SPECTEMUR AGENDO

VOL. 42 | SUMMER 2026

NEWCASTLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL



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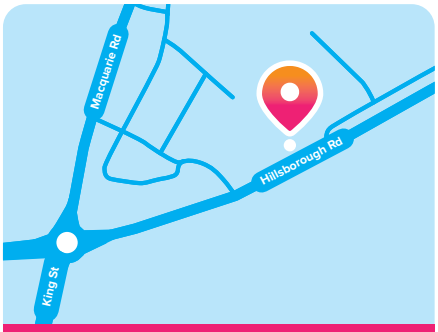
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HEAD OF SCHOOL

THE STORY OF NGS



Each edition of *Spectemur Agendo* offers us a moment to pause — to reflect not simply on what has been achieved, but on how we have gone about it. This volume is a particularly rich expression of that spirit.

You will read of outstanding HSC results, and rightly so. They speak to academic excellence, disciplined effort and the commitment of students who have pursued their goals with focus and determination. Yet, as always at Newcastle Grammar School, these results sit within a much broader story — one that values growth, balance and character alongside achievement.

That wider narrative is captured throughout the pages of this issue, and in the stories our students bring home each day. The launch of our new sports uniform is more than a change in appearance; it reflects a shared identity and pride in belonging. Co-curricular successes — across sport, the creative and performing arts, intellectual competitions, camps and more — remind us that learning flourishes when students are encouraged to explore passions, take risks and work together.

Community events, alumni stories and individual achievements further reinforce something we hold dear: that this is a school shaped by people and relationships, not just programs and outcomes.

What connects all these stories is action: respect shown in teamwork, integrity evident in effort, service lived through contribution and excellence pursued with humility. These are not abstract ideals. They are visible each day in classrooms, on sporting fields, on stage and in the quiet moments that rarely make headlines.

As Head of School, I am deeply grateful to our students, staff, families and alumni who continue to bring our values to life. Together, we are part of something enduring — a community where young people are known, supported and challenged to become the best version of themselves.

May this edition both celebrate what has been achieved and quietly inspire what comes next.

Mr Matt Macoustra
Head of School



The inter-house chess tournament was a true showcase of strategy, composure and competitive spirit.



Kindergarten students were excited for their first Speech Day.

> “… this is a school shaped by people and relationships, not just programs and outcomes.

PARK CAMPUS

A PLACE OF CONNECTION AND GROWTH



As we reflect on our first year as a full Primary campus, it is clear that the changes to our site have impacted more than our physical environment; they have deepened our sense of community and belonging. In the NSW syllabus, students learn that places are special because of the meaning and connections they hold. Throughout 2025, the new spaces at Park Campus enabled us to create a vibrant, connected Kindergarten to Year 6 community where families and educators work hand in hand to support every child's learning journey.

Author Dr James Comer reminds us, "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." Our expanded facilities have allowed us to host a greater range of events that strengthen partnerships with families and celebrate the richness of our community.

The 2025 calendar was full of opportunities for connection. We began with information evenings where the new classrooms were opened to families. Meeting staff, and seeing the learning areas in person, provided parents and carers with clarity and confidence for the important and ongoing collaboration of home and school.

The Creative Arts Showcase celebrated student creativity in ways that brought pride and joy to participants and audience members alike! Student-led assemblies empowered children to share their learning journey, while events like the K-12 Family Fun Afternoon, Easter celebrations, Book Week, and gatherings for Father's Day and Mother's Day reminded us that schools are places where traditions and relationships matter. New opportunities also emerged; our inaugural (and incredible) Year 6 Student Leadership team introduced new traditions including termly House Days and a deeply moving Year 12 clap-out tunnel that farewelled the graduating students from the place where many had begun their formal schooling.

These experiences highlight the significance of place in education. A school is not just a group of buildings but a cultural and social hub that shapes identity and belonging. When students see their school as a special place, they develop pride and ownership, which fosters engagement and wellbeing. For families, the school represents a site for partnership and shared responsibility for growth. By creating spaces that welcome and include, we have ensured that learning extends beyond the hours of the school day.

As we reflect on 2025, we celebrate not only what has been built but who we have become: a K-6 campus where every child feels supported, every family feels connected, and every event strengthens the bonds that make our community thrive.

Mrs Belinda Nichols
Head of Primary



Crazy Hair Day was just one of the culture-building activities in 2025.

CLASS OF 2025

CONGRATULATIONS

We are incredibly proud of the outstanding HSC results achieved by the Class of 2025, with impressive individual successes across a wide range of subjects. We also celebrate the compassionate, thoughtful and adaptable young adults they have become – ready to make a positive impact in the world.

The completion of schooling marks the culmination of 13 years of dedication, perseverance and hard work. These results are a reflection not only of the students' efforts but also of the support and encouragement of parents, teachers and peers throughout the journey.

We are thrilled to announce that five NGS students received an ATAR above 99; congratulations to Charlotte Knauer 99.4, Siena Latham 99.3, Jem Fidyk 99.3, Barnabas Toth 99.2 and Claudia Wills 99.15.

In addition, William Bird, Molly Boyle, Ronan Brown, Lucas Burton, George Carr, Leila Cunsolo, Zara Campbell, Julian Feltrin, Abbey Hutton, Vanessa Kuru, Samuel Lane, Feliz Lamoureux, Noah Lorenz, Jack Martin, Annabel McKensey, Sadie Smart and Laura Trout earned ATARs above 95. What an outstanding achievement!

We are pleased to see remarkable success in a range of subject areas, which demonstrates the breadth of expertise of our teachers across all faculties. Notable subject areas with exceptional results include Biology, Drama, Engineering Studies, English Extension 2, Legal Studies, Maths Extension 2 and Physics.

Congratulations to the staff and families who have worked together to prepare this cohort well, across their Kindergarten to Year 12 journey. You've created an environment of curiosity, generosity and excellence in which our students can flourish and achieve their personal best.

"To the Class of 2025, thank you for the meaningful contributions you've made to the life and culture of Newcastle Grammar School," said Head of School, Mr Matt Macoustra. "On behalf of the school community, I wish you every success and happiness as you embark on the next chapter of your journey."

Mrs Leanne Lynch
Head of Curriculum Administration

HIGHLIGHTS

Five students
achieved an ATAR above 99

40%
of students received an ATAR of 90 and above (46 students)

22%
of students received an ATAR above 95 (25 students)

99.4
was the top ATAR for an NGS student

Seven students
were named on the NSW All-Round Achievers list

94
Distinguished Achievers (receiving a Band 6 result in one or more subject)

NOMINATIONS

English Extension 2
Young Writers Showcase – Olivia McGee

Drama
OnSTAGE Individual Performance Nomination – Josie Doyle, Lucienne Roberts and Claudia Wills

OnSTAGE Group Performance Nomination – Josie Doyle, William Harvey, Jasper Lance, Lucienne Roberts, Samuel Roberts, Dean Vertzayas and Claudia Wills

Visual Arts
First Class 25 Art Exhibition Selection – Anjali Kana

ALL-ROUND ACHIEVERS

Students who obtained a mark of 90% or more in at least 10 course units.



Charlotte Knauer 99.4
ATAR Dux



Siena Latham 99.3
NGS Dux



Jem Fidyk 99.3



Barnabas Toth 99.2



Claudia Wills 99.15
98% for Drama
OnSTAGE Individual Performance Nomination
OnSTAGE Group Performance Nomination



Connor Elvish 97.9



Lucienne Roberts 97
OnSTAGE Individual Performance Nomination
OnSTAGE Group Performance Nomination

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS



Mitchell Chung 98.45
Engineering Studies 97% - 7th in NSW



Olivia McGee
English Extension 2
Young Writers Showcase Nomination

> These results are a reflection not only of the students' efforts but also of the support and encouragement of parents, teachers and peers through the journey.

YEAR 11 ACCELERATED STUDENTS

Newcastle Grammar School offers an Accelerated Program in Mathematics, Business Studies and Biology to support students with skill and passion to excel in these areas. Congratulations to the following Year 11 students for their outstanding Year 12 academic results.



Keely Rao
3rd in NSW for Year 12 Business Studies



Yejia (Thomas) Wang
100% in Year 12 Maths Advanced - 14th in NSW
50/50 in Maths Extension 1



Emily Levitt
97% for Year 12 Biology - 15th in NSW

VALEDICTORY

A YEAR 12 TRADITION



At the conclusion of our Valedictory Chapel Service lies a tradition that speaks to the spirit of Newcastle Grammar School. As the final hymn fades, the roll is called for the last time, the graduating Year 12 students step through the great doors and the celebrations move outside. The path from the Cathedral, across the road and back to Hill Campus becomes a corridor of love, pride and excitement. The applause of the clap-out carries our graduates forward, surrounded by family, friends and peers. This moment marks both an ending and a beginning: a farewell to the familiar and an embrace of the limitless possibilities ahead.

Through this tradition, we celebrate not just the end of Year 12, but the remarkable journey that has brought the cohort to this moment. Thirteen years ago, these students began a path that would shape their character, relationships and future. Along the way, there were times they walked alone, times they leaned on friends and times when family stood beside them. Through every challenge and triumph, they have grown stronger together.

What stands out most about this group is its cohesiveness and acceptance, their diversity and inclusivity. These students have supported one another through the rigour of challenging academic courses, assessments and exams, uncertainties, and so many successes and milestones. They gave encouragement freely and received it graciously. In doing so, they learned one of life's most enduring truths: genuine wellbeing flourishes when we understand that other people matter. When we show gratitude, when we are inclusive, and when we accept those who are different from us, we create communities that thrive. This, in turn, enhances our own lives.

The Year 12s have built strong relationships with each other and the broader NGS community. These bonds have been grounded in respect, curiosity, perseverance and shared purpose. Completing the HSC is a great achievement, and their success is a testament to the strength of these connections.

The world beyond school is vast and exciting, ready to be explored. There has never been a better time to be a young person stepping into what the future holds. We encourage our graduates to never stop learning — whether through formal education or by simply observing the world around them and being open to ideas that challenge their own. Embrace diversity of thought and experience, for it is in these moments that growth occurs.

As they leave Newcastle Grammar School, students should remember that the journey does not end here. It continues in every choice they make, every relationship they nurture and every dream they pursue. The world needs curiosity, kindness and a willingness to make a difference.

Congratulations, Year 12. We are proud of you – not only for what you have achieved, but for who you have become. Go forward with confidence; you have everything you need to flourish. It has been an immense privilege for me as both a classroom teacher and as Deputy Head of School to know you and to work alongside you. Watching you grow into the young people you are today has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Thank you for the joy, the challenges and the inspiration you have brought to our school community.

Dr Alan Parsons
Deputy Head - Wellbeing and School Life



















Scan the QR code to view the Class of 2025 Clapout video

CELEBRATING THE 2025 MAJOR WORKS

HSC SHOWCASE: CREATIVE HORIZONS



The HSC Showcase: Creative Horizons is fast becoming one of the highlights on the Secondary School calendar. Each year, this special event recognises the immense amount of effort that goes into the realisation of an HSC major work, project or performance.

Scan the QR code to view the 2025 Major Works catalogue

As always, the standard of the projects was exceptional at the 2025 Showcase, and to hear our students discuss their learning journey reflected just how much Deep Learning is embedded in our practice. The students were articulate, erudite and analytical. Many parents commented on the sophistication of the works as well as their ability to discuss it with such insight.

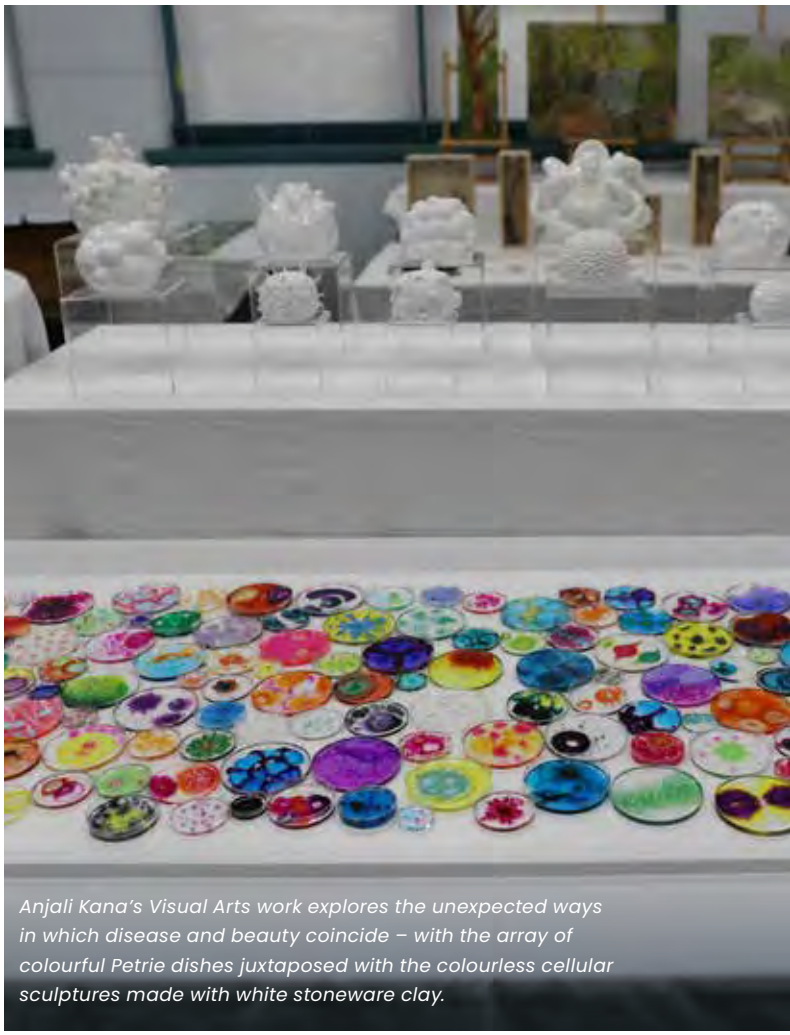
These works and the culminating event are the result of a collective effort; many people have been involved at various stages of their development. Students were fortunate to connect with a range of influential learning partners from the wider community, which enhanced their work and exposed them to some very interesting perspectives. It is a testament to the quality of the learning experiences Newcastle Grammar School provides to all our students.

"We are so proud of our students for the courage they've shown in exploring ideas, expressing themselves and striving for excellence," stated Head of School, Mr Matt Macoustra. "These projects tell us so much about who our students are and the passions they've followed."

We would particularly like to thank the dedicated teachers and staff who have guided the students on their journey this year. It has not always been smooth, but there is a lot to be learnt from the challenges.

- Design and Technology – Ms Rachael Said and Mr Ben Telfer
- Drama – Mrs Carla Holmes and Mr Andrew O'Connell
- English Extension 2 – Mrs Leanne Lynch and Ms Calli Vogel
- History Extension – Mrs Sam Jones and Mr Chris Ferry
- Music 1, Music 2 and Music Extension – Mrs Sara Cutler and Mr Danny Burley
- Science Extension – Mr Simon Halpin and Ms Stacey Preston
- Society and Culture – Ms Kathleen Fulcher
- Visual Arts – Mrs Julie Owers and Ms Jen Zec Cayton.

Mrs Lisa Peterson
Deputy Head of School – Learning and Teaching



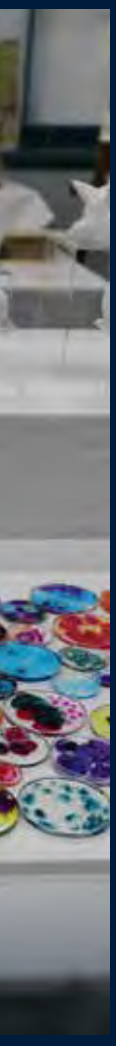
Anjali Kana's Visual Arts work explores the unexpected ways in which disease and beauty coincide – with the array of colourful Petrie dishes juxtaposed with the colourless cellular sculptures made with white stoneware clay.



Emma Tobin's History Extension major work explored Taiwanese Identity and the Power of Revisionist Historiography.



Josie Doyle, Lucienne Roberts and Claudia Wills performed their ONSTAGE-nominated Drama work, Liberté, égalité, franternité.





Noah Lorenz experimented with the Japanese honeysuckle flower as it has been used for centuries in traditional medicine, in Science Extension.



Music 1 student, Thomas Clarkson, presented a program of four works for tenor saxophone, showcasing nuanced expressive techniques and a broad dynamic palette, while highlighting his accomplished improvisation ability.

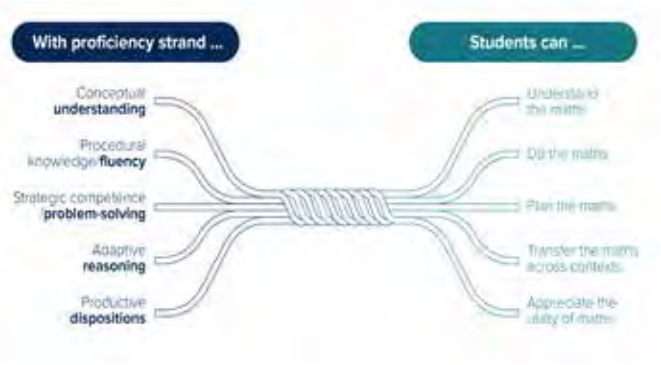
FAST FACTS, BIG THINKING

FLUENCY IN MATHEMATICS



Mathematics is much more than memorising facts or following formulas. It is about understanding patterns, solving problems, and thinking flexibly. But to reach that level of confidence and creativity, students first need strong mathematical fluency: the ability to recall and use basic number facts quickly and accurately.

According to the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO), developing maths proficiency involves building five interconnected strands: understanding, fluency, problem-solving, reasoning and positive dispositions towards maths. Each strand strengthens the others, and fluency plays a particularly important role in helping students access and master new concepts.



At Newcastle Grammar School, students are already experiencing firsthand our focus on developing mathematical fluency. Vivienne, a Year 3 student, shared, "I used to be really slow with my times tables, but the [Maths Fluency] sheets helped me become so much faster and achieve my goals at becoming better at maths." Her reflection highlights how consistent practice not only builds fluency but also supports students in developing confidence and positive dispositions towards mathematics.

When students have fluent recall of facts, like addition combinations, multiplication tables or number bonds (which show how a whole number can be broken into parts that add back to the whole), their working memory is freed up to focus on new learning. This reduces cognitive load, the mental effort required to hold and manipulate information. Without fluency, students can become overwhelmed as their attention is split between remembering basic facts and tackling unfamiliar ideas.

This connection between fluency and ease of problem-solving is something many students notice. Tristan, also in Year 3, explained that completing Maths Fluency sheets daily, "made us do it faster and faster each day, and it helped me because if I had a tricky maths problem, I would try and remember the facts from the sheet and I could answer the question easier."

Fluent recall supports flexible thinking, the ability to break apart numbers, substitute known facts, or use efficient strategies to make sense of new problems. For example, a child who instantly recognises that 7 × 8 = 56 can dedicate their thinking to understanding why multiplication works, how it relates to division, or how it applies when calculating area.

We see fluency as more than speed drills. It's about developing efficiency, flexibility and accuracy through games, pattern exploration and meaningful practice. Some students even take this further independently. In Year 3, Charlotte has been rehearsing her times tables facts at home and can now confidently answer all 144 multiplication questions in under eight minutes. Her enthusiasm demonstrates the power of fluency in motivating learners and fostering a sense of achievement.

AERO's research reminds us that mathematical learning is cumulative. Each new idea builds on earlier understanding, and fluency acts as a bridge that allows students to move confidently from simple to complex concepts. By supporting students to develop this early, we set them up for long-term success. Fluent mathematicians are more willing to take risks, persist through challenges and apply their learning across real-world contexts — from budgeting to building, from measuring recipes to analysing data.

Fast mathematical fluency doesn't just make maths easier, it makes deeper learning possible. By strengthening foundational knowledge and reducing cognitive load, we open the door to a lifetime of mathematical confidence, curiosity and capability.

Concepts informed by the Australian Education Research Organisation's explainer on Developing Maths Proficiency (2024).

Mrs Melinda Tucker
Head of Learning Enhancement K-6



PARTNERSHIPS CREATING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES



Deep Learning is more than a framework – it's a philosophy that shapes every aspect of our teaching in Secondary. Through partnerships with local and global organisations, our students and staff engage in meaningful experiences that foster knowledge, creativity and citizenship.

In 2025, STEM students took part in hands-on projects that required teamwork and problem solving. Year 10 Food Technology students partnered with the Christ Church Cathedral Community Lunch program to host a Christmas Dinner, while Year 8 explored the question "How do you roast a marshmallow on Mars?" with physicist and astronaut Josh Richards. HSC Science Extension students conducted authentic research alongside mentors, including a project on immune modulation in cancer with University of Newcastle (UoN) Professor Matt Dun.

In PDHPE, Year 7 learned about sun safety with the Hunter Melanoma Foundation; Year 9 explored diversity and equality in sport through the Olympics Unleashed program; Year 10 engaged with the RYDA Driver Safety Team; and PASS students developed resilience through workshops with The Movement Collective.

Global Studies students investigated water quality with Hunter Water, studied the Stockton sand dunes and visited the Murrook Cultural Centre to deepen their understanding of coastal and Indigenous land management. Commerce students worked with Young Change Agents to develop social impact products, and Year 9 Entrepreneurship students tackled the NRMA Future of Transport Challenge. Studies of Religion students engaged in dialogue with leaders from Christ Church Cathedral and Mayfield Mosque.

Sport for Jove, an award-winning NSW-based repertory theatre company that provides interactive education programs to NSW schools, brought Shakespeare to life in English. During Cultural Days, Language students explored French, Chinese and Japanese traditions, participating in activities designed to enrich their knowledge and understanding of different ways of life.

Year 8 took part in the first Creative and Performing Arts Deep Learning Day, followed by workshops including light painting photography, and the inaugural Festival of CAPA showcased creative achievements across the school.

Additionally, our staff continue to enhance their professional knowledge and skills through diverse partnerships. This includes building connections with the local First Nations community via the Wollotuka Institute (UoN) and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, completing the Youth Mental Health First Aid course, collaborating with schools across NSW to deepen understanding of Deep Learning, and working with colleagues in Professional Learning Groups to advance pedagogical practices in areas such as AI, assessment and feedback, gifted education, Visible Wellbeing, supporting neurodiverse learners and boys' education.

Through these rich collaborations, we remain committed to developing capable, compassionate and future ready learners.

Mrs Lisa Peterson
Deputy Head of School – Learning and Teaching

1. *Year 8 Chinese Language students on Cultural Day.*
2. *Fionn Spencer (Year 12) worked with Professor Matt Dun from UoN's Cancer Signalling Research Group.*

FRESH LOOK, PEAK PERFORMANCE

NEW SPORTS UNIFORM

Newcastle Grammar School is proud to launch the new sports uniform range in 2026, marking an exciting step forward in comfort, performance and contemporary design for students from Kindergarten to Year 12. After an extensive development process, the School has introduced a refreshed Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) uniform that will become the standard sportswear for all students on their designated PDHPE days.

The new items have been carefully considered to be practical, inclusive and suitable for active participation across all year levels. In addition to this core uniform, a collection of specialised items has been created for students who represent NGS in a variety of sports. These include tailored garments for AFL, Athletics, Basketball (including reversible singlets), Football, Netball, Oztag, Rugby and training activities. This tiered approach ensures representative athletes have access to purpose-built apparel while maintaining a cohesive and recognisable NGS identity across all sporting endeavours.

NGS partnered with OnTrack Sportswear, working closely with their design team to develop a collection that reflects modern aesthetics and incorporates state-of-the-art fabrics. The result is a durable, comfortable and high-performance uniform suite built to support students in training, competition and daily activity.
The range modernises and completes the suite of NGS uniforms, providing cohesion and alignment with the formal school uniform released in 2022.

A key priority during development was minimising cost for families. The transition to the new sports uniform will follow a generous two-year changeover period, providing families with flexibility and time to update items gradually. By the beginning of 2028, the new uniform will become compulsory for all students, ushering in a refreshed and unified look for Newcastle Grammar School.

Ms Carolyn Yost
Project and Enrolments Coordinator





















Scan the QR code to view the launch video for our new sports uniform

STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

CENTRAL TO STUDENT FLOURISHING

In 2025, our theme, Excellence in Action, provided a focus for both students and staff, inspiring us all to strive for improvement. Research reiterates the importance of professional growth and development in enhancing student achievement. Staff at Newcastle Grammar School are supported to engage in professional development experiences aligned with the strategic vision of the School and their professional goals. Throughout 2025, some teachers participated in opportunities to strengthen their skills, whilst others shared their knowledge and expertise with the broader educational community.



Many staff members have pursued advanced qualifications while managing full teaching loads: Ms Bianca Mangioni completed a Master of Education (Learning and Leadership), deepening her ability to design impactful learning experiences; Ms Heidi Lindgren earned a Master of Special and Inclusive Education, strengthening support for diverse learners; Mrs Tracy Pickford completed a Graduate Certificate in Education (Gifted Education); and Ms Matindi Twyford-Moore broadened her understanding of student wellbeing through a Graduate Diploma of Psychology. These achievements convert into richer classroom practice and more nuanced responses to student needs.

Staff also demonstrated their expertise beyond our school gates, presenting at conferences and contributing to greater educational dialogues. In 2025, Ms Mangioni, Ms Lindgren, Mr Will Berry and Mrs Belinda Nichols showcased innovative teaching strategies that build student skill and confidence. Microcredentials and specialist opportunities, such as Mrs Jessica Parsonage's scholarship to study Mathematics and Mr Berry's coaching of ten speakers for TEDx Cooks Hill, further enhance teaching quality and benefit students both within and beyond the classroom.

Wellbeing and Deep Learning initiatives, central to the School's approach, were also enhanced this year. Ms Marnie Thomas' national and international presentations position staff learning as central to student flourishing. Deep Learning, which prioritises understanding and critical thinking, is advanced by staff like Mr Jack Wheeler, Mrs Sophie Robb and Mrs Lisa Peterson, who had opportunities to share strategies for engaging students in complex, meaningful tasks.

Accreditation achievements and literacy initiatives further reinforce the School's commitment to excellence. Staff expertise is built through continuous improvement, modelling lifelong learning for students. Professional development is not optional – it is central to our vibrant learning community, inspiring students and staff to embrace curiosity, persistence and generosity in their own learning journeys.

Mr James Ireland
Head of Professional Growth and Development







1. *Ms Matindi Twyford-Moore earned a Graduate Diploma of Psychology.*
2. *Mr Will Berry, seen here coaching presenters at TEDx Cooks Hill, presented at the Mathematics Association of NSW annual conference.*
3. *Ms Marnie Thomas presented at the Positive Education Schools Association (PESA) National Wellbeing in Education Conference.*
4. *Ms Bianca Mangioni completed a Master of Education (Learning and Leadership).*

MORE THAN A MELODY
A NEW ERA

In every school, there are moments that mark a turning point — new buildings, fresh beginnings and the quiet evolution of a community. But behind these milestones are people whose contributions often go unnoticed, whose talents stretch far beyond the classroom whiteboard. Teachers, in particular, are known for their tireless commitment to students' growth, but occasionally, they reveal extraordinary gifts that remind us just how multifaceted their roles can be.

Such is the case with one of our Year 6 teachers, whose response to the transformation of our Primary campus was not just professional – it was profoundly personal. In a gesture that speaks volumes about creativity, care and community spirit, Mr Ash Hanna composed an original piece of music to celebrate the new building and the journey it represents. The work is a tribute not only to the physical renewal of our school but to the emotional and cultural heartbeat that educators help shape every day.

Mr Hanna's composition is more than a melody – it's a testament to the quiet brilliance that lives within our staff, and to the ways teachers serve above and beyond expectations.

"Music has always been a passion of mine, shaping not only my personal journey but also my professional path," Mr Hanna stated. "This passion led me to complete a Bachelor of Music and Education (BMUS/BED) at the University of New South Wales, where I deepened my love for both composition and teaching. The creation of my latest work, *A New Era*, began quite unexpectedly. Through a casual conversation with [Primary Music teacher] Ms Jane Parkes, the seed was planted and the piece began to take shape."





An excerpt of A New Era *was performed by NGS students at the 2025 Speech Day.*

"The title, *A New Era*, captures the essence of what the new building represents for Park Campus: a stunning, modern environment where students can learn, grow and leave their own mark, and where staff are inspired in their work. The composition also acknowledges the significance of place, recognising the traditional lands of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples, as well as honouring the generations of students who have come through Park Campus with curiosity and hope for the future. Written for full symphony and choir, the work is designed to unite both campuses," added Mr Hanna.

A New Era was brought to life at the 2025 Speech Day ceremonies. Thank you to the Senior Choir, Symphony Orchestra, Tones Choir (Year 3 and 4 students) and soloist Annie Hardie (Year 9) for the beautiful performances. A special thank you to Mr Leigh Sherringham, whose arrangement and organisation helped Mr Hanna's vision become reality.

Mr Andrew O'Connell
Head of Creative and Performing Arts



THE TREK

ACHIEVEMENT, RESILIENCE, CONNECTION



The culmination of the Stage 5 Outdoor Education elective is the Year 10 Trek – an authentic, multi-day expedition that brings together two years of purposeful learning, skill development and personal growth. What begins as a classroom exploration of outdoor theory ultimately becomes a hands-on journey that challenges students to think critically, act responsibly and work collaboratively in real outdoor environments.

Across Years 9 and 10, students undertake a comprehensive program that builds both capability and confidence in the outdoors. Foundational theory establishes the principles of safe and sustainable practice, including minimal-impact travel, navigation, risk management, environmental systems and human connections to nature.

Bushwalking, a central component of the course, allows students to apply navigation skills, read terrain and weather patterns, and develop the physical and mental stamina required for multi-day travel. Climbing units reinforce teamwork, trust and communication, while introducing technical systems and safety protocols. Water-based activities broaden students' experiences further, helping them adapt to dynamic environments and step confidently beyond their comfort zones.

Woven throughout the program is environmental stewardship. Through conservation studies and fieldwork, students examine human impacts, biodiversity and the value of protecting natural places. Time spent in alpine environments deepens this understanding, highlighting unique ecosystems and the specialised skills needed to travel responsibly in cold and fragile settings.

First aid training forms another essential strand, giving students the knowledge and practical responses required to manage injuries and environmental illnesses in remote locations.

The Year 10 Trek brings all these elements together. It is a celebration of resilience, leadership and shared experience – an opportunity for students to demonstrate maturity, independence and care for others as they navigate the journey they have spent two years preparing for. More than a final challenge, the Year 10 Trek stands as a celebration of achievement, resilience and connection.

Mr Drew Collins
Director of Operations and Experiential Learning





ADVENTURE, GROWTH, LEADERSHIP

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH JOURNEY

In 2025, Newcastle Grammar School integrated the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (DoE) as the foundation of its Co-curricular program for students in Years 8–12. This globally recognised framework empowers young people through a structured approach to skill development, physical recreation, voluntary service and adventurous journeys.

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award aligns closely with the School's graduate aims, promoting resilience, leadership and character development. All Year 8 students were registered for the Bronze Award, establishing a strong foundation for progression to Silver and Gold levels.

Thirty students are currently actively engaged in the Silver and Gold Awards. Congratulations to Molly McCauley and Sadie Smart in Year 12, and Jasmine Siedel in Year 11, who successfully achieved the prestigious Gold Award — a significant accomplishment that reflects their dedication and personal growth.

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is recognised by leading universities and employers for its role in preparing students for future success. Its principles, embedded in Kurt Hahn's educational philosophy, also align with the Round Square IDEALS promoting experiential learning, global citizenship and personal challenge.

The DoE provides a structured, holistic, world-recognised journey that supports students to grow, serve and thrive in our rapidly changing world. Prior to entering the Award in Year 8, students in Kindergarten to Year 7 explore a wide range of co-curricular activities designed to help them discover their interests and build a strong foundation for future participation.

Mr Daniel Kozey
Director of Co-curricular K-12


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1. *Sebastian Chalhoub (Year 8) Mountain Biking.*
2. *Jacob McGrath and Sanjitha Chitragar (Year 8) in the Food Technology kitchen.*
3. *Laila Clasie (Year 8) at the HRIS Cross Country Carnival.*

CREATING INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

K-12 CORE SPORTS MODEL





Newcastle Grammar School is implementing a refreshed approach to sport through a new K–12 Core Sport Model — a framework designed to promote broad participation, long-term development and meaningful learning through physical activity. This model reflects a renewed emphasis on creating inclusive opportunities for students to engage in sport, recognising its role in fostering critical thinking, teamwork, resilience and problem solving.

From Kindergarten to Year 2, the focus is on developing fundamental movement competencies, laying the foundation for confident and capable engagement in sport. These early years prioritise physical literacy, coordination and enjoyment, ensuring every student begins their sporting journey with the right skills and mindset.

From Year 3 onwards, students begin to access club-based team sports and representative pathways, with structured opportunities in Basketball, Netball, OzTag/Touch Football, Soccer (Football) and Rowing. These are supported by strong partnerships and expert coaching, offering consistent access to training and competition. Additional sports are introduced throughout the year based on student interest and age group suitability, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness.

For Upper Secondary students, the model supports a healthy balance between academic rigour and physical wellbeing. Regular engagement in sport is encouraged as a way to enhance cognitive functioning, stress management and overall wellbeing, complementing their academics.

The model also incorporates Pathway Carnivals in Athletics, Swimming and Cross Country, which serve as inclusive community events and selection platforms for regional, state and national representation.

A key strength of the model is its multi-year strategic framework, which enables staff to focus on long-term program development, athlete growth and professional learning. This ensures continuity, innovation and alignment with the broader educational vision of Newcastle Grammar School to develop students who are adaptable, resilient and confident.

Mr Daniel Kozey
Director of Co-curricular K-12



EXCELLENCE PINS

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE AND EFFORT



Acknowledging student achievement is vital to fostering a culture of excellence, growth and personal development. Through a clear and student-centred framework, Newcastle Grammar School celebrates the many ways students contribute to and thrive within our community — academically, creatively, and through co-curricular engagement.

Aligned with the School's mission, vision and RISE values (Respect, Integrity, Service, Excellence), the framework ensures that effort, improvement and achievement are acknowledged across all year levels. Awards reflect not only high performance but also commitment, resilience and meaningful contribution.

In the academic domain, students may be recognised through awards such as First in Subject, the Honours List or the GRIT Award, which highlight excellence, consistent performance or significant growth. Gold, Silver and Bronze pins — a new addition to the School's recognition system — are awarded based on achievement at National, State and Regional levels respectively, and are also presented to members of the Honours Society and the Dux of each cohort. These pins are available from Year 4 onwards and foster a strong sense of pride and belonging by visibly celebrating student accomplishments.

In the NGS Co-curricular program, students are acknowledged for their involvement in Sport, Creative and Performing Arts, Outdoor Adventure and Skills for the Future. The Contribution to Co-curricular Certificate recognises sustained engagement across multiple activities. Students may also receive Gold, Silver or Bronze Co-curricular Awards, based on regional, state and national level achievement within the various school pathways. Additionally, recognition can be attained for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award from Year 8, RISE Awards for upholding School values, and external awards presented by recognised organisations.

Celebrating holistic development, this comprehensive framework reflects Newcastle Grammar School's commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals prepared to lead, contribute and flourish, who take pride in their journey and achievements.

Mr Daniel Kozey
Director of Co-curricular K-12





The first recipients of the new Excellence pins.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

At Newcastle Grammar School, we believe that learning should be dynamic, relevant and inspiring. Excursions and incursions are vital parts of our approach, providing genuine learning opportunities that encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and for our students, a broader understanding of the world they live in.

Excursions allow students to engage directly with environments that bring their learning to life. For our Kindergarten students, a visit to Oakvale Farm transformed abstract concepts into tangible experiences. As they observed and interacted with animals, they began to understand the needs of living things and explore the properties of natural materials through sensory engagement. These foundational practices support early scientific inquiry and environmental awareness.

In Year 3, students explored biodiversity and conservation during their visit to the Australian Reptile Park. This excursion encouraged them to examine the interdependence of living organisms and their habitats, while also considering the human impact on ecosystems. Through observation and guided discussion, students developed geographical and scientific literacy, learning to describe the characteristics of places and the relationships between people and their environments.

Incursions bring expert knowledge and cultural experiences into the school setting, enriching classroom learning with real-world perspectives. Year 6 students engaged with history and human rights through a visit from the Sydney Jewish Museum. This powerful experience helped them understand the significance of historical events and the contributions of diverse communities to Australia's development. It also enhanced their ability to interpret and make connections between historical information and classroom novel studies.



Kindergarten (KP) at Oakvale Farm.

For Year 1 students, the Light and Sound Show provided an engaging exploration of physical phenomena. Through interactive demonstrations, students investigated sources of light and sound and how these forces influence our daily lives. This incursion supports their understanding of movement, energy, and the practical applications of scientific principles.

Year 4 students deepened their appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through a Bush Food tasting experience. This incursion encouraged them to explore traditional knowledge systems and the sustainable use of natural resources. By sampling native foods and learning about their cultural significance, students gained insights into the ways people interact with their environments and the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

Whether students are feeding farm animals, meeting reptiles, or tasting bush foods, they are building knowledge in memorable and impactful ways.

Mrs Belinda Nichols
Head of Primary



Sebastian Johnson (Year 3) at the Australian Reptile Park.



Neve Phelan (Year 4) sampling Bush Tukka.

THINKING DEEPLY

SPEAKING BOLDLY



The Junior Ethics Olympiad team of William Barker, Lucas Roberts, Evie Birchenall, Grace Williams and Isabel Lamble (Year 5)

A rich and varied landscape of intellectual competitions offered in Primary and Secondary years gives students the chance to challenge themselves, collaborate and excel across diverse disciplines, reflecting the School's commitment to nurturing curiosity, critical thinking and creativity.

Chess continues to thrive, with over 70 Primary students participating weekly under the expert guidance of coaches from the Sydney Academy of Chess. This partnership has elevated the program, with students attending regional competitions led by Mrs Muddle, and Secondary students competing in the NSW Interschools Finals and achieving success in the Country Schools Chess Championships.

Debating saw another strong season in the Heads of Independent Co-Educational Schools (HICES) Debating Competition, with 15 teams entered from Years 5 to 12. A standout achievement was Emily Hayes (Year 8), named Best Debater in the Middle Division from 104 teams across 55 schools.

Students also engaged in the Tournament of Minds, guided by Mr Fisher, Mrs Muddle, Mrs Murdoch and Mrs Wood, with teams qualifying for the NSW Final. A particularly outstanding accomplishment this year came from the Write A Book In A Day (WABIAD) competition, where one team was awarded 2025 NSW/ACT Best Book in the Middle School division – a remarkable achievement recognising the creativity, teamwork and literary talent of our students. Congratulations to Charlotte Blackmore, Sarah Park, Sarah Patmore, Neesha Rao, Evelyn Richardson and Ella Walters in Year 9 for topping the State!



The NGS da Vinci Decathlon team competed at the State competition, held in Sydney.

Students also took part in the Ethics Olympiad and OzCLO, the Australian Computational and Linguistics Olympiad, which challenges students to solve complex language puzzles using logic and pattern recognition. Participation in the da Vinci Decathlon and Public Speaking further highlights the breadth of intellectual engagement at NGS.

These opportunities continue to inspire students to think deeply, speak confidently and pursue excellence.

Mr Daniel Kozey
Director of Co-curricular K-12



The Tournament of Minds challenges students with collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking.

ROUND SQUARE

A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY



2025 was an incredible year for Round Square at Newcastle Grammar School. Our program, connecting over 260 schools across 50 countries, continued to build and flourish through increased student agency, stronger engagement and closer alignment with the Round Square IDEALS of Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership and Service.

Highlights included the continued development of our student voice and committees, an increased number of exchange opportunities, both domestic for Year 8 and international for Year 9 and above, and local and international tours such as Perth (Australia), Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and Whanganui (New Zealand). However, it is the growth of whole-school involvement that the Round Square leadership team is most proud of. The appointment of student and staff leaders at Park Campus has broadened horizons and expanded opportunities for students from K–6, enabling them to connect with peers around the world and raise awareness of global issues that matter most to them.

In September, four NGS students represented our community at the Round Square International Conference in Dubai, following a short pre-conference program in Singapore. The Dubai conference brought together more than 1,000 students from across the globe and challenged participants to engage deeply with the IDEALS, with a particular focus on environmentalism, adventure and service.

Through keynote speakers, Baraza group discussions and immersive learning experiences, students were encouraged to think critically about leadership, global responsibility and their role in creating positive change. Students took part in hands-on environmental initiatives, including climate education workshops, tree planting and conservation activities within a national park. Service learning formed a powerful part of the experience, with students working alongside local communities in a temple setting, packaging gifts and serving meals. One student reflected that while the experience was confronting at times, it was "meaningful and something I will carry with me for a long time."

Adventure was woven throughout the program, from desert experiences to a challenging hike that revealed UAE's natural landscape. Cultural exchange remained central, particularly during Cultural Night, where students celebrated diversity through music, dance and shared traditions.

Throughout the conference, students proudly represented Australia and formed genuine friendships with peers from around the world, developing confidence, empathy and independence. This experience was deeply transformative, reinforcing the value of global citizenship and highlighting the extraordinary opportunities available to NGS students through Round Square.

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





1. *NGS student delegates in Dubai with Acting Assistant Head of Global Studies, Ms Bianca Mangioni.*
2. *Round Square participants enjoying the geothermal wonders of New Zealand during their tour to Whanganui.*
3. *Students visiting their Round Square peers at Scotch College, Perth.*



The 2026 Student Leadership team following the Induction Service in Christ Church Cathedral.

STUDENT LEADERS

A PASSION FOR COMMUNITY

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." This quote about leadership is attributed to social anthropologist Margaret Mead and has been repeated by many, including on the television series *The West Wing*.

After an exceptional 2025 – guided by leaders who truly embodied our school motto, *Spectemur Agendo* – the next group of young people entrusted with continuing that legacy was formally inducted into their roles. They are our thoughtful, dedicated citizens, ready to unite the Newcastle Grammar School community and create positive change in their world.

The Leadership Induction Service was held in the Christ Church Cathedral, a tradition that remains one of the most memorable in our school calendar. Family, friends, students and staff gathered to celebrate the beginning of the new leaders' journey as custodians of NGS spirit and culture. Each student stood proudly to declare their commitment to live out the RISE values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence in all that they do.

Throughout the year, the whole Year 11 cohort participated in leadership training, engaging in rich discussions about what it means to lead with inclusivity, integrity and service. Together, they set a collective goal to foster a culture where every student feels heard, valued and connected. The 22 students chosen as our new prefects underwent a rigorous selection process involving written applications, interviews, speeches and voting.

Our leaders have already shown great motivation, planning initiatives and events that will strengthen connections across the school and in both the wider and global community. Their passion for collaboration and student voice is unmistakable. In addition to celebrating those inducted, we also champion the many students who lead quietly every day.



Dr Alan Parsons, Mr Matt Macoustra and Mrs Lisa Peterson with the new Vice Captain Evan Buckeridge, School Captain Jenny Park, School Captain Ali Zoghbi and Vice Captain Alexandra Noonan.

We look forward to seeing this new team of leaders inspire others through their actions, service and dedication throughout 2026.

Mrs Samantha Jones
Head of Student Leadership and Service Learning K-12

> They set a collective goal to foster a culture where every student feels heard, valued and connected.

BEN DUFFY

A LESSON IN LEADERSHIP



When Ben Duffy (Year 11) started high school, he lacked confidence, purpose and direction. So when he was introduced to the school-based Australian Army Cadet (AAC) Unit – a co-curricular program designed to instil discipline, teamwork and leadership among students – it became a turning point for the then Year 7 student. The program's alignment of both NGS and Australian Defence values provided Ben with the framework, opportunity and motivation for growth.



In late 2022, Ben transferred to the community-based 211 Army Cadet Unit (ACU) in Adamstown, a transition made more daunting as this new environment was filled with seasoned cadets. However, after only a few months in the unit, Ben was recommended for a promotions course by his commanding officer, in what became a pivotal moment for him. This endorsement was more than a promotion; it was a validation of his potential and capability. He completed the course and attained the rank of Cadet Corporal. He has since gone on to complete his Sergeant's course in 2024 and was promoted to Cadet Warrant Officer Class Two in May 2025, taking the position of Company Sergeant Major of his unit.

The highlight of his 2025 AAC activities was being promoted to the rank of Regional Cadet Under Officer (RCUO) and appointed the 2026 Regional Cadet Adjutant for the New South Wales Brigade, making him the second-highest ranking cadet in the State and requiring him to plan, manage and execute public events, promotions courses and the Annual Field Exercise. He has also enjoyed opportunities to give back to the ACC, such as instructing on the NSW Brigade Sergeant's Course in July, where he said he "…thrived in mentoring the future senior leaders of the Brigade, teaching and presenting complex lessons of duty and responsibility."

Ben's next goals include completing the Deputy Chief-of-Army Adventure Training Award, which is the highest individual achievement attainable in the AAC, and would "…signify mastery in complex situations, stress management and my ability to push myself to the edge of my personal limits," he stated. Additionally, he has ambitions to be promoted to a National Cadet Leadership Position, to play a significant part in ensuring that cadets across the country are able to enjoy the program as much as he does.

Ben's progress has not gone unnoticed within the Newcastle Grammar School community – teachers and peers have observed a marked increase in his confidence, engagement and initiative. This transformation underscores the profound impact of co-curricular programs and the broader educational philosophy at NGS, which emphasises holistic development and real-world readiness.



TEN YEARS OF SERVICE

EXPERIENCES TO LAST A LIFETIME

The 2025 Vietnam Service Trip marked ten years of Newcastle Grammar School's partnership with Long Hai School. Since 2016, NGS students have journeyed to Vietnam to teach, learn and participate in service activities alongside the Long Hai community, continuing our support even when travel was not possible. This year, the return to Long Hai with students and staff was filled with both purpose and familiarity for 34 students and six staff.



For many students, the immediate heat, humidity and pace of Ho Chi Minh City was challenging on arrival. Guided by long-time tour leader, Do Duc Tuan, students were introduced to Vietnamese history, culture and daily life in a way that made sense of the places they were seeing. As one student reflected, "driving through the city or rice fields, Tuan has the expertise and stories to make it everything interesting."

Our time at Long Hai School remains the core of the Vietnam trip and we were welcomed by the primary-aged students with open arms. As the group quickly moved into classrooms, playgrounds and service spaces, excitement was evident, as one student reflected, "When we got to the school it was amazing to see the kids run up and give us hugs and hi-fives immediately."

Across several days, our students taught lessons, ran games, danced, painted murals, restored facilities and prepared care packages for the Long Hai community and their families. The last day was filled with joy as we shared our Wiggle-a-thon and enjoyed the cultural dances of the locals. These special moments made the goodbye difficult, as with "heavy hearts we waved farewell."

During the trip, students were also challenged by visits to the American War Museum and the Cu Chi Tunnels — experiences many described as "harrowing but important." The Cambodia component of the tour extended these lessons. Visits to social enterprises like the Cambodian Circus, and various hospitality venues prompted discussion around culture, empathy, access and inclusion. Exploring Angkor Wat and surrounding temples reinforced the importance of understanding history through place and culture.

A decade into the Vietnam Project, the purpose remains clear — students leave more grateful for their opportunities and more conscious of their responsibility to serve others. As one student put it, "truly, it was an enduring experience and something we will carry with us for the rest of our lives."

Mr Drew Collins
Director of Operations and Experiential Learning







A FABULOUSLY FUN WAY TO CELEBRATE

FATHER'S DAY

Newcastle Grammar School was delighted to celebrate the special role fathers and father-figures play in our community at the Father's Day morning across both campuses in September.

Our annual Donuts for Dads celebration at Park Campus was a huge hit, bringing together dads, grandfathers and special role models for a morning filled with fun, food and sunshine. With donut in hand, dads and their children made the most of a beautiful sunny morning outdoors.

The playground buzzed with energy as families took part in a range of games and activities, from Giant Jenga and Connect 4 to mini golf, handball and more. There was plenty of laughter, a touch of friendly competition, and lots of moments worth remembering.

At Hill Campus, Secondary families gathered for a relaxed and friendly Father's Day Breakfast with coffee to go, creating space for meaningful conversations and time together amid busy routines. These moments strengthen the supportive relationships that help our young people thrive both at school and beyond.

Thank you to all who attended – your presence enriches our school community, and we are grateful for the care, guidance, and encouragement you bring to the lives of our students each day.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Newcastle Orthodontics for sponsoring both breakfast events.

Mrs Amy Falconer
Deputy Head of Primary

Thank you to our sponsor

Newcastle ORTHODONTICS
Smiles Transforming Lives


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1. Jasper, Christopher and Camden Brown.
2. Olivia, Caitlin, Andrew and Abigail Travis.
3. Harriet Dun with Matt Dun.
4. Ava, Yezdi and Maya Mistry.

CONVERSATION

CONNECTION COMMUNITY

More than 70 dads gathered for a casual and relaxed Friday evening focused on strengthening connections and sharing stories. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, with plenty of laughter, meaningful conversations and a genuine sense of camaraderie. It was wonderful to see friendships rekindled, fresh connections made and fathers united by shared values.

The evening served as a reminder that parenting is a collective journey — it truly takes a village. Opportunities like this help foster a strong and supportive community, where families feel connected and encouraged. These moments of togetherness play an important role in nurturing a sense of belonging within the Newcastle Grammar School community.

We extend our appreciation to all the dads who guide, encourage and inspire our students every day. Your presence, involvement and quiet support make a lasting difference in the lives of our young people, and we are deeply grateful for the positive impact you have at NGS.

Thank you to Earp Distilling Co. for the perfect setting, delicious food and excellent service.

We are also incredibly grateful to our generous prize donors whose contributions added an extra touch of excitement to the evening: Core Project Group, Fourth Wave Wine, Heal Urgent Care, Hungerford Hill Wines, Jenkins Legal & Advisory, Merewether Golf Club, SHAC Architects and Tulloch Wines.







Thank you to our prize donors

SHAC

Fourth Wave Wine

Heal Specialist Urgent Care

Hungerford Hill

CoreProject

jenkins Legal & Advisory

The Merewether

Tulloch

A Year of Growth, Community and Opportunity

As I reflect on the year that was 2025, I am incredibly grateful for the families, clients, and local communities the Salt team has had the privilege to support. Newcastle continues to evolve, and the neighbourhoods surrounding Newcastle Grammar School remain some of the most tightly held and sought-after in our region. With strong demand throughout 2025 and consistent growth across a range of markets, the year has reinforced just how special these pockets of our city are. As both a parent within the Grammar community and someone deeply invested in the local area, I see first-hand how important it is for families to feel connected, supported, and confident when making property decisions.

Salt proudly sponsoring

This year, Salt has proudly continued our involvement with the communities that make this region so vibrant, including, Newcastle Grammar, Newcastle Women's Knights, Merewether Greens, Merewether Surf Life Saving Club, Souths Netball, Hamilton South Public School, and so many more. These connections remind me daily why people choose to build their lives here.

Looking ahead, we are forecasting an even stronger 2026 as interest rates continue to ease and buyer confidence grows. Families are already enquiring about the year ahead, and competition remains high for quality homes close to the school and surrounding lifestyle hubs.



One of the greatest opportunities right now sits within our Salt Exclusives network. Many of our recent sales have taken place quietly off-market, where motivated buyers are thoughtfully matched with owners seeking privacy, efficiency, and a more personalised process.

If you are considering your next move in 2026, we would love to help. It is a privilege to support Grammar families as they plan their next chapter.

Warm regards,

Lyndall Allan





YEAR 11 CONFERENCE

INSPIRING FUTURES

The Year 11 Conference is an opportunity for reflection, connection and growth for Year 11 students before they step into their HSC year. Held over three days after the end of Preliminary Examinations, the conference offers a balanced program of wellbeing, leadership and academic preparation, designed to set students up for success in Year 12. Students engage with inspiring guest speakers, participate in workshops on personal and collective leadership and take time for observation and goal setting.



The 2025 program encouraged students to strengthen relationships within their Houses, work collaboratively to explore the RISE values in action and begin shaping the legacy they will leave. Sessions on goal setting, resilience and study skills provided practical strategies for navigating the academic challenges ahead, while activities with staff and peers reinforced the power of teamwork and shared purpose.

The wellbeing focus sessions encouraged students to pause, reset and look forward with optimism. Guest speakers shared personal stories of growth that deeply resonated with the students. Not all paths to success are the same, and our Year 11 cohort found joy in the micro-moments, connecting with each other, visiting alumni and professionals who shared their journeys.

The careers and pathways dinner event at The Merewether Surfhouse enabled students to engage in conversations with professionals from a diverse range of industries from an F-35 fighter pilot and Olympian, to environmentalists, medical professors, doctors, surgeons, engineers, lawyers, accountants and business owners. The guest list showcased the diversity of career paths available to today's graduates. Each student was thoughtfully seated with professionals aligned to their interests, subject choice and aspirations, ensuring tailored conversations and relevant advice. This experience offered valuable insights into future opportunities and helped students imagine the many directions their post-school journeys might take.

We thank all NGS staff, visiting speakers and students who contributed to this memorable experience. The Year 11 Conference truly marked the beginning of a new chapter of purpose and connection for the Class of 2026.

Dr Alan Parsons
Deputy Head of School – Wellbeing and School Life

1. *Thank you to the incredible guests who inspired the Year 11 students.*
2. *Ms Lauren Dawson, Senior Human Resources Business Partner, Port Waratah Coal Services with Emily Simpson (Year 11).*

CLASS OF 2025

A FOND FAREWELL

The Class of 2025 gathered with family, friends and staff for their Year 12 Graduation Dinner to mark the conclusion of 13 remarkable years of learning, growth and shared experience. The ballroom was filled with warmth, pride and celebration – a fitting reflection of a cohort that has journeyed together with generosity of spirit and genuine care for one another.

Throughout the evening, a strong and consistent theme emerged: that what truly endures from a school journey is not measured by results alone, but by relationships, moments of kindness and the support offered in times of challenge. School Captains, Molly Boyle and Shanuk Wickremaratchy, beautifully articulated that what shapes a young person most deeply is the guidance and encouragement offered during struggle and the quiet belief in them shown by others. They spoke with heartfelt gratitude of teachers and staff who not only guided learning but nurtured character – challenging them when needed and helping students become not just capable learners, but thoughtful people.

That sense of appreciation extended naturally to families. In a moving toast, Vice Captains, Jack Martin and Shilpi Salaria, honoured parents for their constant, often unseen support – for "holding up the sky" through ordinary, uncelebrated moments of care and love. It was a reminder that behind every milestone stands a network of commitment, sacrifice and unwavering belief.

Long time NGS parent, Mrs Allison Elvish, reflected on the constant that has defined her family's experience over many years: the tireless dedication of Newcastle Grammar School staff to create a safe, nurturing environment where young people are known and encouraged to flourish. Her words echoed the deep trust families place in the School and the gratitude they feel for those who walk alongside their children each day.

Ms Chantal Byrnes spoke of a Year 12 group defined by humility, kindness and creativity – students who committed fully to school life across academics, sport, service and the creative arts, not for recognition, but because they cared. Their natural leadership, particularly in the way they supported younger students, has left a legacy that will endure well beyond their final year.

In addressing the room, Head of School, Mr Matt Macoustra, expressed the hope that the students' time at NGS would be remembered for more than academic content. He spoke of resilience, collaboration and empathy as the lessons that matter most – qualities that will remain long after textbooks are closed and which will serve them well in whatever paths they choose next.

As the evening drew to a close – amid laughter, reflection and plenty of dancing – there was a shared sense that this was not an ending, but a milestone in a much longer journey. The Class of 2025 leaves Newcastle Grammar School with our deep pride and best wishes. They have contributed richly to the life of the School and will always remain an important part of its story.

Congratulations, Class of 2025. May you go forward with confidence, purpose and kindness.







> "Their natural leadership ... has left a legacy that will endure well beyond their final year.











HONOURING 107 YEARS

PAST AND PRESENT

The Founders' Day 2025 celebrations brought together alumni from Church of England Girls Grammar, Broughton School and Newcastle Grammar School alongside current students and staff to commemorate 107 years of history.

Christ Church Cathedral provided the reverential backdrop for the annual Eucharist, led by The Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart, Bishop of Newcastle, and The Very Reverend Katherine Bowyer, Dean of Newcastle. The special service recognised the significant impact of those who have gone before, upon whose foundation the Newcastle Grammar School of today was built.

Following the service, stories and laughter flowed over a delicious three-course lunch at the Newcastle Club. The 'Old Girls' of Church of England Girls Grammar School – some of whom boarded in the 1960s and 1970s – along with Broughton School alumnus, Judge Colin Davidson OAM, shared their reflections, experiences and wisdom.

We thank all who attended – your presence was deeply valued and we look forward to welcoming you back for future events.


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1. *1960s Alumna Jane Rankovich, Tanya Palmieri and Lorraine Samuels.*
2. *Libby Maskey (Class of 1972) and Kate Croft (Class of 1974).*
3. *Alumna Janet Ross (right) reconnects with former NGS staff member Judy Wotton.*
4. *Reminiscing at lunch, held at the Newcastle Club.*





CELEBRATING CONNECTIONS

2025 ALUMNI REUNIONS



Held in July, the 2025 reunions brought together generations of past students and staff, reflecting the enduring bonds formed among the NGS community.

Guests were greeted by current students who proudly led school tours, providing alumni with a glimpse into the vibrant life of NGS today. It didn't take long for smiles, laughter, hugs and enthusiasm to permeate the Horbury Hunt Hall.

Graduates from 1995, 2000, 2005, 2015 and 2020 gathered on the Hill Building Balcony and the traditional 10-year time capsule was opened by the Class of 2015. Cohort groups then headed out to various venues across Newcastle to keep the conversation flowing.

For Andy Howard (Class of 2000), reconnecting with classmates he hadn't seen in decades was a powerful reminder of the lasting and meaningful nature of the friendships made at school: "When you are part of a community like this, your relationships run pretty deep. I feel like we've all just walked in here, everyone has reconnected and picked up where we left off."

Past staff member, Mr Leigh Carroll, was excited to attend the event and delighted to be met with equal joy from alumni reuniting with some of their favourite teachers again. "You meet them now, exchange old stories and hear what they've been up to. It's so good seeing them again."

The alumni events were a celebration of friendship, belonging and the rich tapestry of connection, woven together by the threads of each individual who has played a part in the NGS story. Lifelong friends embraced while others reconnected for the first time in decades.

To all alumni and past staff who came Back to School, we hope you had a wonderful time!

SYDNEY REUNION

The Sydney gathering proved a great success, reuniting NGS Alumni in October. It was a celebration for all generations as Head of School, Matt Macoustra, welcomed alumni spanning eight decades – from 1946 to 2024. Former Headmaster, Alan Green, and his family also attended, sparking heartfelt conversations across the venue. The night was recognised as a unique opportunity to network - engineers, innovators, students and business leaders were united by their shared history at NGS. We look forward the next Sydney reunion event in 2026.

Stay up to date with alumni events and opportunities at alumni.ngs.nsw.edu.au



CLASS OF 2016

ELIZABETH BEHNE-SMITH



Elizabeth's adventurous spirit on display during a year's exchange in Switzerland.

Elizabeth Behne-Smith's journey since graduating in 2016 is a story of adaptability, curiosity and community. Today, she channels those qualities into her role at GWG Recruitment in Newcastle, connecting businesses with the right people and building stronger communities.

Originally from Canada, Elizabeth moved to Australia as a child and grew up in Newcastle's Bar Beach with her four siblings. Her adventurous spirit was evident early on. During high school, she spent a year on exchange in Switzerland. Immersed in a German-speaking community among postcard-perfect mountains, Elizabeth quickly learned to adapt, saying, "It made me grow up really quickly. I learnt that people live their lives very differently around the world. I learnt a new language and culture."

Returning to NGS after a year abroad meant joining a new cohort, but Elizabeth reconnected with her peers by embracing co-curricular opportunities. She credits inspiring teachers for shaping her positive school experience and encouraging big ideas.

After school, Elizabeth began a Business/Law degree at the University of Newcastle. Her strong ties led her back to NGS to a role at Park Campus OOSH, where she discovered a passion for early childhood education. After earning her Diploma of Early Education, she eventually became the OOSH Director. During this rewarding chapter, Elizabeth discovered that, in the process of hiring staff, she loved helping people find their career passion. Encouraged by a friend to follow her instincts, she was soon thriving in a global recruitment agency. Later she joined GWG as a Senior Consultant, specialising in the Technology Sector.

Elizabeth's current role feels full circle — her managing director is also from the NGS community, a reminder of the strong network that continues to shape her life. She attended the 2025 Back to School alumni reunion and volunteered at the Year 11 Conference, sharing insights into the evolving tech industry and encouraging students to stay open to change.

"Don't stress too much about whether the educational or career path you're on is the right one. Make the best decision you can, give it your all — and if it's not right, change direction," she advises.

Elizabeth's adventurous spirit remains strong. She recently returned from Europe after celebrating her wedding to Steven in a beautiful spring ceremony in the Hunter Valley.

Congratulations, Elizabeth and Steven!



Elizabeth recently celebrated her marriage to Steven.

Scan the QR code to visit the NGS Alumni Platform

CLASS OF 1968

JANICE FERNANCE (NEE MILLS)



For Janice Fernance, Newcastle Grammar School is the heart of a family legacy spanning three generations. Janice first walked through the gates of the Church of England Girls' Grammar School (CEGGS) in 1964, graduating in 1968. Today, her ties to NGS remain strong, with three grandchildren currently attending.

After leaving school, Janice pursued a rewarding career in education, a path inspired by her love of learning and desire to share that passion with young people. "I had a very fortunate childhood – challenging in some ways, because we were an army family and I attended six schools – but I also appreciate the adventure of living in different cultures," she remembers. "I think it was this experience that led to my passion for teaching."

Janice fondly reflects on many wonderful lunchtimes, excursions, teachers and friends that shaped her sense of community while at CEGGS: "School community is important, and I recall some of the girls I shared it with, both boarders and day pupils, from New Guinea, England, Wales and one whose parents were Italian."

Recently, Janice returned to Hill Campus with her family to recreate treasured moments captured in photographs from her school days. Standing in front of the Berkeley building – once home to the boarders' common room where she recalls Latin lessons with Mrs Kathleen Stewart – she posed with her grandchildren for a photo reminiscent of her formal class portrait. In Merrick Courtyard, lockers now line the walls where many lunchtime conversations were had. In Horbury Hunt Hall, she sat in the very place where her CEGGS Ball was held in 1966, bringing the past vividly to life.


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1 and 2. Janice Fernance with friends at the CEGGS Ball in 1966 and reminiscing in Horbury Hunt Hall in 2025.

Her connection with NGS continues beyond family ties. Janice has generously volunteered for the Year 12 HSC examinations, offering support to students at a pivotal time in their education. Her commitment reflects the enduring spirit of the School, valuing tradition, service and lifelong relationships.

Janice treasures the opportunity to reconnect with fellow alumnae from her era and always looks forward to upcoming reunion events. Each rekindled memory strengthens the bond between past and present – a reminder that the NGS spirit truly lasts a lifetime. For the NGS alumni community, reunions are a celebration of enduring friendships and the shared experiences that helped shape who they are today.

We invite all alumni, past parents and former staff to join the NGS Alumni network. Staying connected ensures that these stories, friendships and traditions continue to inspire future generations. Whether it's attending reunions, sharing expertise or career advice to current students, volunteering or simply telling your story, your involvement keeps the heart of NGS beating strong. Together, we can celebrate our history while building a vibrant community – benefiting generations for years to come.


3


4

3 and 4. In front of the Berkeley building with her peers in 1966 and her grandchildren Lincoln, Ethan and Zoe 60 years later.

CLASS OF 1946– BROUGHTON SCHOOL

HALDANE GRIFFITHS

Just a short stroll from Hill Campus, Hal Griffiths was born in 1926 at Bramley Court, The Hill. Growing up in Hamilton South, Hal and his brother, John, attended Broughton School, later Newcastle Boys' Grammar.

In 1947, Hal embarked on his engineering career at TC Pollard in Carrington where he spent nine formative years. From fabricating road graders to constructing massive oil tanks, these early experiences laid the foundation for a remarkable trajectory through the automotive parts industry, a sector which underwent rapid transformation in post-war Australia. Hal's career spanned Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, and included senior roles at Tutt Bryant, Lamb and Quinton Hazell. As Company Secretary and later General Manager, he saw more than 20 acquisitions, witnessing firsthand the dynamism of corporate growth.



Hal (bottom row, third from left) in the Broughton football team, 1940.


Hal in his Sydney home.

His work took him across the globe. Hal recalls being in Detroit, USA, during the week of President Kennedy's assassination and later flying to London to meet Sir Quinton Hazell himself, whose bold strategies propelled the company to extraordinary success. There were visits to Paris, meetings with industry giants like General Motors, and thrilling innovations that defined the era.

Beyond business, Hal cultivated a rich personal life. Upon leaving Broughton School, he joined the Junior Stockton Golf Club, a pursuit that foreshadowed decades of golfing enjoyment with his wife, Rosalyn. He and Ros, whom he met at Lakes Golf Club, shared a love of travel, golf, sailing and regular trips to explore the world. Their home reflects this spirit. The walls are adorned with memorabilia from adventures, including artwork of 'Nirvana', the yacht he helped crew in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race in 1952.

Music also plays a central role; Hal first learned piano at school and still plays daily – a practice Ros credits for his sharp mind! "It's a great way to relax! I enjoy the old standards by Kern, Gershwin, Porter, Berlin and Lloyd Webber," he said.

From Newcastle roots to global horizons, Hal Griffiths exemplifies a life lived with purpose, curiosity and joy. A favourite at reunion events with alumni from all generations, Hal's story continues to inspire.

VALE

CLEMENCE TULLOCH

Clemence (Clem) Tulloch (1935 – 2025) joined the Church of England Girls' Grammar School (CEGGS) in 1943 when the school was based at Morpeth, leaving in 1948 and returning in 1951. Clem maintained lifelong friendships with her schoolmates, and recalled her time at CEGGS with affection, "I'll always think of the Grammar School as a very happy place."

Her warmth and generosity extended far beyond her school years. Clem was deeply involved in her community – visiting older members, offering communion and leading sing-alongs. She was instrumental in connecting Old Girls at gatherings, often hosting annual lunches at her vineyard where friends would enjoy a beautiful day and pick grapes together.

Fondly remembered for her humour and kindness, Clem's influence touched many lives. As one friend shared, "There wasn't anything she wasn't involved in – her influence popped up everywhere, and she always joked she was 'related to everyone!'" We honour Clemence's legacy of friendship, service and joy. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.



Clemence Lord (Tulloch) with friends Elaine Greaves, Roma Hall, Betty Harris and Judith Hinds in the 1940s.



Clemence often attended Founders' Day celebrations at Newcastle Club and was honoured at the 2018 Centenary event.

VALE

MISS DOROTHY RAMPLIN

From 1972 to 2011, Miss Dorothy Ramplin inspired students at Newcastle Grammar School with her passion for Science and her unwavering dedication. Known for her strict yet engaging teaching style, she sparked a love for learning and guided many into successful STEM careers. She loved travelling and adventure, which led to teaching in several countries, and was an avid lawn bowler.

News of Miss Ramplin's passing prompted an outpouring of fond memories from former staff and students with one sharing, "Such a beautiful, dedicated and caring human. Dorothy was a force to be reckoned with. A laser sharp wit and a brilliant educator."



Miss Dorothy Ramplin in 2011.

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