

# SPECTEMUR

## AGENDO

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NEWCASTLE  
GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL



... as we all work together and care for one another, a stronger community will result.





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# FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

## SCHOOL LEADERS



**It has certainly been a whirlwind start as I begin my time here at Newcastle Grammar School. At the conclusion of my second week here, I reflected that there would not be too many roles in other walks of life where you can meet so many people within an organisation of more than 1,000 people all at once.**

Yet, I was afforded that wonderful opportunity at our marvellous Founders' Day service. While I might be stretching things a little, livestreaming enabled everyone to be connected and to hear the messages on the day.

That sense of connection has been the most important thing I have been made aware of since starting in my role. The students have a sense of joy being at their school — they are highly invested in all that they do at NGS. The staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are dedicated to making the experience for the students the very best it can be. The parents speak in such a positive manner about the experiences their children are having. It is a community that people are justifiably proud to be a part of.

Some events have, in my first few weeks here, demonstrated to me that this is a community looking to a bright and positive future. It has not necessarily come in the 'staged' moments of an assembly or commissioning service — but rather in the everyday events. Things have been genuine without any pretence and that is what has made it so delightful.

I was invited to meet with former students as several reunions were held on campus on a recent Saturday afternoon. I was struck by the absolute joy that those alumni had in seeing their peers, many for the first time in decades. As they reminisced, the discussions were not that their school time was perfect (there were some anecdotes that we shall not repeat here!), but there was a focus in the conversations about the balanced and outward looking attitudes that school life had left them with. An NGS education was seen as a great preparation for life. We can't ask for much more.

I was able to watch some of our students play in a Rugby game as part of a Hunter-wide school tournament. At the start of the match the team looked disjointed, not sure of what each other was doing. As you can imagine, this allowed the opposition team to take the advantage early on. But then, following a short break in play, the team suddenly looked more cohesive. They were talking and encouraging and ran out decisive winners. In the stands after the match the talk between the players, while exuberant following the win, was really process driven. They picked apart their performance, where things had gone right and why. The consensus seemed to be that it really meant something,

to do well and represent NGS proudly, particularly in front of the large band of parents who were there to support.

The final event that I reflected upon came in the most unexpected of circumstances, the evacuation drill. Following a calm procession across Church Street into the grounds of the Cathedral, staff and students waited patiently for the all-clear to be given to head back to class. It was in these minutes that I saw unscripted moments that really spoke to the life of the School. Senior students checking in with the younger ones, not just making sure they knew where to be, but rather saying hello, seeing what they were up to, how Term 3 had started for them. There is real connection, beyond wearing the same uniform and walking the same corridors. The students know and care for one another.

The American speaker and author Simon Sinek, in his work *Start with Why*, writes about the reasons he believes some organisations become significant, while others never exert any influence or meaning. His thesis contends, in broad terms, that before anything is done, an organisation must be able to clearly articulate and know why it does what it does. Everything else flows from there. NGS knows its 'Why' — to assist the young people we work with to be the best they can be. The things that are being done to achieve that are many and varied. The sense of community is at the heart of it all, valuing that as we all work together and care for one another, a stronger community will result.

**Mr Matt Macoustra**  
Head of School

# FROM THE HEAD OF PRIMARY



**“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.” – Benjamin Franklin**

**As I reflect on our first half of the school year, I can't help marvelling at the obvious delight coming from the faces of the children I see every day. The atmosphere of Inquiry Learning has become widespread and contagious. I see it in their environment where the possibilities to learn seem endless.**

Small children begin life intensely curious about everything and they express their curiosity with questions – enough questions to wear out even the most dedicated parent! “What makes the car work?” “Why is the sky blue?” “Where do the possums sleep at night?” But that level of curiosity doesn't last, which brings us back to education. As primary school teachers we need to continue to focus on facilitating curiosity in the learning environment.

“Curiosity is the engine of achievement.” – Ken Robinson  
Curiosity is the quest for new ideas and information. Students who are curious aren't satisfied with what they already know or have figured out. They go after what they

don't know or can't understand, and that missing information can become a driving need to discover.

Curiosity is powered by questions. As adults, it is important we encourage our children to want to find the answers, to pursue the missing information, to find or figure out what they don't know. This is a quest that culminates with a satisfied smile and a commitment to further questions and more learning.

Inquiring is more than just a way of learning; it needs to be recognised as being a way of living, of reaching out to the world, of forming relationships, making meaning and creating change. Children inquire from birth, as they seek relationships with the world around them. The desire to know is intrinsic and children in particular have an enormous capacity for questioning and observing. Inquiring is the most natural, exciting and meaningful way of learning.

At the heart of Inquiry Learning is a deep sense of curiosity, from which arises many substantial questions. It is this sense of curiosity and wonder that propels us forward and motivates us to learn. During Term 3 we are focusing on implementing the Inquiry framework into our Science and Technology units. Through the Inquiry process students will learn through active construction, making meaning by building connections between current understandings and new information and experiences. The Inquiry framework will allow each child's understanding of the world to develop in a manner and at a rate that is unique to them. In this transformational, inquiry-based approach, education is empowering, meaningful and lasting.

**Mrs Aicha Dyer**  
Head of Primary



*Dashiell Kumar, Year 4, and Kevin Zhao, Year 1, showing their curiosity with Year 1 Teacher, Mr Ian Gunther.*

# WELCOME MATT MACOUSTRA

**On behalf of the Board of Newcastle Grammar School, I would like to welcome Mr Matthew Macoustra to the role of Head of School. Matt brings over 30 years of educational experience to the role, including the last seven years as the Deputy Head of Barker College in Hornsby, Sydney.**

The Newcastle Grammar School Board commenced the search in mid 2022 to find the right person to lead the School after the resignation of the previous Head of School, Mrs Erica Thomas. The Board

wanted someone who was a highly qualified leader and exceptional educator with vision, integrity and commitment, who would embrace the values of the School and continue to drive the excellence for which the School is widely known.

After a global search, the Board announced the appointment of Mr Matt Macoustra in December 2022. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the Independent Schools sector and expressed an appreciation of NGS's commitment to educational excellence in an environment that equips students

to be their best. We are excited, both for Mr Macoustra and for our community, to build on the School's current successes and move into the next phase of our Strategic Plan to be recognised as the leading regional school and a world-class centre for learning and wellbeing.

Mr Macoustra received his Bachelor of Education from the University of Sydney in 1992 and a Master of Leadership and Management in Education, with Distinction, from The University of Newcastle in 2013. Following three years at Macquarie Boys' High School in



Parramatta, he joined the staff of Barker College as a Science, Geography and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teacher in 1997. In 2001, he accepted the role of Director of Sport and in 2008 joined the Barker College Senior Executive Team: firstly, as Head of Middle School and finally as the Deputy Head of School (K-12).

In his leadership roles, Mr Macoustra gained strong experience in managing the day-to-day operations of Barker, planning and implementing strategic priorities, and working in tandem with the finance, works and building committees. Mr Macoustra has enjoyed opportunities to impact the spiritual and ethical life of students as well as developing and nurturing the growth of middle leaders amongst staff.

He has expressed excitement at Newcastle Grammar's commitment to providing a world-class, holistic education for each student and working with the Board and the Executive Team to implement the Strategic Plan 2023-2025 and Masterplan. Mr Macoustra's warmth and authenticity underpins his enthusiasm for the role of Head of School which can be both challenging and rewarding. The Board is committed to a smooth transition for Matt and to provide him with support as he takes on this important leadership role.

"It is an absolute privilege to be afforded the opportunity to lead a school that so clearly values the holistic development of the young people within its care," said Mr Macoustra. "Newcastle is a city that offers so much. There can be no doubt that the School is in an exceptionally strong position to be an institution that leads the way as the city reinvents itself and continues to thrive. I am genuinely excited about all that lies before me in terms of getting to know the



city, the broader region and most significantly, the people. There are so many strengths to this school community, none more so than the wonderful young people who we have the privilege of working with."

It is my pleasure to welcome Matt Macoustra as Head of Newcastle Grammar School to lead the NGS community through the next chapter of its history.

**Ms Catherine Wilkinson**  
Chair of the Board



**Watch the Commissioning Service video for more highlights.**





# CURIOSITY, WONDER AND COLLABORATION

## ACADEMIC

**Primary Learning Festivals encourage students to take an active role in their learning. They provide an excellent opportunity to enhance students' educational experience and provide them with an avenue to showcase their knowledge and understanding of units studied.**

Newcastle Grammar School students work collaboratively and enthusiastically to demonstrate their learning to their peers, teachers and parents through a variety of interactive presentations, including video, in-person displays and immersive experiences.

This year, Learning Festivals have been held within our classrooms, providing an accurate depiction of what education in action looks like at NGS. These opportunities can help facilitate child-parent conversations, as well as allowing us to find ways to increase and improve the methods we use to support the learning process. From Science and Art to Space Exploration, States of Matter, Kindness Quilts and Neighbourhood Maps, our 2023 Learning Festivals have showcased dynamic and engaged learning in action.

These events are an integral part of our curriculum and are just one way our commitment to providing students with an

outstanding educational experience is demonstrated. We thank our families for partnering with us to deliver the best outcomes for each student, allowing each one to explore, develop and flourish.

1. Kindergarten student Edward Lopez with his mum, Prue.
2. Year 4 students: Nikolas Politis and his mum, Andrea; Ethan Chern and his mum, Elizabeth; Jake Avery and Emma Murphy, with Emma's mum, Chris.
3. James Huxley from Year 2 and his mum, Linda.
4. Kindergarten student Sean Bruce with his dad, Steven.
5. Madison Macpherson from Year 2 with her grandmother, Brenda.





“ ... our 2023 Learning Festivals have showcased dynamic and engaged learning in action.



# PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

**The Newcastle Grammar School graduates of today will transition into a vastly different world to that of generations past. The linear career progression that their parents experienced is no longer the norm.**

While students are still often asked the rhetorical question, “What do you want to be when you leave school?” the reality is that modern graduates will be employed across a range of different sectors in a now global economy. Compounding this uncertainty is the reality that many of the jobs these graduates will occupy do not yet exist.

We may not know exactly what lies ahead for our students, but we have the advantage of knowing what skills these students will need to successfully navigate their post school lives.

While graduates will still need to be highly proficient in the traditional domains of education, such as literacy and numeracy, employers today are equally interested in the less tangible skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and collaboration. They are seeking graduates who are flexible, resilient to change and who see employment as a continuum of their own learning.

Furthermore, these graduates will enter a world with significant challenges. The long-term consequences of the recent global pandemic, the realities of climate change, growing social and political division within our

region and increasing inequity all present complex global challenges confronting both our current and future generations.

As secondary educators, we must prepare students today for the uncertainties of tomorrow. NGS graduates will be charged with the responsibility of tackling some of the world’s most complex problems. The ability to memorise mathematical formulae and deliver prepared English speeches use skills which are fast becoming redundant. Today, students must be innovative and lateral in their thinking. They must be assertive communicators who think critically about the world and their place in it.



**NGS graduates will be charged with the responsibility of tackling some of the world’s most complex problems.**



*Year 12 students Eve Ashmore and Hayden Martinelli are preparing for a constantly evolving global landscape.*

# CURRICULUM REFORM: WHAT IT MEANS FOR STUDENTS

In May 2018 the New South Wales (NSW) Government announced a comprehensive review of the school curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 to 'ensure that the NSW education system is properly preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century'.

The first major review of the entire NSW school curriculum since the 1980s found strong community support for change. Recommendations include both short and long-term reforms that will deliver a new curriculum for NSW schools.

The final report, *Nurturing Wonder and Igniting Passion*, states overwhelming support from teachers for curriculum reform.

The aim of the new curriculum is to ensure that every student:

1. Learns with understanding.  
The crowded nature of the current curriculum, including the amount of content some syllabuses expect teachers to cover and students to learn, is not conducive to teaching in depth or helping students see the relevance of what they are learning. The new syllabus will aim to have teaching and learning that is focused on developing students' deep understanding of important concepts, principles and methods.



Year 8 student Harry Van Woerkom and Global Studies teacher Mr Rowan McKinnon.

2. Builds skills in applying knowledge. Existing syllabuses undervalue and underdevelop skills in applying knowledge. The integration of knowledge and skills in the new syllabus aims to ensure that in every subject there is a mix of theory and application, with no subject focused only on knowledge or only on skills.
3. Makes excellent ongoing progress. Some students are required to move to the next year level syllabus before they have mastered the current syllabus. The new syllabuses are untimed and students progress to the next syllabus once they have mastered the prior syllabus.

The implementation of a new curriculum presents significant challenges for schools and teachers, but with this comes great opportunities for our staff to reflect on our practice and ensure that our programming, teaching and learning experiences, and assessment practices are developed in a way that continue to promote excellence for Newcastle Grammar School students. By 2026, every subject across the School will be taught using the newly refined syllabus.



The integration of knowledge and skills in the new syllabus aims to ensure that in every subject there is a mix of theory and application ...

# FAMILY NIGHT

## COMMUNITY

**Our first major event for the year, Family Night, was a wonderful evening of music, games, laughter and fun.**

Centenary Field and the basketball courts were abuzz with the sound of over 680 people catching up, playing giant games and enjoying plenty of food and refreshments. It was a pleasure to welcome new families to Newcastle Grammar School and to reconnect with friends and staff. Thank you to fabulous local band, Phonic, who provided the energetic acoustic backdrop for the evening.

Thanks to the generosity of the Newcastle Grammar School community, over \$1,600 was raised. The funds were donated to our sister school in Vietnam to purchase 15 bikes for students in need of transport to and from school.

Thank you to the staff and student volunteers for your smiling faces and to all the vendors who made the event happen.





# CELEBRATING OUR MUMS

**Primary students continued the cherished tradition of celebrating the love and care of special women in their lives through the Mother's Day assembly and morning tea.**

The children came together to express their gratitude and appreciation for all the hard work their mothers do for them. This annual celebration is a joy-filled presentation that showcases the talent of each student. Kindergarten to Year 6 classes spent many weeks rehearsing items thoughtfully selected by our specialist music teachers Miss Jane Parkes and Miss Jessica Love.

The assembly began with a powerful combined performance by our Tones and Semitones choirs of *Kusimama*, a Swahili piece. The lyrics convey what our mothers want for us above all else – to stand tall on the earth with hope, strength, acceptance and positivity. Other spectacular choral presentations included

performances by Years 5 and 6, a lullaby and captivating hand dance by the Minims Choir, and closing items from the Passport Choir. The assembly also featured the Year 6 Strings' dynamic delivery of *A Salty Sailor's Song*.

Kindergarten children captivated the audience with their delightful responses to questions about their mothers in a heart-warming video. When asked how old their mums were, responses ranged from 21 and 27, through to 68, 85 and 110! But when asked to describe their mum, their responses were a little nicer: kind, loving, beautiful, clever and the "bestest mum in the world!"

Our families and students enjoyed the stunning weather to share a morning tea on the Park Campus lawn, with jam and cream scones served by the Year 6 students.

Thank you to the staff and students, and especially to our mums for all they do.



1. Tones and Semitones Choirs performing a powerful Swahili piece.
2. Year 5 student Bronx Dillinger, enjoying the sun with his mum, Kristy Brown, and grandmothers.
3. Olivia Myat from Year 6, with her mum, Thin Naing.



# IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

**Our Annual Mother's Day Lunch was held at the Merewether Surfhouse with over 200 ladies (and two gentlemen) in attendance. The dominant theme of the day was that it truly takes a village to raise children.**

There was a sense of gratitude for the Newcastle Grammar School community, families and friends, and acknowledgement of those past who have invested into Newcastle and our School to provide the opportunities and support we enjoy today.

Our guest speaker, NBN Newsreader Natasha Beyersdorf, talked about the progression of her career beginning in radio in Tamworth, through to journalist and newsreader with Prime, a stint in PR and then reporter, producer and newsreader with NBN, where she has worked for the last 20 years. Adding two children to her family,

she shared some of the struggles and delights of parenthood. It was wonderful to hear her story.

Judy Wotton, long-time former staff member, then shared the inspiration behind the beginnings of an Indigenous Scholarship Fund at NGS. A highlight was the reunion of some of her former students, now NGS mums.

The event culminated in a prize-giving, with many mums going home with full hands and big smiles.

Thank you to our many supporters, made up of current families, alumni and local businesses, who contributed to the success of the event:

**Major Sponsor:** Uaine Candles

**Silent Auction donors:** Newcastle Jockey Club, Lot 19, Blooms on Darby, Bay Dental and Vivid Imagination



**Raffle and Door Prizes:**

Bagga's Pharmacy, Cadre Coffee, Clare O'Hara Art, Cocoa Nib, De Iuliis Wines, Earth & Grace by Pukara, Easy Steps Living, Good Times Creative, Keith Tulloch Wines, Manning Valley Eggs, Market Basket Co, Merewether Golf Club Pro Shop, Merewether Surfhouse, Muse Pilates, Pappa Sven, Pukara Estate, Salt Property, Terry White Chemmart The Junction, The Grand Hotel, The Letter Q, TicTasTogs, Tulloch Wines.

Please support those who supported us. Thank you to all who attended. We hope you had a fabulous day!

“ The dominant theme of the day was that it truly takes a village to raise children. ”

# EASTER AT PRIMARY

## CELEBRATING

**Easter is a time for us to celebrate as a community all that we are grateful for: friends, family and the people around us. Newcastle Grammar School's Easter Assembly highlights the range of traditions that occur at that time of year.**

Stringendo, our strings group for students in Years 4 to 8, opened the assembly with a splendid rendition of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. Kindergarten led the procession of Easter symbols that represent peace, triumph, hope and eternal life. Minims, Semitones and Tones, our Kindergarten to Year 4 choirs, beautifully captured the full meaning of Easter through their choral performances.

The Very Reverend Katherine Bowyer, Dean of Newcastle, warmly delivered the Easter blessing which tributed the multi-faith significance of this time of year. We were thankful for Dean Katherine's presence as well as some other special members of the audience including Miss Judy Wotton and Mr David Sarich, former Heads of Primary. The Easter Assembly concluded with a magnificent performance of *For God So Loved the World* by our Year 5 and 6 combined choir.

Following the formalities, it was wonderful to have so many families come together for morning tea on the lawn. In a moment of miraculous timing, the Easter Bunny had a break in his very busy schedule and stopped by, much to the delight of our Primary students.

Thank you to all who participated, supported and organised this special day.



1. The Minims Choir capturing the spirit of Easter.
2. Year 1 student Cassian Kot with the Easter Bunny.
3. Kindergarten student Sofia Lui carrying the special Easter candle.



# EASTER EUCHARIST: THANKSGIVING

**The traditional Easter Eucharist Service for Years 7 to 12 students was held in historic Christ Church Cathedral. The magnificent acoustics enabled a rich depth of sound as the choir sang *Arioso*, *Agnus Dei* and *Via Dolorosa*, accompanied by the Newcastle Grammar School String Orchestra and organist, David Clark.**

Father Stephen Williams spoke about giving life and blessing to others, following the example of Jesus. He also used the analogy of migrating birds to highlight how we should work together and help one another to move forward.

The Easter story was recounted, Communion was shared for those who wished to partake, prayers were spoken and hymns sung.

The word *Eucharist* is from the Greek *eucharista*, meaning thanksgiving – and indeed, this was evident throughout the service.

Thank you to the staff of Christ Church Cathedral – we value our partnership and being able to celebrate in such a beautiful, reverent setting.

1. Christ Church Cathedral provided the perfect acoustics for the Eucharist Service.
2. Mr Kevin Young conducting the String Orchestra.
3. The Chamber Choir sang a beautiful rendition of *Via Dolorosa*.





# HONOURING OUR ANZACS

**Newcastle Grammar School students and staff paid homage to our ANZACs through a range of services held at Park and Hill campuses.**

The significance of Anzac Day was conveyed to our younger students by the Year 4 cohort, who led the K-4 assembly. Their presentation included a reading of *The Ode* and a bugle playing *The Last Post*.

Year 5 and 6 students organised a service in front of the Stewart Building, where they solemnly lowered the flags and observed a minute of silence. In the moments of contemplation, they acknowledged the freedoms we enjoy today, owing to the immense sacrifices made by countless service men and women. With the bugle's familiar melody breaking the silence, the students placed poppies around the flagpoles, symbolising their remembrance of those who served.

For Year 7 to 12 students, a special ceremony was held at Christ Church Cathedral. The courageous and selfless acts of World War 1 soldiers were highlighted, serving as a powerful example of loyalty and bravery for our students. A profound moment came when the Book of Remembrance from the Warriors' Chapel, containing the handwritten names of soldiers from the Hunter Region who perished in World War 1, was reverently placed on the altar. Its gold cover, crafted from the melted gold rings of local grieving wives and mothers, stands as a testament to the enduring love and loss experienced during those trying times.

We extend our gratitude to all students and staff involved in orchestrating these moving tributes. By commemorating the sacrifices of our ANZACs, we ensure that their legacy lives on within the hearts and minds of our school community.

“... a powerful example of loyalty and bravery for our students.”



1. Year 5 student Noah Brady with Sophie Clee and Lincoln Dewar from Year 6, at their service in front of the Stewart Building.
2. Eve Taylor and Sadia Wagner from Year 5 displaying their Anzac spirit
3. Year 12 student Samuel Priest playing the bugle during the Years 7 to 12 Anzac ceremony.
4. A guest bagpiper from The Australian Army Band Newcastle plays during a moving ceremony at Christ Church Cathedral.

## PRIMARY

# PUBLIC SPEAKING

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

**The annual Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Public Speaking Competition provides an opportunity for students to showcase their public speaking skills to the wider community and to compete in a fair and friendly environment. Each school can enter one student per grade per category.**

An impressive 39 Newcastle Grammar School students from Years 3 to 6 expressed interest in competing across a variety of categories. Year 3 and 4 students

chose from Prepared Speech, Poetry or Impromptu Reading, and Year 5 and 6 students chose from Prepared Speech/Impromptu Speech or Poetry.

All students were extremely well prepared for their category and presented with confidence. After a wonderful day of year-level competitions, there was much deliberation from teachers to select the top three students from each category to enter the next round, where only one student could progress.

Nine students advanced through to the HRIS Competition held in June,

and we are very proud of them all. Thank you to the parents and staff who attended, your support is appreciated.

**Congratulations to the following students on their results:**

**Nicholas Kalyvas** - First, Year 3 Poetry  
**Mary Johnson** - Highly Commended, Year 3 Prepared Speech  
**Olive McKay** - First, Year 4 Poetry  
**Arianna Stephen** - First, Year 4 Impromptu Reading  
**Riley Macpherson** - Highly Commended, Year 5 Impromptu Speech  
**Sofie Halland** - Third, Year 6 Prepared Speech

Public Speaking will return to the Primary spotlight during Term 4, when we host the NGS House Public Speaking Competition.



All students were extremely well prepared for their category and presented with confidence.

## NSW WINNER:

# VOICE OF YOUTH



**Congratulations to Year 12 student, Jasmine Withford, on her outstanding success at the recent Rostrum Voice of Youth NSW Final.**

Jasmine delivered a prepared speech titled *Unanswered Questions* that explored the concept of why each of us is unique, linking this to different memories and experiences.

Her impromptu speech, *We Can All Be A Part Of The Solution*, investigated the persisting nature of

gender inequality reinforced through generations via jokes, and how these comments can affect individuals in ways we do not foresee.

Jasmine was declared the overall NSW winner and will head to Melbourne to compete in the Rostrum Voice of Youth National Final.

This is an inspiring result following years of passion, commitment and hard work.

# INDIGENOUS NETBALL ROUND: CUSTOM BIB DESIGN

## SPORT

**Thank you to local Indigenous artist, proud Gamilaroi woman, Krystal Dallinger, who designed the Newcastle Grammar School Netball bib specifically for the recent Indigenous Netball Round.**

Krystal said the story behind her design is all about the pathways in life. "The river-like pattern is the flow of possibilities and the different pathways that many will take," she said. "The different sized dotted paths are the many opportunities that one can achieve. The dots on the inside and out of the river-like pattern can also symbolise the steppingstones you use to make your path. There will always be obstacles and difficult times but steppingstones are always placed in

the right spot so you can cross over that obstacle.

"The emu tracks are a representation of never going backwards – every path is the right path – meaning that no matter what you want to do you're always on the right journey to becoming who you want to be. The symbol in the top left symbolises expanding the knowledge and skills that you already have. Everyone starts somewhere and it's the branching out and trying of new things that can better you as a person with whatever you choose."

This year, Krystal designed the artwork for Suncorp Super Netball's First Nations Round, which featured at every game on signage, centre circles and the umpires' uniforms. Krystal has also designed the Giants Netball artwork

in past years. Our students are thrilled they are wearing artwork designed by the artist who designed for the professional netball league. Thank you, Krystal, and best wishes to all our players who will look sensational for this round.

We hope your pathway is a winning one!

1. Artwork by Krystal Dallinger for NGS Indigenous Netball Round 2023.
2. NGS1 – 21s Division 3: Lucy Smithson (Class of 2022), Eve Ashmore (Year 12), Bridget Clarke (Year 10), Coach: Mrs Tracy Gardiner, Veronica Kuru (Year 12), Ava Battisti (Year 12), Katherine Wang (Year 12) and Niamh Maguire (Year 12).  
Absent: Erin Tassell (Class of 2022).  
Photo courtesy Sports Action Pix.



“ Everyone starts somewhere and it's the branching out and trying of new things that can better you as a person...”

# DANCE, DEDICATION AND DETERMINATION

**Year 10 student Olivia McGee joined Newcastle Grammar School at the start of this year. Olivia is a dancer and is part of the School's Supporting Athlete Performance (SAP) Programme.**

"Everyone has been so welcoming, and I immediately felt a sense of acceptance and belonging," she said. "I have made many new friendships and I look forward to moving through my senior school years being part of this amazing group."

With a natural devotion to dance, Olivia also believes her academic journey is equally important. "The programmes here have provided me with many opportunities to achieve in both dance and academics, through adjusted timetables, endless support from teachers — including tutoring assistance both during and after school, various workshops, wellbeing support and individual mentoring," she said. "That level of support is invaluable and has allowed me to successfully manage my schedule without having to compromise my studies or sport."

Olivia trains six days per week in Newcastle and Sydney. In January this year, she auditioned and was accepted into the 2023 Sydney Dance Company's Senior Youth Ensemble which involves travelling to Sydney every Sunday to train with leading dance teachers.

Olivia recently ventured to the USA, after successful auditions for both



The Juilliard School and The Joffrey Ballet School, for Contemporary and Jazz Dance Summer Intensives. Olivia says she is thankful to have her family, friends, NGS and her dance teachers to support her along this incredible journey.

As part of the NGS High Performing Students Programme, Olivia is currently studying the Foundations of Health and Disease with the University of Newcastle. She has several ambitions — one of which is to be involved in the medical research field. But in the short term, after completing the HSC, Olivia hopes to study and dance overseas.

In what little spare time she has, Olivia says she enjoys catching up with her friends or challenging her family to card and board games.

Congratulations Olivia!



*Photo credit: Yellow Wood Photography.*

“That level of support is invaluable and has allowed me to successfully manage my schedule without having to compromise my studies or sport.”

# A FABULOUS DISPLAY OF TALENT

## EXPERIENCES

**The highly contested Annual Music Festival showcased the outstanding talents of our Year 10 to 12 students, who performed in small ensembles and as a House for points and victory. This year's competition was fierce across both the instrumental and vocal sections.**

Thank you to all who contributed to making the afternoon one to remember, including the judges, technical experts, student photographers and our MCs. The adjudicators took their roles seriously with criteria including intonation, balance and blending,

musical execution and stage presence for the small group. For the whole House performances, judging was based on a combination of sound, movement, visual impact, energy and participation. Each House had a theme: Shortland – Around the World, Tyrrell – Best of the Brits, Hunter – A Trip to the Beach, and Macquarie – Rock 'n' Roll.

The students participated with enthusiasm and excitement after weeks of rehearsal, and the results were exceptional. Thank you to everyone involved in such an energetic and fun afternoon.

Congratulations to Macquarie House for taking out all categories and the overall win.





# BUILDING RESILIENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

**Students in Years 5 to 9 enjoyed a series of camps at the end of Term 2 as part of the School's Outdoor Education programme. Camps provide the perfect setting to engage in new experiences and strengthen life skills.**

Outdoor Education is an integral part of Newcastle Grammar School's holistic approach and provides experiences essential for the healthy development of young people. Adolescents in particular need to involve themselves in challenges and beneficial risk-taking behaviour. They are hard-wired for this.

Along with all the other opportunities of Outdoor Education, such as fostering leadership and teamwork and encouraging self-reliance, the programme allows students to experience risk in a controlled and safe environment. This enables each student to experience successes which promote self-confidence and self-worth, while overcoming challenges leads to increased resilience.

Outdoor Education also exposes students to new environments. Stepping away from the classroom, students encounter unfamiliar

landscapes, weather conditions and terrains. While some may initially experience discomfort in unfamiliar surroundings, they gradually adapt to each new setting and develop a sense of comfort and confidence in the natural world.

Collaboration and teamwork are key components of Outdoor Education. Students work together to solve problems and navigate challenges, developing effective communication and trust in their peers. By stepping out of their comfort zones, students become more resilient, adaptable and willing to embrace new challenges in their lives.

And most importantly of course, much of what happens on camp is fun!

Thank you to all our staff who were also away from the comfort of their families and homes. They immersed themselves in the activities and worked with our students to make each camp the most outstanding experience possible.





## GRATITUDE AND CIRCLES

**Parents and students were excited and delighted to attend Newcastle Grammar School's traditional Year 11 Presentation Ball in April. Although the rain dampened their arrival, all attendees wore happy faces as they shone in their formal attire.**

Each student was presented to the audience, symbolising the entrance to their final two years as Seniors at NGS. Year 11 representative, Sasha Stockham, began her speech by thanking the wonderful parents. "We appreciate your presence tonight to not only support us but to acknowledge how far we have come. We are so grateful for you, everything you do and everything you are. We love you."

Inspired by Indigenous Yarning Circles, Sasha explained that "when we sit in a curved shape, someone is always watching our back, looking out for us. No one is left behind. On this special evening, after dancing in a circle, I ask you

to look around your circular table. To acknowledge the people sitting around you in a connected formation and look behind them, protect them. To your left and right are the humans shaping your social circle."

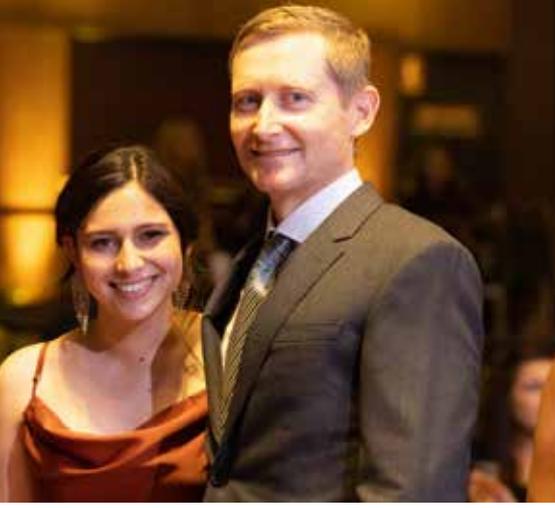
Fellow student, Tom McGrath, continued with the theme and shared gratitude on behalf of the cohort. "These past years have not been lacking in adversity, but through the worst we have been anchored by the passion and resilience of our dedicated teachers. To Dr Parsons and Mrs Peterson, you are not only inspirations through your dedication and drive but through the continued impact of your leadership and vision, and so we would like to say thank you."

Tom also acknowledged Ms Marnie Thomas, who "gave up all her Fridays this term. We were able to galvanise as a year group because of her constant enthusiasm, kindness and love. She ensured that we could all be our best for this special moment."

Tom's final sentiment summed up the palpable unity felt on the evening. "Regardless of whether you have been here since Kindergarten, arrived this year or any time in between, we are all part of this remarkable circle, and I couldn't be prouder to stand alongside each one of you as a point on the curve."

Year 11, we are proud of you too. Best wishes for your Senior years – we are cheering you on.

“ To acknowledge the people sitting around you in a connected formation and look behind them, protect them.



# MUSIC FROM THE MOVIES

## CO-CURRICULAR

This year's Music Showcase - NGS Goes to the Movies - was an entertainment extravaganza featuring students from Years 2 to 12. Bands, orchestras and choirs led the imaginative musical journey with themes from movie favourites including *Saving Private Ryan*, *Star Wars*, *Mamma Mia*, *Get Smart*, *James Bond* and more, culminating in a magical finale of *The Circle of Life* from *The Lion King*. The audience enjoyed a variety of genres from classical, jazz, pop and rock with some humour cleverly woven throughout the scores.

Renowned Australian composer Gerard Brophy was our special guest, having conducted a three-day workshop with senior music students earlier in the week. Guest artist, alumnus Megan Morris (Class of 2009), performed a number of solo items and joined the NGS Symphony Orchestra and Senior Choir to conclude the evening. Thank you to all performers, staff, and accompanists for entertaining and delighting all in attendance.





# SWIMMING: SACRIFICE AND SUCCESS

## SPORT

**Year 7 student, Jacob Samokhin, has achieved incredible results in the pool this year including 11 medals at the NSW State Age Championships, three gold medals at the Coast and Valley Swimming Association (CVSA) Speedo Sprint Series, and four gold medals and a new record at the Combined Independent Schools Sports Council Swimming Championships.**

Since starting high school, one of Jacob's main struggles was managing his sport commitment, music and homework. He quickly learned to manage his time as efficiently as possible. "This has

allowed me to prioritise and plan out my tasks to ensure I get the most amount of time to do them, as well as maximise my time for other things such as surfing and going for walks," he said. Despite this, Jacob still needs to make sacrifices such as not watching TV during the week.

Jacob began swimming at a very young age and has loved it from the start. "I was in the water more than I was out of it, and I always stayed after training when I was younger to play in the pool," he said. "I love the competition in a big swimming race, where it's just you and your mind trying to get the best out of yourself. The friends I have made from swimming are some of the best I have, and the pool is a very respectful and welcoming place."

One of Jacob's tips for managing his schedule is to go to bed very early to get as much sleep as possible. He sets two alarms in the morning to make sure he doesn't miss training. "I have gotten used to the cycle of going to bed early and waking up earlier," he said. "Mornings are generally much more peaceful and calmer, and there are fewer people who train in the mornings. I really love the feeling of starting the day with an achievement and I always leave the pool with a positive attitude."

When he is not in the pool, he is often still found in the water as surfing is his favourite hobby. He loves the feeling of floating in the ocean on his surfboard and watching the waves roll by. "It's exhilarating and beautiful at the same time," he said. "I also love to read. Reading allows me to immerse myself in a different world and be taken on an adventure by the writer."

Congratulations Jacob – your display of commitment and discipline is commendable. We wish you continued success as you balance your training with your studies.



*Year 7 student Jacob Samokhin's outstanding swimming achievements reflect his dedication.*

**“ I really love the feeling of starting the day with an achievement and I always leave the pool with a positive attitude. ”**



# PRIMARY SPORT

**Newcastle Grammar School primary students have excelled in representative sports across various codes, setting records and achieving outstanding results in Semester 1.**

The year began with Year 6 students Chloe Elliot and Isabelle Waerea representing the Hunter Region at the New South Wales Combined Independent Schools (NSWCIS) Tennis Championships, showcasing their talent on the court. Chloe also earned a place in the Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Netball team, competing at the NSWCIS Carnival in Sydney.

Rory Shirlaw, Year 6, made his mark as a specialist goalie, representing the HRIS Football team at the NSWCIS Football Championship. In the pool, Year 4 swimmer Daisy Falconer represented NSWCIS at the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association (PSSA) Swimming Carnival. On the Touch Football field, Chloe Elliot, Year 6, and Bronx Dillinger, Year 5,

were selected for the prestigious three-day NSWPSA Carnival in Penrith. Bronx's achievements extended to securing a spot in the NSWCIS Rugby League team, competing against top players from across the state.

NGS students also achieved impressive results in other sports, including a third place finish in the NSW School Mountain Bike Championship. In Rugby 7s, Harlo Slattery and Sachi Scowen in Year 6 earned well-deserved spots in the team set to compete at the State Championships in Term 3.

There have been some remarkable record-breaking performances including Max Liang, Year 5, and Rachel Sverdlov, Year 4, who set four new school records at the NGS Swimming Carnival. Rachel continued her record-breaking streak at the HRIS Carnival, setting two records in the backstroke and butterfly events. NGS Primary won the HRIS Carnival – point score winner by school population.

In the Primary Cross Country Carnival, Sadia Wagner in Year 5 displayed her exceptional endurance and talent by breaking the Under 11 Girls 3km record at Richley Reserve. The Primary Athletics Carnival was also a record-breaking event, with several outstanding performances – Thomas Boyn, Year 3, set a new record in the Under 9 Boys 1,500m event, Sienna Myers, Year 6, achieved a new record in the Under 11 Girls 1,500m event, and Lucas Beattie, also Year 6, set a record in the Under 12 Boys 1,500m event. Molly Waerea in Year 2 demonstrated her skills in the Under 8 Girls discus, setting a new record. Additionally, the Under 12 Girls Macquarie Relay team broke a record of 22 years, showing their exceptional teamwork and determination.

These amazing achievements reflect the hard work, dedication, and talent of the students at NGS Primary. It is a testament to their commitment to excellence and their ability to push beyond limits to achieve outstanding results.



## SECONDARY SPORT: INDIVIDUAL SPORTING EXCELLENCE

Students at Newcastle Grammar School are provided with exceptional sporting pathways in which to excel. Recently, several of our students have gained selection to NSW Combined Independent Schools (NSWCIS) sporting teams to compete at their respective NSW All Schools Championships.

**AFL Football**

Myla Tucker  
Jett Floyer-Kell, Bowen Stubbs and Benjamin Matuszny as a referee.

**Hockey**

Brooke Hill

**Netball**

Aela Streatfield

**Rugby**

Liam Sidwell

**Rugby League**

Bronx Dillinger and Finnegan Rogers

**Surfing**

Ocean Lancaster

**Swimming**

Alexandra Noonan, Daisy Falconer, Jacob Samokhin and Violet Williams

**Touch Football**

Bronx Dillinger and Chloe Elliot

## PASSIONATE PARTNERSHIP HAS BLOSSOMED

Horse rider Ellie Logue, a Year 4 student, continues to soar in the world of equestrian, accompanied by her beloved pony, Blossom. Their partnership, built on years of dedication and determination, has paved the way for some remarkable achievements.

Notable successes include a third place finish at the 2023 prestigious AMGA National Mounted Games Championships in the Under 12 age

division. Ellie was accepted into the NSW State Development Squad which involves monthly coaching at various training camps by some of the best technical instructors in NSW.

Ellie's bond with Blossom is strong, and the duo remains competitive despite the pony's imminent retirement. Blossom has enjoyed every moment of competition, and Ellie looks forward to the next chapter with her new horse, Jacobite.



# SECONDARY SPORT TALENT AND GRIT

## **Congratulations to our Secondary athletes who achieved some amazing results in Semester 1.**

### Basketball

What an incredible result for our young basketballers who won the Association of Independent Co-Educational Schools (AICES) Cup Open Basketball Championships in Term 1, defeating last year's winners. Even more impressive is that this team was comprised of students mostly in Years 8 and 9 who played against more experienced, older teams. The win saw the team progress to the NSW Combined Independent Schools (CIS) Champion Girls School play-offs, where they competed as one of the top three independent school teams in the State.

### Cross Country

For the third time in four years, the NGS Secondary Cross Country team outran 17 other schools from across the Hunter to be named the Hunter Region Independent Schools (HRIS) Division 1 Cross Country Champions for 2023. A number of students progressed to the AICES Secondary Cross Country Championships in Sydney, with an impressive 17 students from Primary and Secondary travelling to the Sydney Equestrian Centre to compete in the CIS Cross Country Championships. Everyone displayed great determination, perseverance and sportsmanship throughout all events, testing themselves against the best runners from across NSW in

very wet conditions. Congratulations to Harry Boyn and Annabelle Miller for qualifying for National Schools Cross Country later in the year.

### Football

Our dedicated and hardworking Under 15s Football team won the HRIS Boys Football (Soccer) Gala Day for only the third time in the School's history in a thrilling penalty shoot-out. To put the significance of this result into perspective, the last time NGS won this competition was in 2000. Congratulations to this focussed squad for displaying great competitive spirit and high character.

### Netball

Congratulations to the NGS Open Netball team for winning the HRIS Secondary Netball Championships, and to our Under 14s team for coming Runners-Up. A special mention to our Under 16s team who demonstrated courage and tenacity in playing short of substitutes across the day.

### Rugby

Our Under 14s Rugby Squad had an outstanding team performance at the McKendry Shield XV's Gala Day. Our team started out with a hard-earned draw in Round 1 followed by a win in Round 2 thanks to the pinpoint conversions of Hugh Dyer (Year 7) in challenging conditions. Round 3 saw us hold out the competition favourites. Grit and courage demonstrated in defence were the key factors in seeing us finish the round games in 2nd place

and into the Grand Final. We were proud to see every member of the squad embody these values, right to the final bell which saw us unfortunately miss out on the Grand Final win.

### Surfing

NGS students have achieved exceptional results in surfing so far in 2023. Thirteen surfers represented NGS at the recent Mutual Bank High Schools Team Challenge in February, with our Boys A team beating a strong field in the final to be crowned champions, and our Girls team finishing second by the narrowest of margins. Congratulations to our Senior Boys team for winning the Surfing NSW High School State Titles and for our Junior Boys for making it to the finals. Our Senior Boys team now progresses to Nationals Surfing later in the year.

### Surf Lifesaving

The Hunter Interbranch Surf Lifesaving Championships were held recently at Fingal NSW. Collectively, our students won over 26 medals. These students are in full preparation for the upcoming State Surf Lifesaving Championships.

### Swimming

The NGS Secondary Swimming squad enthusiastically competed in the AICES Secondary Swimming Championships. With a small squad carrying a high event load, our students actively demonstrated our RISE values with both their effort and tenacity, resulting in NGS coming second overall, first in HRIS, winners in the Boys points score, and a total of 42 medals won. For the fifth straight year, the NGS Swim Team won the HRIS Division 1 Swimming Championships and the Point Score by Population. An outstanding result!



...determination, perseverance and sportsmanship throughout all events, testing themselves against the best...

# EVERY DAY IS AN ADVENTURE

## STAFF



**Kindergarten teacher Jade Biddleston has always loved adventure. Born in Broome, Western Australia, she spent her early childhood travelling between her home in Merewether and the WA coastal town, where her dad spent six months each year as a pearl diver on the last of the luggers.**

Now in her 22nd year teaching Kindergarten, Jade's sense of adventure continues to fill her classroom each day. "Every day is different when you share in the kids' excitement and love of learning," she said. "When they realise they are learners and they can suddenly

make sense of the world around them, it's amazing. When you love Kindy like I do, it's the best job in the world."

Jade spent the first eight years of her career teaching Kindergarten in Canberra before moving back home to be closer to her family, and to accept a position at Newcastle Grammar School. "Kindergarten is such a happy place to be," she said. "The kids make it special. They're such fun and full of curiosity. It's a privilege and important responsibility to be there when they're first embarking on their learning journey." Jade said as a K to 12 school, NGS allows Early Childhood teachers the opportunity to share and see the students' progress and growth throughout school and into the world.

Inquiry Learning underpins every part of the day for NGS Kindergarten students. "Every day, in every learning experience, they have opportunities to be thinkers, self-managers, collaborators, researchers and communicators," Jade said. "And our students are also so lucky to have specialist teachers for Art, Music, STEAM, Mandarin and Physical Education."

Jade is extremely passionate about Kindergarten's research-based synthetic phonics programme – an individualised programme that is customised to each child's level of learning. "The students take great pride in sharing their learning, especially when their parents are able to join us in the mornings," she said. "That partnership is crucial because it also helps parents learn new skills they can use to support their child's phonic development and reading at home."

Always in pursuit of the next adventure, Jade's travels have taken her parasailing in New Zealand, swimming with whale sharks at Ningaloo, kayaking with sea turtles and riding camels on Cable Beach and to the top of the Eiffel Tower. She has climbed the Gold Coast's Q1 Building and Sydney Harbour Bridge, and returns to Broome whenever she can.

With her passion for literacy, quality literature and reading, Jade said she has considered the specialist area of Teacher Librarian as a long-term goal. "I do delight in sharing my love of books with the students at Park Campus with the goal of developing a love of reading in all children," she said. Jade helps organise special events at the School each year, including Book Week and National Simultaneous Storytime for the K-4 students.

For now though, Jade says Kindergarten is where her heart remains. "The kids are my inspiration and even as older students, they always come back to touch base, reflect on their own special memories and often offer to help out with my new little ones."



*Miss Jade Biddleston with Kindergarten students Poppy Frisken and Tristan Barrett.*

# A ROLE MODEL FOR REINVENTION



**Peter Juchniewicz remembers with clarity receiving a phone call on Christmas Eve in 2003. In what he described as the best present, the call was to offer him a position as PDHPE teacher at Newcastle Grammar School.**

Peter brought outstanding sporting expertise to the role, having played for the Newcastle Breakers and Newcastle United teams in the National Soccer League since he was 18. Now 20 years later, Peter's passion for teaching, and belief in his students and their future, remains evident. "We really are surrounded by a remarkable generation of kids," he said. "These are quality young people that we get to teach every day, with powerful strengths and high values."

Peter's additional roles have included Director of Middle School Sport, and 10 years as Head of House for Years 9-12, so it was a natural progression when he stepped into the newly created position of Year 12 Coordinator in 2021. "It's pretty cool to be able to live the Year 12 experience every year," he laughed. "I ride the



emotional wave with them, so to know that I can be that tower of support during that wonderful time in their life – that also presents many challenges – I feel is really important."

Working closely with the academic and wellbeing teams, Peter aims to ensure the students' final year is full of memorable moments, experiences and privileges that younger year groups can strive for. "Most importantly, I want to give them opportunities to think about their transition from school," he said. "Being able to see where you've had that impact on the way they perceive themselves as learners, and their ability and confidence to be lifelong learners, is really amazing."

Peter is also one of 200 teachers across the State contributing to the first full NSW curriculum reform in 30 years, as part of the NESA Teaching Expert Network. "It's really exciting because you feel like you're at the forefront of some crucial decision making," he said. "I consider myself lucky to be part of a network that has a voice for the future of education in NSW."



Away from school, Peter shares a small acreage in Brandy Hill with his wife Renae, who is also a teacher. The couple (who met in high school) are kept busy with their four-year-old daughter Elsie, miniature goats George and Nancy (named after Peter's grandparents), recently adopted 17-year-old kelpie, Chocolate, and five-year-old cat, Lucy.

Peter said he feels fortunate to have grown up in Newcastle and to have forged his career at NGS. "It's a delight to be a part of this village, surrounded by colleagues and friends who have the same values and dedication to constantly evolve," he said. "To craft that same experience for students coming through, is pretty special."

With five years' experience as an HSC Marker, Peter has this year applied to become a Senior Marker for HSC PE. Beyond that, he hopes to pursue a Masters Degree to delve further into Leadership Management roles. "I just never want to get bored of reinventing myself," he said.

“ I consider myself lucky to be part of a network that has a voice for the future of education in NSW. ”

1. Peter Juchniewicz with daughter Elsie.
2. Year 12 Coordinator Peter Juchniewicz.

# BUILDING DAVID'S ARK: A CAREER OF PURPOSE



**David Sarich has loved dedicating his life to teaching, including 28 incredible years here at Newcastle Grammar School, but that wasn't his original plan.**

Growing up in West Pymble, the eldest of three children, David had ambitions to become an accountant when he left school. Fortunately, his final maths results didn't quite match that ambition. Instead, he was offered a scholarship at Wollongong Teachers College and from that moment, David never looked back. "Teaching just fit my personality," he said. "I enjoyed making a difference and helping students realise what opportunities they could make for themselves."

His first appointment was for one year at the remote Perricoota School on the Murray River, where he was the sole teacher to 12 students

ranging from Kindergarten to Year 6. For the following three years David taught at the equally remote Lalaly School. "I loved the transition to country life," he said. "The nearest town was 25 kilometres away so the kids were all very independent and resourceful."

During this time, David met his wife Wendy, who was teaching at a local high school. The couple moved back to Sydney and married in 1971. Adventure soon called when they moved to the Solomon Islands to teach at a high school on an island only accessible by boat, where the students boarded for 20 weeks straight at a time. "We were there for five years, and in that time had our three children," he said. "It wasn't easy, but we believe that was where we were meant to be."

When they returned to Sydney in 1979, David accepted a position as Master-in-Charge of the Junior School at NGS. Fellow long-serving teacher, Judy Wotton, also started at that time and was always a great support to David. Their classrooms were former dormitories from when the School was originally a boarding school for girls. "The original Parnell Building was fairly dilapidated," David said. "Parents would come in on weekends to help us paint the classrooms."

David continued teaching full-time during his role as Master-in-Charge to the 200 Junior School students. When Alan Green became Head of School in 1989 his priority was to build new Junior School facilities. These included the purpose-built

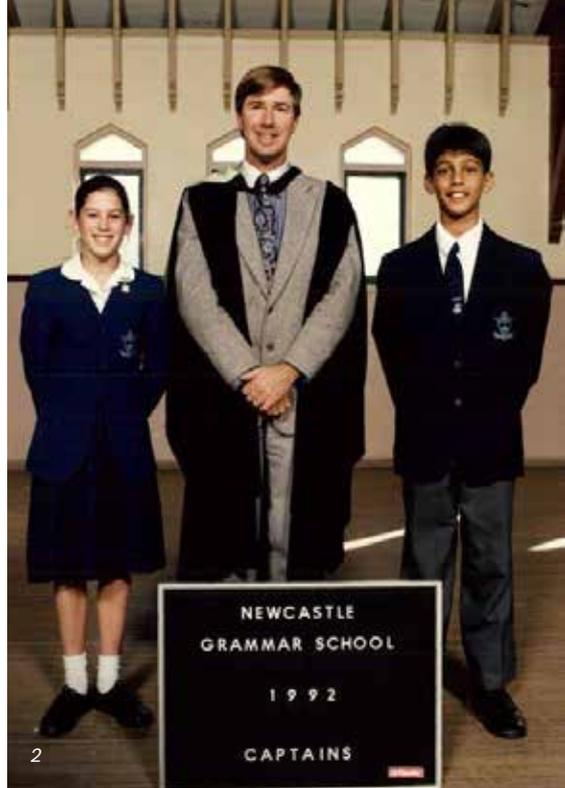
Stewart Building and the first real playground areas for students. Prior to that, the teachers would walk the children to King Edward Park at lunchtime so they could play. "We would line the kids up all along the road, wait until there was a break in traffic on this very busy thoroughfare, and then all run over at the same time," David said. "That's 200 kids crossing all at once!"

The School was also given access to an oval at the nearby hospital. "We used to have some interesting conversations with some of the patients," David said. "At one stage some of the Junior School classes were held in spare rooms at the hospital because we simply ran out of space on our campus." Further development of the Junior School took place in 1999 with the opening of Park Campus, providing more suitable facilities and more playground area.

In 2002, David took a two-year secondment as Acting Principal at Lakes Anglican Grammar School in Gwandalan, to oversee the school's closure and re-opening at a new location in Warnervale. He returned to NGS for four more years before leaving to finish his career as Head of the Junior School at Lakes Grammar. "I left NGS with a sad heart, but with many wonderful memories of both students and teachers," he said.

At his last Speech Day in 2007, the building affectionately known as 'The Ark' was officially named the Sarich Building, in honour of David's contribution to NGS.





Earlier that year, heavy rains had caused the storm water canal to flood the bottom of the school. It was late on a Friday before a long weekend. With the water quickly rising, David moved some electrical equipment and then drove four remaining students through flood waters up the hill to stay safely overnight with fellow teacher, Helen Tabart and her husband, Laurie. David requested 'The Ark' reference remain connected to the building's history and today the plaque reads: "David's Ark – The Sarich Building".

David recalled organising weekend camps for students in the early 80s, because at that time camps weren't allowed during school hours. "We'd always do something where the kids had to work in teams such as build rafts or shelters or flagpoles," he said. "It was proper camping, so it was always good fun and the kids were very spontaneous. They brought their own old tyre tubes or bits of wood to make the rafts and test them out on Lake Macquarie." Wendy would do the cooking for

many of the camps, feeding up to 150 students, often with the help of other school parents, in particular Kaye Deakin.

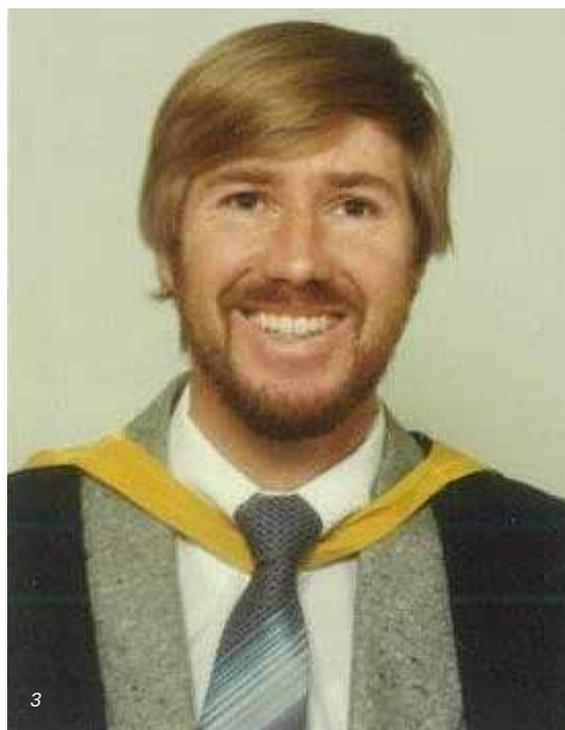
David said his career had been extremely rewarding, and credits Alan Green for his vision and belief in the earlier years. "I really appreciated Alan's hard work and development of the School. It flourished under him and has continued to do so since his retirement."

David's family, including children Andrew, Scott and Katrina, and his nine grandchildren, remain closely connected to the Newcastle area. "Grammar has been a big part of our lives," he said. "I believe it was God's hand that brought us here." While he is proud they have all enjoyed success in their chosen fields, only one of David's family members – grand-daughter Emily, is pursuing a teaching degree.

Even in retirement, David and Wendy continue teaching scripture voluntarily in primary schools.

"The best part of teaching is helping kids to see and develop their different talents and abilities," David said. "It's so rewarding to hear from previous students who struggled at school but who, with dedication and support, have gone on to lead fulfilling lives."

1. Mr David Sarich at the 1996 Swimming Carnival with student Amanda Green.
2. Mr David Sarich with the 1992 Junior School Captains Lindsay Rees and Joshua Ratnarajah.
3. Mr David Sarich in 1986.



“Parents would come in on weekends to help us paint the classrooms.”

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## ALUMNI PROFILE



**History, English and Art were Emma Buxton-Namisnyk's favourite HSC subjects at Newcastle Grammar School. This passion continued as she studied Law and Philosophy at Macquarie University.**

Graduating in 2010 with First Class Honours in both degrees, Emma soon commenced work at an international law firm. It was here that she gained a glimpse of what her future would be – contributing to something good by working for people in need. She wasn't enamoured with the world of corporate law, however, preferring the pro bono work instead.

Emma's interest in social justice developed at university and she soon found herself employed in public service as an associate for a judge in the NSW Court of Appeal. The role gave her excellent insight into how court processes work and exceptional experience being part of the administration of justice at a high level.

During this time, Emma also studied a master's degree in International Human Rights Law through the University of Oxford in the UK, spending two summers there in person, and completing course requirements online. "It was an amazing, game-changing degree because I got to work with people from the United Nations and I was the only Australian in my intake year," she said. "I have made lifelong friends all over the world. This opened up a whole new world of possibilities for what I thought the law could do in areas of social justice."

During her master's degree and at the conclusion of her role at the NSW Court of Appeal, Emma took a role on the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team as its inaugural research analyst. She soon found herself conducting reviews into domestic violence-related deaths, including homicides and suicides. This developed her passion researching how to prevent future deaths, and built on her long-time interest in domestic violence criminalisation.

Emma credits her school environment at NGS with contributing to her sense of social justice. "One of the things that going to NGS instilled in me was the idea of whole personhood – I believe I am an all-rounder and a social contributor," she said. Emma's time at school included playing hockey and music, which also contributed to her holistic approach to life.

Emma undertook a second master's degree in Criminal Justice and Criminology at UNSW, which she had to complete very quickly as she was also offered a scholarship for a DPhil (PhD equivalent), once again

through the University of Oxford. She graduated her DPhil, which examined Australia's response to domestic violence against First Nations women, in 2022.

Emma epitomises the idea of being a lifelong learner who has put her learnings into practice to help others. She speaks with passion as she describes why she loves her work – research, collaboration, working with people, teaching students, intellectual activity and making a difference so we, as a society, can respond to serious issues more effectively.

Still friends with many from her graduating cohort, Emma fondly remembers being a part of the school musical, *Les Miserables*, and is grateful for the teachers who helped her discover what she really enjoyed. Her advice to current students is to: "Follow what you're really interested in. You may encounter pressure from other people to follow a certain path, but it's important to follow your own."

Currently a lecturer at UNSW, Sydney, Emma was recently the recipient of the prestigious Radzinowicz Memorial Prize from the *British Journal of Criminology* for the best article published in 2022, arising from her research into domestic violence policing of First Nations women in Australia. This followed an Early Career Research Award from the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology earlier in the year. Congratulations, Emma. These are incredible achievements!

Emma lives in Sydney with her husband, Alex, and three-year old son, Felix.

# FROM LAW TO LOVE

**Matthew Barter (Class of 2010) met Anita through a mutual friend from university. Anita was still in law school and Matthew was a junior lawyer. They have been inseparable ever since.**

The couple won a free holiday to Cairns in 2022 and that's when Matthew took the opportunity to pop the big question, and Anita happily agreed. As Anita has Croatian heritage, they decided to have a small wedding ceremony on the

island of Brač in the Adriatic Sea, Croatia, at the end of June this year.

Matthew said it was the best day of his life, filled with laughter, tears (the good kind), eating and dancing. "It was over 30 degrees and, thankfully, our talented photographer was able to edit the beads of sweat forming on our foreheads!"

Congratulations Matthew and Anita – we wish you a lifetime of happiness.



**VALE**

# MICHAEL JOHNS

## IN MEMORIAM

**In April this year, the Newcastle education and business communities were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Michael Johns, whose decades-long contribution to the growth of our city was significant.**

Michael's commitment on the Senate of the University of Newcastle exemplified his respect for the richness of education. This essential quality, together with his legal expertise and reputation as a respected businessman, led in 1992 to his becoming a member of the inaugural board of five directors invited to oversee the independence of Newcastle Grammar School from

its 15-year administration by the Pittwater House Schools in Sydney. Michael, then an NGS parent, reflected the enthusiasm of the School family for this momentous journey to independence – a decision that would ensure a viable future for Newcastle Grammar School, manifested today in its reputation at the forefront of school education in the Hunter Region.

In the early years of the School's independence, Michael's skills as a director were invaluable in 'steading the ship' and offering a vision for unparalleled opportunities and educational resources for generations of future students. Our community acknowledges Michael's role in the history of Newcastle Grammar School and

extends our sincere sympathies to his wife Barbara, daughters Trudy, Amy, Karen and Megan and their families.

Contributor: Mrs Sandi Warren, NGS Board Chair 1994-2004



**VALE**

# MERRIDY CHILDS



**Merridy Childs attended Newcastle Church of England Girls Grammar School (NCEGGS) from 1966 to 1969 as a boarder and was a Hunter House Captain. She was the daughter of Canon Bill**

**and Margaret Childs and grew up in Cessnock before coming to NCEGGS. Merridy played basketball for the School, and enjoyed guitar and singing, often hosting singalongs in her room.**

Following her graduation from Salisbury College of Advanced Education and the South Australia Institute of Technology, Merridy worked for 30 years for the South Australian Department of Education, initially teaching English and Music, then as a School Counsellor. Overseas teaching posts followed, including Central London, Brunei

and Qatar. She advocated for literacy, equality and justice for all of her students, particularly girls, Indigenous Australians, teenage migrants and refugees.

Merridy was a former member of Rotary International and the Lantern Club as well as an award-winning Cancer Council Advocate. In her later years she was the proprietor of a successful Bed and Breakfast called 'Merridy's at Morpeth'.

Merridy died peacefully after a short illness on 8 April 2023. She is survived by her husband Michael and son Ben.





# NEWCASTLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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