

Spectemur

VOL.33

Agendo



Newcastle
Grammar
— SCHOOL —

SUMMER 2021

FROM

HEAD OF SCHOOL



At the start of 2021, I know many in our community are looking forward to a more predictable year. As a school we are very grateful to so many who assisted us last year and for the lessons that came from such a challenging year.

We start the year with over 960 students enrolled at NGS. There were many happy faces returning to school and we are enjoying meeting new ones. Temperature checks and hand sanitizing are now part of our lives as we enter the school grounds and we are expecting this routine to continue well

into 2021. In the coming weeks as co-curricular begins, swimming carnivals take place, our Musical *Wicked* finally gets on stage and students settle into classroom routines and homework, life at school will resume a familiar pattern.

Our staff spent two days at the end of the holidays finishing the Visible Wellbeing course we began in 2019. This whole school programme aims to deliver a strong approach that puts student wellbeing at the centre of each child's experience at Newcastle Grammar.



The staff have worked with experts in the field and we have seen a growth over the last two years of student understanding and expression of the factors that enhance a sense of self worth and belief.

In 2021, we are looking to build on our STEM partnerships, develop strong post school pathways and enhance our teaching and learning strategies. The professionalism of our staff remains a critical factor to our success and working with staff to continue to develop skills in their subject or grade area, remains an ongoing commitment of our School.

As you read this edition of the Spectemur and see what occurred at NGS in the second part of 2020, I hope you feel encouraged, as I do, by the many and varied achievements of our students, staff and School. In a year that delivered so many restrictions – as a community we have much to celebrate.

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HSC

RESULTS



All Rounders: scoring more than 90% in every subject:



Rosie Charge



Thomas Elkovich



Lara Ferch



James Kosy



Jadon Routley



Evgenia Petrelis



Tors Webster

Six students received a 2021 Leaders and Achievers early offer from Macquarie University, and several students won scholarships including:

Rosie Charge who received the St Andrews College Award at the University of Sydney providing full fee relief for the entire duration of her undergraduate degree.

Niamh Lewis who was awarded the Winifred Margaret Neirous Memorial Scholarship for women in Civil Engineering at University of Sydney.

Olivia Martin who received the University of Newcastle's Vice-Chancellor's Award for Academic Excellence.

NGS ranks 45th out of 650 schools across NSW

NGS Year 12 students achieved stellar HSC results for 2020, ending the challenging year on a high note.

NGS was ranked 45th out of 650 schools across NSW, making it the highest ranking school in the Hunter region.

"The Class of 2020 certainly have a lot to celebrate. Our students delivered an outstanding set of results, personal best achievements, the highest number of early entry offers into university that the School has ever seen and achievement in a diverse group of subjects – they have ended the year on a high," Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas said.

"Against the backdrop of 2020, as a community, we congratulate this well rounded and thoroughly committed cohort. We are proud of you!"

The top ATAR was achieved by 2020 School Captain Evgenia Petrelis (99.40) and seven students achieved "All Rounder" status, scoring over 90% (or Band 6) in at least 10 units of study.

There were two subjects where every student achieved a mark above 90%: Engineering Studies and Japanese Continuers, while William Carraro achieved a perfect score of 50/50 in Music Extension.

A total of 40 students received early offers via UAC NSW to courses at the University of Newcastle, Macquarie University and UNE, while other students applied and received early offers to universities in Queensland and Victoria.

Students' Creative Talents Recognised

Seven NGS students had their major projects nominated for 2020 HSC exhibitions that showcase works of some of the state's most talented students.

Three students – Thomas Conlon, Edward Fagan, Elizabeth Kinsella – were nominated for OnSTAGE, a presentation of performances and projects by HSC Drama students.

One student, Steele Lacey, had his work nominated for Shape 2020 which features a selection of exemplary major projects from HSC Design and Technology, Industrial Technology and Textiles and Design students.

And Three Music students, William Carraro (violinist), Edward Fagan (vocalist) and James Snitch (guitarist) were nominated for ENCORE, which features outstanding performances and compositions by students from the HSC Music examination.

"We are delighted that once again the fine work of our students and staff in the creative and performing arts as well as Design and Technology, has been recognised with nominations for HSC showcases," 2020 Director of Studies Mr Philip Fielden said.

"It was a particularly challenging year for our Year 12 students and it's a credit to them that they've received this honour."

HSC 2020



When NGS farewelled its 2020 Year 12 cohort at the end of last year, it was with a great sense of pride. The HSC students faced unprecedented challenges throughout a year that started with devastating bushfires, before being dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas noted, 2020 was the first year the students had wondered if there would even be an HSC.

But the Year 12 students showed amazing resilience, as they dealt with changes in school life and in assessment requirements for many HSC courses, as well as news of increasing instability in the university sector and jobs market.

"What the teaching staff have seen from this cohort has been astounding," Mrs Thomas said. "Year 12 had a 100% attendance record for their Trial examinations, completed all Major works, adapted to online learning with a purpose and have remained calm and positive as a group throughout the year."

"What we are most thrilled about are the ways the cohort have been able to reposition and regroup. The ability to meet challenges, respond flexibly and maintain focus are admirable qualities and skills for life."



Despite COVID-19 restrictions, NGS was able to farewell Year 12 with a "clap in" by the student body from the Hill rooftop to the Centenary Lawn (rather than the usual "clap out"), and a Graduation Assembly joined by parents and the school community online.

The Assembly was followed by a special Year 12 lunch and the students continued the traditions of the "laying of the brick" and the all-important volleyball game against staff.

School Captain Jadon Routley summed up the year in his final Assembly speech:

"Well, we've made it. I will be the first to admit that it was touch and go a couple of times there, but against the odds we have made it to the last Assembly that Gina [Petrelis] and I will have the honour of running."

The HSC exams ran smoothly from an alternate venue in Bolton Street, and the students received some good news when restrictions were eased at the start of Term 4, enabling them to hold a Formal event at Noah's On the Beach after their exams.

BEEKEEPING

BUZZ OUT OF



“Most went away keen to set up their own hive. Four families have since purchased colonies from the school apiary to start up their home hives.”

— Mr Chris Wyatt

The number of beekeepers in Newcastle is growing, after an NGS Beekeeping course put several local families on the path to setting up their own hives.

Technology teacher and resident apiarist Mr Chris Wyatt leads the Honey on the Hill course. The course covered everything from life inside a beehive to how to work safely with bees, and how to spot common pests and diseases.

Mr Wyatt said the School’s beehives were thriving and students were also set to have more opportunities to learn beekeeping skills, with the School offering a new beekeeping course as part of the myNGS Passport Co-curricular programme in 2021.



SPEECH DAY

SPEECH DAY WITH A
DIFFERENCE CELEBRATES
SUCCESSES OF A
CHALLENGING YEAR





The NGS 102nd Speech Day and Awards Ceremony held in December 2020 looked very different to usual, but it remained an inspiring celebration of all that students and staff achieved during a challenging year.

To meet COVID guidelines, students attended separate daytime ceremonies at the Civic Theatre – Primary and Secondary – and the events were live-streamed for viewing by family and friends.

Highlights of the events included musical performances by Stringendo, the NGS Symphony Orchestra and a wide range of talented students.

Head of Primary Mrs Alisha Dyer, congratulated all students on their reliance, courage and tenacity in dealing with the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“At the commencement of the year, we made a commitment together that we would choose courage in our lives in 2020,” she said. “Little did we know how brave we needed to be. Congratulations to every student, parent and staff member for demonstrating bravery this year.”

Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas said that at the start of 2020, she had not expected she would end the year by speaking at two live streamed presentations, rather than one evening speech night.

“It’s been a year where we’ve managed to normalise the abnormal and have learnt to live with the uncomfortable. It’s been a year that has turned us around and challenged us on many levels,” she said.

“It’s also been a year of great pride and many successes and today gives us an opportunity to celebrate what we did do, rather than what we didn’t do.”

Chair of the Board Ms Catherine Wilkinson gave an address via video, as did Bishop of Newcastle Diocese, the Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart.

2020 School Captains Evgenia Petrelis and Jadon Routley farewelled a year that “should not have happened” but that had offered lessons and opportunities for all students.

“This year has shown us that we cannot take what we have for granted. That life is fragile yet dynamic, that we cannot predict what tomorrow will bring and because of it, we must be forever grateful for the relationships and connections that enrich and sustain us.”

“This year has provided us with a singular opportunity to reconsider our world, reject what is wrong and encourage change for a just and fair society,” Evgenia said.

We congratulate our students and staff for all they achieved in 2020.



WEBINAR

WEBINARS PROVE A WINNING WAY TO COMMUNICATE

2020 saw NGS adopt new ways of communicating with parents and families, including through a series of webinars which proved a popular and effective way to connect the school community.

**EVENTS MOVING TO AN ONLINE
ENVIRONMENT DUE TO RESTRICTIONS**

MOVING ONLINE



2021 Captains and Prefects Induction was live streamed for friends and family to celebrate together.

Celebrations and assemblies were live streamed and shared throughout the year

2020 saw NGS adopt new ways of communicating with parents and families, including through a series of webinars which proved a popular and effective way to connect the school community.

With many events moving to an online environment due to restrictions on large gatherings, the School adapted quickly, introducing innovations such as online parent-teacher interviews and NGS webinars on a wide range of issues.

Many parents and students joined the webinars live and had an opportunity to participate in discussions, posting questions for the presenters to address. Those who couldn't attend live could view the recorded event at their convenience.

"One of the positives of COVID-19 has been that we've had to be innovative and come up with different ways of doing many things," said Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas. "This has opened up opportunities for parents to engage with their children's education in many exciting new ways."

The webinars gave parents a convenient way to remain connected, to learn about new initiatives affecting their children's schooling and to join discussions – all remotely. "We're thrilled our school community has embraced this form of communication and we'll continue to present webinars in the future – hopefully to complement face-to-face events when they are possible," Mrs Thomas said.

2020 NGS Webinars

The Future of Education

Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas and Executive staff led a discussion of the many changes that COVID-19 has prompted in education broadly, as well as at NGS. The webinar looked at where those changes would lead the School in the future including: new opportunities for blended face-to-face and online learning; the new Co-curricular programme being developed; a strong focus on students' pathways to the future; and new ways of communicating with the school community.



Bringing learning in Kindergarten to Life

Head of Primary Mrs Alisha Dyer and key staff gave families of students starting school in 2021 an introduction to Kindergarten at NGS, and discussed the learning journey children would go on once they started school.

NGS & East End Early Education Partnership

Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas, Head of Primary Mrs Alisha Dyer, Head of Learning Support K-6 Mrs Melinda Tucker and East End Early Education Centre co-owner and Director Tonya Franks discussed the new partnership which will provide Pre-School services for future NGS students.

Year 12, 2021 Information

Parents and students of Year 12, 2021 learned important information about the HSC journey, including how to approach the year, assessment, ATARs and careers information.

Subject Selection

Two webinars were held to explain subjects and choices for students moving into Year 9 and into Year 11 in 2021.

myNGS Passport

Mr Daniel Kozey joined with students and key business leaders Nadene Barretto, managing director of Eight Recruitment and Aaron Kearney, managing director of AKS Media International, to outline and discuss the innovative new Co-curricular programme being launched in 2021.

Information Evening

A webinar was held to provide information to families of Year 7 students due to start in 2021.



A LESSON IN LEADERSHIP FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL



Students in Year 11 had an opportunity to glean insights about leadership from one of Australia's eminent leaders – the Governor-General – in an online discussion forum in August.

Students asked His Excellency Governor-General, Honourable David Hurley and his wife, Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley, questions ranging from the relevance of the position of Governor-General to young people today, to their thoughts on recently released documents about the Whitlam Dismissal.

James Fry, one of the student hosts of the event, said the Governor-General offered valuable insights into the importance of adapting strengths to overcome challenges.

"We also gained a unique insight into the skills and attitudes required for effective leadership, as learned through His Excellency's time as a General in the Australian Defence Force, most notably as Chief of the Defence Force," he said.

Co-host Zoe Roberts-Thomson said the main message she took away from the event was that leadership is an incredibly broad and multifaceted experience.

"It involves not only being able to stand up and deliver a speech, but also being a good listener and have an understanding of what the people you serve are going through, you need to "lead with your ego but not for your ego".

The online forum was a precursor to the two-day Year 11 Positive Education conference held later in September, which aimed to help students transition to the skills and mindsets needed to flourish in Year 12 and beyond.

YEAR 11 POSITIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE



MOCK TRIAL SUCCESS

The Newcastle Grammar team, took to the challenge of online Mock Trials like ducks to water throughout a jam-packed season. The team's barristers led the charge towards an undefeated run through the preliminary rounds whilst near-perfect scores from the witnesses and court officials ensured NGS' continuation into the State Finals Elimination Series for the second year running.

As the knock-out rounds progressed, the team really came into their own. Meetings at each lunchtime, strategy sessions with our legal consultant and creative brainstorming became commonplace. Indeed, this preparation was key - with only eight teams left in the State, the competition was nothing less than fierce.



In the final week of the 2020 school year, the team faced their greatest challenge, and an NGS first – a State Mock Trial Grand Final. Travelling to Sydney for the only in-person trial of the year, the team put up a brilliant display – anyone would be forgiven for thinking the room was filled with top-class barristers dressed as school students, rather than the other way around! After three hours of vigorous debate and examination, the Newcastle Grammar team were awarded State Runners' Up, an incredible achievement by any measure.

Congratulations to St Catherine's School Waverley in Sydney who were the 2020 State winners.



TOM Tournament of the Minds

A team of innovative Year 5 and 6 students have shown that COVID-19 can't stop collaboration, after working together to achieve a top score in the 2020 Tournament of the Minds.

The annual competition offers teams of students the opportunity to solve open-ended challenges that foster creative, divergent thinking while developing skills like teamwork.

Gifted and talented teacher Mrs Jessica Parsonage said NGS entered a team of seven students in the Primary Division of the Tournament: Samuel de Andrade, Matilda Dyer, Nicholas Egerton, Kanisha Goyal, Olivia Lorenz, Morrison Martin and Scarlett Van Dyck.

The competition usually requires teams to choose one of four disciplines as a focus for their presentation (The Arts, STEM, Language Literature or Social Sciences), but in 2020 it took the form of an 'Online Super Challenge' combining all disciplines.

The students had six weeks in Term 3 to develop their solution to a problem, write a script, create props and film their performance entry for the Tournament.

In order to adhere to social distancing measures, they used Microsoft Teams to communicate with one another between sessions, and split the roles and tasks (such as script writer or prop maker) within the team, so they could collaborate in smaller groups.

The team scripted and performed a short fictional play about Leonardo da Vinci's final confession, in which he reveals that the true geniuses responsible for his famous Renaissance art, inventions and ideas were actually all women.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the submissions were filmed by students and their video was judged externally. The NGS team was proud to be awarded the highest grade of "Merit", with the top score in the Hunter region.





CAMPS

Our Year 5 and 6 students spent three days at a camp in the Blue Mountains.

“Building relationships, communication and resilience were a focus while students participated in bush skills, environmental education and team initiatives that challenged them to push the boundaries of their comfort zone,” said Mrs Joanne Murdoch. “And of course, no camp experience would be complete without a hefty dose of fun.”

Activities included archery, orienteering, a challenge course, team Initiatives and an unforgettable bush walk from Scenic World to the Three Sisters Lookout taking in waterfalls, lookouts and rock caves.

The students also really enjoyed a morning of games and activities on the oval where they erected tents, made daisy chains, played touch football and had a very serious mixed game of cricket.

Mrs Murdoch said the activities were part of the core educational framework of Self, Others and the Natural World.

“We also held a Remembrance Day service including a minute’s silence in the beautiful surrounding bushland. One of our camp leaders, Shane, shared stories of his time serving in the Australian Army as an engineer. He let the students handle his medals and spoke about team building, camaraderie and pride.”

Year 7 students had fun at Camp Wombaroo in the Southern Highlands in early December, erecting tents to spend one night under canvas.

They enjoyed activities including canoeing, bushwalking, abseiling, high and low ropes courses, raft building, camp craft, archery and the giant swing.

“The Camp is extremely important in engaging our students in activities that develop independence, communication, empathy and teamwork.” Mrs Olsen said. “Our Year 7 students had the opportunity to build upon and create new friendships and memories within this experience.”

While Year 8 students didn’t get a chance to go on a camp in 2020, they took part in a two-day outdoor education programme aimed at broadening and building their relationships and skills, including a “choose your own experience” day.

The Year 8 girls took on the challenge of a Treetops course, where they had unlimited access to the junior course of bridges, tightropes, nets and flying foxes, while the boys took part in a Learn to Surf and Safety Awareness Course at One Mile Beach.

In the “choose your own experience” day at Glenworth Valley, students could choose to have a go at abseiling, laser tag, kayaking or horse riding.

outdoor SCIENCE

From exploding watermelons to an ocean-themed “escape room”, National Science Week 2020 saw NGS students inspired to explore the many ways that science shapes our world.

The week, held in August, was themed Deep Blue: Innovations for the future of our oceans and focused on embracing the innovative technologies, capabilities and skills needed to achieve economic, environment and social sustainability of our oceans

Assistant Head of STEM, Ms Summer Edwards said junior science classes took part in learning activities about sustainable oceans, and an ocean-themed “escape room” was completed online using the learning platform STILE.

The students who take part in the Co-curricular NGS Science Club helped to run a series of fun, lunchtime events at Hill Campus to celebrate the week.

Activities included a science trivia competition, the Young Scientist Paper Plane competition (see below), “Scinema” – a chance to watch short films from the International Science Festival 2020 – and the opportunity for students to immerse themselves in a virtual reality experience of being under the sea or taking a journey through the human body.



Due to COVID restrictions, Ms Edwards said two sessions were run for every lunchtime activity – one for Year 5–6 and one for Year 7–11 students. The “Messy Science” activity was a big hit, with students able to get hands-on exploring how many rubber bands it takes to explode a watermelon, as well as watching the infamous Mentos and Coke eruption experiment.

For a Science Bonanza Expo, the students made and ran activities including making a dry ice tornado, made oobleck, making an ice fishing competition, magical eggs and fizz inflators, Ms Edwards said the Science Club members showed other students how to go about the activities and discussed the science involved.

“This had involved them doing lots of pre-testing and research to find out how to make the experiments and the best way to run them on the day,” she said.



The annual NGS Hands on Humanity Vietnam tour was unable to go ahead in 2020 due to COVID-19, but the School's fundraising efforts for the school and orphanage continued throughout the year

The NGS Vietnam Project works in partnership with the Trung Tam Bao Orphanage at Vung Tau and Long Hai School, which were established by Vietnamese Australian woman My Huong Le who has devoted much of her life to helping underprivileged children in Vietnam.

The orphanage was caring for 10 new babies and children, whose families could not afford to feed them as a result of the pandemic that had hit the poorest families hardest, she said.

And due to job insecurity, children were often needed by their family to work to supplement family income, meaning it was difficult to keep them in school.

Mr Parsons said while NGS had been limited in the types of fundraising events it could hold during 2020, we still managed to keep our commitment to this project.

In February, "Towel Tuesday" saw a call for donations for towels for use in the school and orphanage, with a lunchtime BBQ also raising funds.



In April, a Round Square fundraiser enabled a \$850 donation towards buying food for students at the school and the orphanage as they navigated the pandemic.

The House days throughout the year also supported the Project, including Shortland House's "Splendour on the Hill" music festival in Term 4, which saw students give a donation to enjoy performances by the School's many talented musicians.

The fundraising also included generous donations of icecreams and iceblocks that were sold to the students, as well as a pizza lunch fundraiser.

"The fundraising was a great success and we look forward to passing that on soon," Mr Parsons said. "We also hope, of course, that we will be able to reconnect with My Huong and the Vietnam experience for our students in 2021, if and when international travel again becomes an option."

A number of NGS students have shown that the age-old skill of paper plane making and flying lives on, after competing successfully in the NSW Young Scientist Paper Planes Challenge 2020: one of the many events held to mark Science Week.

Year 6 student Harper Willilams was surprised to be presented with a medal in Term 4, after achieving third place for the "time in the air" category for the year group.



Five other Year 6 students also received certificates from the Science Teachers Association after being named finalists in the Challenge: George Opheim (Distance); Harrison Johnson (Distance); Morrison Martin (Airtime); Matilda Dyer (Distance) and Myla Tucker (Distance).



**Always Was,
Always Will Be.**



naidoc.org.au

NAIDOC WEEK

8-15 NOV 2020

#NAIDOC2020
#AlwaysWasAlwaysWillBe

Always: Words of Land to Torres Strait

The Naidoc logo depicts a person in the shape of the Torres Strait Islands, the land of the Torres Strait Islanders. The logo is a stylized figure of a person in a dynamic pose, with arms raised and legs bent. The figure is composed of black outlines with internal patterns and colors like red, orange, and blue. The figure's head is a circle with two white eyes and a purple triangle for a nose. The figure's arms are extended, and its legs are bent in a powerful stance. The background consists of numerous concentric, wavy lines in various colors, creating a sense of movement and depth.

[Facebook.com/NAIDOC](https://www.facebook.com/NAIDOC) [Twitter.com/NAIDOCweek](https://twitter.com/NAIDOCweek) [YouTube.com/NAIDOC](https://www.youtube.com/NAIDOC)

NAIDOC WEEK

NGS students celebrated the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a special Assembly and activities to mark NAIDOC week in November. Secondary teacher Ms Matindi Twyford-Moore, who co-ordinated the event at Hill Campus, said the School's first NAIDOC Week celebration was embraced by staff and students.

She said the 2020 week was themed "Always was, always will be", inviting all Australians to embrace and acknowledge the country's true history.

During the Assembly, Maree Edwards, Aboriginal Community Development Officer at Lake Macquaire City Council, read a poem written by her mother celebrating the significance of women in Aboriginal culture.

Ms Twyford-Moore, who attended high school with many students who identified as Aboriginal and has many close friends who are Koori, spoke about the intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal people.

She outlined some of the statistics showing the disadvantages experienced by Indigenous people, including shockingly high suicide rates, reduced life expectancy, a high proportion of children in out-of-home care, high rates of incarceration, and the fact that only one-third of Indigenous youth finish Year 12 compared with three-quarters of non-Indigenous youth.

In their mentor groups, the students then watched a video created by the University of Sydney entitled "Ask us Anything" in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander answered a range of questions about their culture and identity.

The students formed a 'yarning circle' – a traditional, collaborative way of communicating – to discuss the issues raised in the video and Assembly.

"The students were really engaged and there was lots of meaningful, honest and open conversation," Ms Twford-Moore said.

Students traced their hands onto paper, cut it out and attached it to a large Aboriginal flag as a symbol of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

They also plaited yellow, red and black friendship bracelets, representing the friendship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and recognising the traditional Indigenous practice of weaving.

"We are very excited that plans are afoot to celebrate Indigenous culture and promote reconciliation each and every year," Ms Twyford-Moore said.



Initiative to Grow in 2021

Trips to other schools as well as exchanges within Australasia are on the agenda for 2021-22, under the School's membership of Round Square – a network that aims to nurture forward-thinking, global citizens.

NGS joined the network of around 200 schools in 50 different countries last year, opening up opportunities to collaborate on initiatives including academic endeavours, conferences, sharing resources, cultural trips and exchanges.

Global Studies Department teacher Mrs Samantha Jones, who is leading the initiative, said the COVID-19 pandemic limited some activities in 2020. However, highlights included a livestreamed concert by Senior School jazz ensemble Brass RaZoo raising funds for an international charity, and a series of video interviews with prominent Australian leaders by student committee chair James Peters.

"Last year was a really great start for us, especially considering COVID – James Peters' leadership interviews were fantastic. Our environment campaigns and mentor mascot activities also got students more involved in the ideals of Round Square and how it can complement our Positive Education programme," Mrs Jones said.

In 2021, Round Square would get involved in a broader range of activities both inside and outside School, she said.

The student committee will expand to about 30-40 students from Years 5-12, with different responsibilities, including linking in with House terms, mentor activities, fundraising, awareness, service and leadership opportunities.

"As COVID-19 restrictions ease, I am hoping to see a wider range of trips open up including shorter visits to other schools, and leadership and service training trips later in the year. We are also hoping for exchanges to be possible from the middle of next year initially within the Australasia and NZ region."

Mrs Jones said Round Square was also being embedded in the School curriculum framework. For example, in 2020 Year 7 created cultural displays as an end-of year activity, writing questions to schools around the world to create informative displays on cultures including Thailand, India, Peru, Turkey and Indigenous Australia.



THE 2020 ROUND SQUARE STUDENT COMMITTEE

James Peters (Chair)

Archie Carter and Genya Doherty (Year 12)

Foti Petrelis and Emma McGrath (Year 11)

Lily Webster and Omar Galal (Year 10)

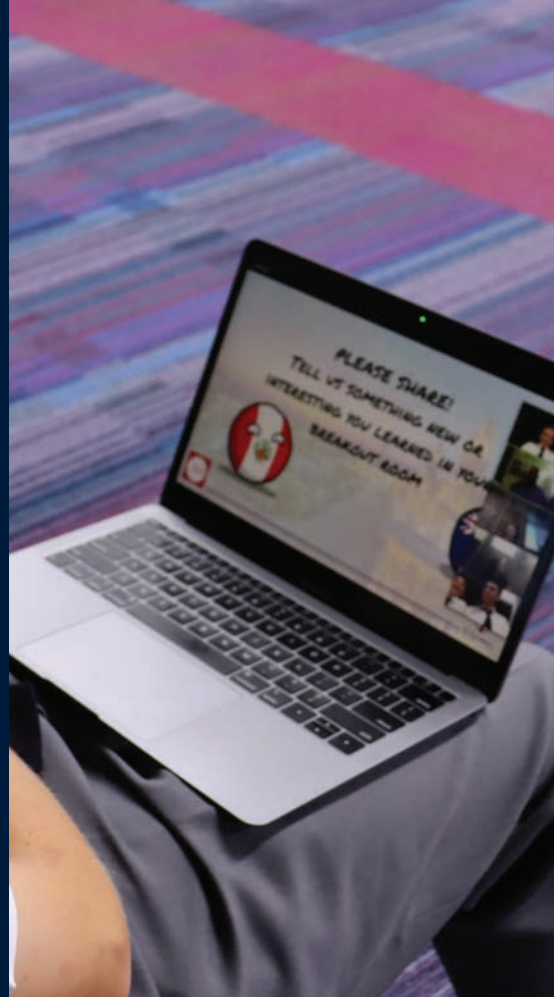
Katherine Wang and Alexander Macdougall (Year 9)

Olivia Prickett (Year 8)

Molly Boyle and Campbell Gentle (Year 7)

Dominic Crampton Amelie De Iuliis (Year 6)

Allegra Hinton and Winter Bennett (Year 5)



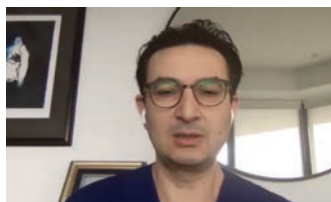
Leadership interviews bring the world to NGS

With NGS students unable to go out to the world in 2020, Round Square student committee Chair, James Peters, helped bring the world to them through a series of video interviews with leaders from Australia and abroad.

James conducted and recorded the online interviews with community leaders from many different walks of life throughout Term 3, to gain insights into how they had used their strengths to serve others.

The inspiring interviews were shared with students on SchoolBox.

James's interview subjects included some of the following:



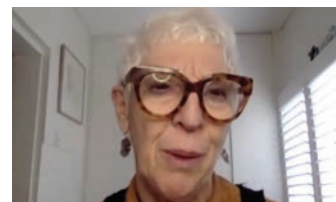
Professor Munjed Al Muderis, orthopaedic surgeon and human rights activist who fled Iraq during the regime of Saddam Hussein



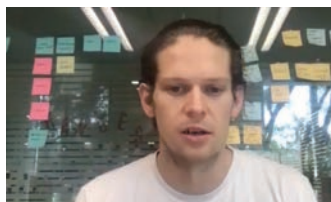
Former NGS teacher and current Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand, the Honourable Patricia Forsythe



Governor of NSW, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley



Founder and CEO of charity Ozharvest Australia, Ronnie Kahn



2016 Young Australian of the Year and Co-founder of Orange Sky charity, Lucas Patchett



James Peters
NGS Round Square, Chair

HSC

Study Skills 2021

Year 12 students are on the path to study success in 2021, after taking part in a Study Skills session via Zoom in Term 4 last year.

The session, run by Elevate Education, focused on two key areas: time management and student motivation.

In the time management seminar, students were encouraged to create a study routine that they could actually stick to, as well as learning how to study “smart rather than just hard”.

The goal setting and motivation seminar aimed to help students not only become motivated – but to stay motivated throughout their toughest school year.

Director of Studies, Mr Philip Fielden, said the session was part of a programme of speakers and sessions held for students from Years 7–12 to help them develop and improve all-important study skills and habits that would be valuable not only during their schooling, but beyond.

“This session should help our Year 12 students begin their HSC studies with the motivation and the study habits they’ll need to perform at their best,” he said.

A Year 12 Parent Information webinar was also held in Term 4, with Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas, Director of Learning and Teaching Mrs Lisa Peterson and Mr Fielden outlining details of the HSC programme and the support provided to students. While COVID-19 disrupted start to 2020 had made it a difficult year for senior students, Mrs Thomas said they had demonstrated their ability to be resilient, to adapt and to be self-reliant.

“I hope what that does, as they move into their final year at school, is to give them this huge boost – whatever is thrown at them, they’ll be able to manage it,” she said.

“We are very proud of our students and we believe that if 2020 has shown them anything, it’s the fact that they can not only survive, but thrive.”



BOOK WEEK



Park Campus was overtaken by wild and curious creatures in October, when students brought their favourite books to life during Book Week.

Primary teacher Miss Jade Biddleston said the theme for the week was “Curious Creatures, Wild Minds,” celebrating children’s curiosity and creativity.

The students’ curiosity was aroused by reading the blurb of special books at Morning Assembly each day. Those books were the focus of a virtual, interactive drama performance celebrating the best Australian children’s books of 2020, put on by Perform! Education, that the students enjoyed at the end of the week.

Throughout the week, the students took part in Curious Creature Craft lunchtime clubs and went on a Wild Mind Gallery Walk of artworks they had created.

But the biggest highlight of the week was Friday’s dress-up day, when both students and teachers transformed into an amazing array of characters, including Dr Suess’s Thing 1 and Thing 2 (and a Thing 3), Little Red Riding Hood, princesses, Star Wars characters, Where’s Wally and Hogwarts’ pupils of Harry Potter fame.

“It was a wonderful and very colourful celebration bringing books and story characters to life,” Miss Biddleston said. “Our students at NGS read an enormous variety of books each year. This is wonderful as reading impacts every Key Learning Area in our curriculum. It also develops our understanding of the world and our relationships with others, and improves vocabulary and imagination.”

VIRTUAL

Debating

While COVID-19 meant there were no face-to-face interschool debates this year, NGS students still had the opportunity to develop their skills in a virtual debating competition involving schools as far afield as Perth and Far North Queensland.

History teacher Dr Phillipa Parsons, who oversaw the NGS teams, said the debates were run via an online platform, with students able to see each other, and an adjudicator on a third screen. NGS entered teams in four divisions – Primary (Years 5–6), Juniors (Years 7–8), Middles (Year 9–10) and Seniors (Year 11).

“The students really loved the virtual format,” Dr Parsons said. “They liked that they didn’t have to travel, but I don’t think there was any real difference in their ability or confidence either way. Our teams debated schools from Perth, Melbourne, Western and Northern NSW, Brisbane and Far North Queensland, so it was exciting for them to know that we were connecting with students so far away.”

While the Primary and Junior teams were given their topic a week before to enable them to prepare, the Middle and Senior teams were given the topic only at the start of the one-hour debate and had 10-minutes use of their computer and internet to research the topic.

Topics that were hotly debated during the competition ranged from whether Australia should implement a Bill of Rights and whether we should abandon space exploration, to whether the media should report on the family lives of politicians. The Junior team got through to the Knockout round and quarter-finals, while the Senior team got as far as the Knockout round.

NGS 2020 Debating teams

The teams, which varied for each debate, included the following students:

Primary: Sophia Richardson, Savannah Lance, Elisha Griffis, Jatin Budaraju, Jessica Choi, Oscar Avery, Enora Wang, Allegra Hinton, Gabe Flynn, Dominic Crampton, Shaveen Saleria, Valeria Trujillo.

Juniors (two teams): George Carr, Saffron Thibault, Samreen Haque, Shilpi Salaria, Shanuk Wikremaratchy, Christian Spencer, Kevin Seng and Caitlin Baker.
Middles: Lily Webster, Sebastian Spencer, Ruby Buckeridge, Jasmine Witford, Prakriti Goel, Josephine Armstrong and Piper Rao.
Seniors: Zoe Roberts-Thomson, Foti Petrelis, Sophie Franks, Cameron Slarks and Sabrina Mancini.

CURIOSITY

Fantasy, Magic and Wonder



From fantasy and fairytales to magicians and the Seven Wonders of the World, Primary students let their imaginations soar during a series of “Stay Curious” days in September.

Head of Primary Mrs Alisha Dyer said the Primary School was always a place of creativity, wonder and magic and the Stay Curious days, created by Miss Amy Bibby, aimed to foster students’ love of learning.

“Our Stay Curious’ days saw our students not only dress to a certain theme, but they were immersed in learning activities that cultivated their curiosity, their imagination and deep thinking,” Mrs Dyer said.

Three days were held for students in different stages. The theme for students in Kindergarten and Year 1 was fantasy and fairytales: they dressed up as their favourite characters to take part in STEM challenges and literacy circles as well as designing castles and creating puppets to perform in a puppet theatre.

Students in Years 2–4 became magicians and wizards, creating potions, slime and other intriguing artefacts to match their hands-on learning experiences. They used their scientific skills of problem-solving to determine accurate measurements to ensure their creations were successful.

The Year 5–6 students became historians, musicians, artists, detectives and architects, as they explored the Seven Wonders of the World. Throughout the day, they were challenged to recreate famous monuments and artworks as well as discovering the significance of the Seven Wonders of the World through a WebQuest and using their imaginations to escape from an exciting Egyptian adventure.

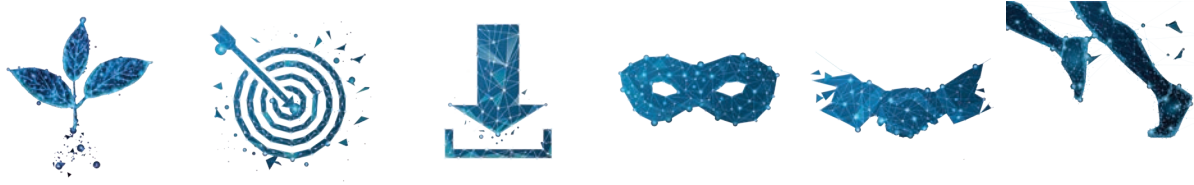
“It was wonderful to see the students embracing their curiosity, discovering new things, and using their imaginations to solve problems – all while having a lot of fun,” Mrs Dyer said.

Our investment in **your** future.



myNGS
passport





NGS is excited to launch the myNGS Passport, a new approach to Co-curricular from 2021

The Skills for the Future area of the passport aims to connect students with a suite of local businesses, building connections and providing opportunities for work experience and on-the-job training.

Mr Kozey said discussions were underway with a number of local businesses to explore ways they could get involved with the activities being offered as part of the programme.

"The long-term aim is that we have a suite of business, and it may enable students to do internships through their holidays, or to do on-the-job training during their senior years," he said. "We've got great kids, our region has great businesses, and this will link them together and give them a head-start in building relationships with potential employers," he said.

Discussions are also underway with the University of Newcastle to enable students to access university facilities, and to have UON student ambassadors involved in mentoring and coaching NGS students in different activities.

Nadene Barretto, Managing Director of Eight Recruitment and school parent said the programme would give students a headstart when they entered the job market, whether they were looking for a part-time job while studying, or embarking on a career.

"I think it's so exciting because what's missing in these young kids' resumes is what you're providing. A resume is all about telling a story and I think with what this programme is – it will be a ready-made resume... it's an amazing programme," she told the webinar on the myNGS Passport late last year.

Mr Aaron Kearney, international journalist, 2020 OAM recipient, school parent and Managing Director of AKS Media International, said the myNGS Passport would help create multi-faceted, nimble individuals – attributes that would be vital in the future world of work.

The added element of self-reflection would give students an opportunity to learn and grow from their experiences, he said. "It can go wherever the student takes it – it is simultaneously a pathway, with the freedom to roam."



UNIVERSAL

Graduates



myNGS Passport

NGS students will build up a 'passport' of their experiences and training in everything from sports coaching to beekeeping or making podcasts, following the launch of an innovative new Co-curricular programme that aims to create 'universal graduates'.

Director of Co-curricular K-12, Mr Daniel Kozey said the programme, called myNGS Passport, was a completely new way of approaching Co-curricular activities that would harness connections with both the University of Newcastle and local businesses.

"The key features built into the myNGS Passport that separate it from other Co-curricular programmes is that it will be student-driven, progressive and provide opportunities for students across K-12 to build leadership and skills," he said. Students can choose innovative experiences from six themes or pillars, which are designed around the passions of both students and staff. Along with the traditional co-curricular activities such as music and sport, new activities being offered in 2021 include "Hive" – a beekeeping course run by teacher and apiarist Mr Chris Wyatt which will see students harvest honey and sell it at local markets; and sustainable gardening, utilising the Hill campus rooftop garden.

Other experiences to be offered include creative fashion, positive sports coaching, podcast creation and a range of STEM activities that might start with a coding camp for Years 5-6 and progress to the opportunity to enter international competitions such as the 'F1 in Schools' car-building competition in senior years.

Mr Kozey said job-ready experiences such as learning how to create a resume and how to perform in an interview would also be offered within a reshaped Work Experience programme. "Years 5-12 will be able to choose their own experience if we can't offer something that truly excites them," he said.

The programme is progressive, with a pathway from activities in Primary School through to more challenging activities in Senior years. Some activities run for a few weeks and others for a term or longer, and students are able to choose to take part in as many activities as they like, if they fit in with their other school and home commitments.

"COVID-19 taught us that the students liked having flexible options to work on tasks online when it suits them throughout the week, so some activities will involve a mix of face-to-face sessions at school and online activities at home," Mr Kozey said. He said self-reflection is a key element of the myNGS Passport programme, with students completing reflection questions after each activity to give them insights into what they've learned.

"Students in Years 5-12 will talk about their Round Square discoveries, relationships it has helped build and the skills they've used, while K-4 will self-reflect based on wonder, discovery and inquiry."

The students will receive 'micro-credentials', including certificates for completing externally-run courses, so they can build up a passport of their skills.

Students in Years 5-12 will receive a digital passport that will give future employers or university selection panels a picture of their interests, skills and other achievements, to sit alongside their academic record of achievement. Students in Years K-4 will have a physical passport with stamps or stickers for their completed activities.

"We are tremendously excited to be able to offer something like this to our students – and both our students and staff are really keen to get involved and follow their passions," Mr Kozey said.

"This is our investment in our students' future, and we believe it will create not just global graduates, but universal graduates."

SPORT A CHALLENGING YEAR

The 2020 season was like no other. Students and parents adapted to many changes including reduced spectator rules, social distancing, constant sanitising, and no oranges at half-time. Director of Co-curricular K-12 Mr Daniel Kozey said NGS fielded five teams in the Mini-Roo non-competitive format, which enabled the students to turn their focus to learning new skills, being active and developing new friendships.

He said the School was also fortunate to continue its relationship with former Socceroo Clayton Zane and his InZane coaching team.

“Thanks to the coaching team for inspiring the students to be active, improving their skills, building their confidence, and teaching them invaluable social skills,” he said.



The 2020 Netball season also posed challenges that players had never experienced before.

“The length of the season was reduced, and there were significant restrictions meaning that the players had to arrive, play and depart immediately afterwards, while training sessions involved more hand sanitiser than we wish to remember,” said Mr Kozey.



NGS fielded 12 teams in the Newcastle Netball Association competitions, where the focus was on fun, friendships and gratitude.

Among the uncertainty, cancelled rounds and wiping down of goalpost pads after each game, he said the NGS players proved to be resilient and motivated to play every week.

“Congratulations to all our players, parents and coaching staff on adhering to the constantly changing restrictions and for their excitement at being back on court,” he said.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions meant the Primary Athletics Carnival could not go ahead in 2020, but students enjoyed an Athletic Challenge day in August. There was high level of energy and lots of fun as students competed in House groups in the mini Olympics (K-1); Endurance Challenge (Years 2-4) and Amazing Race (Years 5-6).



Secondary students were excited to be able to don their House colours and participate in the 2020 Athletics Carnival held at the Fearnley Dawes Athletics Track in Term 3.

Mr Kozey said students had the opportunity to enter the traditional competitive events, competing for their House, as well as having lots of fun in non-competitive events including 400m races.



"Despite a lack of training, several athletes broke School records on the day," he said. "But most importantly, the Carnival was an opportunity for our Secondary school to come together for the first time in many months and enjoy the camaraderie and support of fellow students and staff."



Congratulations to the following students for their outstanding results on the day:

Girls' Age Champions: Annabel McKensey, Hye-Won Wilson, Hannah Choi, Brooke Hides, Bella Williams, Elizabeth Carter.

Boys' Age Champions: Zaneyth Molinia, Kalen Routley, Edward Hunt, Alexander Mackinnon, Benjamin Henderson, Jadon Routley.



PRE-S PARTN

New Pre-school partnership focus on school-readiness

Pre-school students will be well-prepared for the move to “big school” at NGS, with the introduction of an innovative school-readiness programme as part of the new Pre-school partnership announced last year.

With Park Campus undergoing redevelopment as part of Stage 1 of the School Masterplan, the difficult decision was made to close the NGS Pre-school at the end of 2020.

However, a new partnership was developed with East End Early Education and Preschool in Bolton Street, Newcastle, to provide Pre-school programmes for future NGS students.

In a webinar outlining the changes for the school community, Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas said the benefits of the partnership included similar fees, state-of-the-art facilities, longer hours of operation (7am-6pm), meals provided by an in-house chef and the opportunity for child-care subsidy rebates.

“We will be able to provide a unique Pre-school experience, replicating and enhancing our current programme, just in a different environment. We have found in East End a centre aligned with our philosophy and ethos,” Mrs Thomas said. The children will continue to have access to

specialist teaching resources such as music, languages, sport, and creative arts, and four-year-old students will complete a new NGS School Readiness Programme designed by the School to prepare them for the transition to Kindergarten.

The programme will include visits to events and Park campus throughout the year, as well as two new evidence-based programmes that are being overseen by Head of Learning Support K-6, Mrs Melinda Tucker.

Mrs Tucker said the children will take part in a skills-based early literacy programme called PreLit, developed by experts at Macquarie University to complement the play-based environment.

“It will be run by our teaching staff, who will teach early literacy in a fun and engaging way that is appropriate for all children, and will form part of a daily, high-quality programme,” she said.

The second programme called Talk for Writing (T4W) is based around how children learn language – through memorable, meaningful repetition.

“It doesn’t require children to write in the early years, but shows them how to rhyme, tell stories, develop language skills and ingite an absolute love of learning,” Mrs Tucker said.

SCHOOL ERSHIP



"I'm really passionate about these programmes which will ensure the children have the best possible transition into formal learning the following year," she said.

Director and co-owner of East End Early Education Mrs Tonya Franks said both NGS and East End believed early education formed the basis of a child's success.

"The children here will begin their early education in a secure, well-resourced environment that caters for growth and development," she said.

She said the collaborative arrangement with NGS, including the delivery of the School-Readiness Programme and sharing of resources, would enhance children's preparedness for kindergarten.

"The children will have increased confidence and independence from having participated in the NGS School-Readiness Programme," Mrs Franks said. "They will have developed a love for literacy and a love for learning."

TEACHERS

NGS shone a spotlight on its teaching staff to mark World Teachers' Day in October, recognising the amazing job done by teachers in 2020 as they adapted to the many changes wrought by COVID-19.

The day, held on Friday 30 October, was supported by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and had the theme: "Teaching, a bright Future".

NGS Director of Learning and Teaching Mrs Lisa Peterson said NGS acknowledged the work its teachers do in a variety of ways.

That included giving teachers a beautiful bespoke cookie as a token of thanks, Shout Outs from students published to the SchoolBox site and recognition at Assembly.

"It truly has been a remarkable year for teachers, particularly with the added dimension of COVID-19 and the resilience and adaptability that has required," Mrs Peterson said.

"Our staff have risen to the challenge, ensuring both continuity of learning and a high level of support for wellbeing which has enabled students to weather this unsettling period."

"In a year when the nature of teachers' work is being studied, I sincerely hope we will see broader recognition and acknowledgement of the work we do and why it matters so much," she said.

Year 12 students also finished the year with a special video, thanking all their teachers who prepared them for the HSC.





Where are they now?



Travis Norris: Class of 1995

Family: wife Jessica and sons Isiaha 17, Elye 13, Elijah 8

Currently lives in: Bastad, Sweden and works as a team supervisor for a lumber/hardware company.

Travis spent time backpacking around Australia, Asia and Europe after he finished school. "I had no idea on a career path only that I was interested in exploring the world and finding my place in it," he says.

In 1999, he met his wife Jessica who was also backpacking, married her and joined the Army. He spent the next 10 years in the Army and completed four tours, deploying twice to Iraq, and doing one tour of Afghanistan and one of Timor Leste.

Then in 2010, he and his family moved to Jessica's home-country of Sweden. "I had really enjoyed my time in the military but the constant deployments and war fighting was taking a toll on my soul. I had two boys at that time and the constant separation was unfair to my family." They moved closer to his wife's family and shifted their focus to lifestyle and family rather than career.

Travis and his family remain in Sweden, where he is a team supervisor for a lumber and hardware company. He says he last returned to Australia in 2017 for his best friend's wedding, and for the first time, did feel a little homesick. However, his family usually holidays in nearby European countries, as they can be in a new destination in just two hours.

Travis recalls his time at NGS fondly. "I really loved my time at NGS, even though I was a terrible student," he says.

"If I could pass on one thing on that I wish I knew back then that has helped to shape me now, it is this: Aim to be the hardest working person in the room, if you do find yourself to be the hardest working person in the room then you are in the wrong room. Challenge yourself and be the best version of you."



Anne Grivas, Class of 1988

Family: husband Chris and children Nicholas and Sofia.

Currently lives in: Newcastle and works as a Performing Arts teacher at Lambton High School.

After finishing school, Anne completed a Bachelor of Arts and worked in public relations, before returning to university to study a Diploma in Education and Masters of Education, focusing on performing arts and modern history. You may have spotted her in a few TV advertisements some years back and her love of theatre saw her tour NSW with a Shakespeare educational group.

Together with husband Chris and children Nicholas and Sofia, she spent a few years living in Orange, before the family returned to Newcastle.

Today, she teaches Performing Arts at Lambton High School, as well as running Atkins Carpentry business with her husband. "I loved being at NGS," she says. "I would not swap my school years for anything. I still have contact with lots of friends from school – it was a beautiful time."



Lachlan Stronach, Class of 2000

Currently lives in: Newcastle, and is soon to join the family business, Stronach Property as a property developer. Ten years after graduating from NGS, Lachlan Stronach is set to follow in the footsteps of his high-profile property developer father, Keith, his grandfather and great-grandfather, becoming the fourth generation of his family to work in the family business.

Lachlan initially studied engineering after leaving school, but later swapped to a Bachelor of Business and Innovative Entrepreneurship at the University of Newcastle. He has just completed a Masters in Property Development at UTS, while working at Richard Crooks Constructions in project management.

He said he was planning to join his father's business, Stronach Property, early in 2021, and was keen to continue the family tradition.

"It's a job where you have a real sense of completion," he said. "You are changing the city you live in."

"I have always been in Newcastle and always will be, and it's good to see it progress."

Lachlan's great grandfather William developed the iconic Civic Theatre in the 1920s, and the family business has been behind the development of many local landmarks including Newcastle Police Station. In more recent years, the company has developed the Honeysuckle Precinct including The Boardwalk and Lee Wharf, Merewether Surf House and Watt St Commercial – as well as some NGS buildings.

Lachlan, who attended NGS from Kindergarten right through to Year 12, said the School had given him a close group of friends, who he continued to spend time with regularly. "All my friendships are from school – a lot of my mates went to Sydney for a bit, but they came back after a while," he said.

Celebrations

Our congratulations go to Fiona Hart (Class of 2007), who married Joe Nines in a small ceremony in Sydney on 6 November 2020.



Vale

Sheila Bronte Burnell (nee Pitt) – born 1926. Passed away peacefully at Cooinda Retirement Village, Benalla. Aged 94 years. Much loved mother of John, Wendy, Jim, Bruce and all their respective families.



Share your news

Please let us know any milestones or memories that you'd like to share with the NGS Alumni community. As we continue to grow this section of the magazine, we'd love to include news of your weddings, new babies, awards and achievements (with a photo please) as well as remembering any Alumni who have passed.

Email: Clare.Lacey@ngs.nsw.edu.au

NGS Connections

The connection to Newcastle Grammar School runs very deep – and wide – for Alumni Sue Robertson, who graduated in 1961.

While Sue and husband Bruce have lived in Melbourne for many years and brought up their family there, they are both originally from Newcastle, where they were childhood sweethearts. They recently researched their family trees and discovered a web of connections to NGS that spans both their families. In total, they traced 14 family members who attended the School, largely between the 1920s and the 1960s when it was girls-only school.

“I always knew that my mum and aunts went to Grammar, then Bruce remembered that his aunts also went there. We delved a little further, and found so many connections,” says Sue (formerly Susan Pitt). “It goes around in a circle”.

Sue says she loved her time at NGS, and while she hasn’t been able to attend reunions as she lives too far away, she’s always keen to hear news of the School.

“The teachers were very strict, but we had a really good time,” she says.

After leaving school, she worked in the anaesthetics department at Newcastle Hospital. However, it wasn’t until she was 39-years-old and her daughter Elizabeth finished school and was going to university that Sue too decided to pursue her long-held interest in medicine by studying nursing – a career she continued until her retirement.

The Robertson-Pitt family connections to NGS include:

Sue Robertson (nee Pitt), and her two sisters Margaret Bowman (nee Pitt) and Janet Abraham (nee Pitt). Margaret, who lives in Goondiwindi, Queensland, attended the NGS Centenary celebrations. Sadly, Janet died from motor neurone disease in 2015

Sue’s mother Joan Pitt (nee Robinson) born in 1917 and her sister Hester Pitt (nee Robinson) born in 1918. Their family owned the Criterion Hotel in Newcastle.

Sue’s three aunts (her father Rowan Pitt’s sisters): Judith Rutherford (nee Pitt) born in 1916 – who was Dux of the School in 1934, Pamela Slaton (nee Pitt) born in 1921 and Sheila Burnell (nee Pitt) born in 1926. Their father Nigel Pitt was a founder of Pitt and Merewether Architects in Newcastle.

Bruce’s aunt Lorna Tait (nee Hingst) born in 1917, whose father owned Steggas menswear store in Newcastle.

Bruce’s two sisters, Janette Crittenden (nee Robertson), born in 1938 and Suzanne Larke (nee Robertson) born in 1940 who attended NGS for a few years before going to boarding school in Sydney.

Two of Bruce’s cousins Wendy Perkins (nee Young) born in 1936 and Robyn Mahood (nee Young) born in 1938.

Patricia Mulholland who was Dux of the School in 1927 was the mother of David Giddy, who married Kathy Crittenden, daughter of Janette Crittenden (nee Robertson).



Sue's sister Janet Abraham (nee Pitt) front row, second from right



Joan Pitt (nee Robinson) - Sue's mum



Bruce's sister Janette Crittenden (nee Robertson) at Newcastle Baths



Bruce Robertson with Sue (Left) and her sister Margaret



Newspaper clipping showing Suzanne and Janette Robertson



Bruce's sister Janette Crittenden (nee Robertson)



Hester Pitt (nee Roinson), Sue's aunt



Janette Crittenden (nee Robertson), Bruce's sister

Medical school creates award to honour former student Holly Hart

A Sydney medical school has named an award in memory of young doctor and NGS Alumni Holly Hart, who died from bowel cancer in 2019 just as she was embarking on a career in medicine.

The University of Notre Dame's Hawkesbury Medical School, where Holly completed her last two years of medical school, honoured her with the award which states:

"The Holly Hart Award – presented each year to a student or staff member who has demonstrated genuine compassion, kindness and collegiality towards patients, peers and the wider community." Holly's mum Judy Hart said the award captured the essence of Holly, who combined a great sense of fun and adventure with deep compassion.

She said Holly was a high achiever at NGS, gaining the top UAI of 99.35 in her graduating class of 2006. She was a prefect that year, and loved singing in the Chapel Choir, the Britten Choir and the Senior Choir, as well as being a keen netballer, interests she shared with her sister Fiona (class of 2007). With her mum a pharmacist and dad James a radiologist, medical careers ran in the family.

When she finished school, she studied psychology at the University of Sydney, gaining first class honours. While at University, she was asked to co-ordinate the UBS Young Women's Leadership Academy, where 50 girls from public high schools in NSW, the ACT and Victoria lived in the Women's College for five days and were given the chance to explore possibilities of further education and business.

After completing her undergraduate psychology degree and working for a couple of years, Holly decided she wanted to become a doctor. She taught herself physics and sat the competitive

GAMSAT exam, gaining entry to the University of Notre Dame postgraduate degree on her first attempt.

She had gained her MBBS and was starting to flourish as a doctor, working at Nepean Hospital in Western Sydney, when she became ill and received the shock diagnosis of late stage bowel cancer.

"I want to let people know that this is not an old people's disease," Mrs Hart said. "A lot of young people die of bowel cancer, because it isn't caught early enough".

She said Holly was stoic throughout her eight-month illness, remaining positive and supporting other young people through a peer support programme run by Bowel Cancer Australia. She died on 15 October 2019, and the "hymn" at her funeral was Monty Python's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life".

"That was her way of looking at life once she became an adult," Mrs Hart says.



History repeating itself: the first pandemic to impact NGS in 1919

When Louise Mann came across some incredibly well-preserved Prize-Giving Programmes from NGS's earliest years among her family's archives, she was fascinated to read that the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 wasn't the first such crisis the School had faced.

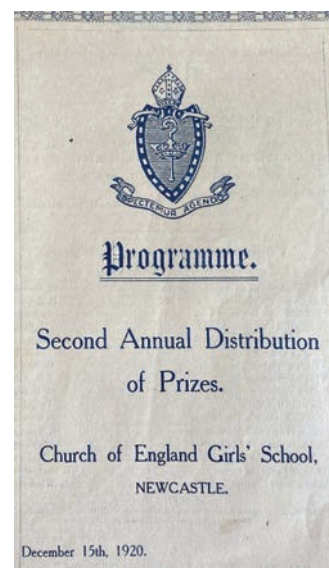
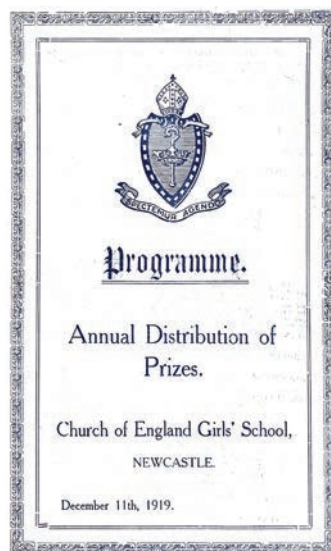
Louise's grandmother, Ida Stephenson (nee Andrews), was a boarder at the School – then called Church of England Girls' School – in 1919. It was just a year after the school opened its doors, and the country was in the grips of the Spanish Influenza epidemic, which killed 15,000 Australians. "When I found a school pin which had been my Nan's, and the prize programmes from 1919 and 1920, I was amazed," Louise says. "I read the Principal's Report from 1919 about the Spanish flu and thought, this year is just like history repeating itself."

Louise's grandmother Ida was an accomplished musician. She received a School music prize in 1920 and went on to play the organ in churches in the local dioceses, including at Christ Church Cathedral in Newcastle.

While Louise and her mum attended school in Cessnock, her sons Cooper and Hunter are now students at NGS, following in their great-grandmother's footsteps.

An account written by a student in 1919 also described how life went on, despite various restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of Spanish Influenza.

The "flu has come to Newcastle, but none of us are the least bit scary about it. We go out comfortably unprotected by masks and we are all working just as hard as usual. No pictures! No theatres! No excursions by train! We are also glad we have all been inoculated, as a number of us did not enjoy that operation. When the announcement of the first case in Newcastle was made, Miss Lawrance closed the school to the day girls for four days to safeguard borders. However, none of the boarders' parents were worried and we have almost a full school with the exception one or two girls who have to come to school by train."



In her 1919 Principal's Report, Miss Margaret Lawrance described the School's success in weathering the Spanish flu epidemic just a year after the school opened its doors.

"The school began its career during the most critical months of the war, and six months later, had to combat the strenuous period of the influenza epidemic, which prevailed for the first six months of this year, and yet it had prospered more than anyone dared to hope at the outset, which not only proves that it is supplying a long-felt need, but also augurs well for its future usefulness and success."

She continues:

"...It is pleasing to be able to report a clean bill of health for the whole year, having entirely escaped the influenza epidemic so far as the boarders and staff were concerned. Not a single case of the disease occurred in the house, an experience which we believe to be almost unique."



Newcastle Grammar School

Production of

WICKED

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE WITCHES OF OZ

Music and Lyrics by

**Stephen
Schwartz**

Book by

**Winnie
Holzman**

Based on the novel by Gregory Maguire

Orchestrations by
William David Brohn

Music Arrangements
Alex Lacamoire & Stephen Oremus



**10 - 13
MARCH 2021**

**CIVIC
THEATRE
NEWCASTLE**

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