

# SPECTEMUR

## AGENDO

VOL. 33 | WINTER 2021



Newcastle  
Grammar  
— SCHOOL —





Newcastle Grammar School  
is the pre-eminent co-educational  
Independent school in Newcastle  
for children in Kindergarten to  
Year 12.





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# FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



**This year has seen a wonderful return to the many activities that bring our School community together and give our students an opportunity to shine, following the disruption that COVID-19 wreaked on all our lives in 2020.**

In March, we marked the one-year anniversary of the sudden COVID-19 school shutdown by burying a time capsule containing items from 2020, including student reflections on the pandemic. We also put together a short history, recording how the School responded to COVID-19. A copy is buried in the capsule and I hope it can offer some insights into this remarkable time when it is reopened in 50 years.

While the pandemic remains a new backdrop to our lives, it has also brought an enhanced appreciation of the richness of everyday life at NGS. It has been a joy to see our students resume the academic, sporting, community-based and creative endeavours that are featured throughout this edition of *Spectemur Agendo*.

The staging of the School musical *Wicked* at the Civic Theatre in March was a true triumph. When we first began planning for the show in 2019, we could never have envisaged either the journey or the result. However, as everyone who was fortunate enough to see the show can attest, it was something incredibly special.

We have been thrilled to be able to welcome Park Campus families back for assemblies, to run the Year 11 Presentation Ball and to host Open Days again. It has also been a joy to resume services at Christ Church Cathedral, where we held a moving ANZAC Day Service led by our cadets in the Service and Adventure Training Unit (SATU), with members of our Chamber Choir once again able to raise their voices in song.

Our Primary and Secondary swimming and athletics carnivals have also brought our School community together in a way that we really missed last year. As well as giving our talented athletes the opportunity to push themselves to achieve, students were once again given free rein to cheer loudly for their Houses and to display their terrific team spirit. What a difference 12 months makes!



*From left to right: Matthew Macdougall, Fotios Petrelis, Mrs Erica Thomas, James Fry and Zoe Roberts-Thomson bury a time capsule to commemorate the remarkable events of 2020.*



## What a difference 12 months makes!

While COVID-19 has seen unavoidable delays in some of the School's longer-term projects, we are progressing well with our three-year Strategic Plan (2019–2022), and the Board will embark on formulating a new plan later this year.

When we look back on this Strategic Plan, it is a time when:

- a Master Plan was developed for the future School
- our positive education approach was embedded
- approaches to staff professional learning advanced
- the NGS passport reshaped co-curricular
- approaches to early literacy were redefined
- we made STEM and technological improvements that are now greatly benefiting our School.

I hope that the second half of 2021 sees us continue to enjoy the rich offerings in our everyday lives, as our School continues to build and enrich the lives of our students.



# BROADENING EXPERTISE OF THE NGS BOARD

**We recently welcomed two new members to the NGS Board, further broadening the expertise and skill set of the School's governing body.**

Ms Jennifer Hayes brings extensive skills and experience in financial leadership, economics, strategic planning, corporate governance and audit and risk management. She has more than 20 years' experience in executive and non-executive positions locally, nationally and abroad, covering a diverse range of sectors including fast-moving consumer goods, utilities, primary health and tertiary education. Ms Hayes is a certified practising accountant, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds a Bachelor of Business in Accountancy and a Master of Business.



We are very grateful to our Board members, who all give so generously of their time and their expertise to ensure NGS continues to thrive and that we have a truly forward-looking vision.

We also welcomed Mr Robert Madden, whose expertise includes strategic planning, infrastructure and asset management and risk management. Mr Madden, a Director of Madden & Associates, holds qualifications in construction management, is a chartered project manager and quantity surveyor. He has more than 10 years' experience working in Australia, the UK and Europe across a broad range of sectors. He is a member of the School's Property Development Committee.

Mr Madden and Ms Hayes joined our serving Board members (see box) in the vital role of setting the strategic direction for NGS as well as guiding and overseeing the School's performance.

"We are very grateful to our Board members, who all give so generously of their time and their expertise to ensure NGS continues to thrive and that we have a truly forward-looking vision," Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas said.

Mrs Thomas also expressed thanks to Mr Ben Young who recently stood down from the Board. Mr Young has been instrumental in assisting the School with property issues in his time as a Board Member.

## The NGS Board 2021

**Chair: Ms Catherine Wilkinson**

### **Members:**

Mr Andrew Beattie  
Mr John Candy  
Professor Mark Flynn  
Mrs Christine Giles  
Ms Jennifer Hayes  
Mr Robert Madden  
Mr Todd Williams



*Ms Jennifer Hayes.*



*Mr Robert Madden.*

# INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS TO 'STEM' FROM STRATEGY

**Innovative measures are being developed to foster and develop Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics teaching and learning from Kindergarten through to Year 12, as part of the NGS STEM Strategy.**

Director of Strategy and Performance Mr Philip Fielden said the desire to create an integrated and powerful K-12 STEM Strategy was set out in the School's Strategic Plan, 2019-2022. Despite some COVID-19 delays last year, the strategy is now firmly back on the agenda.

"In 2019 we approached many business and industry partnerships to gauge the level of interest in working with NGS on our STEM projects. Their response was very pleasing," Mr Fielden said.

"In 2021 we have been working hard to visualise exactly what innovative partnerships and practices will look like between NGS and these groups."

Developing industry partnerships is one of four key areas of focus in the STEM Strategy:

- Creating a strategy to attract, train and retain the very highest quality STEM teachers, in an era when they are in high demand.
- Reflecting key advice from the Australian Education Council, the Chief Scientist and others that it is vital to engage students and develop their enthusiasm for STEM subjects when they are in primary school.
- Acknowledging the national problem of recruiting girls to STEM-based tertiary education, by offering activities tailored to their interests.
- Recognising the need to make STEM education authentic and basing it on real-world activities by working with local businesses, individuals and partnerships to add value to the curriculum and teaching.

"All of this is intended to build on the already impressive results that our students achieve in STEM subjects each year in external competitions and the HSC examinations," Mr Fielden said. He said several exciting STEM initiatives were already in place, including the recent Tech Girls initiative (see box).

1. Amelie De Iuliis at work during the Tech Girls Workshop.
2. The interactive programme aims to change the way girls perceive and engage in STEM.

## TECH GIRLS: A NEW TWIST ON STEM

Our Year 7 and 8 girls gained a new perspective on STEM, as well as skills in leadership and entrepreneurship, at an interactive Tech Girls Workshop delivered by Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter in April.

The programme aimed to change the way girls perceived and engaged in STEM and taught problem-solving through a social, business and technical lens, according to Technology teacher Mrs Rachael Said.

Led by an industry expert and female role models in the field of technology, the students worked in teams to address a key social issue, producing a business plan and innovative app concept before pitching their ideas to the rest of the teams.

The students now have the opportunity to put their ideas and skills into practice by entering the online Tech Girls competition. Judging begins in August and winners will be announced in September.





# CREATIVITY

## TO FLOW THROUGH NEW SITE



**The secondary Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) department has gained its own integrated space as NGS expands to a new site at nearby Bolton Street.**

The historic former Newcastle Infants School building was first used by NGS on a short-term basis to hold the 2020 HSC exams, when COVID-19 rules required the School to look for an offsite exam centre.

Director of Learning and Teaching Mrs Lisa Peterson said the School will use the space from Term 3 to house a new NGS Creative and Performing Arts Centre, including Drama, Visual Arts and Academic Music classrooms and staffrooms.

"The Bolton Street site offers us the chance to integrate the accommodation for our CAPA department and staff for the very first time, which is really exciting," Mrs Peterson said. "It's a magnificent setting just 150 metres from Hill Campus."



1. The heritage style building retains high ceilings and some ornate architectural features.
2. Will Pederson, Hamish Bell, Elizabeth Carter, Edward Fagan, Grace Ellis, Liam Wilson, Joy Ragaruza, Thomas Conlon and Olivia Martin at the end of their final HSC exam in 2020.



We think it will be an ideal setting for our students and staff to engage in creative arts.

"The building is in the old-school style with solid walls, high ceilings and some ornate architectural features. We think it will be an ideal setting for our students and staff to engage in creative arts."

# COMMUNITY

## EMBRACING RECONNECTION



**NGS has embraced the opportunity to reconnect with the broader school community in 2021. Parents were welcomed back on campus, Cathedral services returned, choirs allowed to sing and bands resumed playing, following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.**

NGS returned to Christ Church Cathedral in February, with Year 11 and 12 students attending their first Service since the start of 2020. The School was also pleased to be able to hold a special Easter Chapel Service and a commemorative service for ANZAC Day at the Cathedral.

"We value our services in the Cathedral as part of our students' spiritual development and extend our sincere gratitude to Dean Katherine Bowyer for her role in our community," Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas said.

The annual Music Camp was held at Broken Bay in February, when 80 students and staff spent a weekend developing their skills through tutorials, combined items and performances.

Head of Music Performance Mr Kevin Young said students were thrilled to be able to return to playing in the orchestra and ensembles and to be singing together again in the choirs. "It felt very strange in 2020 not to have the orchestra and other musical groups as part of our life... music is so much fun and it offers fantastic opportunities for everyone involved," he said.

The School was also thrilled to welcome parents back to Park Campus assemblies, including a special Easter assembly in March. The K-4 students enjoyed hearing



1. A long-awaited return to Christ Church Cathedral in February.
2. Staff and students were thrilled to welcome parents back to Park Campus assemblies.
3. A special Easter assembly was the first time many younger students had performed in front of family and friends.

the important Christian messages of Easter, and the occasion was made all the more memorable for many of the younger students as it was the first time they had performed in front of their families and friends.

A new series of evening events was introduced this year to give parents from different year groups a chance to meet one another and form connections. New parents and those of Kindergarten, Year 1, Year 7 and 8 students, enjoyed mingling and chatting over drinks and canapes.

Our School camps also got back in full swing in June, with Year 5 going to Collaroy, Year 6 to Camp Yarramundi, Year 7 to Camp Wombaroo, Year 8 to Camp Yarrahappini and Year 9 to Camp Biloela.



# WICKED

## WOWS AS SHOW GOES ON

**After almost 18 months of preparation beset by the COVID-19 pandemic, the NGS production of *Wicked* took to the stage at the Civic Theatre in March with huge success.**

Students from Years 5 to 12 auditioned for the show in 2019 with rehearsals starting in Term 4 of that year. However, COVID-19 saw rehearsals stymied and the planned June 2020 show dates postponed, as theatres closed and group singing and dancing was banned across NSW.

Executive Producer and Musical Director Mr Kevin Young said the School remained committed to the show going on despite the challenges. "It would have been easy to shelve it, but everyone was supportive and dedicated to making it happen," he said.

Rehearsals continued online or outdoors, costumes had to be altered, musician commitments changed and the initial cast of 55 students fell to 40 as some decided not to continue. Two students who played leading roles – Ned Fagan and Lilly Kinsella – agreed to continue with the show despite graduating from NGS at the end of 2020.

Mr Young said that when the cast finally took to the stage at the Civic Theatre for the first time, just days before the opening performance, all the hard work paid off.

The musical is a prequel to the classic *Wizard of Oz* tale, telling the story of Elphaba (the Wicked Witch of the West) played by Bella Williams and Glinda (who later becomes Glinda the Good Witch) played by Lucy O'Brien.

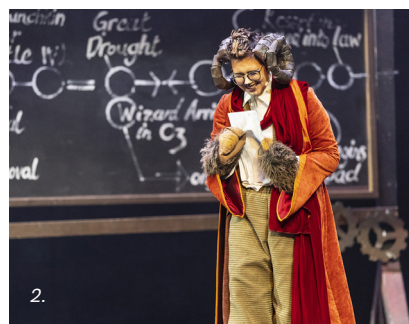


The spectacular set was hired from Melbourne and professional riggers operated technology that enabled characters to fly and rise above the stage.

The performances were met with rave reviews. "This has been a journey of courage, resilience, grit and determination to put on the best show we could in the beautiful Civic Theatre," Mr Young said. "The cast, crew and production team have learnt so much over the past 18 months and I am grateful to each and every one of them for seeing *Wicked* through to a highly successful end. I was always confident the show would be fantastic and would put Newcastle Grammar School on the map, but it surpassed that. It was the best production I have ever been involved with."

Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas congratulated all involved, saying the outstanding production was a testament to the staff and students who stayed the course, committed to the show and enjoyed the challenges.

"As the curtain fell on the final performance on the Saturday evening and the audience cheered, cried and gasped for the last time, the pride we felt as a school community was palpable," she said.



1. Lilly Kinsella and Lucy O'Brien.
2. RJ Zacharia.
3. Tom McGrath and Clara Anscombe.
4. Bella Williams and Ned Fagan.
5. The spectacular set was hired from Melbourne.

# PRESENTATION BALL LIGHTS THE WAY

**A colourful, light-filled celebration for the Year 11 Presentation Ball in April marked the first formal event the School has held since last year's COVID-19 shutdowns.**

Head of Positive Education Mrs Marnie Thomas said the Ball's purpose was to introduce Year 11 students into the Senior years, build connection and enhance relationships. The students spent eight Friday afternoons learning a dance, where there were plenty of laughs and fun.

In keeping with the NGS Visible Wellbeing theme for 2021, Under the Love Umbrella, the venue was decorated with umbrellas and beautiful lights.

Year 11 students Omar Galal and Lily Webster spoke about the idea of light and the fleeting beauty of a rainbow following rain. "This is a truly special opportunity for all of us, to spend time together as a cohort and understand what makes this year group shine," Omar said. Lily said the students' preparation for the Ball was shaped in the shadow of many events being cancelled due to COVID-19 and likened it to the rain before a rainbow. "While COVID has become something ubiquitous, we have to recognise how it marks tonight, making it even more special," she said.

With music provided by NGS ensemble Brass Razoo, the students and their parents enjoyed a wonderful night of dining and dancing. "All the students were very aware that this was the first formal event after the easing of COVID restrictions," Mrs Thomas said. "They felt honoured and definitely embodied the values of NGS on the night. It absolutely was extra special. They had a heightened sense of excitement and gratitude. It was such a gorgeous evening."



*Year 11 students were shining for the camera at their Presentation Ball in April.*

# MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON



**The School was thrilled to host its annual Mother's Day Luncheon again this year, celebrating the NGS community of women.**

More than 130 mums, grandmothers and friends from the School community gathered together to make new connections and enjoy a delicious lunch at Noah's on the Beach.

"It was a wonderful opportunity for women from across the generations to get to know one another and to take some time out to enjoy a lovely lunch," said Head of Community Relations Mrs Clare Lacey.

Parents generously donated raffle prizes and tickets sold out, with \$1,700 raised towards the NGS Vietnam Project. The Vietnam Project is a service learning initiative to support the Long Hai School in Vietnam as well as raise awareness of poverty issues within that country.

Some of the comments on Facebook highlighted how much those who attended enjoyed the occasion.

"Lovely to meet some school mums. Thanks for a lovely lunch," said one parent.

Another commented: "As a new parent, it was wonderful to feel part of the NGS community. Thank you."



# PARK CAMPUS CELEBRATES SPECIAL WOMEN

**Our Park Campus students delighted in treating their mums, grandmothers, great grandmothers and many other important women in their lives to a special Mother's Day assembly and morning tea in May.**

"Community plays a vital role in making our Primary School environment the inviting, vibrant school that it is," Head of Primary K-6 Mrs Alisha Dyer said. "One of the highlights of our year is when we come together to celebrate the important women in our lives. Our annual Mother's Day Celebration was a joyful occasion as it showcased every child from Kindergarten to Year 6."

On a lovely crisp Autumn morning, students eagerly greeted their special guests with a beautiful badge and key ring to symbolise their appreciation for them. Artworks created especially for each mum were displayed throughout the hall.

The students performed stunning choral and drama presentations, including the Year 5 and 6 dance troupe, choirs (the Minims, Semi Tones, Tones and Year 5 and 6 students), the Year 3 String Ensemble, a Year 3 drama movie and solo performances by Year 4 student Ryan Yi on piano and Year 2 student Emma Murphy on violin. Kindergarten students featured in a movie entitled *Why I Love My Mum* (see box).

## "WHY I LOVE MY MUM"

**Kindergarten students explained why they love their mums in a short movie. Here's what some of them said:**

- "She gives me tight cuddles."
- "She makes us so happy."
- "She reads me stories."
- "She looks after me."
- "She cuddles and kisses me."
- "For helping me to read in the classroom."
- "She makes the best food."
- "She helps me do things I haven't tried before."
- "My mum's beautiful and she cooks dinner."

Some of our dads also got involved, serving scones with jam and cream for morning tea. Mrs Dyer said it was impressive to have so many special women join the celebration. "We were honoured to have so many grandmothers and great grandmothers join us as well," she said. "It was a wonderful celebration of beauty, appreciation and love. Our Primary students enjoyed having morning tea with the special ladies in their lives."



1. The Year 6 String Ensemble performed at the Mother's Day Assembly.



2. Students performed stunning choral and drama presentations.

3. The 'guests of honour' were treated to thoughtful performances from all year levels.

4. Year 2 student Emma Murphy gave a solo performance on violin.



# STUDYING

## FOR SUCCESS

**A combination of studying the basic course content and practising skills is a key to academic success, according to one of the School's scholarship recipients.**

Every year, NGS offers the opportunity for outstanding young students to apply for scholarships in Academic, Music, Visual Art, All-Rounder and Sporting disciplines.

A current Year 12 student who received an academic scholarship said it had enabled him to enjoy both the academic and social sides of life at NGS.

"I have greatly enjoyed my time studying at NGS," he said. "I've been lucky to attend a school with such dedicated teachers and a caring environment. I've learnt to put my academic skills to the best use and found subjects that I enjoy and strive to do my best in."

"The teachers always do their best to help me achieve the results that I can, while caring for my wellbeing and future goals. Attending NGS also allowed me to make life-long friendships while undertaking my work, enabling me to balance my studies."

In terms of tips to help future students achieve their best in their studies, he suggested a combination of studying to gain a thorough knowledge of the subject area and plenty of practice of the relevant skills.

**Scholarship applications for 2022 are now closed. Availability for 2023 entry will be announced soon. Check the website for further updates: <https://www.ngs.nsw.edu.au/entry-to-ngs/scholarships>.**

**The following scholarships will be available:**

Academic Scholarships  
Music Scholarships  
Visual Art Scholarships  
Sporting Scholarships  
All Rounder Scholarships



*Studying and practise papers are the key to academic success according to scholarship recipient.*

"Writing notes and reading textbooks to understand the basic knowledge and concepts is important, but it needs to be supplemented with practise papers, problems and writing tasks."



**I've been lucky to attend a school with such dedicated teachers and a caring environment.**



# STUDENTS FIND THEIR VOICE

**Public speaking is a terrifying prospect for many people yet it's a skill that has many benefits for work and for life in general, according to History teacher Dr Phillipa Parsons.**

That's why she was thrilled to see six secondary students take to the microphone for the Rostrum Voice of Youth public speaking competition Hunter heats, held at Newcastle High School in March.

Seniors Jasmine Withford, Lily Webster and Cameron Slarks from Years 10 to 12 were required to speak for eight minutes, while juniors Emily Simpson, Saffron Thibault and Molly Boyle from Years 7 to 8 had to speak for six minutes.

The NGS students, who were all taking part in the competition for the first

time, composed their own speeches, drawn from a list of broad topics specified by Rostrum. They covered the important issues of climate change, social disconnection, social justice, global citizenship, prejudice and perseverance.

Dr Parsons said the quality of speeches was excellent, and Jasmine was awarded the runner-up prize. "Getting involved in competitions allows students to hear and network with students from other schools, build an outward perspective on life and broaden their horizons. Developing self-confidence and learning how to project that confidence is something that will take students from the school classroom, to university and on to job interviews and work performance," she said.



*Front: Emily Simpson, Lily Webster and Saffron Thibault.*

*Back: Cameron Slarks, Jasmine Withford and Molly Boyle.*

## NGS STUDENT NAMED LAKE MAC YOUNG CITIZEN OF 2021

**Year 7 student Jasmine Seidel is excited about having her voice heard on local issues, after being named Lake Mac Young Citizen of 2021.**

Jasmine says she was "gobsmacked" when her name was read out at the Lake Macquarie Council award ceremony, in recognition of her impressive fundraising efforts for causes including the John Hunter Cancer Ward, Heart Kids and Multiple Sclerosis Limited.

"I got into fundraising when I was really young, around six or seven, because I felt bad that I had so much whilst others were in really tough situations," Jasmine said.

"I have kept raising money over the years because I found out that lots of people I had never met and lived overseas were touched by what I was doing and wanted to help. This inspired me to go even harder!"

Jasmine was just 11 when she received the award, so had to wait until she turned 12 to take up an invitation to join the Lake Macquarie Youth Council.

"The Council actually gets to influence a lot of things – we get a say in where buildings go, chopping down trees and any local laws," she said.

"It's exciting to think that I'll be able to have my voice heard. I am really invested in making sure we preserve



*Lake Mac Young Citizen of 2021  
Jasmine Seidel.*

the environment of Lake Macquarie and I'm keen to make sure this is on the Youth Council's agenda."

# STUDENTS THRIVE THROUGH ENHANCED LEARNING

**A focus on personalised learning and new innovative specialised programmes are ensuring all NGS students have the opportunity to achieve their very best.**

Head of Learning Support K-6 Mrs Melinda Tucker said 'personalised learning' was a term used to describe the tailoring of a student's learning to match their needs and support their development. "All students are assessed regularly throughout the year on their content knowledge and confidence levels, to ensure their needs are met," she said.

In the Primary School, both individual programming and a range of small group focus opportunities are helping to cater for students' needs. For example, some students in Kindergarten, Year 5 and Year 6 are being accelerated in Mathematics, in line with their learning needs and one student has been accelerated by two years in English.

A programme called Read Naturally has been introduced for a group of readers in Year 2. They can start class at 8am three times a week and spend 10 minutes working on the programme which builds fluency. "It has been wonderful to see these students' vocabulary grow and to see them consolidate vital comprehension skills," Mrs Tucker said.

A group of students with low confidence in Mathematics has been offered the opportunity to work three mornings a week on a programme called Pirate Maths Equation Quest. They receive explicit instruction on reading, interpreting, setting up, and solving word problems with a focus on schemas, to help build their Mathematics confidence.

All Year 5 and 6 students have been invited to attend a before-school Mathematics programme called Math Ninjas that focuses on challenging mathematics strands such as decimals, fractions and percentages as well as other common difficult concepts. "The aim of this program is to provide regular revision in order to curb the forgetting cycle that is commonly seen in many young mathematicians," Mrs Tucker said.

Selected students also had opportunities to enter external competitions such as the DaVinci Decathlon, ICAS Tests in a range of subjects and the Newcastle Permanent Mathematics Team Challenge.



*Personalised learning ensures every student can achieve their best.*

Hill Campus Head of Learning Support Mrs Astrid Lepelaar said inclusive learning remained a focus in the Secondary School. "It's really built into the fabric of everything we do, to ensure we meet individual needs in the classroom," Mrs Lepelaar said.

For students with additional learning needs, classroom teachers use a number of different strategies to remove barriers to learning. For example, having audiotext of work available on Schoolbox or using online programmes such as Stile for Science aid in reducing barriers for students with reading and writing difficulties. "We have students from a wide range of backgrounds, including students with additional needs and students with disabilities, so we embed supports that enable all students to participate in all activities."

Further, Mathematics, English, Science, History and Geography classes are set up in bands to cater for students of all abilities. There are opportunities for students to undertake accelerated studies in Mathematics from the start of Year 9, and accelerated Business Studies from the start of Year 10.



# NGS SPORTING LIFE

Students have embraced their return to sporting competitions this year, with our annual carnivals once again showcasing some incredible talent and spirit. Director of Co-curricular Mr Daniel Kozey said that whether it was in swimming, cross country or most recently, athletics, the carnivals were an opportunity to see the NGS RISE values (Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence) in action.

## SWIMMING CARNIVALS

**PRIMARY:** It was great to see the energy, enthusiasm and team spirit shown at the Years 2–6 Primary Swimming Carnival in Term 1.

“We were very proud of our swimmers and the way they cheered each other on, showing great support for their House and teammates,” Head of Primary Mrs Alisha Dyer said.

Hunter House were winners on the day and 36 students went on to compete at the HRIS Primary Swimming Carnival in March, where NGS finished in 5th place overall.

**SECONDARY:** The NGS Secondary Swimming Team also performed exceptionally well at the HRIS championships, winning our third HRIS Division 1 Championship in a row and breaking five HRIS records! Three-quarters of the team moved on to represent the Hunter region at the AICES competition at Homebush, and NGS were again crowned AICES Swimming Champions.

Well done to Alexandra Noonan who went on to break two records and Gabriel Jeffery who broke three records at NSW CIS. Together with Alexis Sutherland and Tyler Trethan, they were selected to compete at the 2021 NSW All Schools Secondary Swimming Championships in late May. Alexandra Noonan and Tyler Trethan both finished 3rd in their event and qualified for the NSW All Schools Merit Team 2021.

## CROSS COUNTRY

Congratulations to all students who gained places to compete at the HRIS Cross Country Carnival in May. NGS Secondary finished 2nd overall, and our Primary team finished 5th. There were a number of outstanding individual and team performances across both carnivals. A number of NGS students went on to compete at CIS in Sydney in June.

## ROWING

The 2020/21 Rowing season included some outstanding achievements, with success at the many regattas attended in Term 1 and a second place overall at the CDRA Championships. NGS students also achieved some outstanding individual results, as detailed below.

**Kalen Routley:** three NSW State medals, three NSW State Indoor Championships gold medals, two Australian Indoor gold medals, multiple Australian and World Indoor Records and two NSW Schoolboy Head of the River gold medals.

**Patrick Stanley:** National Championships gold and State Championship silver.

**Alexander Macdougall:** three NSW State gold medals and two NSW Schoolboy Head of the River gold medals.

**Marcus Lumley:** two NSW Schoolboy Head of the River gold medals.

**Gabriel Leishman:** two NSW Schoolboy Head of the River gold medals.

**Amy-Jorgia Barnett and Isabella Oakley:** selection to NSW ISRA Representative Pathway Eights.

**Alice Macready, Marcus Ferch and Bella Williams:** one State Indoor Championships gold medal.

## FUTSAL

NGS Under 10s (mixed), Under 12s Girls and Under 12s Boys Futsal teams competed in the Newcastle Region Futsal Championship in May. Each team won their division and progressed to the State Championships in Maitland.

## NETBALL

The NGS Secondary Netball teams put in a fantastic effort at the HRIS Gala Day in May. After finishing on top of their pools, the U14 and U16 teams finished 3rd and 4th respectively after the finals stage. The Opens team came home with the trophy after winning their division in a dominant performance in the final.



## IMPRESSIVE SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

*The HRIS Swimming Team.*

Many individual NGS athletes have achieved remarkable sporting successes in a broad range of arenas this year including:

- **Ocean Lancaster** (Year 7): Won the U12s final in the Billabong Oz Grom surfing competition in Coffs Harbour in April and is now ranked number one in his age group in Australia.
- **Bella Williams** (Year 12): Won second place in the U19 Nutri-Grain Next Gen series at Kingscliff and won two gold, one silver and three bronze medals in the U19 division in the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships on the Queensland Sunshine Coast.
- **Liam Wilson** won first place in the Under 19 Male division of the recent Hunter Schools Mountain Bike Championships at Glenrock.
- **Harry and Rosie Boyn** (Year 8 and Year 7) competed in the gruelling 11km race at Ultra Trail Australia in the Blue Mountains in May. Harry came first in the Super Junior Male Division and was the 11th fastest male out of 272 runners, while Rosie came second in the Super Junior Women Division, and was the 7th fastest female on course out of 417 runners.
- **Alice Hill** (Year 6) was selected in the Primary Girls CIS Hockey team which competed in the PSSA Hockey championships in Wollongong in May, finishing fifth out of 13 teams.
- **Harley Sleeman** (Year 6) was selected in the CIS Primary Rugby League team, which competed at the NSW PSSA State Championships in Tamworth in June.
- **Connor Johansen** (Year 10) competed at the NSW Country Club Water Polo Championships, after being granted special permission to play in the Open A Grade Men's competition, making him the youngest player to compete at the event. Connor has now been selected to be part of the NSW Pathways Programme for water polo.
- Northern NSW Football Talent Support Programme: **Kalen Routley** (Year 10) was selected in the U15s. **William Harvey** (Year 8) was selected in the U14s. **Bowen Stubbs** (Year 9) was selected in the Goalkeepers.
- **Lily Spruce** and **Sosha Hellman** (Year 6) were selected for the NSW CIS Primary Girls Basketball team in February.
- **Joshua Svedlov** (Year 6) competed in the CIS Tennis competition in February.
- **Caleb Garven** (Year 11) was selected for the NSW Baseball High Performance Programme.
- State Surf Lifesaving Championships: **Taj Williams** (Year 5), U11 Swim Team; **Liam Sidwell** (Year 7) U13 Ironman and U13 Board Rescue; **Alexis Sutherland** (Year 7), U12 Surf Race, U12 Ironwoman, and U12 Board Rescue; **Stella Sutherland** and **Zara Campbell** (Year 8), U14 Board Relay.



Many individual NGS athletes have achieved remarkable sporting successes in a broad range of arenas this year ...





1. Ocean Lancaster's win at the Billabong Oz Grom surfing competition took his ranking to number one in his age group in Australia.
2. Angus Tait in action at the HRIS championships.

3. Patrick Stanley (centre) with other medalists at the Australian Rowing Championships.
4. Annabel McKensey takes the lead during day one of the Secondary Carnival.

5. Harry Boyn at the HRIS Cross Country Carnival in May.
6. Strong competition from Year 2 student Nikolas Politis (in red) at the Primary Athletics Carnival.

# SUPPORTING SPORTING SUCCESS

**More than 80 students across Years 5 to 12 are taking part in the School's Supporting Athletes Programme, which aims to help talented athletes achieve their potential by individually tailoring the support, development and resources they need, when they need them. SAP co-ordinator and specialist Performance Coach Ms Leah Gilbert said there had been a very positive response to the programme.**

Students involved were participating in a wide range of sporting and athletic pursuits, including baseball, surf life saving, swimming, athletics, soccer, basketball, netball, martial arts, AFL, surfing, gymnastics and ballet.

The programme was launched last year after NGS noticed a number of students were training and competing at very high levels within their individual sports. It aims to support them to perform to the best of their ability in both the academic and sporting arenas, as well as fostering sporting ability among students who are not yet at the elite level.

There are several different SAP tiers: high performance, emerging, pathways, and transition.



... if students can keep up their sport, it can often help them achieve academically as well.

Resources are allocated on the basis of individual testing results, the student's current level of involvement in their sport and their achievement levels based on the NGS Sporting Framework.

Ms Gilbert said there was a general trend for students to drop out of sport as they reached senior school levels, but it was hoped the programme would give athletes the support they needed to manage both schoolwork and sport. "There's a high attrition rate when students reach Year 11 and 12, but if they can keep up their sport, it can often help them achieve academically as well," she said.

Students within the High Performance section of the programme have access to support services including: academic support, strength and conditioning and sports science sessions, sports nutrition advice, mental performance support, professional development and physiotherapy.

They meet regularly with Director of Learning and Teaching Mrs Lisa Peterson to work out a study schedule that fits with their training and competing commitments.

Support services are being provided to students by world-class professionals including Dr Colin Sanctuary, a sport scientist and strength and conditioning specialist who has worked in elite systems such as the England Rugby League and Seattle Seahawks; Rachel Svenson, a sports dietitian for the Newcastle Knights; and Austin Wiehahn, a sports and occupational physiotherapist who has lectured at Cambridge and Hertfordshire Universities.



# CREATING A SPORTING FRAMEWORK

Supporting Athlete Performance (SAP)

Active  
Lifestyle

Sport

Sport Excellence

SAP LEVEL

<b>M</b>	MASTERY	Sustained Success	
<b>E2</b>	ELITE	Success	HIGH PERFORMANCE
<b>E1</b>	ELITE	Representation	HIGH PERFORMANCE
<b>T4</b>	TALENT	Breakthrough and reward	EMERGING
<b>T3</b>	TALENT	Practising and achieving	EMERGING
<b>T2</b>	TALENT	Verification	PATHWAYS
<b>T1</b>	TALENT	Demonstration of potential	NEXT GEN

## Foundation 3

Sport specific commitment and/or competition

## Foundation 2

Extension and refinement of movement

## Foundation 1

Learning and acquisition of basic movement

**The FTEM framework integrates three key outcomes of sport participation:**

- Active lifestyle;
- Sport participation; and
- Sport excellence.

By categorising the features of a sportsperson within each of these pathways, we are able to easily use relevant research to manage the expectations of our athletes and teams.

The inclusion of our Supporting Athlete Performance programme creates a positive network and mentoring for our talented athletes.

This enhanced understanding of sporting pathways and our athletes will improve the experiences for all NGS students.

– NGS Director of Co-curricular Daniel Kozey

# BELLA WILLIAMS

## - STUDY, STAGE AND SURF

**Boundless energy, determination and a mastery of time management are just some of Year 12 student Bella Williams' impressive list of skills.**

This year, she has played a leading role in the School musical *Wicked* as well as competing in the National Ironwoman and Surf Life Saving Championships, all while juggling Year 12 studies.

Bella's day generally starts at 4.45am, with surf life saving training. "People say I'm a bit crazy and some days it is hard to keep going, but it's so fun, and that makes it all worthwhile," she said.

Having always loved singing, she auditioned for the role of Elphaba (the Wicked Witch of the West) for the School production of *Wicked* in 2019. The show was originally scheduled for 2020 but was postponed to March this year due to COVID-19.

Major sporting competitions were also cancelled in 2020, which Bella said was somewhat of a blessing as it gave her more time to devote to the musical and her Year 11 studies.

In February, Bella competed in the inaugural Nutri-Grain Next-Gen Ironwoman competition over three weekends in Kingscliff, northern NSW. The event gave the young athletes exposure to the Ironman and Ironwoman series; they competed in the same format as the adults, with events broadcast on national TV. Bella took second place in the under 19s, missing out on first place and automatic qualification for the 2022 Nutri-Grain Ironwoman competition by a single point.

She then switched focus, put on her green makeup and took to the stage in *Wicked*, which played to rave reviews. "In a sense I was anxious about the show being held in Year 12 and how I'd manage it with my competitions, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world," Bella said.

In April, she returned to athlete-mode for five gruelling days of competition in the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland – competing in up to 12 events on some days. She came home with a swag of six medals, including two gold (U19 Surf Race and U19 Taplin Relay).



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. Year 12 student Bella Williams juggles a hectic training schedule with her school commitments.
2. Bella took second place in the inaugural Nutri-Grain Next-Gen Ironwoman competition over three weekends in February.
3. Bella won an astonishing six medals, including two gold, at this year's Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.
4. Bella relished playing the role of Elphaba in the School's *Wicked* production.

Bella is part of the NGS Supporting Athletes Programme, which provides her with support to manage her studies with her sporting commitments, as well as access to services such as physiotherapy and sport psychology.

After finishing school she'd love to become a paramedic, but before that she has next year's Ironwoman championships in her sights. "It's been my childhood dream and I've worked very hard at it from a young age, so I need to give it a good crack before I get into my career," she said.



# NGS COMMEMORATES THE ANZAC SPIRIT

**Newcastle Grammar School was given the honour of playing a central role in ANZAC Day ceremonies for schools across the state this year, with School Captain James Fry delivering the key address for a combined schools service in Sydney.**

Each year, schools from the Government, Catholic and Independent sectors take part in an RSL ANZAC Service at the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park.

The Service was filmed this year because of COVID-19, and released to all NSW schools for use in their ANZAC ceremonies.

NGS was given the honour of delivering the main address – the first time a school outside of Sydney was asked to do so – and James Fry spoke eloquently about the meaning of ANZAC and the role that so many have played in the security of our nation and our world (see excerpt).

James also delivered his address at the NGS ANZAC Day service held in Christ Church Cathedral, led by the SATU, School Captains and the Chamber Choir.

"Thank you to Dean Katherine Bowyer who was as thrilled as we were to see the Cathedral filled once again for this special service," Head of School Mrs Erica Thomas said.

The SATU also took part in the Newcastle ANZAC Day Dawn Service and Civic Park Service, representing Newcastle Grammar School, the Australian Army Cadets and commemorating the fallen.



*James Fry, Erica Thomas and Philip Fielden at the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney.*

## MEMORY, DUTY AND CONTINUED LEGACY – THE ANZAC STORY

*An excerpt from the speech by NGS School Captain James Fry*

"As time distances us from the First World War, and many significant conflicts since, connectedness to the sacrifice of our troops becomes naturally blurred. The sacredness of history becomes just that, history. It is our duty to remain solemn in the recognition of what's written in our past, and not extrapolate the sacrifices made as grounds for unreasonable nationalism or a 'new wave' of patriotism. This sacred commemoration is not about the politics of memory nor is it justifying any glorification of war. There should be no person who takes part in Anzac Day services without reflecting on their meaning. That's what sacred things do: they compel us to consider their significance.

To help affirm the date's true significance to me has been a veteran with whom I share a connection. I've been fortunate enough to share in the memory of James Albert Johns, who I called, and will forever call, my Poppy Jim. My late great grandfather served in New Guinea during the Second World War, as part of a force resisting Japanese advancement in the Pacific. I wasn't old enough to gain much insight into his experiences, however growing up around someone with such direct connection to sacrifice was enough to instil within me; an understanding of why we need to reflect ...

As young Australians, we all bear the burden of the sacrifice of our forebears. It is our responsibility to honour their sacrifice by building the future we want; the future they'd want for us. That is, building a future that sees the world uphold the humanist principles which our ancestors witnessed the cost of, firsthand. In this pursuit, we reserve the ability to invoke their spirit in times of hardship, as we too strive in our duty to act with the courage and valour displayed by our service members past."



# YOUNG STUDENTS

## EMBRACE OPERA



**NGS students were thrilled when Opera Australia's production of *The Barber of Seville* finally arrived at Park Campus this year.**

"Beautiful costumes, music, engaging scenery, lighting, acting, love, tragedy, joy, heartache, recitatives, arias, choruses, villains, heroes and jokers collide into the culturally rich experience of opera," Primary Music Programme teacher Miss Jane Parkes said.

She said Opera Australia performs to 80,000 primary school children throughout Victoria and NSW each year and Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is one of the most popular operas ever written.



"A serious case of love at first sight is a big problem for Count Almaviva. Enter the resourceful barber named Figaro, who cleverly solves everyone's problems — for a price. Secret letters, cunning disguises and all sort of confusions delighted our young audience as the boy gets the girl and Figaro gets paid!"

It was some students' first experience of opera, and they were entranced by the performances of four extremely talented young opera singers accompanied by a fabulous solo pianist.

The students were encouraged to sing Figaro's theme every time he appeared. "Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro .... They will never forget it!" Miss Parkes said.



1. Student Alfred O'Connor.
2. Opera Australia performers Claire-Patti Chehade and Imogen-Faith Maltifano perform in *The Barber of Seville*.



Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro, Figaro .... They will never forget it!



# DRAMA STUDENTS LEARN THE ROPES ON AND OFF STAGE

**NGS Drama students from Years 9 to 12 are gaining valuable experience both on stage and behind the scenes, through a wide range of innovative programmes.**

Drama teacher Ms Eily Pleming said all units of study required students to improvise and collaborate on stage, before also working in groups to devise and present original pieces of theatre.

Students who elect to take Drama throughout Years 9 to 12 must engage in three key practices: making, performing and appreciating.

“In their experiential use of acting techniques, theatrical stylings, and performance conventions in class, students can fulfill the roles of actor, audience, director and designer, thus gaining insight into the power that theatre can have to change our world.”

Throughout their studies, Drama students had many opportunities to hone their skills as actors, directors, designers, writers and critics, helping HSC students to tailor their choice of an Individual Project option most relevant to their skills and interests.

Year 9 Drama students studied the topics of Acting, Improvisation and Playbuilding, and Ancient Greek Theatre in Semester 1. Students studying Ancient Greek Theatre gained insights into the origins of acting as a craft and profession – they learnt relevant performance conventions and Ancient Greek terminology, much of which is still spoken in modern theatres today.

Year 10 students studied Shakespeare in Performance and Design, and Physical Theatre, examining Shakespeare’s works differently from their English lessons. They focused on highly physicalised, rhythmic readings and considered the specifications for their performance within Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre.

“Students broadened their vocal skills and control of timing to perform engaging prologues and epilogues, remembering that the success of an Elizabethan era performance determined whether the cast might be eating or starving day-to-day,” Ms Pleming said.

Year 11 students focused on consolidating and taking stock of skills and knowledge developed throughout the earlier years of study. They then worked to

enhance their acting skills with close study of Russian practitioner Konstantin Stanislavski, whose training in realistic acting is favoured by actors and directors to this day.

During Term 2, they read and enacted parts of a contemporary Australian play, *Ruby Moon*, before creating their own directorial folio and presentation on how the play could be presented in Newcastle’s Civic Theatre.

Year 12 Drama students devised their compulsory Group Performances in Term 2 and have been looking to the work of noted 20th century practitioners, Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874–1940) from Russia and Augusto Boal (1931–2009) from Brazil.

“Students make connections between each man’s context, philosophies, training methods and desired aesthetics of performance,” Ms Pleming said.



## EXPERIENCING LIVE THEATRE

Each year, NGS seeks professionally-led workshops to give HSC Drama students an opportunity to strengthen their skills in both critical performance analysis and in responding to different styles of theatre in written form.

In March, students took part in a seminar run by Monkey Baa Theatre Company in Sydney on the thought-provoking play *Neighbourhood Watch*, which they had been studying.

Professional actors performed key scenes from the play before Director Sandra Eldridge discussed the journeys and ambiguities of each character and their staging choices.

Year 10 and 11 Drama also enjoyed a live theatre experience, attending the Shake & Stir Theatre Co production of *Animal Farm* at the Civic Theatre. The play is an adaptation of the classic novel, told in storytelling style with physical theatre performance elements.

## A PROUD TRADITION OF

# ARMY CADETS

**Camping out in the bush for five days might not be everyone's idea of fun, but for the Newcastle Grammar School Army Cadets, it's just one element of a programme that teaches vital life skills from survival to leadership.**

The cadets are part of the Service and Adventure Training Unit (SATU) – an Australian Army Cadet (AAC) unit which offers students the opportunity to take part in a programme of adventurous military training throughout secondary school.

NGS has run a cadet unit for more than 40 years, and the 35 students currently signed up are among 14,000 Army cadets based in 224 units around Australia.

Officer Commanding (OC) Captain (CAPT) Victoria Price was a cadet herself throughout her years at NGS, before she graduated in 2011. She has been working with the School to support the cadets since 2012 and is managing the Unit this year, supported by other qualified staff.

CAPT (AAC) Price said students can join the cadet unit from Term 4 of Year 7, and the School is keen to recruit more cadets.

### Why join SATU?

"Many students join because they want to learn the fundamentals of leadership and be able to take on leadership roles from a younger age," CAPT (AAC) Price said. "Many students also like the adventure training. We get a diverse group of students who join and thrive in cadets."

While the Australian Army Cadets has strong links to the Australian Army, there is absolutely no expectation for cadets to join the military or go to war. However, it is considered an excellent pathway for learning and understanding tradition.

"Australian Defence Force Cadets and cadet staff are drawn from a diverse range of unique backgrounds and experiences," the Australian Department of Defence website explains. "All are committed to providing and enjoying a positive and safe youth development experience, respecting the value and dignity of all people, and recognising the particular rights and needs of young people."



1. The cadets tackle a muddy obstacle at the annual Field Exercise Camp at Singleton Military Area.

2. Campfire at the end of a long day of field exercise training.



**We get a diverse group of students who join and thrive in cadets.**

CAPT (AAC) Price said the NGS Unit does have a proud tradition of cadets choosing to pursue careers in the Defence Forces.

The cadets gain a range of technical, practical, personal and organisational skills through regular training each Friday afternoon, as well as four camps throughout the year – with camps resuming this year after a difficult 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Army personnel were very complimentary of how NGS cadets represented themselves.

### Gaining field experience

The Unit conducted its annual Field Exercise Camp at Singleton Military Area during the April school holidays. CAPT (AAC) Price explained this involved the cadets undergoing five days of training and experiencing the field environment, while instilling the cadet values of Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Excellence.

“Cadets were privileged to participate in Army-run activities including a land-based obstacle course, a pool obstacle course and weapon training simulation system (WTSS),” she said. “Army personnel were very complimentary of how NGS cadets represented themselves.”

The cadets learn navigation, survival skills, first aid and gain experience using weapons in a simulated way, then are usually given one opportunity each year to use live ammunition.

Ceremonial duties also form an important part of the Unit’s role, with SATU representing the School in ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies, as well as conducting an annual Passing Out Parade.

“It is always rewarding to see the cadets become more confident and skilled during their time in SATU,” CAPT (AAC) Price said. “We see the students grow, become more independent, gain more adult life skills progressing towards more respect for both themselves and for the community as a whole. They also gain teamwork experience and knowledge about how to work with different people.”



*SATU representing the School at this year’s ANZAC Service.*

### SATU: challenges and opportunities

Year 12 student Connie Krause joined SATU when she was in Year 7 and now holds the most senior NGS cadet position of Senior Cadet Under Officer (SUO), following in the footsteps of her two brothers who really valued their experience in cadets.

“Being a part of SATU has not only been a lot of fun but has helped me to develop lifelong skills ranging from leadership to communication,” she said.

“I was attracted to the adventure side of cadets and the subsequent mateships that I had seen my brothers form, and now I can say that I have formed a similar camaraderie.”

Connie said SATU has taught her many practical skills for later life, from first aid training to survival skills.

“I have really enjoyed my time on camps where we do navigational exercises through the bush and working collaboratively with my fellow cadets to achieve the mission, whether it be to navigate to a given point or rescue a hostage from behind enemy lines,” she said.

Although the SUO position has helped her gain leadership and organisational skills, as well as given her practise in communicating effectively with varying age groups, Connie said it hasn’t all been easy.

“The biggest challenge I have faced in SATU has been planning and running the annual five-day camp at Singleton army range [Singleton Military Area],” she said. “This was a rewarding experience that taught me a lot about how to manage people and run activities that the cadets would enjoy as well as incorporating training and further learning into these activities.”

Connie said that while one of her brothers went on to join the RAAF as a pilot following his SATU experience, she hopes to put the many skills she’s developed to use by studying a combined degree of law and social science.

For further information about SATU or how to join, email CAPT (AAC) Victoria Price at [Victoria.Price@ngs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Victoria.Price@ngs.nsw.edu.au)



# PUTTING THE FUN INTO PREPARATION FOR 'BIG SCHOOL'



**Life's never dull for children attending the NGS partner preschool, where having fun is central to all lessons as part of an innovative School Readiness Programme.**

With Park Campus set for redevelopment under the School Master Plan, the on-campus preschool was closed at the end of last year. NGS launched a new partnership with East End Early Education and Preschool to provide preschool programmes for future students.



Families are really happy, the facilities are amazing and the children are really enjoying the new School Readiness Programme that's been developed by NGS.

Preschool Education co-ordinator Ms Amber Mooney, who worked at the NGS Preschool for 16 years before moving to East End with the children, said the transition to the new preschool in Bolton Street, Newcastle, had been a great success.

"The children have adjusted to the change beautifully," she said. "Families are really happy, the facilities are amazing and the children are really enjoying the new School Readiness Programme that's been developed by NGS."

Children take part in a skills-based, early literacy programme, as well as enjoying a variety of flexible, inquiry-led learning experiences. Each child's progress is tracked closely using standardised assessments,

so individual programmes can be developed to suit their needs.

Ms Mooney said fun, age-appropriate and play-based classes include:

- Music and movement
- Physical Education
- Early Childhood literacy (PreLit and Talk for Writing)
- Chinese
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- Wellbeing
- Visual Arts

Teaching staff from Park Campus visit the Preschool regularly to teach specialist lessons, so the children have an opportunity to get to know many of the teachers they will interact with once they start school. Ms Mooney said the children would also spend time at Park Campus in the coming months to become familiar and comfortable with the School environment.

Parent Edwina Lamrock's youngest son James, aged four years, started at the preschool this year, after her two older children had attended the NGS preschool. Mrs Lamrock said James settled in easily and was loving his three-days a week at East End. He was especially excited about his lessons with some of the Park Campus teachers, she said.

"He loves it when Mr [Cameron] Logan comes to do PE with them, and he loves the Chinese programme," she said. "He comes home and tells us all about his Chinese lessons and what he's learning – he's certainly not bored."

*Photos: It's all about fun for these NGS students.*

# TAKE A PEEC AT OUR WELLBEING INITIATIVE



**Wellbeing is being placed firmly at the heart of teaching and learning with the implementation of an evidence-based programme called Positive Education Enhancement Curriculum (PEEC) for primary students.**

Head of Primary K-6 Mrs Alisha Dyer said student wellbeing — ensuring all students enjoyed coming to school and could grow in their understanding of themselves and those around them — was a core focus of the primary school.

“The PEEC programme allows us to place wellbeing firmly at the heart of everything we do and brings together best practice teaching and learning, encouraging the skills and mindsets to flourish,” she said.

The PEEC programme is based on the following pillars:

- The curriculum content is firmly based on the science of wellbeing, underpinned by research in the fields of positive psychology, cognitive behavioural therapy and acceptance commitment therapy.
- PEEC is an exclusive curriculum that has been written by teachers, for teachers in consultation with renowned researchers in the field of positive education.
- The PEEC curriculum blends into classroom teaching, rather than competing with it.
- It teaches concepts and activities that are developmentally appropriate for the social and emotional development of children at different ages and stages.

Mrs Dyer said there were many reasons it was vital for schools to utilise a well-researched and deeply embedded wellbeing program, including the fact that students who feel connected, safe and secure are more likely to be active participants in their learning and to achieve better physical, emotional, social and educational outcomes.

“The wellbeing of children and young people is enhanced and their learning outcomes optimised when they feel connected to others and experience safe and trusting relationships,” she said. “Newcastle Grammar School is proud to be at the forefront of student wellbeing and its implementation in our curriculum.”



# LANGUAGE LESSONS

## PROMOTE CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

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**Mandarin lessons provided for all primary school students are not only a lesson in language, but in intercultural understanding.**

Mandarin teacher Ms Jing Ren said students from Kindergarten to Year 6 enjoyed lessons that covered how to speak and write Mandarin as well as introducing elements of Chinese culture. The lessons also extend to Preschool children who are part of the School Readiness Programme at the East End Early Learning Centre.

Kindergarten students recently connected via video link to a kindergarten class from a school in Yunnan Province, China. Ms Ren said the kindergarten teacher in China had studied at the University of Newcastle and had maintained a connection to the city.

"We greeted each other in Mandarin and English, and shared Mandarin songs with the Chinese children. The students loved it. They were very excited to meet their new friends," she said.

Year 4 students were learning about days of the week and schooling in China, while Year 6 learnt how to order food in a restaurant in Mandarin. The older students enjoyed playing Chinese sports including shuttlecock, kicking and beanbag games, as well as learning Chinese dance with Ms Ren.

"It was wonderful to see the students enjoy and engage in Chinese culture," Ms Ren said. "By exploring different cultures and diversity through play-based learning activities, students were able to develop an intercultural capability and an understanding of the role of language and culture in communication."

She said the ability to communicate in Chinese provided students with incentives for further learning and for more meaningful interactions with speakers of Chinese. It also encouraged socio-cultural understanding in Australia as a multicultural society.



*Kindergarten students connected via video link to a class in Yunnan Province, China.*

“

...students were able to develop an intercultural capability and an understanding of the role of language and culture in communication.



# SOLVING THE DA VINCI CHALLENGE

**Students in Years 5 and 6 were put through their problem-solving paces recently, using teamwork and creativity to compete in the annual Da Vinci Decathlon.**

Named after one of the world's greatest ever thinkers and scholars, the competition is aimed at high potential learners. Students compete in teams of eight to tackle challenges in the following 10 disciplines:

- engineering
- mathematics and chess
- code breaking
- art and poetry
- science
- english
- ideation
- creative producers
- cartography
- legacy.

Our NGS teams devoted their lunch breaks to prepare for the challenge before taking part in the Hunter Regional competition at Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College in Term 1.

The Year 5 team included Zach Porter, Oliver Lewis, Rehaan Kalra, Neesha Rao, Edie Wills, Shannara Stephens, Sarah Park and Alison Kopano. Representing Year 6 were Matilda Dyer, Olivia Lorenz, Cheryl Kopano, Edward Branscombe, Enora Wang, Harley Sleeman, Lucas Hu and Lachlan Yost.

"It was fantastic to see our young students working collaboratively and creatively to tackle new challenges," Enrichment teacher K-6 and coach Mrs Jessica Parsonage said.



"The experience helps them to develop problem-solving skills that will be valuable throughout their lives."

The Year 6 team were overall winners in their division in the regional competition, gaining a place in the State Da Vinci Decathlon in early May.

For the first time, the state competition was run virtually on Zoom. It was hosted by Knox Grammar School and attracted dozens of teams from around NSW.

The Year 6 team had a wonderful day, demonstrating excellent teamwork to divide and conquer the various domains in the challenge. In the Secondary School, we were thrilled when teams from Years 7, 9 and 10 won their regional competitions. A great result for NGS!

1. Years 5 and 6 students devoted their lunch breaks to prepare for the competition.

2. Year 6 regional competition winners Lucas Hu, Lachlan Yost, Cheryl Kopano, Enora Wang, Olivia Lorenz, Matilda Dyer, Edward Branscombe and Harley Sleeman.

3. Year 6 students hard at work during the Da Vinci Decathlon.



It was fantastic to see our young students working collaboratively and creatively to tackle new challenges.

# EXCELLENCE

## SPOTLIGHT ON TEACHING

**NGS places a strong focus on professional development for all its teachers in the knowledge that the quality of teaching is fundamental to student outcomes.**

Director of Learning and Teaching Mrs Lisa Peterson said teachers were taking part in a wide range of professional development activities, including an exciting new programme being piloted this year.

“We know professional development is at the heart of improving student outcomes and student achievements, so it’s crucial for schools to invest in quality professional development,” she said. “We certainly value professional development for all our teachers.”

Staff professional development is a key strategy in the NGS Strategic Plan 2019–2021 and Mrs Peterson said the School had partnered with the University of Newcastle (UON) Quality Teaching Academy this year to introduce a new programme called Quality Teaching Rounds.

More than 1,200 schools have used the programme, designed by leading educators Laureate Professor Jenny Gore and Dr Julie Bowe from UON.

The evidence-based programme involves teachers working in small groups to observe each other’s teaching practice in the classroom, and to assess it in line with a quality teaching framework.

The teachers then work together to identify areas for improvement in their teaching practice.

The framework aims to help teachers focus on:

- **Professional knowledge:** developing understanding of how students learn.
- **Professional practice:** helping to plan and evaluate their teaching and learning activities and programmes.
- **Professional engagement:** improving teacher morale, self-efficacy and collegiality – as well as student outcomes.

Mrs Peterson said University research showed that the Quality Teaching Rounds could improve student achievement by up to 25 percent, as well as improving teacher morale and school culture.

Twelve NGS teachers from Kindergarten to Year 12 across various key learning areas are piloting the Quality Teaching Rounds programme this year, and it will be rolled out more extensively in future years.

“Teachers like to learn from one another and we believe this school-based programme will be really effective – we know that teachers are keen to continue furthering their skills in the classroom,” Mrs Peterson said.

Under NSW teacher accreditation standards, all teachers are required to undertake regular continuing professional development and Mrs Peterson said there were a wide range of other ways NGS teaching staff were doing so. Some teachers were being supported to undertake external study, while others were offered opportunities to attend conferences and workshops relevant to their subject areas.



We’re really proud of the commitment our teaching staff put into continually developing their skills and ensuring they can provide all students with the highest quality teaching.

Professional development days also offered all staff valuable skills in areas including positive education and wellbeing, she said.

The School also implements a programme of regular professional learning conversations to support teaching staff to further develop their skills. This involves teachers undertaking self-reflection, gaining feedback from students and working with their supervisor to identify their own professional development goals. They can then seek out opportunities to build their skills and competencies in specific areas.

“All our professional development is mapped to the School’s Strategic Plan, as well as to the individual teacher’s learning goals,” Mrs Peterson said. “We’re really proud of the commitment our teaching staff put into continually developing their skills and ensuring they can provide all students with the highest quality teaching.”





## THE COVID-19 IMPACT ON TEACHING

During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic saw NGS teachers rapidly learn new skills in remote teaching.

When lessons moved from face-to-face to online in a matter of days due to lockdown, both teachers and students entered a new world of online learning.

As a result, last year's professional development programme focused on supporting teachers to provide high quality lessons digitally, Director of Learning and Teaching Mrs Lisa Peterson said.

That experience has opened the door to the possibility of introducing more blended learning – combining face-to-face lessons with some elements of online learning in the future. "We are looking now at how we can leverage the learnings from COVID-19 to enhance the teaching and learning experience," Mrs Peterson said.

"Certainly, technology has provided many more opportunities in the teaching and learning space, particularly for students who may not be able to come to school for some reason but can access resources and lessons from home."

1. Kindergarten teacher Olivia Paton.

2. Science teacher Matindi Twyford-Moore.

3. Science teacher Summer Edwards.

4. Year 5 teacher Ben Lloyd.

5. Year 5 teacher Trent Daly.

6. Head of Language and Literacy Geoff O'Neill.

7. Global Studies teacher Philip Mau.



# LOVE OF MATHS LEADS TO REWARDING CAREER

**Secondary Mathematics teacher James Ireland has always had a love of the precise nature of maths – and he’s passionate about sharing that love with his students.**

Mr Ireland, who joined NGS last year and is currently teaching Year 9 to 12 Mathematics classes, said maths was definitely his favourite subject growing up. “I found the precise nature of the discipline appealing and I love to problem solve,” he said.

Mr Ireland grew up in Newcastle and gained a Department of Education scholarship to study mathematics teaching at the University of Newcastle. He spent five years teaching at Glen Innes High School in the Northern Tablelands,

then three years at Gunnedah High as a Head Teacher, before deciding to move back to the coast. He taught at Swansea High School before joining NGS.

“I find working as a teacher extremely rewarding,” he said. “NGS in particular is a special place. All the students are motivated and diligent and my fellow teachers are some of the best operators I have worked with.”

Mr Ireland said education is his passion. “Teaching is about forming relationships. I love starting the year with a new class and thinking about all the potential in the room.



*Mr Ireland*

With two young children at home, Mr Ireland doesn’t have a lot of spare time, but he does manage to fit in a session of running or Crossfit most days.

## DISCOVERING THE PRIVILEGE OF TEACHING

**Helen Griffith never planned to be a teacher. She had seen her father, an English literature professor, work around the clock, and thought it wasn’t the career for her.**

Instead, she studied Human Geography and the Environment and worked in that field, while pursuing her other passion – playing the cello. Ms Griffith said it was only after she started tutoring cello at NGS and other local schools in 2014 that she realised how rewarding teaching could be. “Through my experiences in music and being fortunate enough to tutor in the NGS strings programme, I quickly learned why my father worked so hard. To be a teacher is a great privilege,” she said.

“My father truly sees the value of education and holds his students’

future as his utmost responsibility. I feel so fortunate that I came to this realisation and furthered my studies to become a classroom teacher.”

Ms Griffith studied a Masters of Education at the University of Newcastle and began teaching Year 3 at NGS last year. “There are so many things that I love about teaching. I love interacting with my students, helping them make connections,” she said. “But my favourite aspect is that I will be a life-long learner myself. Education is an ever-changing field with new research to guide lessons and extend student learning.”

Ms Griffith hasn’t abandoned the cello. “Playing the cello ... brought me to education and has allowed me to meet some amazing and



*Ms Griffith*

inspiring people,” she said. Most weekends Ms Griffith can be found on stage playing with her electronic/indie band, or at wedding gigs and orchestra concerts.

# ALUMNI ARCHIVES

## A DIFFERENT ERA OF DISCIPLINE

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**Saturday detention would be met with shock by both students and parents today, but it was a common form of discipline at NGS in the 1960s, according to former student Libby Maskey.**

Libby graduated in 1972 and admits she loved to have fun and didn't always follow the School rules. "The School rules were very strict," she said. "If you got three order marks in a week, you got Wednesday afternoon detention, and if you didn't turn up on a Wednesday afternoon, you got Saturday detention." This would involve coming to school in full uniform and writing out passages from the Bible.

“

There were only about 160 of us in the whole school and we all got to know each other – we were a really close community.

Libby remembers girls getting suspended for 'minor crimes', with one student receiving a suspension for giving a packet of biscuits to the boarders. To this day Libby remains furious about receiving a full week's suspension for challenging a teacher's instruction – with some colourful language. She had switched English classes and was told by the teacher to write her name in a new copy of a novel they were studying. Libby refused because she already had a copy of the book at home and didn't want to mark the new one, but the teacher insisted. "I said if you think I'm going to put my name in that bloody book, you've got another think coming." She was sent straight to the Principal's office and given her suspension.

Despite the tough discipline, Libby has fond memories of NGS and catches up with many of her former classmates regularly at Bar Beach. "There were only about 160 of us in the whole school and we all got to know each other – we were a really close community," she says. Libby went on to a successful career as a hairdresser, running her own business in Merewether for many years.

### **DETENTION: RECOLLECTIONS FROM AN EARLIER TIME**

**Recollections of Rosalind Archer Shearer (nee Casstleden), day student, 1940s.**

"Most [detentions] were 'kept-ins' for not doing homework but we also received 'marks' for offenses such as talking in prep... All these demerits also involved staying behind after school for 20 minutes, either doing the homework you should have done or the most ghastly multiplication sums the teachers could think up. In the days of imperial measurement, these were a real trial."

**Excerpt from: *From the Spirit, A History of Newcastle Grammar School*, p91.**



*Former student Libby Maskey enjoying life to the full.*

# ALUMNI

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



*Sean Farrell's inspiring career has been led by a need for discovery.*

### **Dr Sean Farrell:**

Class of 1995

### **Currently lives:**

Newcastle, where he works as a data scientist for a Canadian technology company.

Since graduating from NGS in 1995, Dr Sean Farrell's passion for knowledge has taken him from a career as an engineer to an astrophysicist and now a data scientist. He's hunted

for rare types of black holes, tracked terrorists and worked with top football clubs on performance analysis.

Sean initially studied physics and mechanical engineering. He worked as an engineer for several years before embarking on a PhD in astrophysics at the Australian Defence Force Academy and UNSW in Canberra. He developed a love of research that led to 11 years working on post-doctorate research largely in Europe, including time with the European Space Agency in France.

When he returned to Australia, Sean said astrophysics jobs were 'thin on the ground' so he took an opportunity in the growing field of data science. Describing himself as a 'reformed astrophysicist', scientific exploration remains his passion. "The common theme among my work that gets me out of bed in the morning is the thrill of discovery," he said.

Sean has applied his data analytics and research skills to an incredibly wide array of fields, including working with the Government in national security to performance analysis for both Arsenal Football Club and AFL club, North Melbourne.

Sean returned to Newcastle two years ago and is now working as 'data scientist at large' for a Canadian tech start-up called Receptiviti. The company is developing applications that analyse the way people communicate to shed light on their psychology and personality.

Sean said he is loving life back in his hometown with his partner and their puppy.

### **Judy Evans (nee Storey):** Class of 1969

**Currently lives:** Near Tamworth, on a small acreage where she continues to enjoy her long-held passion for horses.

Judy Evans will never forget the look on teacher Miss Marion Gardner's face when she was spotted riding a horse through the NGS school grounds one Saturday afternoon. "She was apoplectic," Judy laughed.

Judy, who admitted she has always been 'horse crazy', was among the first cohort of NGS students to complete a secretarial qualification rather than the Leaving Certificate in her final year.

Judy worked in photography studios and managed to save enough to buy her first horse when she was aged 18. She kept the horse in her backyard on Anzac Parade, as well as tethered in vacant lots near the Obelisk and in the grounds of NBN (then Channel 3) at night. Judy went on to work as a jillaroo, gaining experience with Arabian horses, and later married. She has a daughter Tina, who now lives in Newcastle.

Moving to Tamworth in 1984, Judy said she started a small Arabian horse stud, breeding and showing horses, as well as writing and taking photographs for several specialist horse magazines. She later switched to dressage, a discipline in which she still competes.

Judy took up running in her 50s and completed two half-marathons. These days she remains active looking after her four-acre property in the village of Moonbi outside Tamworth.



*Judy Evans' passion for horses has been a feature since childhood.*



# ALUMNI

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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### **Ann Lewis (nee Valerie Ann Barnes):**

Class of 1968

**Currently lives:** Canberra, where she is enjoying retirement

Ann Lewis recently came across the School blazer that she wore right through her six years as a boarder at NGS. She generously donated the blazer to the School archives, together with photos and treasured mementos from her school days.

She said the photos prompted memories of a different era for school students. "I did wonder if sleeping on the outside verandas with no glass and only cyclone fencing in the midst of winter would be tolerated today," she reminisced.

Ann joined NGS when her family moved to Port Stephens from Ballarat. Despite being 'dreadfully homesick' during her first year, she went on to do well at school and her name appears on many prize lists in the NGS archives.

Ann's mother was keen for her to become a medical pathologist, however Ann loved history and gained a Teachers College scholarship. She went on to study teaching at the University of Newcastle.

Ann met her husband Edward at university and they were married at Christ Church Cathedral by Dean Falkingham — the father of her dearest friend Margaret. The couple moved to Melbourne and had two children. Ann taught history at MLC there.

When the family later moved to Canberra, Ann taught at Canberra Boy's Grammar School, before becoming Head of the History Department at Canberra Girl's Grammar School, where she remained until her retirement in 2008. "History has always been a great delight for me," she said.

Since retirement, Ann and Edward have enjoyed many overseas trips, including 12 months in Boston, Delft in Belgium, France and Oxford in the UK from 2010-11. "We were so lucky to have done all that travel, given the COVID-19 restrictions now," she said.



History has always been a great delight for me.



1. Ann Barnes and Larry Castle at the 1967 RSL District Council Ball.

2. Ann Barnes (back row, second from right) with fellow 1968 Prefects.

# ALUMNI

## PROFILE



### A wandering soul: Sarah Harrison, graduated 2005

*"Not all those who wander are lost": JRR Tolkien*

**A love of geography while at school sparked a passion for learning about other cultures that has seen Sarah Harrison travel the globe ever since.**

Since graduating in 2005, Sarah has worked in international development across Europe, the Pacific, Latin America and Africa, while sharing her adventures through a blog and Instagram account dubbed Sarita's Wanderings (@saritaswanderings).

Sarah is currently living in Arusha, Tanzania, working as a manager for The School of St Jude, an educational charity set up by Australian woman Gemma Sisia. (Find out more at: [www.schoolofstjude.org](http://www.schoolofstjude.org))

"St Jude's provides a free, high quality education to poor and bright children from northern Tanzania, who, due to poverty and social pressures would otherwise be unlikely to complete their schooling," Sarah said.

After leaving school, Sarah completed a Rotary Exchange to Austria for a year and learned German, before studying International Relations at ANU in Canberra (where she also learnt Spanish), followed by a Master of Development Studies at the University of Sydney.

She completed an internship at The Hague in the Netherlands and spent three years working for the World Bank in Sydney where she focused on health

and education projects in the Pacific Islands, PNG and East Timor. Sarah then spent three years living in Guatemala working for a health clinic. She also recently completed a Masters of Public Health at the University of Newcastle.

"I have always loved travelling and learning about other cultures – it is my main passion in life," she said. While it was too difficult to nominate a favourite destination, Sarah said some of her top picks included India, Mexico and Colombia.

As a child, Sarah initially wanted to be a writer, then a journalist, then a diplomat or aid worker. "Now I work in international development and do writing and photography as a hobby, so I guess it's kind of a combination of all of those," she said.

When COVID-19 saw international borders close, Sarah decided to remain working in Tanzania, where she'll stay until at least the end of 2021.

Her advice to today's school leavers is not to worry if things don't pan-out as planned. "Life and careers are not always linear. Everyone is on a different trajectory and success means whatever you want it to – don't let others define what it should mean for you," she said. "I'm a big advocate for a gap year – working, volunteering or travelling (or a combination) – it's a great way to get some perspective before diving into anything."

1. Sarah Harrison.

2. Sarah's career has taken her across the globe.



# MILESTONES & MEMORIES

## CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to **Cassie Stronach** (graduating class of 2001) and her partner Ashish Vinayan (Ash) who married in a colourful ceremony at Christ Church Cathedral on New Year's Eve 2020. The celebrations continued with a long lunch reception with 60 guests at Merewether Surfhouse.

Unfortunately, Ashish's parents, friends and family could not travel from India to be there, but his sister Isha, who lives in Newcastle, was Ashish's 'Best Woman'.

The couple live-streamed the ceremony so loved ones in multiple countries could join in. Guests enjoyed Bollywood dancing among other Indian elements at the ceremony and reception.

The newlyweds are living in Newcastle, where Cassie works as an architect with Alleanza and Ashish is a business analyst at the University of Newcastle.



*Cassie Stronach and Ash Vinayan at their wedding.*



*Dr Erin Harvey.*

Congratulations also go to **Dr Erin Harvey** (graduating class of 2011) who recently completed her PhD at the University of Sydney.

Erin completed her thesis entitled *Using meta-transcriptomics to reveal the diversity, ecology and evolution of animal viruses* under the supervision of Professor Eddie Holmes, who released the first

genomic sequences of SARS-CoV-2 – the virus that causes COVID-19.

She continues to work for Professor Holmes as a Postdoctoral Research Associate and her current research is focused on understanding the diversity of viruses in Australian animal species, the impact that humans have on the viruses they carry and identifying any potential disease-causing viruses.

Erin wanted to give a special mention to Ms Ramplin, her Biology teacher in her last year at NGS.



*Marg Selby – 40 years of teaching.*

## MILESTONES

**Marg Selby** (nee Falkingham) from the graduating class of 1968, has reached an incredible career milestone of 40 years in teaching. Marg has spent the majority of her career at Abbotsleigh in Sydney, where she continues to work as Careers Adviser and Exchange Co-ordinator.

Marg graduated from NGS as Dux and School Captain and went on to study a triple major in Classics, History and Politics at ANU, followed by a Diploma of Education. Her first teaching position was in Goulburn, then after travelling and working overseas, Marg returned to teach

Ancient and Medieval History at Abbotsleigh for five years.

After some time away from teaching to start a family and raise her two daughters, Marg returned to her role at Abbotsleigh in 1989 and moved into her current role in 2007. She also organises student exchange programs to the UK, US, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa (pre COVID-19).

"Working with young people who bring energy and enthusiasm to every day is the most satisfying and enjoyable part of my job," she said.



# ALUMNI

## NGS CONNECTIONS

**The Johns family are set to continue their long connection with NGS, when a third generation of the family joins the School next year.**

Barbara Johns (nee Pickering) is looking forward to seeing her grandson Angus start Year 7 at NGS in 2022, following in the footsteps of not only herself, but her four daughters.

Barbara was the first in her family to attend NGS in the 1960s, when they lived in Stockton. "The older girls were given the responsibility of getting me home on the ferry, even though they can't have been that much older," she said.

Barbara finished school in 1962 and went on to study and then teach handicrafts and fashion at TAFE, before setting up her long-running patchwork and quilting business, Pot Pourri, in The Junction 30 years ago.

Barbara and her husband Michael decided to send their eldest daughter Trudy to NGS for high school, partly because they thought its 'twin school' concept – where boys were enrolled at the School but most lessons were still single-sex – would suit her. Her three sisters followed and for anyone who spent time at NGS in the 1990s, the Johns family are likely very familiar – Trudy graduated in 1992, Karen in 1993, Amy in 1995 and Megan in 1998.

Michael, a solicitor and prominent Newcastle businessman, served on the Schools' inaugural board that was invested in 1992, and Barbara spent a lot of her time volunteering in the canteen and uniform shop.

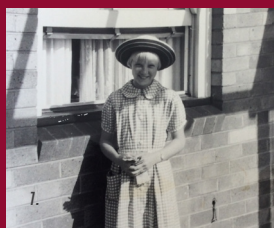
During her time at NGS, Amy Lane (nee Johns) recalls big changes were underway; she remembers trudging across to James Fletcher Hospital where classes were held during the construction of the Parnell Building.

A self-confessed 'nerd', she graduated as Dux and pursued her childhood dream of becoming a vet. "Grammar certainly played a big part in helping me achieve that, and I'm very grateful for it," she said.

Having lived in Cowra and Perth after finishing her studies, Amy and her husband Ben moved back to Newcastle seven years ago. The eldest of their three children, Angus, is enrolled to attend NGS next year, carrying on the family tradition.

"I've been to a couple of the Open Days and it's really interesting to see all the changes," Amy said. "The facilities are amazing, and the new myNGS Passport gives the students opportunities to try lots of different things. I hope he'll really enjoy it."

1. Barbara outside her home in Stockton, wearing her primary school uniform in Year 6.
2. Barbara in the NGS grounds in third form, 1962.
3. The girl's grassy playground, known as the 'cow pasture', in 1962.
4. Amy Lane, Trudy Wallace, Karen Doyle and Megan Johns at Karen's wedding recently.
5. Barbara (back row, second from right) in her final year, third form in 1962.







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