Newtown High School of the Performing Arts Parents and Citizens Association plays a significant role at the school providing an active community of support for students and teachers. The contribution of parents is essential to students’ learning and enjoyment of their high school years.

Without doubt the highlight of 2011 was NHSPA’s 21st birthday. The P&C was active in organising and supporting birthday celebrations including the third annual Earth Festival held in March which provided an occasion for the whole school community to mark the success of the school throughout its first twenty one years. Later in the year the final student Showcase performance held at the Seymour Centre provided another platform for the talent and capabilities of students past and present to be displayed.

2011 also marked the taking of a significant step with the appointment of the school’s first patron. Lynne Williams, the CEO and Director of the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) agreed to the invitation of the Principal and P&C Executive to be NHSPA’s inaugural patron, a partnership that fulfils a long-held ambition of the P&C and will provide exciting possibilities for the strengthening of NHSPA’s practical connections with the performing and visual arts industries. Lynne will be a source of wise advice and inspirational support to NHSPA’s students and faculty at a time when the Federal Government is exploring and documenting the value of the arts in the Australian community through the development of a National Cultural Policy. We very much look forward to realising the potential of this ground-breaking relationship over the next couple of years.

The P&C’s Voluntary Fundraising Contribution proved a tremendous success in its third year, raising $60,800, nearly three times that raised in 2010. These funds enabled the continuation of Master Classes in each of the Performing and Visual Arts faculties that were initiated in 2010. Master Classes provide external professional input for the benefit of students and teachers. Almost three quarters of these funds have been set aside for the refurbishment of the Studio Theatre foyer and entrances, including, the installation of a formal box office, poster display box, external painting, storage enhancements, and new furniture. This project which is expected to be completed in term 2 of 2012 follows the extensive refitting of the seating and performance space within the Studio Theatre achieved in recent years, and is aimed at ensuring NHSPA has a high quality performance space befitting its status as the nation’s pre-eminent performing arts high school.

Other highlights in 2011 included:

- Extensive commitment and involvement by various members of the P&C committee and the wider NHSPA parent community involving more than 30 occasions where a roster of 3 or more parents provided Front of House refreshments at Showcase, auditions and orientations, a significant contribution by families to the school’s workings.

- Taking an active role in the development of the School Plan 2012-14.
• The P&C Performing and Visual Arts Sub-Committee (PVASC) provision of essential support to the Music, Drama, Dance and Visual Arts faculties as well as to the Technical Company.

• The continuation of this Committee’s co-ordination and overseeing of the Guest Company Directors program for the drama co-curricular program. Students of drama teaching from University of Western Sydney were selected to direct drama companies, freeing up teaching staff for more strategic tasks. The P&C conducted a successful pilot of the program in 2010.

• The Faculty Support Sub-Committee’s co-ordination of the P&C’s assistance of the English, Maths, Science, HSIE, PDH/PE, Languages, and TAS faculties.

• The Building Sub-Committee’s development of plans and detailed drawings for the Studio Theatre Foyer refurbishment.

• The Environment Sub-Committee’s planning and delivery of a successful working bee involving more than 35 parents, teachers and students which saw extensive weeding, planting, mulching, fence painting, and rubbish removal.

Monthly P&C meetings are held during school terms as well as various sub-committee meetings, and regular meetings between the P&C Executive and the School Executive. The NHSPA P&C looks forward to another active and successful year in 2012.

Darren Mitchell, P&C President
13 March 2012