NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

Annual School Report 2014
School context

Newtown High School of the Performing Arts is a dynamic, caring and creative school established in 1990.

NHSPA specialises in the performing and creative arts and is committed to excellence in student education by providing a challenging curriculum that enhances the talents of its students. The school's comprehensive programs strive to instill discipline and self-esteem, and to encourage creativity, enabling students to develop to their fullest potential and to excel in their chosen endeavours. This report reflects the consolidated energies and efforts of the staff, students and the parent body.

Each year in Term 2 the school auditions students from all over NSW in music, dance and drama for intakes in Years 7 and 11. The school continues to enjoy an international and national reputation for excellence in the performing arts.

The school enhances student motivation and achievement through learning support and welfare structures and programs, and by establishing close working relationships within the community.

Principal’s message

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Peter Shields
Relieving Principal

P&C Message

Newtown High School of the Performing Arts Parents and Citizens Association provides an opportunity for parents to be part of an active and engaged community whose goal is to support the students and teachers at the school. The involvement and contribution of parents is essential to the students’ learning and enjoyment of their high school years.

The P&C’s Voluntary Fundraising Contribution, continues to raise significant funds. These funds have enabled substantial work to be undertaken to refurbish the Studio Theatre foyer and entrances in 2013/14. The next planned project is a refurbishment of the internal space of the historically listed St Georges Hall, which will include more effective use of the internal space for both stage and seating. This project is another example of the positive collaboration between parents and the school, to achieve a unique space for the performing and visual arts at NHSPA.

Other highlights of this positive collaboration in 2014 include:

- Extensive involvement and coordination by members of the P&C committee and the wider NHSPA parent community to provide Front of House refreshments at Showcase, auditions and orientations.
- Coordination of important events such as the new families’ welcome BBQ and the annual World Earth Festival, a unique event for students, families and teachers to come together and celebrate NHSPA.
- The P&C Building Sub-Committee’s completion of the Studio Theatre upgrade and refurbishment, plus the repair and replacement of old and damaged lockers for use by the student body, increasing secure storage facilities by more than half.
- The P&C Faculty Sub-Committee’s grant funding to all academic/sport departments to realise effective curricula outcomes; including excursions, teaching materials and equipment.
- The P&C Performing and Visual Arts Sub-Committee (PVAS) support of Music, Drama, Dance and Visual Arts faculties and Technical Company, including master class funding by application to Drama, Music, Dance and Visual Arts Faculties.
- The Environment Sub-Committee’s planning and delivery of another successful working bee to improve, clean and brighten the physical environment of the school for the students and teachers.
- The NHSPA P&C program in 2015 will continue to support the school in a myriad of ways, in particular, aligning with the school's strategic directions outlined in the 2015-17 School Plan. We look forward to meeting new parents and reconnecting with established P&C members, and together making an invaluable and positive contribution to NHSPA.

Katie Mann
P&C President
Student Representative’s Message

Each year the Student Representative Council works effectively to improve the school environment and represent the needs of the student body through a number of different projects. We also have a strong focus on charity, raising money for and working with charities in our community and on a national level.

In 2013 we chose the Exodus Foundation as our long term charity as a way of engaging more with our community. Last year we ran another successful can drive as well as sending a number of students to the Exodus Foundation Centre in Ashfield as volunteers for the day.

In our annual event, The World’s Greatest Shave, we raised over $16,000 for the Leukemia Foundation and were in the top 30 fundraisers in NSW. A few of our members attended a thank you evening hosted by the foundation at Parliament House. Members of the SRC also raised money for Jeans for Genes Day charities.

Last year we have organised for a group of Year 11 students to donate blood at the Red Cross, an initiative we hope to continue.

This year we have a number of new projects that will be undertaken throughout the year alongside our annual ones. Our two main aims include the installation of an air-blade hand dryer in the girl’s and boy’s bathrooms and the introduction of girl’s shorts into the school uniform.

Through our quarterly newspaper, Facebook page and suggestion box we have become more interactive with the student body and have received an increased number of ideas and suggestions.

The SRC is continually improving and constantly active within the school community. Meeting weekly, we are still seeking projects for the future to help enhance our school environment. This year we hope to boost our impact within the school and in our local community.

Lois Armstrong
SRC President

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

The school has a total enrolment of 1036. Each year auditions take place for Years 7 and 11 resulting in enrolments from across the state. The school also enrolls students from the designated local area.

Student attendance profile

A concentrated effort on improving student engagement as well as targeted attendance policies has maintained attendance rates above state average across all years of the school.

Retention to Year 12

The retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 continues to be well above that of the state and School Education Group.
Students chose to study at a variety of tertiary institutions including ANU, UNSW (COFA and ADF Canberra), The University of Sydney (SCA and The CON), Macquarie University, UNE, UWS, Wollongong University, CSU Bathurst, Australian Catholic University, UTS, COFA, VCA, WAPPA, JMC Academy, The National Art School, Sydney TAFE and Notre Dame.

Two students chose to pursue their scholarships for Dance in America, while five were admitted to the pre-professional course with the Sydney Dance Company.

Approximately 45% of students studying Music are pursuing tertiary study related to either performance or other music industry related bet365 review by oddslot courses.

### Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

In 2014, 6% of Year 12 students were enrolled in vocational or trade training; studying courses such as Nursing, Tourism, Children’s Services, Electro Computer Assembly and Financial Services.

### Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent Vocation educational qualification

All Year 12 students successfully completed the HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification in 2014.

### Workforce information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

### Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
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<td>School Counsellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
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The Graduating Year, 2014 featured 162 students with HSC units attempted ranging from 6 to 14.

Survey results revealed that 65% of students applied for Universities through UAC, while others chose to pursue study through TAFE, smaller private colleges or go directly to fulltime work. Three students acquired a fulltime apprenticeship.

A growing percentage of students chose to take a GAP Year deferring their study till 2016, to either work or travel (many opting for volunteering experience).

Areas of study were diverse, reflecting the variety of talents and aspirations of the 2014 cohort. The most popular areas of study included Film or other media related courses, Arts, Dramatic Arts/Theatre, Fine Arts or Design, Communications, Education, Music, Dance, International Studies and a high percentage of diverse Science related courses from Physiotherapy to Marine Biology.

Popular TAFE/Private College courses included Music Industry related courses, Business, Design, 3-D Animation, Fashion Design, Hospitality, Stage & Lighting, and Information Technology.
The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

No members of the permanent staff identify as Aboriginal, however throughout the year a small number of Aboriginal casual and volunteer staff worked in a range of capacities across the school.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meets the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

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<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
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<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>20</td>
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Professional learning and teacher accreditation

In 2014 teacher professional learning continued to be the focus for school improvement with 58 teachers undertaking professional learning activities with an average expenditure per staff of $950. A total school expenditure on teacher professional learning for the year was $57,503. School Development Day evaluations indicated priorities for professional learning activities and these priorities were then addressed.

In 2014 a range of opportunities were offered to all staff in relation to professional learning workshops and activities throughout the year. The targeted priority areas were literacy and numeracy, Wellbeing, Positive Psychology, Beginning Teachers and ICT.

The Professional Learning team continued to organise School Development Days. Topic areas covered were HSC data analysis, Anxiety and Learning Difficulties, Professional Teaching and Quality Feedback, ALARM, Quality of School Life Survey Data Analysis and presentations on Child Protection and Work Health and Safety.

Conferences were held for the executive and welfare teams. School Project Coordinator roles were created to build staff capacity, whereby, key priorities such as Innovative Assessment and Teacher quality feedback and mentoring were oddslot soccer picks achieved.

26 staff members were supported throughout the year in maintaining their accreditation at the Proficient teacher level and some staff is now seeking voluntary accreditation at the Highly Accomplished level. 11 New Scheme Teachers have worked towards their BOSTES accreditation.

Beginning Teachers

A Beginning and New Teacher team was established to support all beginning teachers in adjusting to their new roles as teachers. Funds provided were used to give relief time, mentoring, and professional development.

The staff induction program again included a performing arts orientation day. All new scheme teachers attended regular meetings, and successfully completed their accreditation portfolios.

Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

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<th>2014 Actual ($)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Opening Balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
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<td>Appropriation</td>
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<td>Sale of Goods and Services</td>
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<td>Grants and Contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain and loss</td>
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<td>Other Revenue</td>
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<td>Expenses</td>
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<td>Recurrent Expenses</td>
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<td>Employee Related</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surplus/Deficit for the Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance Carried Forward</td>
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The information provided in the financial summary is current at the date shown. This summary includes reporting from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014.

The RAM data is the main component of the “ Appropriations” section of the financial summary.
School performance 2014

Achievements

Arts
A major feature again in 2014 was the school’s two showcase seasons. These were highly successful; companies and ensemble groups performed at the school and at the Seymour Centre. These performances incorporated the skills, expertise and collaboration of students, community members and staff.

Achievements in Drama
Over 200 students in nineteen drama companies performed as part of the year’s two showcase seasons. A diverse range of theatrical styles were presented, including Shakespearean drama, site-specific theatre, Absurdist comedy, playbuilt drama as well as contemporary Australian theatre. Garth Holcombe, ex-NHSPA student and NIDA graduate, also directed companies as did fellow NIDA graduates and tutors Rebecca Johnstone and Harriet Gillies.

Our Theatresports team continued their recent successes and was runners-up in the Theatresports Schools Challenge.

There were thirteen OnStage nominations in 2014: two group performances and five individual performances and projects. Of those, four students performed at the Seymour Centre in February 2015.

Our students were involved in a number of significant workshop events in 2014. These include the Year 8 slapstick workshops, Bell Shakespeare Masterclasses for the Extension Year 10 class and a P&C-funded workshop with well-known performer Phillip Quast.

Four of our Film Studies students were the year’s Tropfest Junior Competition winners.

The Drama faculty congratulates last year’s HSC Drama cohort for their excellent results and makes special mention of Toby Blome who successfully auditioned for NIDA late last year and Hannah Rae Meegan who was admitted to AFTRS.

Achievements in Dance
Twenty-six Dance students went on the USA Dance Tour visiting Booker T Washington Performing and Visual Arts High School in Dallas, New York, where they attended classes at Alvin Ailey Studios, Miami, where they participated in the National High Schools Dance Festival, and Disney World. All year 12 students who auditioned for tertiary Dance courses were successful in being awarded at least one scholarship.

Twelve students from the Dance Faculty attended the Newtown High School of the Performing Arts China Tour 2014.

Over forty dance students participated in the 2014 Schools Spectacular in various segments including the Schools Spectacular Classical Ballet Company.

Three Dance companies, three Classical Ballet companies and five Dance ensembles represented the school at the Public Schools NSW Dance Festival, Series 2. All Dance Companies, two Classical Ballet Companies, and one Ensemble were selected to perform at the State Dance Festival.

Dance students participated in Showcase performances in both semesters. Every Dance and Classical Ballet class performed in the Classwork Showcase series of concerts.

“Off Broadway” and the end of year “Dance Showcase” were performed at the Everest Theatre, Seymour Centre.

Adrian Van Winkelhof and Gilli O’Connell were guest choreographers who choreographed works on our Senior Repertory Company, ‘Verging On’ and ‘Fortune Favours the Brave’ respectively. These works were performed at the mid-year showcase “Off Broadway”.

Thirty-one Year 12 students were nominated by markers as presenting exemplary works in the HSC Dance examination. Seventeen of these students were nominated in more than one syllabus component.

The Technical Company was involved in all Showcase Concerts, Presentation Day, auditions, Formal Assemblies, HSC Drama, Elysium Concert, and NSW Public Schools’ Dance Company performance. The venues they worked in were Studio Theatre, St Georges Hall, the Everest and
York Theatres at the Seymour Centre, and the Sydney Opera House.

**Achievements in Music**

Once again, 2014 proved to be an exciting and creative year for the Music Department with great success in both curricula and co-curricula programs. The year also marked the end of an era as staff and students, past and present, acknowledged the great work of Gemma Thomas who, after 23 highly successful years, retired as Head Teacher Music at NHSPA.

The Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Concert Band received Gold awards in the NSW Band Festival in July in the Sir John Clancy Auditorium, UNSW.

The String Ensemble was invited to accompany Sydney District Choir and perform solo piece, La Mueta Piazzola at the Sydney Opera House in July.

At the Sydney Eisteddfod in August the Jazz Orchestra achieved first place, whilst the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Sax Quartet achieved second place. The Sax Quartet also performed at Concord Hospital, raising money for cancer research, and performed at the nationally televised Medical Research Presentation at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital attended by the Premier of NSW.

Six of our Year 8 music students were invited to perform as part of an International Youth Congress in Beijing. The tour involved combined music and dance items representing Australia at the Youth Congress and was televised on China Central Television.

The Schools Spectacular featured Kelsi Boyden and Joshua Meader as solo artists. Jessica Rookwood was a featured artist and Gus Noakes and Kay Hughson were backup vocalists. Many of our students were involved in the Schools Spectacular Orchestra and Stage Band.

The Elysium Concert was held in St George’s Hall in December and featured HSC performances by Year 12 extension students.

Five Year 12 students, Eve McEwen, Lyla Levy-Jordan, Alfie Carslake, Nelson Earl and Emma Gibson were awarded Encore nominations for exemplar HSC performance programs. Oliver Schumaker appeared as soloist at the Encore concert at the Sydney Opera House in March.

Students from the NHSPA Senior Choir were selected to feature in an episode of Home and Away performing the hymn ‘Abide with Me’ for a dawn service commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the ANZAC landings. The Senior Choir also performed as part of the community Remembrance Day ceremony with Miles Bennett performing the Last Post. This was the first time that this event was staged in co-operation with members of the Newtown RSL, members of the Australian Army and community leaders.

World Earth Festival 2014 was a great whole school event, with amazing performances from eight student bands whilst the Year 8 Soul/Funk Ensemble also performed at the Newtown Festival.

In May, a group of eight music students recorded ‘Paint You a Song’ for the statewide project ‘Music Count Us In’. They were mentored by a team of music industry professionals, led by producer, John Foreman.

Our Showcase series was once again a huge success. In Semester 2 we continued the Summer Series. As well as the opening night, featuring vocal ensembles, the series included a Jazz night in the Studio Theatre and an acoustic night in St George’s Hall featuring the Orchestra, choirs and small ensembles.

Create your own Musical also presented a completely original work as part of the Showcase elective, with students recording a CD of the songs. The Finale at the Seymour Centre in December included a combined dance/choir performance, String Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble and a combined original work for music and drama.

In November, Matthew Drury and Rowan Scott were accepted into MAKE, a composition workshop with world renowned ‘London Symphony Orchestra’, workshopping and performing these works with the LSO at the Sydney Conservatorium.

NHSPA and the Australian Rights Association held a two-day intensive song-writing workshop in April. This was a pilot program with the aim of developing song writing skills and allowing
students to gain an insight into the Popular Music Industry. The intensive workshopping involved 18 students, five new bands and resulted in a professionally produced CD of five original songs.

The Spring Prom concert in September featured all our acoustic ensembles as well as various works from individual Year 12 students. It also featured many ex-students in a farewell item to celebrate the great work of Gemma Thomas in her years as Head Teacher Music.

Achievements in Visual Arts

Ania Lloyd-Jones, Jared Ziegler, Emmy Saheki and Nell O’Grady successfully completed the National Art School Intensive Studio Practice Course in Digital Photography with outstanding results. This 60 hour program is designed to enhance and extend students’ technical and conceptual knowledge through intensive studio practice. Their final artmaking was exhibited at the National Art School.

Art Express selected Mia Carey’s HSC Body of Work, a series of black and white photograph’s and photo-book titled ‘Mankind’s Creation’ to be exhibited in the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

‘Pecking Order’ by Alvin Williams’s series of quirky wooden ‘found object’ sculptures along with a manipulated photograph of Alvin was also selected as part of the Art Express continuous travelling exhibition across New South Wales.

Included in the Summer Series Showcase was an exhibition of mounted artworks by students from Years 7–12. The exhibition was held in foyer of St Georges’ Hall.

Callum Worsfold received second prize from the NSW Reconciliation Council for his comic ‘A Journey to Reconciliation’, as part of the NSW Schools Reconciliation Challenge’.

Our school’s Portrait Prize is an in class drawing competition for Year 7 students; the works were judged by both students and staff with the 20 finalists’ works exhibited in the library. The winner of the competition was Zakaya Bonne and Emma Fugle won the People’s Choice while the Executive Prize was awarded to Zekie Angel.

Achievements in Sport

NHSPA continued to have a large number of student representatives at Bligh Zone, Sydney East Region and NSW CHS championships where many of our athletes achieved exceptional success.

Our school featured prominently on the Bligh Zone’s list of age champions at the swimming and cross country carnivals. The Zone Age Champions for the Swimming and Cross Country Carnivals were as follows:

Swimming:
14 girls – Olivia Medina-Du Clos
16 boys – Vaso Djurovic
17 boys – Rory Hocknell

Athletics:
14 girls – Talia Munro
15 girls – Imogen Russell (runner up)
13 boys – Tully Lily-Merigan (runner up)
15 boys – Christian Henney
16 boys – Ari Tuaine (runner up)

Cross Country:
14 boys – Archie McKay
15 boys – Alex Small

Sydney East Cross Country Age Champions:
13 boys – Raphael Danoy (10th place)
14 boys – Archie McKay (4th place)
15 Girls – Hannah Newton (8th place)

Other sporting highlights of the year were:

Archie McKay won ‘NHSPA Sports Person of the Year’ for his outstanding achievement in Cross Country at Zone, Regional and State level and his contribution to Athletics.

Vaso Djurovic won ‘The Premiers Sporting Challenge Medal’ for his commitment to fair play, achievement in sport and his overall contribution to sport at NHSPA.

Eleni Knapp and Rory Hocknell were awarded with ‘Bligh Zone Blue Award’ for their outstanding achievements, dedication and commitment to Bligh Zone and Sydney East Swimming over the last six years.

Four teams competed in the ‘Head of the Hill’ schools relay category at the Balmoral Burn. Our students dominated the grueling 420m relay race with NHSPA students competing against the best athletes in Sydney. The senior boys relay team
finished 9th out of 50 in an outstanding time of 8:01.

In team sports our basketball girls and boys teams competed at NSW CHS State Knockout competition with the Under 15 boys progressing through the minor rounds and to the central venue.

In touch football, the girls’ team had success at the Bligh Zone Gala day winning the competition. The boys’ teams were Bligh Zone runners up after narrowly losing to Marrickville in the final.

In netball, the Under 15 team made it through to round 3 in the NSW CHS State Knockout and the Open Netball team made it through to the central venue day. At the Bligh Zone Netball Gala Day, the Open team had a successful day winning all the rounds and progressing through to the final. The girls were narrowly defeated in the final.

Other CHS Knockout sports conducted in 2014 included cricket, football and volleyball.

Other

Student engagement was enriched with the running of annual events including Year 7 Ancient History Show, Year 7 Nicholson Museum visit, Year 8 Medieval Show, and Year 10 Geography coastal management fieldtrips to Cronulla. In the senior years, students participated in the Legal Studies Mock Trial competition in which they made the semi-finals, law courts visits, visits to local businesses and participation in a number of HSC lecture days.

A number of Year 11 and 12 students participated in the annual Young Global Achievers Conference in New York and Italy, where they participated in the UN General Assembly, working with and representing different national embassies in collaboration with other students from around the world. Students returned full of inspiration and stories about their invaluable experiences and lasting connections forged with other young people from around the globe.

Students once again showed great enthusiasm in entering debating competitions. Our years 7, 8, 9 and 11 teams won several debates in their respective zones. The highlight of our success was our Year 10 Debating team who were zone champions and made it to the Regional Semi-Finals.

Our Year 9 Showcase Journalism class produced some wonderful pieces of writing and were published on a regular basis in the school newsletter and the student newspaper.

A Student Literary magazine was published in Semester 2 to showcase the writing talents of our students.

In the Mathematics International Competition, Anna Milburn received a High Distinction for the second year in a row placing her in the top 1% of students within NSW. 13 students received Distinction placing them amongst the top 15% of students within NSW and 63 students received a credit award.

Ilty Sachar (Year 8) and his team received the Mechanical Design award at the National FLL (First Lego League) robotics. As a result, Ilty and his team, have been chosen to represent Australia at the FLL robotics competition at an international level.

Academic achievements

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)

Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

NAPLAN Year 7 - Literacy

Students achieved overall results well above state and Similar School Group (SSG) averages in all aspects of literacy tested.
### NAPLAN Year 9 - Literacy

Students achieved outstanding overall results in all areas tested. The tables below indicate that the school’s literacy results continue to be above state and near or above SSG averages.

#### Year 9 NAPLAN Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average score, 2014</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SSG</th>
<th>State DEC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>610.1</td>
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#### Skill Band Distribution

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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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#### Year 9 NAPLAN Spelling

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<td></td>
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<td>614.7</td>
<td>582.1</td>
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#### Skill Band Distribution

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### NAPLAN Year 7 - Numeracy

Students again achieved overall numeracy results above state average.

#### Year 7 NAPLAN Numeracy

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<th>Average score, 2014</th>
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<td>542.9</td>
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#### Skill Band Distribution

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## NAPLAN Year 7 - Grammar and Punctuation

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<th>Average score, 2014</th>
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#### Skill Band Distribution

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9
Higher School Certificate (HSC)

Our HSC class of 2014 has once again continued the outstanding improvement in HSC results seen at Newtown High School of the Performing Arts over recent years. Achievements include:

- Ancient History results were 3.6% above the state mean with 17% of students receiving Band 6 which is almost double the state rate.

- 42% of students in Biology achieved 80 or more, compared to 28% of the state and 38% in the 2013 cohort and 32% in the 2012 cohort. Biology results were 3.9% above state mean.

- In Dance, our students achieved results 9.9% above state mean with an average mark of 87.3. 39% received 90 plus (up from 30% in 2013 and 20% in 2012) with 86.4% in the top 2 bands which is double the state rate.

- Drama students achieved an average mark of 86.6. Drama results were 8.1% above the state mean, with 38.9% of Drama students achieving marks over 90 (compared to 13.2% state-wide) and 85.1% gained marks in the top 2 bands (42.1% state-wide)

- English Standard results were 4.1% above state mean.

- English Advanced results saw an average of 81.9 with 66.1% of students receiving marks over 80 compared to 59.3% statewide

- With an average mark of 45/50 our Extension 1 English results saw 93.3% of students in the top 2 bands and achieved 3.5% above the state mean.

- 85.7% of Extension 2 English students received marks in the top band compared to 77.4% statewide

- Our Food Technology results were impressive, 6.6% above state mean with 38.9% of students achieving 80+ compared to 28.5% for the state

- Legal Studies results were 6.4% above state mean with an average mark of 80.2. 27.3% of students achieved 90+ which was over twice the state mean with 61.8% in the top two bands compared to 39.6% for the state.

- with an average of 4.7% above the state mean, General Mathematics had 28.3% of its students achieving 80+ compared to 25% of the state.

- Modern History results were 3.3% above the state mean with 27.8% of students achieving 90+ compared to 8.7% of the state and 17% for the 2013 cohort.

- 40% of History Extension students were in the top band compared to 22.3% for the state and 100% in the top two bands compared to 77.7% in the state and 3.4% above state mean.

- Music 1 results were excellent this year with marks 9% above the state mean and 50% in band 6 compared to 18.2% for the state and 33% in 2013. There were 100% in the top two bands compared to 59.3% for the state, 94% in 2013 and 65% in 2012.

- Music 2 results had 45% of students scoring 90+ compared to 34% for the state

- Music Extension results were again outstanding with an average of 47.3/50 and 100% in the top band compared to 74.8% of the state

- PDHPE results were 3.6% above state mean, with 32.4% in the top 2 bands compared to 30.5% of the state.

- Textiles and Design results were 6.2% above state mean with 61.9% achieving 80+ compared to 47% in the state. 23.8% of students achieved Band 6 which was nearly double the state rate.
- Visual Arts were 3.3% above state mean with 63.9% in the top two bands compared to 48.6% for the state.
- Jessica Goodfellow was awarded 1st in the State in Dance.
- 2 students received a Premier’s Award for gaining marks of 90+ in over 10 units. These outstanding students are William Bartolo and Isabella Fulton.
- 71 students were placed on the NSW Distinguished Achievers list for receiving 90+ in at least one course.
- 33 students achieved marks of 80 or more in 10 or more units.

In the Higher School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).
Significant programs and initiatives – Policy and equity funding

Aboriginal education

The Aboriginal Education Team continued its work in 2014 to better support our indigenous students, to raise awareness of aboriginal culture and to develop resources to support aboriginal perspectives across all KLAs.

Every indigenous student at the school was mentored by members of the aboriginal education team. Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) were updated in consultation with the students to identify and better meet their learning needs.

In 2014, we commemorated ‘Sorry Day’ with a whole school assembly. Uncle Max, a local Aboriginal elder, performed a smoking ceremony and Michael West, the Director at NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group at ACARA, talked about the significance of Sorry Day as well as what it meant to him to be a member of the Stolen Generation.

In 2014, the school celebrated NAIDOC week. During the week, Year 8 lessons in all subjects had an Aboriginal theme. A special NAIDOC assembly was held where students of Darlington Public School performed along with our Year 7 music students. We had Richard Green, actor, as guest speaker at the assembly.

Makaela Collins of Year 11 was awarded a Sydney Region “Deadly Kids” award for outstanding achievement. Akala Newman of Year 11 performed at the event.

Kate Lienert, Amy Johnson, Maddison Paluch, Emma Clancy and Akala Newman were selected to be members of the NSW Public Schools Aboriginal Dance Ensemble. They performed at many prestigious events such as the Schools Spectacular. Being members of the Aboriginal Dance Group also meant that they represented the school at the State Dance Festival.

These students were members of the co-curricula companies and ensembles program and had the opportunity to perform at the Semester 1 and 2 Showcase concerts and the Regional and State Dance Festivals.

Multicultural and Anti-racism education

Multicultural perspectives are a compulsory component of all teaching programs. This is evidenced in many curricula and co-curricula programs including the choice of repertoire for all performing and creative arts faculties and texts set for study in English.

In 2014, “World Earth Festival” was again held. This whole school event was designed, in part, to celebrate multiculturalism in Australia.

In 2014 the school appointed Brenton Fletcher as the Anti-Racism Contact Officer to provide timely and professional responses to complaints regarding racism.

Aboriginal background

Learning Support staff supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to improve their literacy and numeracy skills identified in their Personalised Learning Plans.

To further support our indigenous students the school continued to participate in the mentoring program provided by AIME where on a regular basis a group of aboriginal students accompanied by a staff member would attend the mentoring sessions. AIME uses a unique style of structured education-based mentoring to link university students in a one-on-one relationship with Indigenous high school students. Our Aboriginal students have developed positive relationships through this mentoring program.

Socio-economic background

The schools Learning Support team utilized equity funding allocated to cater for socio-economic disadvantage. In addition the school supports families who are unable to pay subject contributions, camps, excursions and other costs.

Learning and Support

The Learning Support team continued to develop, support and implement strategies for 18 students with learning needs. In 2014, the demand for learning support increased with an additional 15 students referred to the learning support program. Learning Support Officers were employed to work with students during class time in the Learning Centre.
In 2014, the Learning Support team continued to focus on developing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) to tailor support for students.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) were updated in consultation with parents and students to identify and better meet students learning needs. ILPs were then communicated to teachers to help teachers implement strategies in the classroom.

Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) were updated in consultation with the students to identify and better meet their learning needs.

Environmental education for sustainability

The school community planned and organised the highly successful “World Earth Festival”. The students from Years 7 to 11 heard from guest speakers on the day on themes such as Sustainable Food Practices, Climate Change and Careers. The festival included both environmental and novelty stalls as well as musical and dance performances. Raising over $4000 for improving the recycling system at the school, providing funding for students to access sustainability conferences and promoting Zero waste with the themes of Reduce, Reuse, Refuse, Rot and Recycle.

As a result of WEF, 15 keen students will be attending the AYCC Sustainability Summit at Taronga Zoo. The summit aims to develop student leadership skills and ignite student interest in climate change and sustainability.

The Environmental Committee has also attended regional teacher environmental network meetings where other schools and their environmental committees attended and student led sustainability projects were showcased and ideas exchanged.

Year 9 attended the Sustainability Excursion to Canberra. Students visited the Woodlawn Bioreactor, the Veolia Wind farm, CSIRO, botanical gardens and Questacon. The trip was designed to engage students with ways in which sustainability is addressed in Australia.

Other initiatives included assisting the P&C on environmental working bees, the herb and vegetable garden and increasing paper and recycling across the school.

National partnerships and significant Commonwealth initiatives

The school was again part of the National Empowering Local Schools partnership in 2014. The school utilized this funding to provide additional human resources to support student learning outcomes. This included additional school counsellor and Learning and Support teacher days, as well as the addition of a third Deputy Principal and the continuation of additional Head Teacher positions.

School planning and evaluation

2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used included:

- a review team was established to recommend changes to the co-curricula program. The recommendations included improved communication relating to the audition process, provision of quality feedback post audition, clarification of roles, and better communication around the showcase program. It also made recommendations to examine the current co-curricula structure, to improve co-curricula organisation and supervision, and examine the Showcase program to improve audience attendance. A school project coordinator will be appointed in 2015 to assist in the implementation of these recommendations.

- as part of the Australian Curriculum implementation, faculties created new teaching and learning programs for Years 8 and 10 English, Science, History and Mathematics.
Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- 10% increase in student demand for performing/creative arts subjects within the curriculum from 1514 instances of elective choices Years 8-12 for 2013 subject selections to 1665 for 2014 subject selections.
- A student work section was added to the school website displaying a variety of written, audio visual and performance works.
- The Showcase program was broadened to include a junior visual arts exhibition as part of the Summer Series and a combined Finale concert in the larger York Theatre at the Seymour Centre.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Review the structure of the co-curricular program in terms of its ability to meet student needs with regards to creativity and excellence.
- Conduct a major cross-KLA excursion that promotes creativity and enhances individual KLA outcomes.
- Establish the position of School Project Coordinator to investigate and implement the co-curricula review findings.
- Survey students in regard to the quality of school life.

School priority: Equity

Intended outcomes 2012-2014

- To increase by 50% the number of targeted students involved in whole-school based individual learning programs/plans.
- To increase by 25% the availability of technology resources in learning spaces.
- Enhance welfare systems/programs to decrease partial truancy by 5%.
- To increase levels of literacy and numeracy for all students through a consistent approach across all faculties.

School planning 2012-2014:

School priority: Excellence

Intended outcomes 2012-2014

- To increase the number of HSC students achieving Band 5 and Band 6 by 5%.
- 75% of Stage 5 students to achieve their personal best in a nominated area.
- To increase by 20% the number of students (in Years 7-10) achieving grade A or B in school-based assessment.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- an increase in the number of HSC students achieving Band 5 and Band 6 by 5% from 459 instances in 2011 to 472 in 2014.
- 38% of Stage 5 students achieved their personal best in a nominated area.
- A 25% increase in the number of students (in Years 7-10) achieving grade A or B in school-based assessment from 3365 instances per semester in 2011 to 4628 in 2014.
- A Learning Centre staffed appropriately to provide support and opportunities for students to work collaboratively or independently.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- Implementing a targeted acceleration program for Year 9 drama students.
- Develop individualised learning plans for identified GAT students.
- Analyse NAPLAN results to identify areas to be targeted in ILP’s.

School priority: Creativity

Intended Outcomes 2012–2014

- A 10% increase in the results from the quality of school life by 2014.
- 90% of students display, exhibit or perform their work in two or more areas of school life by 2014.
- 10% increase in student demand for performing arts programs both curricular and co-curricular.
Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2014:

- A decrease in partial truancy by a further 27% from 582 instances in 2013 to 427 in 2014.
- Class sets of DER laptops were distributed to faculties and the library for in class use
- In establishing the Learning Centre new desk top computers were installed for student use.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Establish a broader Learning Support team to co-ordinate the development and monitoring of Individual Learning Plans
- All learning spaces to have access to appropriate technology
- Establish the position of School Project Coordinator to lead a team of teachers to develop a team to investigate and implement positive psychology
- Investigate the capacity of extended hours for access to the library
- Review and reinforce procedures for monitoring and addressing student lateness and truancy
- In 2014 teacher professional learning continued to be a major focus of the school. Staff surveys and School Development Day evaluations indicated priorities for professional learning activities and these priorities were then addressed.
- A range of opportunities were offered to all staff in relation to professional learning workshops and activities throughout the year. The targeted priority areas were literacy and numeracy, Australian Curriculum, Beginning Teachers, Student Assessment and ICT.
- The Professional Learning Team continued to organise School Development Days. Topic areas covered were HSC data analysis, Australian Curriculum, executive functioning and presentations on child protection, mental health and leadership development.
- The staff induction program again included a performing arts orientation day. All new scheme teachers attended regular meetings, and successfully completed their accreditation portfolios.
- Conferences were held for the executive and welfare teams.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2014 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. This occurred through discussions at P&C, staff, team and faculty meetings, parent-teacher nights, and the quality of school life survey distributed to targeted students.

Overall, parents and teachers were very supportive of the school. The quality of school life survey continued to demonstrate that students were very connected with the school and largely engaged with the teaching and learning process.

Future Directions

2015-2017 School Plan

NSW DEC is implementing a new school planning process for 2015-17. The new plan will be published on the school’s website from the beginning of Term 2 2015.

The school’s strategic directions are creativity, excellence and equity.

The purpose of creativity as a strategic direction is:

To foster, refine and develop the innate and learned creativity of all students to allow them to become successful students, performers and members of the wider community.

To nurture and develop the creativity of our gifted and talented students within the artistic context of our school.

The purpose of excellence as a strategic direction, is:

To enhance the quality of teaching and learning to support all our community in achieving success.
The purpose of equity as a strategic direction, is:
To further develop and sustain an inclusive, engaging teaching and learning environment offering support, challenges and opportunities for all our community to be empowered citizens.

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school’s practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school’s future development.

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