

SPECTEMUR AGENDO

VOL. 41 | WINTER 2025



NEWCASTLE
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL





**NEWCASTLE
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL**

Hill Campus

Cnr Church & Newcomen Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
T (02) 4929 5811
Email: office@ngs.nsw.edu.au

Park Campus

Cnr Union Street & Parkway Avenue
Cooks Hill NSW 2300
T (02) 4925 2121

CRICOS Provider Code: 02344D

ngs.nsw.edu.au

Advertising enquiries

marketing@ngs.nsw.edu.au

Front cover

Union Street Building – Park Campus

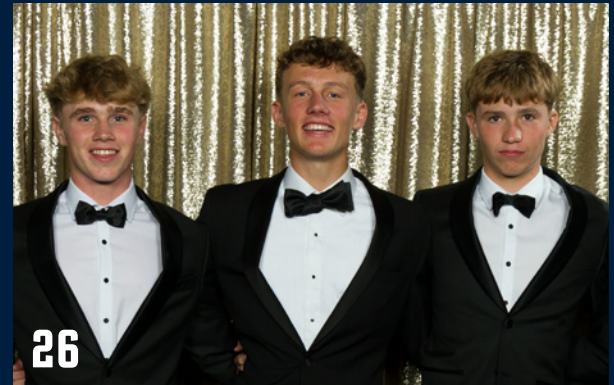
Photography by Murray McKean
[@mckeanphoto](https://www.instagram.com/mckeanphoto)

Inside front cover

Harriet Sturgeon (Year 7)

CONTENTS

2	HEAD OF SCHOOL
3	HEAD OF PRIMARY
4	UNION STREET BUILDING
6	LEARNING SPACES AT PARK CAMPUS
8	ENRICHING SECONDARY LEARNING
10	DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS
11	INVESTING IN OUR TEACHERS
12	CELEBRATING OUR MUMS
14	FAMILY FUN AFTERNOON
16	CREATIVITY IN ACTION
18	CITY OF STEEL
20	HOUSE SPIRIT
22	EUROPE TOUR 2025
23	CHINA'S RICH CULTURAL TAPESTRY
24	ROUND SQUARE IN PERTH
25	THRIVING IN YEAR 7
26	YEAR 11 BALL
27	INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS
32	SWIMMING CARNIVALS
34	SPORTING HIGHLIGHTS
36	INSPIRATIONAL ALUMNI
41	VALE: SHIRLEY KING



HEAD OF SCHOOL

SERVICE LEADERSHIP



“A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and wellbeing of people and the communities to which they belong”.

Robert K Greenleaf, 1977

In the late 1970s, a retired American business executive, Robert K Greenleaf, published a book simply titled *Servant Leadership*. In less than 400 pages, Greenleaf outlined a credo that, at the time, changed the thinking around leadership within organisations. Today, the seven tenets outlined seem commonplace, but a generation or two ago it was not how leadership was typically perceived.

He themed his discussion around:

- Serving first
- The growth of those within the organisation
- Building community
- Being ethical and moral in all that you do
- Listening and having empathy
- Persuasion and foresight (as opposed to coercion and control)
- Stewardship and leaving any situation better than you found it

Previous ways of thinking centred on leadership that was primarily about power or personal gain. Greenleaf proposed that, for the best possible future, we should look to develop people who strive for true leadership through a desire to serve. A leader's effectiveness could and should be measured by the growth and wellbeing of those they lead. Indeed, he had great faith that servant-leader organisations could change the world.

These are noble ideas and ones that I know have been championed across the Newcastle Grammar School community for many years. It is an enormous privilege to work with young people and assist them as they develop their own sense of what leadership is and how they will embrace it as they move into the world.

As detailed in the articles within this edition of *Spectemur Agendo*, we have countless wonderful opportunities ahead, particularly through the revitalisation of our campuses with the construction of the Union Street Building. One such opportunity is within the realm of leadership development for our students.

It may seem a small matter to have our Year 6 students in the same precinct day in and day out with the younger grades. However, this has allowed us to focus on a cogent student leadership model whereby service is seen at the heart of what is being done. This is not to say that it has not happened in the past – it most certainly has – but with Primary all together, the everyday experiences of the student population are imbued with this idea of servant leadership, not just in the formal and structured moments.

Our senior Secondary students have already demonstrated wonderful care and empathy for their junior counterparts through mentorship and guidance in a variety of initiatives. Recent events such as Hunter and Macquarie House Days and Wellbeing Conference (attended by students from across Newcastle, the Hunter and Central Coast Regions) showcased our students in multiple year groups leading and guiding together. Year 11 participated in a developmental leadership day, in recognition that their season of stewardship to lead the NGS community is imminent. The servant-leadership themes were front and centre in the activities of the program. The sense that we all have a role to play is critical.

It is a great joy to be able to work alongside the many talented NGS staff who develop the capacity of our students each day. It is a rare privilege to witness young people realising that they have the great potential to change their world for the better through service and dedication to others.

Go well.

Mr Matt Macoustra
Head of School



Coco Eissa (Year 6) and Amy Webster (Year 12).

“... young people have the great potential to change their world through service and dedication to others.”

HEAD OF PRIMARY

CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY AND COMPASSION



Our new-look campus is a place where dreams are nurtured, where curiosity is encouraged and where the seeds of lifelong learning are sown. It is designed to inspire creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. With state-of-the-art facilities and resources, we are equipped to provide our students with the best possible start to their educational journey.

These new spaces are not just about changing how classrooms look. They are about changing how students feel about learning – and how well they succeed. Because when we create spaces that support every learner, we are not just improving education – we are shaping a better future.

Newcastle Grammar School Primary nurtures happy, confident and capable learners through:

- An engaging, personalised curriculum – where personalised education is a hallmark. Teachers adapt learning to each child's pace and style. Ability grouping and targeted support, including for gifted students, ensure every learner's potential is nurtured.
- High-quality teaching grounded in evidence – with staff selected for their professionalism and expertise. A robust professional development

program across a range of topics ensures our staff are at the cutting edge of teaching practices, have a deep understanding of age-appropriate learning needs and provide effective, targeted and purposeful learning experiences that inspire, motivate and build capacity to enhance the educational experience of students.

- A strong emphasis on emotional and social wellbeing – where staff incorporate wellbeing strategies in their classrooms every day.
- Inspiring arts, leadership and learning opportunities – which creates a culture of curiosity, creativity, responsibility and compassion.

Underpinned by the School's values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence, Park Campus is a place where excellence is encouraged, failure is a stepping stone to success, kindness is celebrated, effort and persistence are keys to growth and fun is expected.

With construction now complete and Years 5 and 6 students leading by example, Park Campus is truly flourishing.

Ms Aicha Dyer
Head of Primary

Primary education is the foundation upon which all future learning is built. It is during these formative years that children develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will shape their futures. Our commitment to nurturing these young minds is unwavering.

The changes undertaken at Park Campus over the last couple of years have enabled a renewed cultural focus for students and staff. It is wonderful for Kindergarten to Year 6 students to enjoy numerous benefits of sharing the same site. This creates a seamless educational experience where students can grow and learn in a familiar and supportive environment. This continuity fosters a sense of community and belonging, allowing students to build strong relationships with their peers and teachers. It also allows us to provide a cohesive and comprehensive curriculum that meets the diverse needs of all our students in a new way.

The cultural change on site is tangible – partly because of the buildings and play spaces, but mostly because of the people.



Kindergarten students at Park Campus dressed up as bakery items for the Vietnam fundraising day.

UNION STREET BUILDING OFFICIALLY OPENED

On Friday 16 May, dignitaries and special guests attended the official opening of Newcastle Grammar School's new Union Street building at Park Campus in Cooks Hill. Attendees experienced a traditional Indigenous smoking ceremony upon arrival before being escorted to the top floor for official proceedings. Speeches were delivered by the Board Chair, Ms Catherine Wilkinson, Head of School, Mr Matt Macoustra, Head of Primary, Ms Alisha Dyer and Director of Core Project Group, Mr Courtney Knight, representing the building company. Musical performances from the Year 5 and 6 choir and the Primary Senior String Ensemble rounded out the formalities.

Following 18 months of construction, the completion of the new facility – positioned directly opposite the National Park Number 4 Sportsground – was celebrated by many of the companies involved in its planning and development. Representatives from Newcastle City Council, the University of Newcastle, the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, former Heads of School, parents and students gathered to celebrate this historic milestone.

About the building

The vertical three-floor plan of the Union Street building maximises active and learning space on a tight footprint. The undercroft provides a shaded and organised play space for students, with direct connection to the broader playground areas.

The two levels above house eight classrooms per floor, each opening into collaborative learning corridors. The rooftop level features a multi-sport court, covered by an all-weather shade membrane – a design feature visible from afar.

Construction began in September 2023 and the building was ready to welcome students and staff on day one of the 2025 School year. Park Campus now accommodates students from Kindergarten to Year 6 – the first time Newcastle Grammar School Primary has been in one location since the site's purchase in the late 1990s.

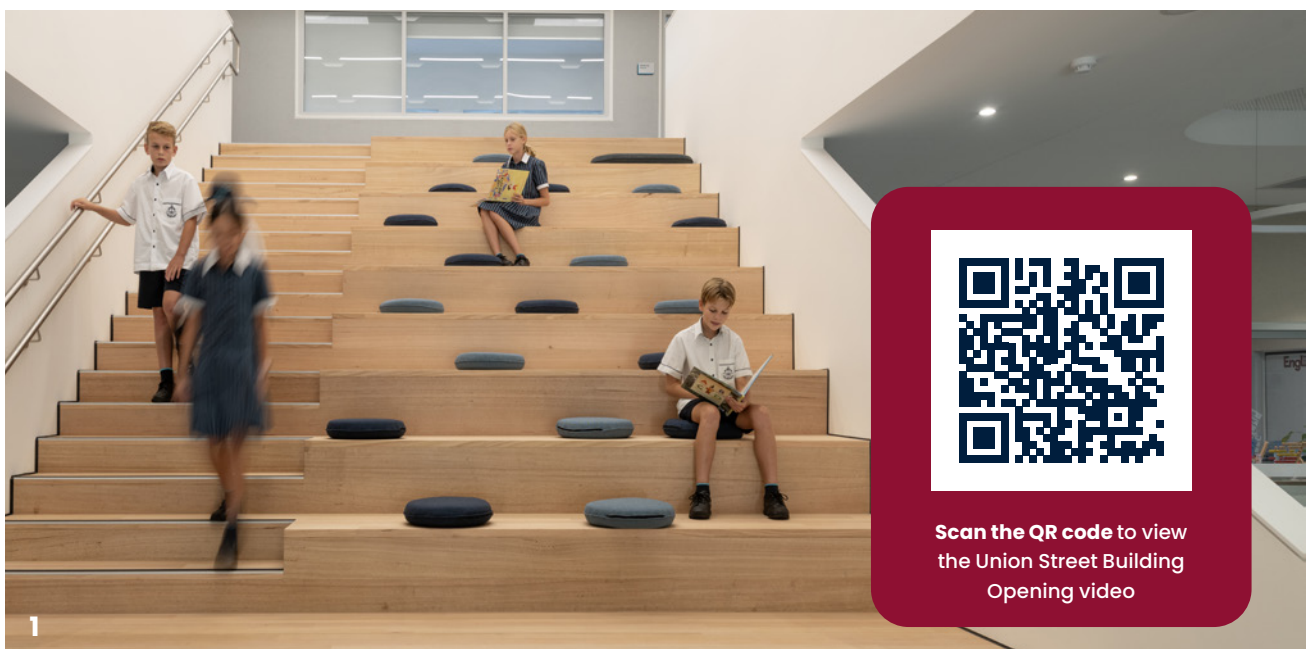
Ms Dyer said, "I am delighted to see the impact this building has already had on our students. The active learning areas and improved collaboration spaces allow us to further our mission – to provide an outstanding holistic education and cultivate curiosity and creativity in even our youngest students, for generations to come."

"We are incredibly grateful to the many organisations and individuals who have been a part of this project. The educational goals for our current and future students have always been at the heart of this development – from the early planning and design to the construction, landscaping and interiors," Mr Macoustra stated.

Students and staff are extremely grateful to be able to learn and teach in such an incredible facility.

Mr David Frazer

Head of Finance and Business Services





1. The centrepiece of Union Street Building, known as 'The Waterfall Stairs'.
2. Flexible learning spaces.
3. A traditional smoking ceremony welcomed guests upon arrival.
4. Mrs Erica Thomas (Head of School 2014–2022), Ms Catherine Wilkinson (Board Chair), Mr Matt Macoustra (Head of School 2023–current), Mr Alan Green (Headmaster 1989–2014).
5. The Treblemakers choir performed at the Official Opening.
6. Current and past Board Members and Heads of School.
7. Mr Matt Macoustra with Mr Courtney Knight, Director – Core Project Group.

INTERCONNECTED AND RESPONSIVE LEARNING SPACES AT PARK CAMPUS

In the contemporary educational landscape, differentiated learning environments have emerged as a critical approach to teaching and learning. These spaces are designed to cater to the diverse needs, interests and abilities of students, ensuring that each learner can achieve their full potential. Differentiated learning environments recognise that learning is a multifaceted and dynamic process, which requires more than a 'one-size-fits-all' model.

The transformation of the physical environment at Park Campus has enhanced our ability to ensure all students can engage with essential knowledge and skills through strong instruction, effective scaffolding and meaningful opportunities to deepen learning.

We believe every student is capable of growth and therefore strive to teach rigorous and rich content that inspires curiosity about the world our students live in. To achieve this, we need places where our students can focus and concentrate, share and collaborate, to learn as individuals and in groups.

Our new classrooms have the flexibility to open beyond the four walls with sliding doors and operable partitions that take advantage of the adjacent multifunctional spaces. This supports flexible grouping across classes and varied instructional strategies that give students more opportunities to actively participate, seek clarification and receive immediate feedback.

In the Primary years at Newcastle Grammar School, we understand that offering well-timed, purposeful choices helps shape the conditions for a thriving learning culture. When students are given autonomy along with clear guidance and support, they are more likely to succeed, take responsibility for their learning and remain intrinsically motivated.

Mrs Belinda Nichols

Deputy Head of Primary and Head of Learning and Teaching K-6

“... students can think critically and solve problems in various ways.”



Opportunities to discuss in pairs can boost participation. It tunes our students into topics and helps them to retrieve and generate ideas before engaging in a whole-class discussion or written task.



We provide spaces where students can think critically and solve problems in various ways. Through collaboration with peers, they develop essential communication skills that are crucial for success.



Small group sizes enable personalised instruction that moves at an appropriate pace to support, inspire and challenge.



Our Primary students learn in environments that are responsive to their academic and wellbeing needs. They feel valued and successful, fostering a sense of belonging and a greater enthusiasm for learning.

ENRICHING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

In Secondary School, the Deep Learning framework and our Principles of Excellence guide teachers in designing experiences that are engaging and relevant, and support students in the development of both disciplinary knowledge and skills, as well as the transferable competencies needed to succeed in a technologically advanced, rapidly changing world.

Students in all years and faculties have participated in a range of enriching activities that leverage learning partners or build students' skills in the 6Cs – Character, Citizenship, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity and Critical Thinking.

Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)

Year 8 students engaged in an immersive CAPA day focused on the C of Communication. Activities included:

- Using pouring techniques and digital collage to create striking mixed-media artworks.
- Forming a rock band and bringing the classic song *Born to be Wild* by Steppenwolf to life for a modern audience.
- Building imaginative creatures from found objects and exploring physical theatre to communicate social messages.

The day inspired creativity, collaboration and deepened students' expressive skills.

In Visual Arts, Year 10 students created portrait drawings, with four selected as finalists for the prestigious Young Dobell exhibition at the Museum of Art and Culture Lake Macquarie.

1. *William Morton (Year 7).*
2. *Portrait artwork by Year 10 student, Chloe O'Donahue.*
3. *Year 12 Drama class.*
4. *Scarlett Goodsall and Harrison Knauer (Year 7).*

Global Studies

Across the Global Studies faculty, students experienced powerful learning moments:

- Year 7 Geographers explored citizenship through a walking tour of Newcastle's coastal areas.
- Year 8 completed water quality assessments at Blackbutt Reserve in partnership with Hunter Local Land Services and Hunter Water Corporation.
- Year 9 Geography students investigated migration by collecting data and heard from a range of expert guest speakers.
- In History, Year 9 classes immersed themselves in an interactive World War I experience.
- Year 9 Entrepreneurship students participated in the NRMA Future of Transport Challenge, applying creativity to real-world issues.
- Year 11 and 12 Studies of Religion students welcomed Imam Muhammad from Sultan Faith Mosque, enriching their understanding of Islam and broadening their global perspectives.

Congratulations to Mrs Sophie Robb, who was recognised for her leadership in implementing Deep Learning, presenting at an AIS TeachMeet on creating enriching learning experiences for students.



PDHPE

In PDHPE, students are supported to develop functional movement skills while building personal and social understanding through the 6Cs.

Year 8 students explored the impact of technology on physical activity and experienced a range of movement trends, examining the implications of the increasing interconnections between physical activity and the digital world. They analysed wearable tech, fitness apps and AI-generated training plans, experiencing the future of movement technology in action.

Year 11 students began the new Health and Movement Science syllabus, which replaces the former PDHPE course. This subject immerses students in authentic research and collaborative investigations in sports and exercise science.



2

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)

STEM has been a hub of exploration. Semester 1 highlights include:

- The Year 7 STEM Day focused on sun safety and design thinking.
- Year 8 students celebrating Pi Day with the Inquisitive Minds Group.
- Cross-curricular activities recognising Albert Einstein's birthday across Mathematics and Food Technology teams.
- Year 12 Chemistry students' visit to the Orica factory on Kooragang Island to study the Haber process (an industrial method for producing ammonia (NH₃) from nitrogen (N₂) and hydrogen (H₂) gases) firsthand.
- Year 11 Biology students exploring biodiversity and ecology at Long Reef and Taronga Zoo in Sydney, even spending the night at Roar and Snore at Taronga Zoo.

Mathematics students have explored vertical whiteboards for collaborative problem-solving. This innovative approach explicitly builds the competencies of character, communication and critical thinking.

Students may participate in a range of extra-curricular activities to ignite their passion and enrich their learning in STEM: the Science and Engineering Challenge hosted by University of Newcastle and Build Me a Future Day, where our team placed first in their division. Four staff members also attended the STEM Academy at the University of Sydney, further strengthening our teaching practices.



3



4

Languages and Literacy

Languages and literacy are also enhanced through rich, real-world experiences:

- Year 11 English students worked with Sport for Jove Theatre Company to explore *Othello* in live performance, deepening their appreciation of Shakespeare.
- Year 9 students launched their diverse and emotive writing inspired by *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, uniting English, Commerce and Food Technology in a creative, cross-curricular unit.
- Year 7 English students showcased their creativity and communication by crafting narratives that reflected their sense of place. Their work was displayed on the Wall of Creative Writing Excellence at Hill Campus.

Year 12 Language students enrich their speaking skills through 1:1 sessions with native-speaking language assistants. This targeted enrichment helps them to refine their oral language skills and prepare for HSC exams.

Year 9 French students have created films in collaboration with a partner school in France. As part of understanding Chinese culture, Year 8 students learned to make dumplings – a delicious and engaging experience.

Mr Jack Wheeler was invited to share his work designing Deep Learning experiences in Japanese at an AIS TeachMeet, celebrating his innovative teaching approach.

Deep Learning continues to thrive at Newcastle Grammar School – bringing learning to life and equipping students with the skills they need to succeed today and into the future.

Mrs Lisa Peterson

Deputy Head of School – Learning and Teaching

DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

At Newcastle Grammar School, student leadership is highly valued. With the belief that true leadership is demonstrated through service to others, students are encouraged to conduct themselves with integrity, compassion and a sense of responsibility to their community. By fostering these qualities from the primary years, we aim to develop future leaders who will make a positive impact on the world.

The creation of a new position in 2025 – Head of Student Leadership and Service Learning – demonstrates the School's commitment to fostering these essential skills. With all Kindergarten to Year 6 students now located on one campus, additional opportunities have emerged for students to step into influential roles. These positions will not only shape the future of our School but also prepare students to be the trailblazers of tomorrow, carrying the RISE values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence into their futures.

In Year 6, students apply for leadership positions such as Captains and Vice Captains, House Captains, Sport Leaders, Wellbeing Leaders and Round Square Leaders, allowing them to cultivate vital skills in communication, creative problem-solving and ethical decision-making. The NGS integrated leadership model provides numerous opportunities to empower every student to succeed, grow and have their voice heard. Official leadership roles are also offered to students in Years 9 and 12.

The School's Mission states, "We are committed to building a caring community that embodies our RISE values, fosters service leadership, and inspires students to become compassionate and responsible global citizens." With this as one of our collective goals, we help students understand the broader impact of their actions and decisions. By equipping them with the skills to serve others, NGS fosters a sense of ownership and pride in their growth and achievements and places high value in understanding the importance of community and looking beyond themselves.



The Year 6 Leadership Team 2025.



Mr Matt Macoustra and Ms Alichia Dyer with Primary and Secondary Student Leaders:

Front row: Year 6 Vice Captains Harry Martin and Sofia Olivares-Green and School Captains Olive McKay and Toby Sayer.

Back row: Year 12 Vice Captains Jack Martin and Shilpi Salaria and School Captains Molly Boyle and Shanuk Wickremaratchy.

At NGS, we believe that every student, regardless of whether they hold a formal leadership role, can be an example through their character, actions and the way they support others. Aligning with the framework of the 6Cs of Deep Learning, we believe that every student can be an example through their character, actions and the way they support others.

Our goal is for every student to leave with a strong sense of who they are in the world and have the confidence to step forward when it matters. While leadership roles are important and we encourage them to represent their peers with pride and belonging, we recognise that true leadership is found in the everyday moments where individuals choose to make a positive impact.

At the inaugural Year 6 Leadership ceremony, Head of Primary, Ms Alichia Dyer, reiterated the expectations of the students:

- To bring your unique strengths of character to the service of others.
- To stand with courage against injustice and to uphold what is right with humility and grace.
- To lead by example.
- To guide and uplift your fellow students.
- To strive for Excellence as a commitment to personal growth, to lifting others and to shaping a school where all can flourish.

At NGS, we truly are developing the leaders of tomorrow.

Mrs Samantha Jones

Head of Student Leadership and Service Learning (K-12)

THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN OUR TEACHERS

Exceptional teaching has a profound impact on student learning. Research consistently affirms that high-quality teaching is one of the most significant factors influencing student success. A 2024 study¹ on teacher professional development (PD) emphasises that ongoing, high-quality PD leads to improved teaching practices, higher student achievement, greater teacher confidence and retention, greater adaptability to change and enhanced collaboration.

Through continuous training, teachers gain updated knowledge of pedagogy, curriculum and technology, which translates into more effective instruction. PD that is sustained, collaborative and closely aligned with classroom practice has a measurable positive impact on student learning. Continuous PD also helps teachers respond to evolving educational demands, such as integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and addressing diverse learning needs.

At Newcastle Grammar School, we are committed to fostering this culture of continuous growth and learning among our staff, ensuring our students benefit from the most effective, research-based teaching practices. This year, our whole-school theme is Excellence in Action – a renewed commitment to continuous improvement in classroom techniques and equipping our educators with the skills needed to further elevate student learning experiences.

NGS collaborates with various professional development providers to offer a diverse range of training opportunities. These include partnerships with educational consultants, universities, specialised training organisations and leading educators.



Ms Bianca Mangioni – Acting Assistant Head of Global Studies.



Mr Rhys Potter – Year 1 Teacher.

Additionally, NGS prioritises collaboration through internal professional learning groups which provide in-house competency development led by our own staff, leveraging their expertise to enhance knowledge and skills across the teaching faculty.

Staff wellbeing is also a critical component of professional development – not just for the teachers, but all operational and professional staff too. At NGS, we integrate wellbeing initiatives into our training programs, offering workshops on stress management, work-life balance, collaboration and mental health. Our staff embrace the journey of professional learning, reinforcing our commitment to Excellence in Action – ensuring every student at NGS experiences engaging, high-quality education that inspires curiosity, confidence and a love of learning.

Mr James Ireland

Head of Professional Growth and Development

¹Dr. Priya, & Sangeeta. (2024). Impact of teacher professional development on student learning at secondary level. International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i02.15219>

A BEAUTIFUL WAY TO CELEBRATE OUR MUMS

Park Campus was filled with joy and enthusiasm as students, staff and families gathered to honour the special women in their lives at the annual Primary Mother's Day celebration. One of the most anticipated events on the Newcastle Grammar School calendar, the morning was a beautiful showcase of gratitude and love.

The event began in the Sandi Warren Performance Centre, which was abuzz with excitement and expectation. The program featured an inspiring range of performances by all Primary students, setting a warm and heartfelt tone for the day. Highlights included musical contributions from our four choirs. Each group delivered moving renditions of songs that celebrated mothers and caregivers, displaying not only the students' musical abilities but also their deep appreciation for the women who support them every day.

Adding to the spirit of the occasion was a captivating performance by the Year 6 cohort. The students presented a humorous and thoughtful drama piece that explored the many roles mothers play in our lives. Their expressive storytelling and confident stage presence drew laughter and admiration from the audience.

In between the musical and dramatic moments, students also shared poetry and instrumental performances — touching tributes to the important women in their lives, filled with heartwarming messages and creative expression.

Following the assembly, students joined their mothers, grandmothers and other special guests for some cherished time together. The atmosphere was one of connection and gratitude, complete with tasty treats and plenty of hugs.

The Primary Mother's Day celebration beautifully captured the spirit of community and family. The time and effort put in by the students and staff were evident in every detail, from the rehearsed performances to the thoughtful decorations and warm hospitality.

Congratulations to the staff and students on a beautiful morning that touched the hearts of all who attended. It was certainly a celebration to remember!

Mrs Amy Falconer

Head of Operations and Development K-6



1. Marlon Magin in the Kindergarten dance.
2. Year 3 students made a heartfelt video for the mothers.
3. Archer Gray (Year 5) was one of the comperes for the event.

MOTHER'S DAY LUNCH

MAKING MEMORIES

The annual Mother's Day Lunch brought together 170 mums, carers, grandmothers and special guests for a truly memorable day. Merewether Surfhouse provided the spectacular backdrop for laughter, lively conversation and a little friendly rivalry during some particularly tricky trivia rounds!

New faces were warmly welcomed into the Newcastle Grammar School community and there was a heartfelt moment as we honoured the mothers whose youngest children are preparing to graduate this year.

With delicious food and fabulous giveaways, the event had something for everyone – and we are thrilled to share that nearly \$15,000 was raised in support of the Cool the School initiative, which aims to install air conditioning to the halls at both campuses. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this amazing result.

A very special thank you to our major sponsor, Lyndall Allan, Director of SALT Property Group, for generously supporting this event. We also extend our sincere gratitude to the major prize donors: Gavin Fisher Jewellery, Hunter Financial and Muse Pilates Studio.

There were many local businesses and supporters who helped make the day so special by contributing to the pool of 18 prizes: Bay Dental Surgery, Blooms on Darby, Core Project Group, CosmoWorld, De Iuliis Wines, Dough Heads, Earth & Grace Skincare, Gavin Fisher Jewellery, Hao Chi Newcastle, Hunter Financial (Phil Smith), Keith Tulloch Wine, The Market Basket Co., Muse Pilates, Pukara Estate, SALT Property Group, The Grand Hotel Newcastle and The Letter Q.

It was a beautiful reminder of how lucky we are to be part of such a generous and connected School community.



Thank you to our prize donors

HUNTER FINANCIAL

PUKARA ESTATE



KEITH TULLOCH

CoreProject

Hao Chi

By Lee's Yumcha

EARTH & GRACE SKINCARE

The Letter Q

The Market Basket Co.

CosmoWorld

THE GRAND

GAVIN FISHER JEWELLERY

baydental

Blooms ON DARBY

de iuliis

Salt PROPERTY

muse PILATES

HELPING HAND GROUP AUCTION SERVICES

Dough Heads

FAMILY FUN AFTERNOON

Park Campus came alive with colour, bubbles, laughter and shared joy during our much-anticipated Family Fun Afternoon. The event was a wonderful celebration of community, creating the perfect opportunity for families, students and staff to come together and enjoy a relaxed afternoon of entertainment and connection.

From the moment the gates opened, there was a vibrant buzz across the campus. Children delighted in face painting, magic tricks and giant games, while others were captivated by cuddly baby animals. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and wonder, with smiles seen in every corner.

Guests also enjoyed guided tours of the new building, music performances and time spent with family and friends.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the staff and student volunteers who made the afternoon possible – especially our outstanding Secondary students. Your enthusiasm, leadership and willingness to give back were truly appreciated. You helped make the day a resounding success.

Thank you to everyone who joined us – we hope you had a wonderful time.

Mrs Alison Annis-Brown
Events Coordinator







Year 5 students delivered a fantastic circus-themed performance during the final assembly in Term 2.

CREATIVITY IN ACTION

THE PRIMARY ARTS EXPERIENCE

Creativity is woven into the fabric of everyday learning for our Primary students. The Creative Arts (CA) program at Park Campus offers rich, holistic experiences where academic learning and co-curricular opportunities work in harmony to inspire confident, expressive and curious learners.

Specialist-led lessons in Music, Dance, Drama and Visual Arts provide students with strong technical foundations while nurturing imagination, collaboration and personal growth. These experiences are not isolated – they are part of a broader educational approach that values creativity as essential to developing well-rounded, future-ready individuals.

Students drawn to performance can extend their classroom learning through the Primary Dance and Drama ensembles, where they build stagecraft, teamwork and resilience in a supportive environment. The Art Fusion program – led by local artists Lauren Wiltshire and Yvette Ten-Bohmer – invites students to further explore diverse media such as charcoal and clay, deepening their understanding of artistic techniques through hands-on, expressive projects.

Music is the cornerstone of the Creative Arts journey at Newcastle Grammar School. Through the Primary Instrumental Program (PIP), every student is given the opportunity to learn an instrument, supporting cognitive development, academic achievement and emotional wellbeing. Instrumental music enhances memory, focus and executive function, while reinforcing classroom learning in rhythm, scales and musical theory.

“Music opens doors to learning, confidence and joy,” says long-time Music teacher Jane Parkes. “It’s a beautiful thing to witness when a student connects with music and begins to grow in ways they never imagined.”



Zoe Lodge and Oliver Steel (Year 3) playing in the Primary Junior String Ensemble.

Led by Primary Co-curricular Music and Instrumental Programs Coordinator, Ms Jenny MacQueen, Co-curricular ensembles offer inclusive opportunities that build on classroom and PIP experiences. Open to interested students, these groups provide a natural progression for those wishing to deepen their musical journey, with opportunities to participate in public performances, Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) exams and events such as the Heads of Independent Co-Educational Schools (HICES) Music Festival. Optional individual voice and instrumental lessons are also available every school day, offering flexibility and personalised growth.

The CA program reflects a commitment to nurturing creative minds within a caring, innovative and aspirational learning community. As Head of Primary, Aicha Dyer shares, “We are not just teaching the arts, we are helping students discover who they are and what they can become.”

Mr Daniel Kozey
Director of Co-curricular

Mrs Belinda Nichols
Deputy Head of Primary and Head of Learning and Teaching K-6

THE BEAUTY OF NATURE THROUGH THE ARTS



SONGS OF SKY AND SEA

The Secondary Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) Showcase, *Songs of Sky and Sea*, captivated the audience at the Harold Lobb Concert Hall. The evening celebrated the power of the Arts to reflect and connect us with nature.

Inspired by the elements of sea and sky, the extensive program featured a variety of musical works, from Coldplay's *A Sky Full of Stars* to Peter Sculthorpe's *Lament*, enhanced by a moving didgeridoo performance by performance by guest artist, Mr Josef Yerin. Concert bands, string ensembles, choirs and soloists demonstrated the depth of talent across the faculty.

Student artworks were also projected throughout the evening, adding a stunning visual layer to the music performances. Music Teacher, Ms Sam Dunlop said, "The concert was a chance to pause and appreciate the wild beauty all around us and to acknowledge the emotional and atmospheric power of the Arts."

The evening concluded with a powerful combined performance of Adele's *Rolling in the Deep*. Congratulations to all involved for bringing *Songs of Sky and Sea* to life with such passion and creativity.

Mr Andrew O'Connell
Head of Creative and Performing Arts



1. Molly McCauley (Year 12).
2. Henry Dayton (Year 10).
3. The evening concluded with a rendition of Adele's *Rolling in the Deep*.

“ The evening celebrated the power of the Arts to reflect and connect us with nature. ”

NEWCASTLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL PRESENTS:

CITY OF STEEL

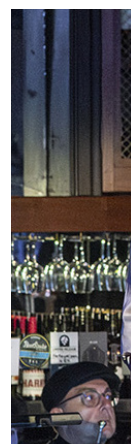
A HARDBOILED NOIR
CONCERT PRODUCTION

The 2025 Newcastle Grammar School Production was created especially for our current students and venue options. Conceived, written and directed by the Head of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), Mr Andrew O'Connell, *City of Steel* was destined to be unique.

Mr O'Connell joined NGS as Head of CAPA in 2024. He has completed workshops and courses for stage and screen with the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), the Howard Fine Acting Studio, Little Angel Theatre and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (AADA) in New York. He has worked as a director, performer and designer for many community and independent theatre companies. Theatre is his passion. With this background, Mr O'Connell was eager to produce something "a bit different" – and so, *City of Steel: A Hard-Boiled Noir Concert Production* was born.

English Extension teacher, Ms Leanne Lynch, provided the following precis in the show's program: "The Hard-Boiled Fiction and Film Noir genres were born out of the 1920s and 1930s Post-War and Post-Depression American society where organised crime and corrupt legal systems dominated the urban landscape. Hard-boiled detectives are the epitome of an anti-hero; they are loners, they are cynical, they talk tough, they act tough, and they exact a form of justice that may not be strictly legal, but it is always moral."

The show was developed much like a fastidious sleuth assembling a lineup of clues – interrogating every possibility until all the pieces fit. The ambition was to spotlight student talent in every aspect of the project, while also presenting audiences with something dynamic and new that expands the understanding of what is possible in the Arts at NGS. The amazing Production Team also featured musical direction by Mr Leigh Sherringham, vocal direction by Mrs Sara Cutler, choreography by Mrs Carla Holmes and costumes by Mrs Linda Keeping, each contributing their absolute best to the show.



The speakeasy-style of Bartholomew's Restaurant and Bar on King Street proved the perfect backdrop for the ambitious piece. Audience members dined together before the show in a wonderful atmosphere of community before the lighting dimmed, the student band played their first note and the cast swirled throughout the space. After months of planning and development, and countless hours in rehearsals, *City of Steel* was a true demonstration of collaboration and creativity.

Mr O'Connell praised the cast and crew, saying, "Congratulations to the students and staff involved. I hope the audience loved this production as much as we enjoyed performing it for you."

Lead performers: Jessica Choi (Year 10), Matilda Dyer (Year 10), Samuel Lane (Year 12), Jack Martin (Year 12), Evie Morton (Year 10), Natalia Muller (Year 9), Adelaide Paramor (Year 9), Lucienne Roberts (Year 12) and Daniel Stone (Year 10).

Mr Daniel Kozey

Director of Co-curricular (K-12)



SECONDARY HOUSE TERMS

HUNTER

Hill Campus embraced the Deep Learning competency of Creativity in Term 1, not just as artistic expression, but as innovation, problem-solving and collaboration. Our Year 12 students shared how they harness creativity in their lives, from stage productions and sport to leadership and photography. Guided by the motif of a puzzle piece, students saw firsthand how something can become greater than the sum of its parts.

Mentor classes each designed a unique puzzle piece that represented their group. These pieces came together to form our 'NGS Masterpiece',



Year 12 students Will Bird, Zane Gusmerini (Hunter House Captain), Caleb Nicetin, Will Golding and Logan Harman served the NGS community at Hunter House Day celebrations.

unveiled on Hunter House Day. Since then, the puzzle has been separated and presented to Heads of House to display as a symbol for the collective creativity and personalities within their mentor groups. Our theme was further illustrated by the handball courts being transformed through colourful student illustrations, a puzzle race in the Tyrrell Library and a bake-sale fundraiser showcasing the exceptional culinary creativity of our students.

We were also delighted to visit Park Campus to participate in the Primary Hunter celebrations. Funds raised from the day supported both

The Vietnam Project and local charity Soul Hub, helping those in need around Newcastle.

Mr Will Berry and Ms Chantal Byrnes
Hunter Heads of House

“ ... helping those in need around Newcastle.”

MACQUARIE

Throughout Term 2, Macquarie House unpacked the Deep Learning competency of Critical Thinking. Our focus was on solving problems, considering different perspectives and having empathy for others as we sought to see Beyond My Looking Glass. Throughout the term, this theme was unpacked during assemblies and formed the basis for our Chapel services. Each mentor group worked to become Macquarie's Mastermind by solving a cryptic crossword and figuring out Detective Macquarie's Classified Clue each week. Special thanks to Laura Trout in Year 12 for her tireless work in producing these clues.

In Week 7, students from Macquarie House across Years 7 to 12 brought in delicious baked goods to sell during breaks. The chilly weather did not cool our enthusiasm; in fact, hot

chocolates warmed everyone up! During the Macquarie House Chapel service, we continued our celebration of Critical Thinking by welcoming guest speaker Ms Loren Collyer from the University of Newcastle. Loren encouraged us to consider how understanding the stories of others helps us see their perspective without which, we struggle to connect and work together.

The celebration concluded with a fundraising barbeque and a lunchtime trivia contest. Staff and students from Hill Campus came together to use their critical thinking skills in a great celebration of the Macquarie House theme. Meanwhile, our House Captains enjoyed leading fabulously fun activities with Primary students at Park Campus as part of their celebrations. All funds raised were shared between



Ms Loren Collyer from the University of Newcastle presented to students on Macquarie House Day.

The Vietnam Project and Wall of Hands, a branch of the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation delivering literacy programs to Indigenous communities across the nation.

Mr Ben Peacock and Ms Sophie Robb
Macquarie Heads of House

PRIMARY

HOUSE

DAYS

HUNTER

The Hunter House Day Dance Party at Park Campus was a celebration of joy, community and giving back. Students and staff came together for a morning that was bursting with energy, music, and laughter.

The event kicked off with upbeat tunes and an open dance floor that quickly filled with enthusiastic movers of all ages. A highlight of the morning was the limbo showdown, which had the crowd cheering as participants twisted, bent and shimmied their way under the bar – a true display of fun and friendly competition.



Sansa Banavar, Matilda Hargreaves, Charlotte Taylor (Kindergarten) and Chelsea Allan (Year 6).

Adding an extra sparkle to the day was a surprise staff performance that brought the house down – teachers took to the stage with flair showing off their best moves.

More than just a dance party, the event was a powerful reminder of the difference we can make when we come together. With every step, spin and smile, students supported meaningful initiatives to support of the Vietnam Project and Soul Hub – causes that reach far beyond our campus. Hunter House Day was a feel-good celebration of unity, generosity and the joy of giving.

MACQUARIE

The energy was electric as students from Kindergarten to Year 6 came together for Macquarie House Day – a celebration filled with colour, creative challenges and House spirit.

Decked out in vibrant red accessories to show their support for Macquarie House, students participated in a variety of exciting activities. From high-energy dance challenges and rounds of charades to spirited cheer-offs and lucky prizes, every child had the opportunity to join in and shine. All students were engaged and cheering one another on in true House spirit.

We appreciated the support of our Secondary Macquarie House students and staff, whose leadership and enthusiastic involvement brought even more energy and laughter to the day.

Beyond the fun, the day also had a meaningful purpose, with all funds raised supporting the chosen charities – The Vietnam Project and Wall of Hands, an Australian literacy and numeracy foundation.

We are very grateful to the entire School community for their generous support in making Macquarie House Day such a success.

Mrs Jo Murdoch

Head of Wellbeing K-6



Tiago Colic (Kindergarten) enjoyed the activities of Macquarie Day.

BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

EUROPE TOUR

2025

Fifty-two students and six staff from Years 10 to 12 embarked on a European History Tour in April, travelling through Italy, Germany and France. Designed to enhance the Ancient and Modern History curriculum, the tour offered students a unique opportunity to engage with history beyond the classroom.

The journey began in Italy, where students explored the heart of the Roman Empire – Rome. They visited the Roman Forum, Colosseum and Pantheon, gaining insights into Roman politics, religion and society – key elements of the Ancient History syllabus. In Sorrento, they reflected on life in a Roman provincial town and visited Pompeii and Herculaneum. These tours brought Roman daily life, social structures and engineering achievements vividly to life, while also highlighting the challenges of preserving ancient heritage.



In Germany, the focus shifted to 20th-century history commencing in Berlin, where students examined the rise of the Nazi regime, totalitarianism and the impacts of both World Wars. Visits to the Reichstag, Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe deepened their understanding of historical memory and Germany's efforts at reconciliation.

The tour continued in France, beginning in Normandy, where students visited D-Day landing sites such as Omaha Beach and Pointe du Hoc. These visits emphasised the human cost of war and the strategic importance of the Allied offensive. In Villers-Bretonneux, students followed an ANZAC pilgrimage, visiting the Adelaide Cemetery and the Sir John Monash Centre. These experiences fostered a greater appreciation for Australia's wartime contributions and democratic values upheld today.



1. Samuel Lane, Lucy Lyden and Lucinda Mott (Year 12) in Berlin.
2. The European History Tour students at Basilique du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre in Paris.
3. Noah Lane (Year 10), Zac Hannaford (Year 11) and Michael Thomas (Year 10) at the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.



The tour concluded in Paris, where students explored iconic landmarks including the Arc de Triomphe, Sacré-Cœur and Notre-Dame Cathedral of Paris. A river cruise along the Seine, ending at the illuminated Eiffel Tower, provided a memorable finale.

This immersive tour transformed history from an abstract subject into a living experience. It strengthened students' historical thinking, broadened their global awareness and deepened their appreciation for the freedoms enjoyed in Australia. Above all, it aimed to inspire a lifelong love of history and learning.

The European History Tour reflects Newcastle Grammar School's commitment to academic excellence, cultural understanding and authentic learning experiences.

Mr Chris Ferry

Director of Curriculum and Assessment



EXPERIENCING CHINA'S RICH CULTURE

In April, 21 enthusiastic Newcastle Grammar School students embarked on an enriching cultural expedition across China. Their journey took them through Shanghai, Nanjing, Xi'an and Beijing, where they immersed themselves in the richness of China's history, language and traditions.

A highlight of the tour was the time spent at Xiaozhuang Experimental School, where students participated in a variety of cultural activities. From donning traditional Hanfu attire and practicing calligraphy to savouring authentic Chinese cuisine, they embraced each experience with enthusiasm.

This journey was more than a sightseeing tour – it was a transformative experience designed to broaden our students' global perspectives and deepen their appreciation for cultural diversity. By stepping out of their comfort zones, they developed resilience, independence and a profound understanding of the world beyond our shores.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ms Patel, Mr Lumley and Mr Collins, whose dedication and care ensured the tour's success. Their guidance provided a safe and supportive environment in which our students could explore and learn.



Sincere thanks also to Xiaozhuang Experimental School for their warm hospitality and the invaluable opportunities they provided. The bonds formed during this exchange have strengthened our international connections and fostered lasting friendships. Our tour guides' deep knowledge and engaging storytelling brought China's vast history to life with their passion and clarity, making every moment memorable.

NGS is committed to nurturing well-rounded individuals prepared to contribute positively to a global society. Experiences such as the China Tour are integral to this mission, offering a wonderful opportunity for students to grow academically, personally and socially.

Ms Josie Yan

Language and Literacy Teacher

1. NGS students with the cast from a Shaanxi cultural performance.
2. Our students enjoyed bike riding along Xi'an City Wall.
3. The tour group at the Forbidden City in Beijing.

UNDERSTANDING, COLLABORATION AND SERVICE FOOTPRINTS OF UNITY



L-R: Matilda Hutton, Sophie Clee and Gabrielle Seckold (Year 8).

The Round Square Footprints of Unity Conference in Perth, Western Australia, provided a unique and enriching experience for the six Year 8 Newcastle Grammar School students who took part. They engaged in a week of immersive learning guided by the Round Square IDEALS – Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership and Service.

The journey began with a visit to Rottnest Island, where students explored its natural beauty and biodiversity, including encounters with quokkas and marine environments. A guided bus tour provided insight into the island's history and significance, fostering environmentalism and a deeper understanding of Australia's unique ecosystems and First Nations heritage of the island.

Students were welcomed into baraza groups (Swahili for "the coming together of different peoples"), which united youth from schools all around Australia, as well as from India, the United States of America and Bangladesh. This model exemplifies

“ This experience was a profound lesson in connectedness to land, Indigenous knowledge systems, and sustainable living.

Democracy and Internationalism, promoting mutual respect, cultural exchange and active participation in discussions about global issues and leadership. Round Square uses baraza groups as a way to foster international understanding and collaboration among students.

The conference program placed a strong emphasis on cultural education. Students engaged in workshops that included singing *I Am Australian* in both English and Noongar language, visiting local First Nations sites, learning First Nations music and dances and how to throw a boomerang. These activities highlighted Australia's First Nations cultures and traditions, encouraging students to develop empathy and awareness of our nation's complex social history. A visit to Fremantle followed, where students explored the Round House – Western Australia's oldest public building – and the Maritime Museum. These sites provided opportunities to examine the region's Dutch and English colonial history, maritime heritage and evolving social fabric.

After leaving Perth, students started a daily rotation phase across different areas to the south of Perth. In Bunbury, they participated in a dolphin discovery cruise and a historical scavenger hunt which strengthened their understanding of marine ecosystems and regional development through inquiry and observation. Others attended environmental and cultural workshops, including sessions that provided critical insights into local traditions, knowledge systems and sustainable land use.

A particular highlight of the tour was a visit to the Ngilgi Cave, where students learned from their Koomal Dreaming guide about how First Nations Australians read the environment to track seasonal changes, animal movements and community needs. This experience was a profound lesson in connection to land, First Nations knowledge systems and sustainable living.

Students also participated in the 'Eat Up' initiative, where they prepared sandwiches for children in need from the area, providing a valuable opportunity to serve. In addition, some created possum boxes to be placed around the host school grounds, supporting conservation by providing shelter for native animals during the day and to nest with their young.

The Round Square *Footprints of Unity* Conference challenged students to think critically, act compassionately and collaborate across cultural boundaries. This is just one of incredible benefits of the Round Square network – attending conferences that provide our students with opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom. We actively encourage students to embrace these experiences on their journey to becoming globally minded leaders of the future.

Mr Jack Wheeler

Language and Literacy Teacher and Round Square Leader (Year 7-9)



Year 8 students at the Round Square Footprints of Unity Conference.

THRIVING IN YEAR 7

MUD, SWEAT AND TEAMWORK

Held at the start of each year, Newcastle Grammar School's Year 7 students are supported in their transition to Secondary School through a comprehensive two-week program aptly called THRIVE. The schedule of activities provides students with an engaging and dynamic introduction to the Hill Campus and its structure, ensuring they feel welcomed, connected and confident in their new learning environment.

With a focus on fostering friendships, building resilience, and developing essential skills, the program helps Year 7s adapt to new routines, expectations and challenges. Through a combination of campus tours, orientation tasks, team-building activities and outdoor experiences, students establish strong relationships with their peers and teachers – laying the foundation for a successful year ahead.

A highlight of the THRIVE program is the Raw Challenge – a high-energy outdoor obstacle course in Doyalson on the Central Coast. This exciting and unforgettable experience encourages students to push their limits, collaborate and embrace challenges with a positive mindset.

Set against a backdrop of muddy trails and physical obstacles, this year's Raw Challenge featured 32 intense trials designed to propel students beyond their comfort zones. From army-style walls and tunnels to rope swings and towering climbs, the course demanded more than just physical strength – it required determination, courage and, above all, teamwork.

From the outset, it was clear this was no individual pursuit. House groups worked together in tight-knit teams, cheering each other on, offering hands



of support and celebrating every small victory. Whether helping a classmate through a mud pit or encouraging them up a high wall, students embodied the NGS spirit of *Excellence in Action* – showing perseverance, empathy and unity.

Laughter and joy echoed across the course despite the physical demands. Mud-covered faces beamed with pride and the bonds formed through shared effort and challenge were unmistakable.

Crossing the finish line marked more than the end of a muddy adventure – it symbolised the strength of new friendships and the foundation of a supportive Year 7 cohort. The Raw Challenge encapsulated everything the *Thrive* program aims to nurture: resilience, connection, camaraderie and confident learners, ready to face future challenges.

Congratulations to Year 7 on a spectacular effort – we can't wait to see how you continue to grow throughout your journey at Newcastle Grammar School.

Mr Chris Ferry

Director of Curriculum & Assessment

1. William Toh.
2. Liyana Seng.
3. Tilly Lynch, Isla Willis, Chloe Elmes and Pippa Hassett.
4. Teamwork was a requirement for success at the RAW Challenge.

YEAR 11 BALL

REFLECTION, CELEBRATION AND GIRAFFES

The much-anticipated Newcastle Grammar School Year 11 Ball is more than just a night out. This annual event is a rite of passage that symbolises unity, growth and the transition to the final years of schooling. In the lead up to the celebration, students gathered on Friday afternoons for formal dance lessons, to learn the routine's build connection, work collaboratively and develop confidence.

The students presented their first dance, followed by speeches that drew inspiration from the beloved children's book *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae. The story acted as a metaphor for the students who spoke with heart and wisdom about individuality, resilience and the power of community.

An excerpt from the speech prepared by Year 11 students Jenny Park and Ali Zoghbi, captured the spirit of the night:



"Gerald the giraffe's story isn't about what he cannot do – it's about what he discovers he can. Tonight is about honouring how far we've come since we first opened this story together. We each have something unique to bring to the dance floor tonight. We're on the brink of our senior years, stepping into a future that will challenge us in ways we cannot yet imagine. But if there's one thing we've learned, it's that we are capable of more than we ever thought possible."

In a touching finale to the official proceedings, parents joined their children on the dance floor, embracing a memorable moment of reflection and anticipation for the new chapter ahead.

The Year 11 Ball was a celebration of every individual's unique rhythm and a beautiful affirmation of the values at the heart of Newcastle Grammar School.

Ms Marnie Thomas

Head of Positive Education and Language and Literacy Teacher



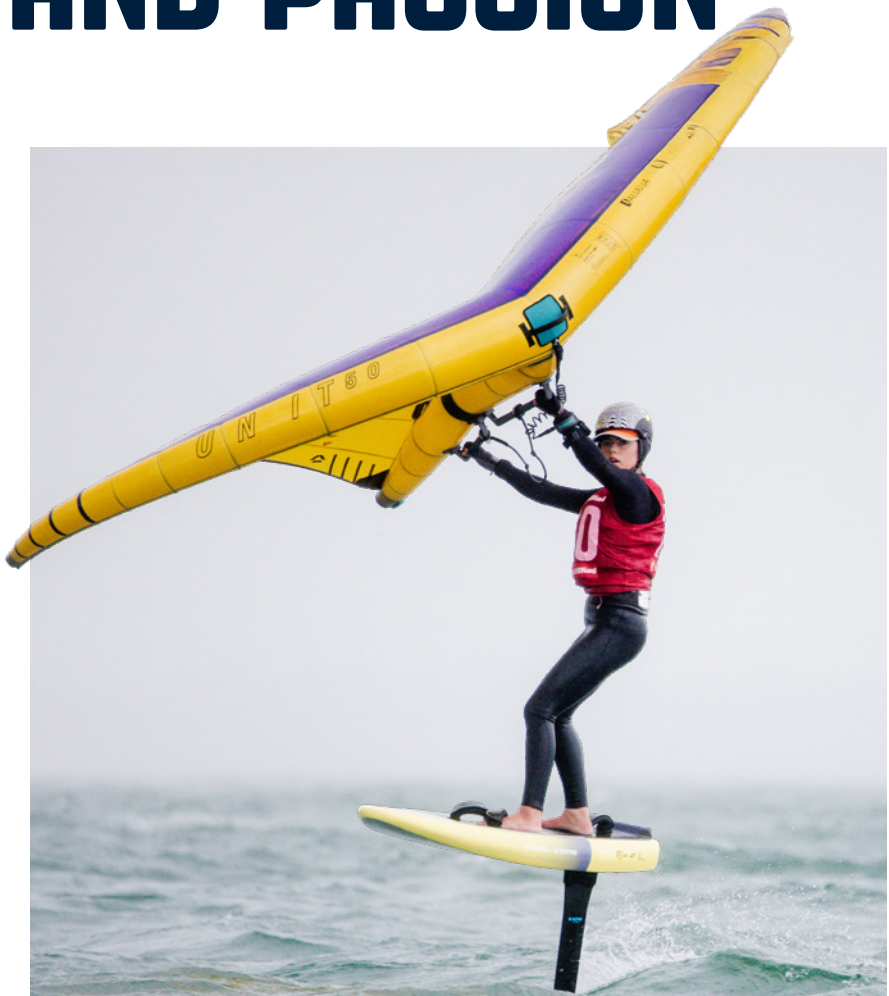
HARNESSING POWER AND PASSION

Ava Spencer (Year 10) is a rising star in the world of wing foiling. Often seen gliding across Lake Macquarie at speeds of up to 60 km/h, Ava is thriving in this new sport arena.

Wing foiling is a water sport that combines elements of windsurfing and hydrofoiling. Riders hold a 'wing' to harness the wind's power while standing on a board equipped with a hydrofoil, allowing them to hover above the water. Despite being relatively new, wing foiling is rapidly gaining popularity due to its accessibility and versatility.

Growing up along the shores of Lake Macquarie provided Ava with the perfect opportunity to not only learn this sport, but to practise and improve her technique to the point where she is now competing both nationally and internationally. At the 2025 Wingfoil National Championships in Auckland, New Zealand, Ava demonstrated exceptional skill and resilience. She emerged as the NZ Race Division Silver Fleet Women's Wing Foiling Champion after 14 challenging races over three days. She also won the Female Under-19 Youth division title to secure 11th place overall out of 49 competitors across all age groups in the Silver Fleet.

The regatta tested participants both physically and mentally, with unpredictable wind shifts ranging from strong squalls to complete lulls. Ava embraced these challenges, viewing the event as a significant growth opportunity.



Ava Spencer (Year 10) at the Wing Foil National Championships in Auckland.

Reflecting on her journey, Ava shared, "Setting goals for each practice session and pushing through the winter months has been tough but incredibly rewarding. Seeing my efforts pay off on the international stage motivates me to aim even higher."

This achievement marks Ava's second racing regatta; her debut was in Melbourne, where she secured third place among female competitors. Her objectives for the New Zealand

event were to gain race experience, refine her starts, and compete with confidence. After the first day, which involved six races over five hours on the water, Ava felt a sense of accomplishment, having met her personal goals. Her positive mindset and determination continue to drive her success.

Ava's journey in wing foiling is a testament to her grit, tenacity, dedication and passion. As she continues to set and achieve ambitious targets, the future looks exceptionally bright for this young athlete.



... the future looks exceptionally bright for this young athlete.

SENSATIONAL FOOTBALL SEASON

Oliver Cockle (Year 12) was recently named the Men's Emerging Jet Award winner for 2024–2025.

"The award was a complete surprise, but I was very glad to be considered for it. This year has been so rewarding because of the support I've had from the Jets coaches, my teammates and wider community. I was honoured to be recognised by them," he said.

Oliver began playing football at six years old for Cooks Hill. At Under 11s level, he joined the Newcastle Jets Academy. He now trains four mornings a week and attends an additional afternoon coaching session with former Socceroo and Olyroo, Clayton Zane.



Oliver's dream is to represent the Newcastle Jets in the A-League and to one day play for Australia. "If the opportunity arises, I would also like to travel the world with football."

Ms Sam Poolman, Head of Athlete Development, reflected, "We are all so proud of him and it has been a privilege to support him through our Supporting Athlete Performance (SAP) program here at NGS."

Congratulations on this outstanding recognition, Oliver.

“ The award was a complete surprise, but I was very glad to be considered for it...”

1. Oliver Cockle (Year 12)

Photo credit: Michael Gorton

Instagram @michael_gorton_images

2. Oliver was named Men's Emerging Jet Award winner for 2024–2025.

FUTURE LEADERS

ON THE WORLD STAGE

Arianna Stephen (Year 6) and Matilda Dyer (Year 10) recently represented Australia at the prestigious 2025 Future Problem Solving International Conference, held at Indiana University Bloomington in Indiana, United States. After participating locally, progressing to the State finals and then excelling nationally, the two earned selection to compete at this global event, which brings together over 2,000 top problem solvers from around the world.

Arianna competed in the Junior Division of Scenario Writing, which is a timed creative challenge where students have two hours to craft a scenario of up to 1,000 words based on a future-focused theme. Arianna's imaginative story earned her 2nd place in the world – a phenomenal achievement and a testament to her skill and creativity!

In the Senior Division, Matilda participated in Scenario Performance, where she was the only Australian in her category. She wrote and delivered a powerful five-minute piece exploring the importance of preserving ancient literature in the face of advancing technologies that threaten to erase cultural history. Matilda impressed the judges so much that she was invited to return next year as an official evaluator for Australia – an exciting opportunity that recognises her confident presentation.



1

While the competition was a highlight, the conference offered much more. Arianna and Matilda immersed themselves in a range of activities including literature classes, social events, a memento exchange and a variety performance, where Matilda also took to the stage. For both, meeting like-minded students from across the globe made the experience even more enriching and memorable.

Arianna and Matilda demonstrated distinction, determination and humility. Congratulations to you both.



2

1. Arianna Stephen (Year 6) placed second in the world in the Junior Division of Scenario Writing.
2. Matilda Dyer (Year 10) and Arianna Stephen (Year 6) competed at the 2025 Future Problem Solving International Conference.

FROM THE TARMAC TO TOP GUN

CAYMAN COWLEY

MEETS THE BEST

At just 15 years old, Year 9 student Cayman Cowley is already a recognised figure in international aviation circles – known not for flying planes, but for telling the stories of those who do.

Cayman's passion for aviation took flight at the age of 12 – sparked by his curiosity about aeroplanes and the remarkable people behind them.

"I became fascinated by the stories of the pilots, their aircraft and their missions," he says. "I didn't just want to watch planes; I wanted to talk to the people flying them."

Armed with a basic mobile phone and a \$29 wireless microphone, Cayman's first interview was with a recreational pilot at a small local airport. That single video sparked a wave of opportunity. He began reaching out to pilots, airshow performers and manufacturers, handling all communication, scheduling and content planning himself – sometimes with the help of his dad for logistics and filming.



Cayman Cowley (Year 9).



Cayman Cowley (Year 9), interviewing F-22 Raptor Pilot Major Samuel "RaZZ" Larson of the United States Air Force.

In just a few short years, Cayman has progressed from small-town interviews to media pass invitations for the world's biggest airshows. At 13, he was invited backstage at the Avalon Australian International Airshow, Australia's premier aviation event and in 2025, he returned as an official media guest, interviewing elite Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) pilots and Air Force personnel. His reputation and social media following have now taken him further afield.

In 2024, Cayman received media passes to two of the largest aviation events in the United States: Sun 'n Fun in Florida and EAA AirVenture Oshkosh in Wisconsin. There, he interviewed top USAF pilots, including the F-22 Raptor demo pilot, and captured behind-the-scenes moments with the Blue Angels, celebrity guests and leading aerospace innovators. One of Cayman's highlights of this visit was touring Elvis Presley's private jet with aviation YouTuber, Jimmy, from Jimmy's World.

Despite his growing fame – he now has over 60 million views across various social media platforms – Cayman remains grounded.

"It's surreal. Being recognised by pilots, CEOs and kids who say I am their favourite YouTuber, it is a reminder that hard work and passion can really take you places," he shares humbly.

Cayman's authenticity and professionalism have earned him respect and enabled him to build a brand on credible storytelling, using videos to spotlight the pilots he interviews. "Pilots are like real-life superheroes. I love seeing them open up, especially when they realise I know what I'm talking about," he reflects.

Cayman sees a future filled with content creation, aviation media and perhaps even earning a pilot's licence. But more than anything, he wants to inspire others to pursue their passions, no matter their age or access to gear. "I started with almost nothing. Just curiosity and persistence," he says. "If a 15-year-old school student from Australia can do this, anyone can."

Cayman Cowley's story is a powerful testament to the strength of passion, storytelling and self-belief and a clear example of what it means to let your dreams take flight.

To see Cayman's interviews visit **YouTube @BeSnappy**

AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR TRIATHLETE

ZARA CAMPBELL

Sports Prefect, Zara Campbell (Year 12), is making waves in the Australian junior triathlon scene. She claimed a silver medal at the NSW All Schools Triathlon Championships, secured a spot on the NSW All Schools team for the School Sport Australia Triathlon Championships, received a prestigious Commonwealth Games Grant and qualified for the World Triathlon Age Group Championships in both the Individual and Relay events. Zara is certainly proving herself to be a rising star in the sport!

Triathlon was not always on Zara's radar. Her journey began in 2020 after a conversation with Newcastle Grammar School's Secondary Head of Sport, Ms Leah Gilbert. At the time, Zara was pursuing a career as a professional ironwoman through Surf Lifesaving. However, Ms Gilbert recognised her natural abilities in Swimming, Cycling and Running and suggested she explore triathlons. Zara was keen for this new challenge.

At the time, Ms Gilbert was working with a number of para-triathletes in preparation for the Tokyo Paralympics. She arranged for Zara to join a swim training session with Australian Olympic Triathlon squad coach Dan Atkins and his high-performance team on the Gold Coast. Zara was immediately drawn to the elite training environment, finding herself excited by the intensity and discipline of the sport.

Due to several disruptions, Zara had to wait until 2023 for her first opportunity to race. When that moment finally came, she did not disappoint. In her very first competition, Zara secured a bronze medal at the NSW Combined Independent Schools (NSWCIS) Triathlon Championships. From that point on, she has been training hard to pursue her goals.

Zara's rapid rise continued when she was accepted into the Hunter Academy of Sport's Triathlon Program. In her debut year, she dominated several events, including clinching victory in her division at the prestigious Sparke Helmore Triathlon.

“Zara was immediately drawn to the elite training environment ...”



“Zara is an outstanding student-athlete who works incredibly hard in everything she does. She truly embodies what it means to be a SAP [Supporting Athlete Performance program] athlete, and we're incredibly proud of all her achievements!” Ms Sam Poolman, Head of Athlete Development commented.

With her eyes now set on international competition, Zara's achievements in triathlon are only just beginning.

Ms Leah Gilbert
Head of Sport

MAKING A SPLASH

SPIRIT, STRENGTH AND SPORTSMANSHIP

In two spectacular displays of pride, athleticism and determination, Newcastle Grammar School students made waves at the 2025 Primary and Secondary Swimming Carnivals – events that celebrated not only speed in the pool but also house spirit, teamwork and personal growth.

Primary Swimming Carnival: A Day of Record-Breaking Effort

For the first time, the Primary Swimming Carnival was held at the Charlestown Swim Centre – a fitting venue for a day bursting with colour, cheers and fierce but friendly competition. With 282 competitors diving into the challenge, students participated in a range of events including 25m, 50m and 100m races across all strokes.

The carnival began with a vibrant House cheer-off, where Macquarie, Shortland, Hunter and Tyrrell set the tone with spirited chants and energy that echoed throughout the aquatic centre. The enthusiasm was infectious and carried through every race.

From the sidelines to the starting blocks, students showed courage, camaraderie and a shared drive to do their best. There were also moments of brilliance in the pool, with several NGS records being rewritten:

- Clayton Ho (Year 5) – new records in 100m Freestyle (1:16.07) and 50m Freestyle (34.52)
- Rachel Sverdllov (Year 6) – four new records: 100m Freestyle (1:12.03), 50m Freestyle (33.55), 50m Backstroke (39.28) and 50m Butterfly (35.43)



Primary Age Champions 2025

AGE GROUP

7/8s

9s

10s

11s

12s

CHAMPIONS

Siena Grove and Henry Giles

Georgia Holmes and Fletcher Niven

Molly Waerea and Clayton Ho

Rachel Sverdllov and Dominic Josey

Emily Williams and Jake Avery

After a day of thrilling races and inspiring sportsmanship, Macquarie claimed victory in the overall House Points Trophy with 1,798 points. Shortland, however, took home the House Spirit Award – demonstrating that enthusiasm and support are just as important as competitive results.

Secondary Swimming Carnival: Tyrrell Takes the Title

The Secondary Swimming Carnival, held at Lambton Pool, matched the excitement and energy of the younger students. The event launched the 2025 House Championship season with resounding participation and a spirit of healthy rivalry in every lane.

Students gave their all across both main and dive pool events, supported by enthusiastic cheer squads and a buzzing atmosphere. A total of 14 school records were broken on the day – a testament to the talent and determination of our Secondary swimmers.

Record Breakers:

- Zara Campbell (Year 12) – 50m Backstroke
- Ruby Carter (Year 9) – 50m Freestyle, 100m Freestyle
- Alexandra Noonan (Year 11) – 50m Freestyle, Breaststroke, Backstroke, Butterfly
- Franki Roberts (Year 9) – 50m Breaststroke
- Jacob Samokhin (Year 9) – 50m Freestyle, Butterfly, 100m Freestyle
- Daniel Vesey (Year 9) – 100m Freestyle
- Shortland Junior Girls & Tyrrell Intermediate Girls Relay Teams



Secondary Age Champions 2025

AGE GROUP

CHAMPIONS

12/13s

Bronx Dillinger and Chloe Elliot

14s

Jacob Samokhin and Gabrielle Seckold

15s

Ruby Carter and Daniel Vesey

16s

Gabby Waerea and Jesse Walter

17s

Alexandra Noonan and William Sullivan

18s

Zara Campbell and Tyler Trethan

After a hotly contested day, Tyrrell was crowned House Champion with a commanding 2,298 points, ahead of Hunter (1,843), Macquarie (1,822) and Shortland (1,645).

Students who placed in the top two of their age group events progressed to represent NGS at the Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Secondary Swimming Championships.



Unity Through Challenge

Across both Carnivals, our students exemplified excellence, resilience and community. Whether breaking records or cheering from the sidelines, every student played a part in creating two truly memorable events that showcased the vibrant spirit of NGS.

HRIS

2025 was a historic year for NGS, with both Primary and Secondary winning their respective HRIS Division 1 Swimming Championships, an unheralded achievement in the history of both the School and the Association. The Primary NGS Swimming team kicked off the winning run with a series of records and many podium finishes.

Primary outstanding achievements included one HRIS new record, 13 first place finishes, two relay team wins and two Primary Age Champions.

The Secondary team continued the winning momentum, chasing a remarkable seventh consecutive title. Our swimmers delivered with grit and grace – breaking eight HRIS records, collecting five Age Champion titles and securing seven Age Team Champion awards. Their outstanding efforts ensured NGS retained the HRIS Championship crown in 2025.

Mr Daniel Kozey

Director of Co-curricular (K-12)



PRIMARY SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

Primary students have not only showcased their skills but have done so with great team spirit and determination, delivering outstanding performances across Swimming, Futsal and Cross Country.

Swimming

Following the Newcastle Grammar School Primary Swimming Carnival, a team of 26 swimmers dove into the Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Division 1 competition with focus and energy. Their hard work truly paid off as NGS Primary secured the overall championship marking a proud milestone for the entire School community.

Notable achievements include Rachel Sverdlov (Year 6), who broke the HRIS record for the Under 11 girls 100m Freestyle, setting a new benchmark with a time of 1:10.00. The team dominated the 50m races, collecting 13 first place finishes along with numerous second and third places. Our Under 10 boys' and girls' Freestyle relay teams powered to victory, while the girls' 11-13 relay team fought hard to finish second. Clayton Ho (Year 5) and Daisy Falconer (Year 6) also earned Age Champion titles, adding to the list of individual honours.

Futsal

Following success in the pool, 40 students participated in the Newcastle Futsal Gala, where five NGS teams took to the court. The Under 10 boys showed resilience, bouncing back from a group stage loss to claim the grand final with a 3-1 victory. The Under 10 girls also made it through to their final, narrowly losing 2-1 in a tightly contested match.

The Senior girls pushed their way to the grand final, finishing as runners-up after a hard-fought game. A standout moment was the rare and exciting quarter-final between Newcastle Grammar's Senior boys A and B teams. In a tight match decided by a penalty shootout, the A team edged through before finishing their run in the semi-final. This unique showdown highlighted the strong talent within the NGS Futsal squads.

Cross Country

The sporting action continued with the HRIS Cross Country Carnival. The team faced a challenging course featuring steep hills and muddy stretches. Despite the tough conditions, the students approached the day with great enthusiasm. Some aimed to secure spots at the NSW Combined Independent Schools (NSWCIS) Carnival, while others focused on pushing themselves to complete the course and support their teammates. Thomas Boyn (Year 5) and Daisy Falconer (Year 6) both secured Age Champion medals. The day was filled with plenty of memorable moments with grit and determination on display. Congratulations to all students who have taken part in Sport opportunities so far this year – your efforts have exemplified dedication, teamwork and individual perseverance. Well done.

Mr Cameron Logan

Primary Sports Coordinator



EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE

SECONDARY

SPORTING

SUCCESS



House spirit came alive in a sea of vibrant colours, enthusiastic participation and spirited cheering at the 2025 Secondary Swimming Carnival. With valuable House points on the line, competition was fierce. Congratulations to Tyrrell House, who claimed victory in this year's Carnival.

Newcastle Grammar School then took to the water at the Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Division 1 Secondary Swimming Championships, chasing a remarkable seventh consecutive title. Our swimmers delivered with grit and grace, breaking eight HRIS records, collecting five Age Champion titles and securing seven Age Team Champion awards. Their outstanding efforts ensured NGS retained the HRIS Championship crown in 2025.



Beyond HRIS, our elite swimmers continued to shine on the State stage. At the Association of Independent Co-Educational Schools (AICES) and NSW Combined Independent Schools (NSWCIS) Championships in Sydney, Franki Roberts (Year 9) was named 15 Years girls Age Champion, while Ruby Carter (Year 9) and Jacob Samokhin (Year 9) earned Runner-Up Age Champion honours.

Special recognition goes to Jacob Samokhin, whose stellar performance at the NSW All Schools Championships included two gold medals, a silver and a new record in the 50m Butterfly. Jacob will represent NGS and New South Wales at the School Sport Australia Championships later in the year.

A heartfelt thank you is extended to our Senior Swimming cohort for their years of dedication, leadership and service to the NGS Swimming program. As they graduate, we celebrate their legacy and look forward to welcoming them back as proud alumni.

Sporting Highlights

NGS students have embraced a busy semester across a variety of sports including AFL, Surfing, Netball, Basketball and Soccer. Notable highlights include our Opens Basketball team, who earned a Wildcard entry to the Basketball NSW State Schools

Championships in Penrith and the Open Boys Soccer team, who finished Runners-Up at the HRIS Gala Day.

The winter Co-curricular Sports program is also thriving at NGS. Nine students have progressed to the NSWCIS Cross Country Championships, with Annabelle Miller (Year 12) and Harry Boyn (Year 12) crowned AICES Age Champions, and Rosie Boyn (Year 11) and Sebastian Chalhoub (Year 8) named Runners-Up.

The NGS Netball program continues to flourish in the Newcastle Netball Association Winter Competition, while our new Strength and Conditioning program, led by Dr Colin Sanctuary, is enhancing performance and wellbeing across all sports.

Anticipation is also building for an exciting international Rugby friendly in Term 3 as our squads prepare to host Weydon School from the United Kingdom.

Ms Leah Gilbert
Head of Sport



A heartfelt thank you to our Senior Swimming cohort for their years of dedication, leadership and service to the NGS Swimming program.

CLASS OF 2013

AFEEYA AKHAND



From the classroom to the forefront of foreign policy and social advocacy, Afeeya Akhand's instinctive international outlook and drive for meaningful change have shaped a remarkable journey.

For Afeeya and her three siblings, Newcastle Grammar School was more than a place of learning. Growing up close to the Hill Campus, their family's memories of Newcastle are forever intertwined with their time at NGS. Afeeya, who graduated as Dux in 2013, spent 11 formative years at the School and fondly recalls adventurous school camps, playing the viola in the orchestra and the inspiring teachers who nurtured her love of learning.

During her school years, Afeeya discovered she shared her father's passion of academia. This began with immersing herself in subjects like Geography and Modern History, where she developed a broad worldview and strong research skills that extended beyond the classroom, feeding her insatiable curiosity about humanity. After graduating from NGS, Afeeya pursued a Bachelor of Laws with Honours and a Bachelor of Finance at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, followed by a role with the Department of Defence. Initially drawn to a career in corporate finance,

she soon discovered an interest in national security and foreign policy – prompting her to pivot towards a Master of International Security at the University of Sydney. Today, Afeeya is a researcher with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), focusing on critical issues such as regional security, Asia-Australia relations, climate change and social cohesion.

A key achievement for Afeeya, was leading an ASPI report on the Australia-South Korea bilateral relationship in 2024. Her work took her to South Korea to gather research insights and the report was later launched at an event in Canberra by the South Korean Ambassador to Australia.

Beyond research, Afeeya is deeply involved in advocacy, particularly in the anti-racism space. As a young Bangladeshi-Australian woman, she understands the challenges faced by marginalised communities and actively promotes inclusive opportunities. Through her involvement with Careers in Colour, a non-profit organisation supporting professionals of colour, and by mentoring young ANU students, Afeeya is committed to levelling the playing field for diverse voices in national security and foreign policy.

"If we are to have a foreign policy approach in Australia that is truly reflective of our people, we need to incorporate all the linguistic, cultural and racial diversity that we have in Australia," said Afeeya.

Looking ahead, Afeeya envisions pursuing a PhD and embracing opportunities for further travel – whether through work and conferences, reconnecting with family across the globe or exploring new destinations for leisure.

Afeeya appreciates the role NGS played in shaping her aspirations. She encourages current students to embrace their unique identities, seek

out mentors and allies, recognise the boundless opportunities before them and believe in their own potential.

"During my time at NGS, having the opportunity to learn foreign languages and study Modern History and Geography really helped me form a sense of self and develop my interests in the social sciences. This ultimately provided the academic background I needed to work in the foreign policy space," she reflected.

Afeeya's remarkable career and dedication to advocacy truly embody the spirit of NGS. Her journey is not just a celebration of success, but an inspiring reminder of the impact education, ambition and community can have in shaping a purposeful future.



1. Afeeya Akhand, Class of 2013.
2. Afeeya led an ASPI report on the Australia-South Korea bilateral relationship.

CLASS OF 2008

JARAAD KADER

Jaraad Kader (JK) graduated from Newcastle Grammar School in 2008 and went on to study Medical Radiation Science (Radiation Therapy) at the University of Newcastle. He knew he wanted to help people in the medical arena and after researching his options, found this path particularly interesting. With his three years of course work completed, he undertook a required one-year internship, with placements at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA) in Sydney and the Orange Base Hospital. Inspired by his experience, JK accepted a full-time job at RPA following his graduation.

After two years, JK returned to study part-time at the University of Technology Sydney, pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA). He was approached by Boston Scientific – a global medical technology company – to work as a Clinical Specialist Representative, focusing on pacemakers, implantable cardiac defibrillators and cardiac resynchronisation devices. He later transitioned into the role of Territory Manager and eventually moved into a Marketing role across Australia and New Zealand. It was during this time he met Pam, an Irish 'lass' who soon became his wife.



Mr Peter Juchniewicz, Head of PDHPE, caught up with JK during a visit to NGS.



Jaraad Kader is working to increase awareness and blood donations.

Early in 2024, JK noticed a lump on his neck. At first, he ignored it, however, a biopsy revealed an aggressive form of blood cancer: Burkitt's lymphoma. This is a particularly fast-growing cancer requiring immediate and intensive chemotherapy. JK's regime was 16 consecutive days of chemotherapy per round.

JK's unique ability to connect with people allowed him to use this experience to benefit others. During his first treatment cycle, his gym community (98 Gym Newcastle), family and friends rallied together and raised \$5,000 for the Haematology Unit at Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital. Still, JK wanted to do more. He asked a nurse for guidance on how people could help. The answer was simple: give blood, because 34% of blood donations go to people going through cancer treatment! So, while undergoing his own often painful treatment, JK and fellow NGS alumnus, Madeline Bunder (Fitzgibbon), established the donor group How Bloody Good to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation and to encourage more people to give. As part of this campaign, JK was featured on local radio, TV news and participated in several podcasts. Between organising the group and riding his (converted) bike in the ward, he "found some time

to do chemo!" After three rounds of treatment and four months in hospital, JK was declared clear. He returned to work just two weeks later.

JK visited NGS to reconnect with some of his old teachers and speak to Year 12 students. He offered them some valuable advice: "Things can change very quickly. Firstly, don't take life for granted. If there is something you want to do, then go after it now. Another chance may not come around. Secondly, donate blood! There's a good chance in life that you or someone close to you will need blood at some stage." The current statistic states that one in three people will need a blood transfusion, however only 1 in 30 will donate.

JK is currently working four days per week, is still promoting How Bloody Good and has raised more money for blood cancer research and support in the 2025 World's Greatest Shave campaign. JK loves spending time with his wife, Pam, and two daughters.

If you would like to become a blood donor, consider registering under the How Bloody Good group through Lifeblood and help JK's group continue to have a meaningful impact on the community.



Smiles transforming lives

MORGAN WISHNEY | CLASS OF 2000

**SPECIALIST
ORTHODONTIC
CARE**

Take the first step toward your dream smile in an environment that is friendly, professional, and caring. We strive to make the orthodontic journey as comfortable and easy as possible.



Scan to book
an appointment
or call 4942 3769
NO REFERRAL NEEDED

newcastleorthodontics.com.au

Newcastle
ORTHODONTICS
Smiles Transforming Lives

CLASS OF 2000

DR MORGAN WISHNEY

When Dr Morgan Wishney reflects on his time at Newcastle Grammar School, he credits more than just academics for shaping his journey. It was the strong values instilled in him by his hard-working parents, camaraderie among his peers and a timely nudge toward self-belief that set the foundation for a life of dynamic purpose.

Now an orthodontist and the owner of Newcastle Orthodontics, Morgan admits he did not begin his school years as a model student. But by Year 9, something clicked. Surrounded by dedicated educators such as Mathematics teachers, Mr Merv Filby and the passionate Mr Mitchell Brain, Morgan was inspired to pursue aspirational ambitions. Together with a cohort that celebrated academic achievement, he started to apply himself with unrelenting focus. "I went from getting Cs and Ds to all the A classes," he said. It marked a turning point in both attitude and trajectory.



Morgan Wishney, Class of 2000.

Morgan began his tertiary education in forensic science combined with law, where fatefully, he met his wife, Erin. But during his honours year, a faulty chemistry machine gave him time to reassess. Observing friends in dentistry, whose hands-on work and fulfilling careers inspired him, he made the bold decision to enrol in dental school in Adelaide. That choice began a journey that took him to Launceston, Tasmania, where Morgan and Erin bought a home and a dental practice then started a family.

Morgan furthered his studies entering a highly selective orthodontics program in Sydney. Within a few years, the family was back in Newcastle where Morgan purchased and continues to grow Newcastle Orthodontics.

What distinguishes Morgan's story is not just his professional success, but how consciously he has shaped a career around values of balance and introspection. His work is attentive and impactful: teaching at the University of Sydney, contributing to the cleft palate team at John Hunter Hospital and providing care through the public dental clinic. At the heart of it all is a genuine joy for helping people smile – quite literally.

"Orthodontics is the best job in the world," he said, without a hint of hesitation. "All I do is make people want to smile. It's such a privilege." Especially impactful is his work with cleft patients. Alongside a large team of dedicated professionals, Morgan has the opportunity to support many of these patients from infancy to early adulthood. "I'm meeting them at a



Morgan working in his clinic at Newcastle Orthodontics.

time when there is a fundamental level of need and that gives my job a lot more meaning."

In the early days of running a bustling practice while raising young children, Morgan struggled with burnout. A nearby Buddhist temple in Launceston offered meditation classes. Attending these profoundly reshaped his outlook. Now a regular practitioner and teacher of meditation, Morgan is developing workplace programs for healthcare professionals to support mental wellbeing, driven by a deep belief that 'our greatest asset is our mind'.

His recommendations for current students and fellow alumni are both sincere and practical: "You are allowed to change direction. What matters is your attitude and your effort. Take opportunities when they come – because you don't know if they'll come again."

Morgan's journey, marked by reflection and a readiness to adapt, reminds us that success is less about having a fixed plan and more about being open to growth. Whether he's fitting braces or helping other professionals, Morgan embodies the best of a life thoughtfully lived.



All I do is make people want to smile. It's such a privilege.

CLASS OF 2000

DR HUGH GOOLD

Hugh always knew that his passion for science would shape his future – but little did he know he would go on to shape the future of science itself. Driven by curiosity and determination, his journey came full circle when he recently returned to the Newcastle Grammar School Science labs where it all began. He reflected on the profound influence of the educators at School whose infectious enthusiasm and encouragement helped ignite his lifelong love of learning.

After graduating from NGS in 2000, Hugh completed a Bachelor of Science at the University of Sydney. He then continued his study with a Master of Philosophy in Fungal Biotechnology at Macquarie University, followed by a PhD in Plant Molecular Biology from the University of Sydney and Université Aix-Marseille. Reflecting on this brave move, Hugh said, "Moving overseas (twice) was the most important and thorough education I had. London is a tough place to live, but every day is a lesson about history and culture. Moving to France blew my mind and I learned a new language!"

Hugh's passion for science – particularly synthetic biology – has paid off. In January 2025, he achieved a remarkable milestone where his research was published in the prestigious Nature Communications journal, marking a significant advancement in the field of gene technology.

Hugh's latest achievement is nothing short of extraordinary. As a scientist with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), he has led an international research team on a pioneering project with the potential to revolutionise medicine, agriculture and environmental sustainability. His work focussed on constructing the final chromosome in the world's first synthetic yeast.

"In simple terms, this project has allowed us to construct a



Dr Hugh Goold in his laboratory.

genome – this means that we can not only understand DNA more deeply, but open the door to new ways of combating diseases like cancer, developing healthier food, or improving the environmental impacts of our industries," said Dr Goold.

Using baker's yeast (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*), Hugh and his team demonstrated how synthetic genomes could be designed to enhance food production and environmental resilience. "In our agriculture sector, the possibilities for applying these techniques are endless. We can engineer crops that thrive in harsh conditions – such as drought or acidic soils – and even refine livestock breeding by selecting the best genetic traits," added Dr Goold.

This breakthrough represents the largest single piece of DNA ever constructed in Australian history, placing Hugh at the forefront of genetic research.

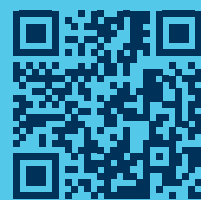
Hugh's advice to current students is, "Don't be afraid to do something different and take a brave step – but always stick to your principles. You'll find that sometimes the diversions along the way are the most interesting."

Dr Goold is set to continue his studies working to better understand plant life, fungal pathogens and how to improve breeding programs. While his groundbreaking work makes a global impact, Hugh's journey is a testament to the power of perseverance, hard work and the value of a strong support system in achieving truly remarkable accomplishments.



NGS ALUMNI

YOUR PLACE TO CONNECT



Connect online

Visit the NGS Alumni platform
alumni.ngs.nsw.edu.au

2025

MUSIC FESTIVAL



The 2025 Music Festival was a fantastic celebration of talent, creativity and House spirit. After weeks of preparation, our senior students delivered standout performances that wowed the audience. It was a joy to welcome four Newcastle Grammar School alumnae to support the next generation of performers. Serving as guest judges were Rachelle Schmidt (Class of 1991) for Macquarie, Alice Jeffery (Class of 2024) for Tyrrell, Sarah Brown (Class of 2014) for Hunter and Jenna Montgomery (Class of 2022) for Shortland.

Their passion for the performing arts and commitment to giving back truly inspired our students.

A huge congratulations to Tyrrell, this year's well-deserved winner!



1. Tyrrell House – The 2025 Music Festival Champions.

2. We were thrilled to welcome back four NGS alumnae as guest judges: Alice Jeffery (Tyrrell), Rachelle Schmidt (Macquarie), Sarah Brown (Hunter), and Jenna Montgomery (Shortland).

VALE

SHIRLEY KING

Mrs Shirley King commenced work at Newcastle Church of England Girl's Grammar School on 16 June 1970. At the time, there were approximately 130 students and 25 staff. She remained a key member of staff at Newcastle Grammar School from 1970 until 1999.

It was a very small community school and Mrs King was the 'go-to' person for everyone. Prue Fletcher, School Captain in 1977, reflected: "Mrs King used to keep everyone going, including us girls. Mrs King ran everything! She was the bursar, student affairs officer, secretary and probably the School media too."

Mrs King was also the great link between the Church ownership years,

the Pittwater House period and the School's return to administration in Newcastle under Mr Alan Green's leadership. Ms Judy Wotton, former Head of Primary, was fortunate to have worked with Mrs King and commented, "She was one of the warmest, most caring and thoughtful women I have ever known. She also had a lovely sense of humour."

Ms Wotton added, "NGS owes her so much. I would even say her being there helped the survival of the School. It was a small caring community and she indeed was the lynchpin, a truly humble beautiful human being. Mrs King always thought of others, never herself and thus endeared herself to all."



Over her 28 years of service, Mrs King worked with five different principals. Her contribution to the School was immeasurable. Upon her retirement, Headmaster Green wrote, "Words are hard to find to express her loyalty, diligence, dignity and calmness in the quiet unobtrusive way that she has gone about her job. Mrs King will be sadly missed by all."

On behalf of Mr Matt Macoustra, Head of School, and the entire NGS community, we share our deepest condolences to Shirley's family as they mourn her loss.

OUR FAMILY HAS GROWN



Dr Lina, GP



Dr Ravi, GP



Dr Irsh, Psychiatrist



Ruby, Dietitian



Dr Patricia, Neurologist



Dr Charlie, GP



Dr Simon, GP



Andrew, Diabetic Educator



Peri, Podiatrist



Dr Kumba, GP



Dr Ehsan, GP



Simeon, Mental Health Nurse



Sonia, Physio



Lucas, Vestibular Physio

🏠 35 Gordon Avenue, Hamilton, NSW
 ☎️ 02 4962 1900 🌐 familycirclemp.com.au

SCAN TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT



Salt

PROPERTY

The modern and honest approach that's breaking records in **Sales**, and now also **Property Management**.



Salt Property is proud to support:



NEWCASTLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

+many more!