow Sports. Sam Simpson secured 1st place in Snowboard Giant Slalom and an impressive 2nd place in Snowboard Cross. Molly Waerea achieved 3rd place in her Alpine Ski debut and Jett Porter earned 8th place in Alpine Skiing.

Congratulations to Daisy Falconer who secured 2nd place at the NSW Primary School Sports Association (NSWPSSA) Cross Country Championship.

Football was a significant highlight in Semester 2, with four NGS teams participating in various Gala Day events. The Primary Boys B team finished in 7th place out of 14, while the Boys A team claimed 5th place after strong victories in their pool

matches. The Year 3 and 4 Juniors also performed well, finishing 9th with numerous wins throughout the day. The Under 12 Girls team accelerated through their pool matches and eventually finished 4th.

The Netball season featured NGS in three tournaments with four strong teams. The Senior Boys team made history as the first Primary Netball Tournament entry, finishing 5th. The Senior B Girls team showed growth, winning their last few games and finishing 11th overall. Our Year 3 and 4 Junior team finished in 3rd place, and the Senior A Girls narrowly missed the final by a point but impressively clinched 3rd.

Athletics was another highlight with 68 students representing NGS at the Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Championship. The School achieved an overall 6th place in Division 1. Eight students were chosen to represent at the Combined Independent Schools (NSWCIS) Carnival at Homebush. At the NSWCIS event, Zara Rahman, Daisy Falconer and



Audrey Heslop earned their places in the team to compete at the NSWPSSA Championships. Zara competed in Discus while Audrey Heslop continued to impress in the 100m and 200m, breaking a school record in the process. Daisy Falconer added another medal to her collection, claiming Bronze in the Under 10 Multi-Class Long Jump event.

Congratulations to Harlow Slattery and Sachi Scowen who were selected to play in the NSWCIS Girls Rugby 7s team.

Basketball, Tennis and Cricket also featured in our sporting endeavours. The NGS Girls Basketball team secured 3rd place, and Isabelle Wearea claimed 2nd place in the Year 6 Girls HRIS Tennis Division. Additionally, NGS entered the inaugural HRIS Cricket Competition, winning two games and progressing to the qualifying final during the two-day tournament.

With another eventful year of memorable moments and achievements, congratulations to all the students who proudly wore the NGS jersey. We eagerly anticipate more successes in 2024.



COURAGE AND COMMITMENT

SECONDARY SPORT

Semester 2 featured a comprehensive sporting calendar, with representative pathways pursued in Cross Country and Athletics, and Gala Day events across a variety of sports including Basketball, Netball, Rugby, Rugby League, Cricket, Touch Football and Tennis.

Cross Country

Our Cross Country athletes finished off an outstanding season with Harry Boyn, Rosie Boyn, Annabelle Miller and Lillian Miller representing NSW Combined Independent Schools (NSWCIS) at the New South Wales All Schools Cross Country Championships at Sydney Motorsport Park. Annabelle Miller was selected to the NSW All Schools squad, competing at the School Sport Australia National Cross Country Championships in the ACT. Congratulations to all of our Cross Country athletes for another successful season.

Athletics

Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Secondary Athletics Championship was held at the Hunter Region Athletics Centre where our students competed with great service and excellence. NGS won the overall Division 1 Championship for the second year running and over 30 students qualified for the Association of Independent Co-Educational Schools (AICES) Athletics Championships. Congratulations to Annabel McKensey, Kalen Routley and Hayden Martinelli for winning HRIS Age Champions for their respective age groups, and to the students who helped NGS win six Age Champion Team Divisions.

A strong contingent headed to the AICES Athletics Championships where some outstanding results were achieved, and many records broken. NGS students won a total of nine Gold medals, two Silver and six Bronze, with Annabelle Miller breaking two AICES Athletics Records on her way to two of her three Gold medals on the day.

The NSWCIS Secondary Athletics Championships were held in extremely challenging conditions, with temperatures topping 37 degrees celcius in the early stages of the twilight event. Congratulations to Annabelle Miller and Gabrielle Waerea for being named on the NSWCIS Merit Squad for 2023.

Basketball

The NGS Basketball squads continued to build on their outstanding results from early 2023, with the Girls Basketball squad competing as one of the top three of the Open Girls squads in the NSW Independent system at the NSWCIS Champion School Playoffs. Demonstrating sheer determination and courage, this younger team fought hard for one win and one loss across the day and moved forward to be crowned Champions at the HRIS 15s Girls Basketball Gala Day in August. Our 15 years Boys Basketball squad achieved outstanding results at the HRIS 15s Boys Basketball Gala Day, playing some extremely physical and close games to come third overall.

Netball

The NGS Netball squads built on their successful start to the season with our Junior 7/8 Girls team progressing to the Regional Finals of the Netball NSW Schools Cup competition, and our 15 years Girls Team winning back-to-back AICES Cup Titles at Netball Central.

Surfing

The NGS Surfing squads competed in both the Senior and Junior Boys Divisions at the NSW State High School Surfing Titles, with our Senior Boys team of Lachlan Smith and Brin Valaire being crowned NSW State Champions. As the title holders, both Lachlan and Brin have since been invited to attend a Surfing NSW Junior High Performance camp at Surfing Australia's High Performance Centre at Casuarina, and went on to compete for the MR Shield at the

Australian Junior Surfing Titles in Phillip Island, VIC.

HRIS Gala Days

NGS students have achieved excellent results at a variety of HRIS Gala Days across Semester 2 including Touch Football, Tennis and Golf. Congratulations to Lennox Tucker for coming Runner-Up in the Handicap Division of the HRIS Secondary Golf Gala Day, and our 15s Girls Touch Football team for coming third overall at the HRIS 15yrs Touch Football Gala Day.

Rugby and Rugby League

Our Rugby season concluded with the final rounds of the Steve Merrick Under 16s Rugby Cup. Congratulations to all students who represented NGS in the Steve Merrick Squad in 2023. NGS was also proud to initiate the Waratahs Academy Rugby extra-curricular program in 2023, with a number of students taking up the opportunity to work with NSW Waratahs Development Officers to hone their skills prior to club finals campaigns. NGS fielded both Junior and Senior Boys teams into the National Rugby League's (NRL) inaugural Hunter Independent Schools Rugby League 9s Gala Day at Wyong, with our teams representing NGS with great enthusiasm and sportsmanship.

Cricket

Cricket season kicked off with the NGS Junior T20 squad coming third in the Hunter Schools T20 Cricket Competition. We are looking forward to Round 1 of the Douglas Shield Senior Cricket competition commencing in late Semester 2. This highly competitive, 50-over a side knockout is steeped in history and NGS is proud to have our first team entered in this competition.

We congratulate all our secondary students on another outstanding year of representative sport, and sincerely thank the NGS community for their continued support of our NGS sporting teams in 2023.

KALEN ROUTLEY: A TEAM EFFORT



“Rowing is a team sport,” according to 2023 Year 12 graduate, Kalen Routley. “It builds in us the ability to collaborate with individuals for the whole to be greater than the sum of the parts.”

Kalen is no stranger to working within a team on the water, but over the last few years he has relied on a different kind of team to support him in his balancing act of time and commitment to his sport, schoolwork, personal wellbeing and his desire to give back to his community. As a valued member of Newcastle Grammar School’s Supporting Athlete Performance (SAP) Program, Kalen is highly appreciative of the help available to him. “The assistance of the NGS SAP team was invaluable with schedule rearrangement and support, especially during my absences for rowing trials and my visit to US colleges immediately before the HSC exams.”

A champion athlete, Kalen’s list of achievements in 2023 included winning the Commonwealth Games NSW Athletes Award (Rowing), NSW Union of Rowers Youth Development Award Scholarship and Lake Macquarie Rowing Club Junior Rower of the Year. At the National Championships he was


part of the second place team in the Under 19 Quad classification, as well as racing as a finalist in the Under 19 Doubles and Under 19 Singles. In the Under 19 Australian World Team trials, he placed 6th in the Single time trial.

However, despite the time-consuming nature of competing at a high level, including travelling for trials and the weekly hours he puts in at the gym and at training, Kalen has still endeavoured to take advantage of many opportunities available to him. In addition to his rowing commitments, he was a 2023 Vice Captain, completed his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, regularly participated at the NGS Community lunches supporting some of the most vulnerable members of the community and upheld his commitment to the NGS surf patrol at the Cooks Hill Surf Lifesaving Club. “Despite numerous sports clashes, and the need to ‘swap’ patrols, I have been able to achieve 100% patrol attendance since I started in 2019,” Kalen proudly claims. The flexibility offered by the School, for example supporting him in completing three units of the HSC with Accelerated Mathematics in 2022, made it possible for him to balance his many priorities.

“Over my NGS journey, both inside and outside of school, I have been fortunate to benefit from the input and commitment of countless volunteers and individuals who gave up their own valuable time to coach, manage, organise or facilitate activities. The opportunities and experiences I gained as a result of this has been instrumental to my development.” Thanks to his team of coaches, teachers, family and friends helping to navigate the challenges of 2023, Kalen is confident to tackle the next stage of his life: temporarily moving to Sydney to compete for the high-performance UTS Haberfield Rowing Club before relocating to the United States in September 2024 to join the US Student Athlete college pathway.



“Despite numerous sports clashes, and the need to ‘swap’ patrols, I have been able to achieve 100% patrol attendance since I started in 2019 ...”



GREAT STRIDES TOWARDS ANNABELLE'S ASPIRATIONS

At the start of 2023, Year 10 student Annabelle Miller set herself a series of goals: run the 3000m in under 10 minutes, become State Champion for the 3000m and venture outside her comfort zone by competing in the steeplechase.



As a member of Newcastle Grammar School's Supporting Athlete Performance (SAP) Program, Annabelle knew she would have the assistance of her school to guide her through, as well as the encouragement of her training partners and friends to push her to achieve her best.

Annabelle admits that there were days when she struggled with her training, but across the year she found motivation in a variety of places. Her favourite mantra (borrowed from Nike) – *Just Do It* – helped her find the right attitude to push through and re-focus on her goals. Training alongside her sister, fellow champion runner and Year 12 NGS student Lillian, was also a great inspiration: "I love having the opportunity to see her thrive at something I relate to," Annabelle declares. "We both push each other to reach our personal bests, which has not only strengthened our relationship as sisters but also provided a strong foundation upon which to connect. I'm not sure either of us would have the courage to swim in the Merewether Ocean baths at 6.00am in winter without the other there!"

As someone who naturally rises early, Annabelle was able to use her mornings before school to study, allowing her to focus on training most afternoons. With the support of the SAP

staff, who helped her strengthen her nutrition and provided a framework to help balance her dual life of academics and sports, she was able to take up the opportunities to travel to various meets. Across the year, she travelled all over the country with competitions in Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Perth. "Exploring new areas of Australia is broadening my horizons and adding to my life experience," she reflects. Annabelle is also grateful for the genuinely positive environment of the athletics community and the wonderful friends she has been able to make. She was further inspired this year when she met one of her idols, Australian 1500m runner, Jess Hull, in Brisbane.

And those ambitious goals that Annabelle set herself? Most of the year she found herself within a few seconds, on the wrong side of 10 minutes in the 3000m ... until she not only broke through but has since made exceptional improvements to set a personal best of 9.47 minutes. Despite tough competition, she was awarded the NSW Junior Championship Under 17 3000m as well as the NSW 5000m Championship Under 20. In addition, she set new NGS records for the 1500m and the 3000m and achieved numerous podium placings across the year. Finally, in September, she took the plunge with a new challenge, entering the steeplechase for the first time. Throughout it all, Annabelle found a way to *just do it*.

TO LONG-SERVING STAFF

HAPPY RETIREMENT

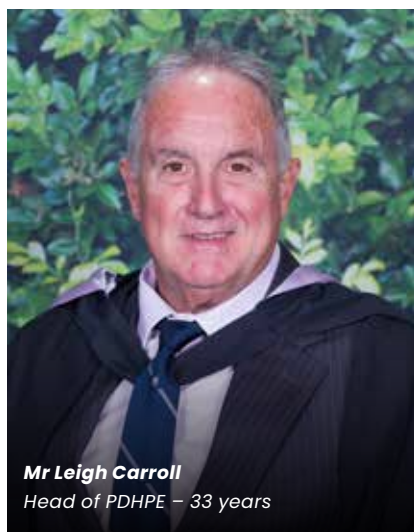
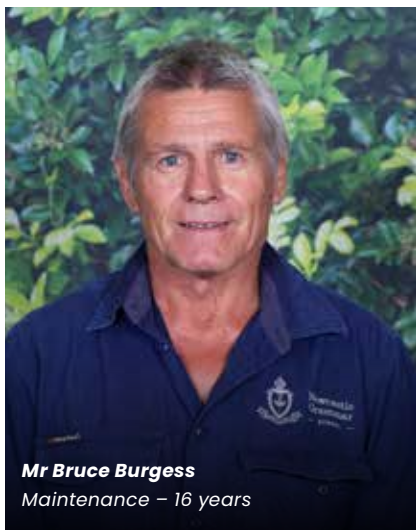
AND FAREWELL

Upon their retirement, we thank the following long-serving staff members who have dedicated decades of their lives to educating and serving the Newcastle Grammar School community. They have each played their part across a variety of departments to foster academic achievement, develop talent, administrate, encourage and support students and their families.

Through their passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment, they have left an indelible mark on the School's legacy. Each retiring staff member has a unique story to tell,

a narrative woven into the fabric of Newcastle Grammar School's history. From the early days of their careers to the present, these educators and support staff have witnessed and actively participated in the growth and transformation of the School. Many former students attribute their success and personal growth to the invaluable lessons imparted by their teachers.

As the school community bids farewell, it does so with gratitude, admiration, and the knowledge that their impact will resonate for generations to come.





SPOTLIGHT ON

MRS CATALINA DAVIDSON

The Tyrrell Library, along with its dedicated staff, assumes a pivotal role in nurturing a school culture that champions the pleasures of reading and fosters digitally proficient students. Indeed, digital literacy flourishes in the presence of adept and impassioned readers.

A school library is integral to the cultural and social life of a school. It is a central point for all kinds of reading, cultural activities, access to information, knowledge building, deep thinking and lively discussion. The school library plays a critical role in helping to fortify school culture – fostering a sense of connection and cultivating unity. Modern school libraries are more than a place to borrow books; they provide a safe place for students to socialise, collaborate, learn, create or relax. At NGS, the library also gives students a sense of belonging and is central to teaching and learning.

Mrs Catalina Davidson is the Tyrrell Library Technician, working regularly with students from Year 5 to 12. She grew up in Colombia where she earned a degree in Communication and Journalism. Afterward, she worked for a Non-Governmental Organisation that works with vulnerable communities, implementing educational programs, before moving to England to pursue further studies.

Upon arrival in Australia, she decided to follow in her mother's footsteps and completed a Diploma in Library and Information Services. She has now worked at Newcastle Grammar School for the past ten years.

Most days you will find Mrs Davidson promoting library services, helping readers to choose their next book, coordinating the purchase and processing of resources, creating content for the library page on Schoolbox or putting up a new display. She also liaises with teachers to source the most up-to-date materials for students and teachers.

Part of her role also includes developing library sessions for Year 5 and 6 students' weekly visits. "It is my passion to instil

a love for reading through enjoyable sessions in the library. Fostering and cultivating a strong reading culture takes a village."

With a broad academic consensus about the decline of reading in past years, it is important that students see the value of reading for pleasure. "Our library wants to support students to read because they want to read, not because they must." In recognition of this, the library has implemented several initiatives that encourage teenagers to pick a book up. One of these is the One Page at the Time program which, every year, sees families taking the opportunity to read the same book concurrently with their child and has proven to help connect families through reading.

Mrs Davidson loves the opportunities the Tyrrell Library offers to make connections with the school community and foster a supportive, welcoming sense of place. "Building positive relationships with students is incredibly rewarding. To witness their growth, successes and moments of discovery is a real joy."

"I am privileged to work with upper primary and high school students as the library plays an important role during these transition years. The move to secondary schooling can pose significant challenges for some students, therefore having a safe, familiar environment can play a crucial part in the student's life. We are fortunate to have a well-resourced, diverse library where students can see themselves reflected in the pages of the books, or dream of places that they create in their imagination."

In her down time, Mrs Davidson loves reading, coffee, food, and travel and has been to more than 24 countries. "Working at NGS has contributed to immense personal growth. I am so lucky to work with a dedicated team, and colleagues who believe in the transformative power of reading."

SID ACHARYA

CLASS OF 2016

At just 24 years of age, Sid Acharya, a graduate of Newcastle Grammar School's class of 2016, is a true advocate for career fluidity. His post-school pathway, both intricate and multifaceted, embraces the intersection of seemingly different worlds, and proves that success is not a linear path.

Born in India and raised in the United Kingdom, Sid emigrated with his family to Australia in 2009. His arrival at Newcastle Grammar School in Year 5 laid the initial foundation for what would eventually become a true love of the arts. He credits the positive environment of the Music Department at NGS for commencing the journey of his evolving artistic identity. "I still have a lot of voice memos on my phone of me and my friends jamming out in the music basement. To have access to all kinds of instruments was very special." His exposure to the Symphony Orchestra and the mentorship of Mr Sherringham in the Music department fuelled his creative spark, planting seeds that would flourish in the years to come. "I think we are surrounded by music subconsciously, without even knowing it. It was only after school that I realised how much of an impact it had on me," he says.

Like many young adults on the brink of graduation and eager to make a meaningful mark in the world, Sid was unsure which post-school path to pursue. Armed with a love of science and a keen interest in computers, Sid undertook a Bachelor of Information Technology with a Media major at the University of Newcastle. It was this decision that uncovered his passion for film, leading him into the areas of cinematography, editing, and ultimately, film composition. A group assignment saw Sid produce his first film score: the soundtrack to a documentary made for a university class. His music was embraced by his peers, and Sid gradually became the go-to composer for his classmates' projects.



While his artistic pursuits were taking off, Sid's love for science was still strong. Keen to discover how he could further explore balancing his diverse passions, he enrolled in a second degree.

Specialising in medical biotechnology, Sid delved into the microscopic world, exploring the intricacies of proteins within the placenta. His PhD journey is a quest to find a cure for stillbirth, an area that piqued his interest after undertaking a Mothers and Babies Research Program placement at the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

Sid's commitment to his dual passions, pushing scientific boundaries and crafting music, reflect a profound dedication to a fulfilling and balanced life. Despite a hectic schedule, he embraces his two worlds with equal parts enthusiasm and dedication. His holistic approach to life mirrors the very essence of Newcastle Grammar School's emphasis on a well-rounded education.

As both a composer and a scientist, Sid sees the creative process as a shared language. His science drives his creativity, and his creativity helps him to uncover meaning in science. The scientific method, with its hypothesising, testing and editing, mirrors the process of crafting a musical composition. His parallel between the two subjects are nothing new, as he observed,

"A lot of scientists in my field that I've met are creatives as well, in one way or another, whether it's visual art or music specifically."

With millions of streams on Spotify and YouTube, Sid's music has found a global audience. His compositions have been the soundtrack to campaigns for NASA, Sony and Arsenal Football Club, and he has soundtracked award-winning feature films which have been released on streaming platforms such as Stan, Apple TV and Amazon Prime. His work has found him listed as a candidate for the Australian Academy of Cinema Television (AACTA) Awards, hosted on the Gold Coast in March 2024, with the possibility of being nominated for Best Original Score.

Residing in Newcastle and currently working towards his PhD, Sid plans to present his research within Australia and around the world at upcoming conferences including Canada 2024, Germany 2025, and Japan in 2026. He collaborates widely with leading scientists at the University of Melbourne and University of Wollongong, and with biotechnology industry partners as part of his specific PhD project. With no plans to slow down any time soon, Sid credits his time at NGS for developing his steadfast dedication. "What NGS taught me was discipline and perseverance. Not just in academics, but in all areas of life."

MICHELE WILLIAMS CLASS OF 1970: A CELEBRATION OF HERITAGE

In exploring Newcastle Grammar School's history, a story unfolds, each chapter woven by families and generations connected by the common thread of NGS. Among these stories stands the narrative of Michele (Chapman) Williams (Class of 1970), the first in a lineage spanning three generations to attend the School.

Michele's journey started within the close-knit embrace of her cohort – a group of 14 students who weathered the challenges of their HSC year together. "I was very fortunate to be in a year of very smart, high achieving girls. The group helped me along, too. I have been able to maintain friendships over 53 years," she said. Despite the modest enrolment of around 165 students at the then Newcastle Church of England Girls' Grammar School, the girls were provided an opportunity to have fun, too. Michele cherishes moments like a memorable trip to Smiggins Holes led by their Maths teacher, Mrs Morrison, and braving chilly swims at Newcastle Ocean Baths.

Michele, with her husband, John, juggled raising a family of four children

whilst contributing to the family pharmacy business in Warners Bay and later in Toronto. Those years, she recalls fondly, were marked by busyness – a testament to Michele's unwavering commitment to both career and family. In the quest for quality education for her children, Michele enrolled her three youngest at Newcastle Grammar School. The decision was shaped by the School's academic reputation and a desire for a well-rounded experience.

With a ringside view of the School's evolution, Michele is most impressed by the change from strict uniform policies and the uncomfortable hat-and-gloves ensemble to the liberating uniform worn by students today. The physical changes in the School's infrastructure and facilities are also notable, transforming it from what Michele remembers as being a simple brick building into a well-equipped institution. "I'm super impressed with how well-endowed the School is now. I shake my head and think, wow, could they relate to what we had?" she wonders.

Now, with the torch passed to the third generation, Michele's grandchildren

walk the same grounds of NGS. She witnesses their milestones, having recently attended her granddaughter's Valedictory Eucharist and Clap Out, a moment that brings a flood of memories and a sense of continuity.

In considering the School's enduring elements, Michele underscores its role as a family school. The ethos of nurturing students into young individuals ready to face the world has endured. The long-standing simplicity of this mission – caring and guiding – forms the bedrock of what Michele values most about NGS. "The School equips students not just academically but also instils confidence, preparing them for success in the broader business world," she notes.

Michele expresses immense pride in her family's achievements, highlighting the success of her four children in diverse fields. Their varied paths, ranging from law and business management, civil engineering, project management, and pharmacy, reflect the breadth of opportunities and experiences provided by the School. Considering the partnership between School and family, Michele recognises the positive influence of collaboration. "It's a family school, where students are nurtured into young people ready to enter the world. Mostly I feel that we have raised four wonderful, balanced young people who are making their way in the world successfully, and in turn raising our grandchildren with lots of love and care."

In offering advice to current students, Michele encourages them to seize every opportunity they can. The sentiment is simple but profound – grasp the chances, lean on the support and know that someone within the School community always has their best interests at heart.



Michele Williams (Class of 1970) with her three daughters from L to R Samantha Miller (current NGS parent), Louise Jenkins (Class of 1997 / current NGS parent) and Gemma Skelton (Class of 2002 / current NGS parent). Michele's son, Andrew (not pictured) also attended NGS (Class of 2000).



ALUMNI BACK TO SCHOOL



What a joy it was to welcome alumnae to The Newcastle Club for the 2023 Ladies Lunch. There was much laughter and reminiscing – and the Newcastle trivia was a hit!

Following this, the 2023 Back to School Day was filled with excitement as alumni returned to NGS – some for the first time in many years. Current students led tours of Hill Campus and heard how much has changed in 10 years, 30 years and even 50 years!

Class of 2013 students opened their time capsule with delight and horror. Class of 2003 reminisced fondly, and Class of 1993 couldn't believe it had truly been 30 years since they finished school. There were representatives from many other cohorts, bound by united memories across different generations.

New Head of School, Mr Matt Macoustra, spoke about the value of alumni in the life of a school. "Their contribution – by being representatives as NGS graduates, giving back by sharing their stories, wisdom and experience to current students, volunteering or working at NGS and giving financially to building and scholarship funds – is greatly appreciated and fortifies the community."

Thank you to all who attended, contributed to and enjoyed this special day.

The reunion dinners that followed continued well into the early hours as people shared, reconnected and talked about their journeys since leaving school.

If you would like to assist with preparations for the 2024 reunions, please contact [NGS alumni@ngs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:NGS_alumni@ngs.nsw.edu.au).







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