Pennant Hills High School
Annual School Report 2014
Principal’s Message

Our school is a large, coeducational, comprehensive high school which fulfils a very important role in its local community. The school is held in high regard for achieving academic excellence and producing quality educational outcomes in all areas. In 2014, the proud tradition of high levels of student participation and achievement in sport and cultural pursuits continued.

The availability of broad curriculum choices across all stages, and the diverse curriculum enrichment programs that operated, ensured students had an extensive range of opportunities to be fully engaged in the school. Students are taught in a challenging, technology-rich environment which is continually being enhanced by the ongoing professional learning of our enthusiastic, experienced and committed staff.

The enormously positive and supportive working relationships between staff, students and an extremely active and involved parent body were features of the 2014 academic year. This sense of spirit and belonging contributed greatly to the maintenance of a happy and safe learning environment. Members of our school community showed their unfailing commitment to enhancing our already stimulating and rich learning environment in which all students are supported and encouraged to achieve their personal best.

The continuing commitment from our students to work cooperatively with each other, and their efforts to be caring, sensitive and supportive, especially during times of personal need, were readily evident throughout the year. This was especially noticeable at times of tragedy in our school community.

The very strong emphasis on student wellbeing that exists at Pennant Hills High School is recognised and applauded by the wider community. The exemplary leadership and citizenship skills of a large number of students were demonstrated at major school events and through student participation in programs and activities outside the school.

Our school continues to be characterised by harmony, cooperation, support, achievement and an esprit de corps, which is the result of the commitment and motivation of many people. We continued this year to recognise and celebrate the many talents, dedication, diversity, creativity, citizenship and overall excellence of our students.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all students, staff and parents for their many significant contributions to our school this year.

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual School Report of Pennant Hills High School for the 2014 academic year.

Geoff Wing
P&C Message

The Pennant Hills High School Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) is an active, vibrant and diverse group of parents, carers and teaching staff whose aim is to enhance the learning of students by providing funding through voluntary contributions, fund-raising and canteen contributions, for resources not otherwise available. These resources include additional equipment requested by all faculties, and environmental improvements to areas used by the students for both study and relaxation. In 2014 a total of $35 000 was given to the school to fund equipment for Industrial Arts, Science, Home Economics, Learning Support and Music. In 2015, further monies from parent contributions and government grants will help fund upgrades to the oval areas, in particular, seating. These areas are used by students at the school, and by various community sporting bodies.

We have continued our work in the school grounds with the Great Penno Reno. Started in 2012, the Penno Reno brings together the P&C, staff, students, parents and members of the wider community over a weekend to take care of some of the most urgent maintenance needs in the school. Over 300 volunteers worked tirelessly to weed and plant gardens, paint and clean walls and walkways, scrub, sweep and otherwise spruce up the school and grounds in a remarkable show of community spirit and willingness to provide the best environment for our children. As in previous years, the event proved the strong relationship that the school has with the community, including parents, friends, local businesses and service providers.

The work in the gardens and grounds continues throughout the year, with a number of P&C members giving up their time on various weekends to make sure that the gardens are looking their best. We continue to receive many compliments on the beautiful grounds and gardens at the school, and it is wonderful to be involved in their upkeep.

Apart from fund-raising for specific purposes, the P&C also acts as a forum for open and lively discussion with regard to all educational matters affecting Pennant Hills High School and education in general, including local partner primary schools and education options outside high school. Members of staff and the community are invited, and welcome, to make relevant presentations to the meetings, which are held monthly.

The P&C also plays a role in assisting the school executive by having representatives involved in areas such as staff selection and out of area student placement.

Our other key role is to provide and support the school canteen. Run by an employed manager and senior staff supported by many volunteers, the canteen provides a wide range of nutritious snacks and meals for students and staff, while raising funds to support the P&C’s activities. It also caters for visitors to the school when required. The canteen has now been approved as a not-for-profit community organisation to enable Centrelink customers to carry out voluntary work as required, and we look forward to welcoming those volunteers.

All parents and carers are encouraged to play an active and involved role in the P&C and we look forward to welcoming you at our meetings.

Sueen McCallum, P&C President

Student Representatives’ Message

Membership of the Student Representative Council (SRC) has increased, and in order to encourage greater participation in student government, all students are now permitted to attend meetings.

The year began with an independently funded Leadership Day where students were able to plan major events for the rest of the year.

The Welfare Committee continued their support for various days of significance as well as charities. They supported Harmony Day and demonstrated their support for the Cancer Council by participating in The World’s Greatest Shave and Daffodil Day, raising $6500. In memory of the late Daniel Christie, who was a student at our school, the SRC also contributed $600 to Donate Life.

The Environmental Committee concentrated on reducing the amount of waste around the school through participation in Clean Up Australia Day and investing in a new ‘Freshie’ drinks machine which dispenses chilled flavoured water into a self-provided bottle.

The SRC supported students by offering funding for representative activities such as the school’s knockout sporting teams and various performing arts projects.

The focal event of the year was Spirit Week which encouraged student involvement in a range of activities, culminating with Multicultural Day.
School Context Statement

Excellent structures exist at our large, coeducational, comprehensive high school to support student wellbeing. An experienced learning and support team develops comprehensive, individualised learning plans for specific students, and the merit award scheme recognises and promotes student achievement. Implementation of phase two of the Positive Behaviour Engaging Learners (PBEL) program is under way, focusing on established core values of responsibility, integrity and achievement.

There is a particularly strong emphasis on developing student leadership capacity through an active prefect body and SRC. The school fosters and develops the capacities of its students, including the provision of a gifted and talented education program. Flexible learning is fostered through including a learning hub which facilitates project learning. A special education unit caters for students with mild to moderate intellectual and physical disability. There is a strong culture of inclusivity of students with a disability throughout the school. A community of schools initiative ensures strong links with its local partner primary schools.

Student Information

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

Management of Non-Attendance

Pennant Hills High School is active in the management of student non-attendance. Class rolls are marked online every lesson, and the system identifies attendance conflicts instantly, enabling swift action from executive staff. Executive staff and the home school liaison officer developed a comprehensive student attendance plan which is reviewed regularly to identify potential issues, by discussing students who have established a frequent pattern of non-attendance and developing plans for students whose attendance is of concern. The support and involvement of parents and caregivers is routinely enlisted to enhance the school’s efforts to minimise non-attendance.
Post-School Destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-School Destinations</th>
<th>Year 10 %</th>
<th>Year 11 %</th>
<th>Year 12 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Employment</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE Entry</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Entry</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Secondary Education</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2014 Year 12 cohort of Pennant Hills High School chose a variety of pathways for their post-school education depending on their vocational interests. From this group, 118 students received a university course offer in addition to 10 who received an offer to study at a private college. Of the students who received a university offer, six have deferred their offer for periods ranging from three months to 12 months, whilst the other 112 have accepted their offers. Eight students enrolled in a TAFE qualification, with four of these also entering an apprenticeship in the area of their course. Ten students have entered full-time employment, primarily in the retail and hospitality industry.

Year 12 Students Undertaking Vocational or Trade Training

Fifteen students undertook TAFE-delivered Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses for the HSC, including Business Services, Construction, Information and Digital Technology and Design. Four have since found work in their chosen field, both as apprentices and full-time employees. Two enrolled in a university course related to their TAFE studies. No student participated in a School-Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship in 2014.

Year 12 Students Attaining HSC or Equivalent Vocational Educational Qualification

Of the 171 Year 12 students who completed their studies this year, including eight from the special education unit, only one did not complete their HSC. That student decided to re-start their Stage 6 studies, re-enrolling in 2015. One student completed their HSC via the Pathways Program, accumulating their HSC over 2013 and 2014. No student was accelerated in a subject.

Participation in Private-Provider Delivered Vocational Training

A number of students participated in courses delivered by private providers in order to give them extra skills to enhance their employability in the job market. This was highlighted by the Year 10 Crossroads program which, as part of the school’s School to Work Initiative, ran several courses to give students access to qualifications at a subsidised fee. As part of this program, 72 students participated in the Provide First Aid course delivered by St John Ambulance, a further 28 participated in a Barista and Coffee Art course at The Coffee School in Haymarket, and ten completed their NSW WorkCover White Card training course at Pennant Hills High School.

In addition, on two other occasions, students from across Years 8–12 took part in the Barista and Coffee Art course at The Coffee School at Haymarket. In total, 76 students completed the Barista course.

Year 9 and 10 Career Classes

On-timetable Careers classes were added to the Stage 5 program to enable students to learn best practice for applying for jobs, career networking and skill development.

Year 9 students applied information gained in a simulated environment to real-world situations, whilst the emphasis for Year 10 was on preparing for Stage 6 in 2015. The Work Experience program in Term 2 was an important part of this, as students were encouraged to gain some experience in their preferred career pathway before choosing their subjects for Stage 6. Subsequently, students were guided through the subject selection process and directed to resources such as the UAC guide, Job Guide and the Labour Market Information Portal. A number of students also participated in TAFE ‘taster courses’ which allowed them to experience an adult learning environment and learn about trades such as carpentry, automotive and retail.
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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principals</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Support Teacher</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Adviser</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellor</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative and Support Staff</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>97.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

Three members of the school’s permanent staff have identified as having Indigenous heritage.

Teacher Qualifications

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Learning and Teacher Accreditation

A major focus for our school’s teacher professional learning (TPL) team was to give teachers more time for quality professional learning in their teaching teams and to align more resources to the school’s key priorities. The total school expenditure on TPL was $59,697, with the majority directed towards syllabus implementation (including the new Australian Curriculum) and quality teaching. Seventy-four teachers were involved in the program, with an average expenditure of $100 per teacher at the school level.

Funding will be set aside in 2015 for priority initiatives including implementation of the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan; PBEL; literacy and numeracy; and Project-Based Learning (PBL).

Our first school development day involved analysing School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) data in faculty teams, followed by time for collaboration in the development of teacher skills and the delivery of teaching and learning programs targeted to specific student literacy and numeracy needs.

At the start of Term 2, teachers participated in HSC marking simulation workshops, designed and delivered by our expert senior markers on staff. The Mathematics team focused on implementation of the new senior syllabus and the English staff participated in a creative writing workshop with leading children’s author Jacqueline Harvey. The afternoon session involved the whole staff in formative and summative assessment workshops, including designing quality assessment tasks, showcasing English video logs (Vlogs), teaching and learning strategies, analysing tasks and assessment for success.

The remainder of our school development days involved collaboration as a whole staff to create classroom expectations to support our PBEL core values of responsibility, integrity and achievement. In addition to this we had a strong focus on lifting academic achievement by mapping units of work and assessment tasks against a Gardner/Bloom matrix. Teaching teams worked with student data, including HSC BOSTES Results Analysis Package (RAP) data, and faculty evaluations to plan and program for improved student outcomes.

In Semester 2, teams of teachers continued planning and programming for the new Australian Curriculum for ongoing implementation in 2015, and all staff throughout the year satisfactorily completed all Department of Education and Communities (DEC) mandatory training components. Our TPL team leader trained in leading and managing professional learning using MyPL. We are now able to write and deliver school-based courses that contribute to learning hours for teachers requiring professional accreditation. The executive team contributed to an evaluation of professional learning.

Major emphasis was placed on professional dialogue through:

- collegial learning, including coaching and mentoring;
- practical experiences and hands-on workshops;
- conferencing and collaboration;
- critical thinking and creativity; and
- reflection on practice.
There was a strong commitment to providing teachers with coaching opportunities to work one-on-one and help with goal setting, problem solving and diagnosing students’ learning needs. In future, this process will inform professional learning planning and support the implementation of the school’s key priorities. Thirteen teachers and school leaders were trained in leadership coaching by Growth Coaching International during Term 4 to support this initiative. By working and learning together, teachers continued to develop leadership skills and jointly examined alternative approaches to improve students’ learning.

The TPL team also supervised the support of our New Scheme Teachers. Five staff sought accreditation at the proficient level and 16 staff maintained accreditation at the proficient level. Professional learning courses were designed and delivered at school and made available to all staff to increase their awareness and knowledge of the accreditation requirements and processes. Eight teachers accessed externally provided professional learning to investigate accreditation at the higher levels.

**Beginning Teachers**

Six permanent beginning teachers were supported with funding totalling $43 679 under Great Teaching, Inspired Learning. The funds were used to build release time into the timetable to promote access to professional learning and mentoring opportunities on a regular basis for the beginning teachers and their mentors. A second strategy involved releasing beginning teachers and their mentors for blocks of time to facilitate lesson observations and feedback and developing skills in programming and assessment.

The Beginning Teacher Scheme has enabled new teachers to develop their skills and knowledge of the profession in a reflective, collaborative manner through mentoring opportunities and the ‘Growth Through Coaching’ model. Additionally, the scheme has released teachers for professional learning opportunities such as the Early Careers Conference, classroom management, curriculum-based workshops, increasing individual student achievement and accreditation processes.

This consistent and planned support for beginning teachers has inspired them to move into leadership roles in programming for new syllabuses and contributing to whole-school programs such as the student representative council, prefect leadership, debating, school professional learning and PBEL teams. Three of these teachers will be involved in leadership roles in 2015, designing professional learning workshops and leading projects to improve student learning outcomes across the school in the areas of technology and writing.

**Financial Summary**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>311509.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>70692.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>832767.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and community sources</td>
<td>835203.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>17814.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>99311.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>2802998.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>301768.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>164630.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>166808.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>7465.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>302615.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>233588.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and office</td>
<td>374022.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>180626.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>132759.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>92976.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>132002.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>2089264.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Balance carried forward** 713733.16

A full copy of the school’s 2014 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the Pennant Hills High School P&C Association. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
Resource Allocation Model (RAM)

Equity Funding

Funding was allocated to individual students on a needs basis to provide the necessary resources for them to actively participate in classroom and curriculum enrichment activities to enhance their learning. Faculties were provided with financial support to develop differentiated programs and assessments that increased student engagement and provided optimal learning opportunities.

Expenditure of Socio-Economic Background and Aboriginal Background funding enabled Pennant Hills High School to embrace inclusive and equitable classroom and community practices which supported all students regardless of their background.

Community Use of School Facilities

Schools are valuable facilities which belong to the community. While their prime function is to serve as places of learning for young people, there are many times when the buildings and grounds are not in use for this purpose.

In line with the DEC policy, Pennant Hills High School encourages members of the community and education groups to use school facilities when they are available. This is a way of sharing a significant resource, and strengthening the partnership between schools and local communities.

Community use of school facilities provides benefits to both schools and their communities through:

- enhanced co-operation and goodwill between the school and the community;
- the provision of additional curriculum enrichment learning opportunities;
- better access for communities and schools to state-of-the-art facilities;
- opportunities for the community to become better informed about, and participate in, the school's operation and activities;
- more effective use of valuable school facilities;
- opportunities for the community to play a positive role in school security through out-of-hours use of the facilities; and
- increased revenue for schools to use on improvements to premises and school resources.

To this end, the school shares its facilities with many sporting groups, including AFL, rugby league and rugby union, football, softball, netball, cricket, basketball, table tennis and various martial arts. The Saturday School of Community Languages uses facilities every Saturday during term for Korean language and culture classes, and a tutorial school uses many classrooms after school hours. The school's multi-purpose centre (MPC) is utilised by community and religious groups for conferences and ceremonies, and is also used regularly by sporting, musical, fitness and meditation groups. Other groups to use the school's facilities are the Millennium Marching Band and the school's bands, which include students from our partner schools. Our facilities, such as the MPC and ovals, are also used by our partner primary schools to host major events such as presentation evenings and gala days. Additionally, the school is occasionally used by other groups for such things as government elections and market days.
**Sporting Facilities—Upgrade of Oval**

The school’s main oval has been in constant use for many years and was starting to show serious signs of wear and tear. Further, markings on the oval and other imperfections in the surface were starting to cause concern as a safety hazard. A grant of $20 000 from the NSW Government’s Community Building Partnership Program, to help restore and upgrade the oval, was applied for in 2012 and approved in April 2013. The school engaged experts to assess the condition and maintenance requirements of the oval, not just in terms of school use, but also wider community use. Works commenced in 2014 to implement the accepted plan which included levelling and re-turfing of the oval; installation of drainage; and connection of an irrigation system utilising tank water collected from the roof of the Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA). Further funding came from the P&C, school funds and a grant of $55 000 from Hornsby Shire Council in response to the urgent need for more sporting ovals in the immediate area. In 2015, seating will be installed and, at a later date, further improvements, including fencing, will be considered.

Due to the high cost of the project, it was broken down into three stages.

**Stage 1:** Oval levelled, irrigation pipes and sprinklers installed, pump connected to mains electricity, large concrete water storage tank built in situ and turf laid, fertilised and top-dressed.

**Stage 2:** COLA roof connected to the water tank. This was made possible by a generous donation from a person who wishes to remain anonymous.

**Stage 3:** Drainage works and new goal posts (scheduled for 2015).

The school has so far been very pleased with the result, with the oval looking rejuvenated. The students are particularly pleased and have expressed great pride in their new facility.

---

**School Performance 2014**

**Academic Achievements**

**NAPLAN**

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 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)  
Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest)

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), enter the school name in Find a school, and select GO to access the school data.

The Year 7 literacy (reading, spelling, writing, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy scores were all above the Australian Schools Average.

The Year 9 literacy (reading, spelling, writing, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy scores were also above the Australian Schools Average.

**NAPLAN Year 7—Reading**

Reading levels in Year 7 for 2014 indicate that 19.9% of students were in the highest band (Band 9), which was above the state average of 11.4% and 2.3% above the 2010–2014 school average of 17.6%. Those who gained the second highest band comprised 29.8%, which was above the state average of 15.7%.
NAPLAN Year 7—Writing

Writing levels in Year 7 show that 10.1% of students were in the highest band (Band 9), which was 2.5% above the 2010–2014 school average. The percentage of students who were placed in the second highest band (18.8%) was significantly above the state average of 11.3%.

NAPLAN Year 7—Spelling

Spelling levels in Year 7 indicate that 19.3% of students were in the highest band (Band 9) in 2014, which was above the state average of 14.1% and 3.6% above the 2010–2014 school average of 15.7%. The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (27.3%) was considerably higher than that of the state average (20.7%).

NAPLAN Year 7—Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation levels in Year 7 indicated that 26.7% of students were placed in the highest band in 2014, which was above the state average of 13.2% and above the 2010–2014 school average of 19.2%. The proportion of students in the second highest band (27.3%) was significantly higher than the state average of 16.0%.

NAPLAN Year 7—Numeracy

Numeracy results for Year 7 revealed that 26.9% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 9), which was significantly higher than that of state averages (13.9%) and the school average for 2010–2014 (24.0%). The proportion of students in the second highest band was 29.5%, which was also significantly higher that the state average of 13.1%.
NAPLAN Year 9—Reading

Reading levels in Year 9 indicate that 13.2% of students were in the highest band (Band 10), which was significantly higher than the state average of 6.9% and above that achieved on average at the school from 2010–2014 (10.7%). The proportion of students placed in the second highest band (Band 9) was 24.3%, which was considerably higher than that of state results (16.4%).

NAPLAN Year 9—Spelling

Spelling levels in Year 9 indicate that 19% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10), which was higher than the state average of 12.2% and above the 2010–2014 school average of 11.6%. Students placed in the second highest band indicate that 22.9% of students achieved higher results compared to those in the state (12.6%).

NAPLAN Year 9—Writing

Writing levels in Year 9 indicate that 11.1% of students were in the highest band (Band 10), which was proportionally higher than the state average of 5.3%. Students placed in the second highest band indicate that 11.1% of students achieved higher results compared to those in the state results (7.7%).

NAPLAN Year 9—Grammar and Punctuation

Grammar and punctuation results in Year 9 indicate that 11.8% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10), which was higher than the state average of 6.8%. The proportion of students placed in the second highest band indicate that 24.2% was significantly higher than for the state as a whole (14.0%).
NAPLAN Year 9—Numeracy

Numeracy results for Year 9 revealed that 26.5% of students were placed in the highest band (Band 10), which was significantly higher than the state average of 13.3% and that achieved by the school on average 2010–2014 (20.2%). The proportion of students in the second highest band was 19.2%, which was also significantly higher that the state average of 11.9%.

National Benchmarks

The Australian Government sets minimum desirable standards for reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar, and numeracy at particular ages. These are referred to as national benchmarks. The performance of students in our school in Year 7 and Year 9 NAPLAN is compared to these benchmarks. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these benchmarks are reported in the following tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 7 Students Achieving at or above Minimum Standard (Exempt Students Excluded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 9 Students Achieving at or above Minimum Standard (Exempt Students Excluded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESSA

The Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) is a statewide assessment for Year 8 students based on the Years 7–10 NSW Science syllabus. Students are asked questions based on knowledge and understanding, skills in planning and conducting investigations, critical thinking and problem solving. This year, ESSA was an interactive multimedia assessment that students completed online. The results of ESSA are recorded on a scale from Level 1 to Level 6, the highest level of achievement.

The results obtained by Year 8 students in the 2014 ESSA were excellent, with 78% of students in the top three levels (Levels 4–6), and 36% of students in Levels 5 and 6, which is above the state average of 23%.
Higher School Certificate (HSC)

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). In Extension courses, there are four bands, with E4 being the highest.

In 23 of the 27 courses for which statistics can be reported, the average school mark was above the state average for DEC schools.

In 13 of these courses, the course average was more than 5% above the state average for DEC schools. Additionally in four courses—Community and Family Studies, Food Technology, Industrial Technology and Mathematics General 2—the course average was more than 10% above the state average for DEC schools.

In courses where there are fewer than 10 candidates, DEC does not permit publication of information on percentages in bands/levels or school averages.

English

Advanced English presented a cohort of 77 students who achieved an average mark of 81.0, which was slightly above the average mark in the state (80.1). Of these, 63.6% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 59.4%). The highest result of 91 was scored by Eliza Macdonald.

Standard English presented a cohort of 66 students who achieved an average mark of 69.3, which was well above the average mark in the state (65.9). Of these, 4.5% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 8.2%). The highest result of 84 was scored by Michael Beech.

English as a Second Language (ESL) presented a cohort of seven students. The highest mark of 89 was achieved by Vanessa Hung.

English Extension 1 presented a cohort of 25 students who achieved an average mark of 39.7/50, which was below the average mark in the state (41.4). Of these, 100% of students scored a Band E3 or E4 (state 93.2%). The highest mark of 44/50 was achieved by Madeleine Du Plessis and Benjamin O'Meara.

English Extension 2 presented a cohort of 10 students who achieved an average mark of 36.7/50, which was below the average mark in the state (38.5). Of these, 70.0% of students scored a Band E3 or E4 (state 77.5%). The highest mark of 42/50 was achieved by Madeleine Du Plessis.

Mathematics

In Extension 1 Mathematics, 13 students presented for the HSC and achieved an average mark of 87.4, which was above the average mark in the state (81.8). Of the Extension 1 students, 100% were placed in Band E3 or E4 compared to 84.6% across the state. In Extension 2 Mathematics, eight students presented for the HSC. The most outstanding Mathematics Extension results were achieved by Ka Hei (Jack) Pun, who scored 93 for Extension 1 and 85 for Extension 2.

In Mathematics, 50 students presented for the HSC and 28% achieved a Band 5 or 6. The average mark for the Mathematics course (73.1) was below the state average (77.3). The highest result of 96 was scored by Benjamin North.

In Mathematics General 2, 67 students presented for the HSC and 47.8% achieved a Band 5 or 6, with an average mark of 77.1, which was higher than the statewide average (65.5). Evan Thomson and Samuel Weiss scored the highest mark of 93.

Sciences

Agriculture had a candidature of 11 students who achieved an average mark of 73.7, which was above the average mark in the state (68.5). Of these, 27.3% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 25.2%). The highest mark of 93 was achieved by Lauren Salisbury.

In Biology, 47 students presented for the HSC and achieved an average mark of 72.3, which was above the average mark in the state (70.2). Of these candidates, 27.7% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 28.4%). The highest result of 94 was scored by Eliza Macdonald.

In Chemistry, 19 students presented for the HSC and achieved an average mark of 81.1, which was above the average mark in the state (75.4). Of these students, 57.9% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 46.3%). The highest mark of 91 was achieved by Ka Hei (Jack) Pun.

In Physics, 25 students sat the HSC exam and achieved an average mark of 75.2, which was above the average mark in the state (73.2). Of these, 36% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 31.3%). The highest result of 91 was scored by Benjamin North.

In Earth and Environmental Science, 13 students sat the HSC examination and achieved an average mark of 80.9, which was above the average mark in the state (73.6). Of these students, 46.2% achieved a Band 5 or 6 (state 40.2%). The highest result of 89 was scored by Kerry Strandquist.
Human Society and its Environment (HSIE)

In Business Studies, 50 students presented for the HSC and achieved an average mark of 75.7, which was above the average mark in the state (71.4). Of these, 38.0% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 37.3%). The highest mark of 92 was achieved by Evan Thomson.

In Economics, eight students presented for the HSC. The highest mark of 86 was achieved by Evan Thomson.

In Legal Studies, 16 students presented for the HSC and achieved an average mark of 78.7, which was above the average mark in the state (76.0). Of these, 66.7% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 45.1%). The highest mark of 95 was achieved by Jesse Hare.

Pennant Hills High School students performed extremely well in the History disciplines.

In Ancient History, 36 students presented for the HSC and achieved an average mark of 70.7, which was slightly above the average mark in the state (69.1). Of these, 44.4% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 33.1%). The highest mark of 93 was achieved by Lauren Salisbury.

In Modern History, 44 students presented for the HSC and achieved an average mark of 75.3, which was above the average mark in the state (72.2). Of these students, 47.7% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 42.6%). The highest mark of 91 was achieved by Andrew Corrigan.

History Extension had a small candidature of eight students, with the highest mark of 41/50 achieved by Simon House.

Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)

In Drama, six students presented for the HSC, with the highest mark of 91 being achieved by Madeleine Du Plessis.

In Music 1, nine students presented for the HSC, with Grace Colley and Lauren Dwyer achieving the highest mark of 85.

In Music 2, six students presented for the HSC, with the highest mark of 92 achieved by Jules Wilson.

In Music Extension, three students presented for the HSC, with Adam Benari achieving the highest mark of 48/50.

Visual Art presented a cohort of 34 students who achieved an average mark of 83.4, which was well above the average mark in the state (76.4). Of these, 70.6% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 48.8%). The highest mark of 96 was achieved by Eliza Macdonald.

Technological and Applied Studies (TAS)

Home Economics courses continued to achieve results well above the state average.

Community and Family Studies presented a cohort of 15 students who achieved an average mark of 82.9, which was well above the average mark in the state (72.8). Of these students, 73.3% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 37.1%). The highest mark of 90 was achieved by Georgia Clements and Lauren Salisbury.

Food Technology presented a cohort of 22 students who achieved an average mark of 82.5, which was well above the average mark in the state (68.4). Of these, 59.1% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 29.1%). The highest mark of 92 was achieved by Lauren Salisbury.

Textiles and Design presented a cohort of 13 students who achieved an average mark of 82.5, which was well above the average mark in the state (74.0). Of these candidates, 76.9% scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 41.9%). The highest result of 96 was scored by Lauren Salisbury.

Industrial Arts candidates also continued to perform at a high standard, with some students achieving exceptional results.

Engineering Studies presented a cohort of 10 students who achieved an average mark of 78.9, which was well above the average mark in the state (73.0). Of these, 50.0% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 32.9%). The highest mark of 94 was achieved by Andrew Corrigan.

Industrial Technology presented 14 students in the focus area of Timber and Furniture Industries who achieved an average mark of 81.9, which was well above the average mark in the state.
(68.4). Of these, 64.3% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 28.5%). The highest mark of 95 was achieved by Jye Wheeler.

The computing course, Information Processes and Technology, presented a cohort of 14 students who achieved an average mark of 77.6, which was well above the average mark in the state (72.1). Of these, 21.4% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 28.7%). The highest mark of 89 was achieved by Sean Diprose.

Languages other than English (LOTE)

French Beginners presented a cohort of eight students, with the highest mark of 94 being achieved by Larissa Turton.

Japanese Beginners presented a cohort of two students, with the highest mark of 80 achieved by Chaeyeon (Celina) Kim.

Japanese Continuers presented a cohort of four students, with Yurika Grove achieving the highest mark of 89.

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)

PDHPE presented a cohort of 42 students who achieved an average mark of 77.6, which was well above the average mark in the state (71.1). Of these, 50.0% of students scored a Band 5 or 6 (state 30.7%). The highest mark of 94 was achieved by Christopher Gibbons.

HSC Course Summary Graphs
ARTEXPRESS

Benjamin Spencer’s Higher School Certificate body of work, titled *Limbo*, was showcased in the elite ARTEXPRESS exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW where, out of a possible 10,000 artworks from across NSW, 37 are chosen for display. Benjamin went on to win the prestigious ‘Julian Ashton Summer School Scholarship’ prize for drawing.

Other Achievements

Creative and Performing Arts

Choir

In May we welcomed Rachel Kelly as the conductor of our newly formed school choir. Under Rachel’s guidance our students performed in this year’s Primary Proms, Uluru Concert, held in Sydney Town Hall in September. The choir also featured in our school’s Community Carols held in December and at several formal occasions throughout the year.

Band Program

The school’s four bands pursued a full program, participating in over 30 performances and festivals. Concert Band 1 achieved a Gold Award at the NSW School Bands Festival and performed at the DEC Festival of Choral Music at the Opera House. Concert Band 2 also achieved a Gold Award at the NSW School Bands Festival and, with the Junior Stage Band and Big Band, performed at three partner primary school fetes and the May Music Festival. Big Band played at the DEC Festival of Instrumental Music at the Opera House in September.

The three-day annual band camp featured intensive rehearsal sessions and tutorials. On the final day, our musicians celebrated their talents by performing at their first concert of the year in the MPC. The camp also provided an opportunity for our Year 7 band members to be made welcome as they transitioned into the high school band program.

Individual performers, Stephanie Ng, Jessica Scott, Lachlan Day and Nathan Ford achieved first and second placing in the Under 19 Years Solo Categories in the National Band Championships.

In December, Victoria Coomber and Jessica Scott of Year 11 travelled to the USA with the NSW Public Schools Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the NSW Schools Jazz Orchestra. They performed at the Midwest Band Clinic whilst in the USA. This is a very rare privilege as only four Australian groups have been invited to do this.
Photography Club

the photography club was established this year. Students were able to extend their photographic skills and learn new ones, as they completed several assignments and had their photographs displayed within the school precinct.

CAPA Festival

The CAPA Festival ran for one week and included the HSC Drama Family and Friends Night, the HSC Music Soirée, the Visual Arts Exhibition and the Big Band Biennale, showcasing the talents and commitment of CAPA students and staff.

Drama

Participation in drama activities has expanded across the school, with many opportunities for students of all abilities to participate.

Year 11 drama students produced and performed the play, Alice in Wonderland, which was presented to the public and partner primary school students over three evening and matinee performances, receiving high praise from all audiences.

Sport

Swimming

Pennant Hills High School placed fourth at the Zone Swimming Carnival. The school had five age champions, Patrick Field (17+), Maddison Robertshaw (16), Emily Proctor-Messham (15), Lachlan Dunlop (15) and Alison Blundy (14). Fifteen students qualified for the Sydney North Area Swimming Championships along with three relay teams. At the Combined High Schools (CHS) championships, two of our students, Patrick Field and Lachlan Dunlop competed as individuals, along with three relay teams.

Cross Country

At the Zone Carnival, Pennant Hills High School finished second due to outstanding contributions from many of our athletes, in particular Elena Koudasheva, Eleanor Lidbetter, Grant Burbage, Oliver Lidbetter and Cody Rudd. Athletes who competed at the State Cross Country included Elena Koudasheva, Eleanor Lidbetter, Hannah Taylor, Grace Nell, Sara Kely (AWD) and Sean Brown (AWD). Sean Brown achieved a silver medal for his efforts at the NSWCHS State Cross Country Championships and Sara Kely a bronze medal.

Athletics

Pennant Hills High School was placed second in the Zone Athletics Carnival. Forty-seven athletes, including four relay teams, then went on to compete at the Regional Carnival, which we won again for the sixth year in succession. One of our students, Caitlin Job, put in an outstanding effort, coming first in the 100m and 200m in the Girls U16 age group. The U16 Girls Relay Team came first for the third consecutive year. The team members were Georgia Sewerle, Caitlin Job, Dakota Duncan and Erika Love. Our athletes with a disability (AWD) made a significant contribution to the point score through their outstanding efforts. James Hill was the age champion for boys.

Fifteen athletes, including Caitlin Job, Oliver Lidbetter, Nicholas Thomson, our Girls U16 Relay Team and eight AWD competitors, then represented the school at the NSWCHS Athletics Carnival, putting in outstanding performances. AWD team results of note included: James Hill (800m, discus, shot put and javelin); Raymond Ferris (shot put and javelin); Tristan Sassen (100m, 200m, discus, long jump, shot put and javelin); Sean Brown (100m, 200m and 800m); Emmanuel Karlaftis (discus, long jump, shot put and javelin); Sara Kely

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Students participating in this incursion.

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.

Public Schools NSW Schools Spectacular

An exciting achievement for CAPA was Eamon Moses of Year 11 being selected as a featured artist in Schools Spectacular, and Jessica Williams of Year 12 progressing well into the audition stages of this prestigious event. Eamon Moses was also selected to attend the DEC Arts Solo Vocal Camp Group mid-year.

Three teams—the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Team—participated in the Theatresports Schools Challenge, and a Theatresports Workshop was conducted for students from Years 8–12, with over 70 students participating in this incursion. Students, predominantly from Stages 4 and 5, formed a drama ensemble, which enabled them to further develop their skills in performance and movement.
(200m, discus and long jump); Morgan Boss (javelin, discus and shot put); and Natalia Antelmi (javelin, 100m, 200m, discus and long jump).

Our competitors again performed magnificently in all three disciplines in the AWD categories, winning the Champion AWD School title at the Regional swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals. Sean Brown and Sara Kely went on to represent the school at the Regional and NSWCHS carnivals in both swimming and cross country. Sean Brown received a silver medal and Sara Kely a bronze medal at State cross country.

**Team Sports**

Our Open Boys Cricket Knockout Team in the Alan Davidson Shield Competition won their way through to the NSWCHS semifinals, where they were narrowly defeated. The boys in the team were: William Johnston (Captain), Ben O’Meara, Jules Wilson, Nicholas Hey, Matthew Corish, Hamish Fullagar, Angus Graham, Christopher Habib, Daniel Habib, Anthony Johnston, Jack Leggott, Kristoff O’Meara and Danusha Seneviratne.

Outside of the major carnivals, triathlon continues to be our biggest sport in terms of the number of students participating. We sent 21 teams to the NSW All Schools Triathlon, with our Senior Girls Triathlon Team placing third in the state. Pennant Hills High School enters more than 20 teams in statewide knockout competitions each year and many teams achieve at very high levels in these competitions.

**Individual Achievements**

Highly capable sportspeople, Dela Amirikia (volleyball), Talisa Cattini (volleyball) and Tristan Sassen (athletics AWD) were awarded Zone and Sydney North Regional Blues. Hannah Taylor (athletics and soccer), Cameron Goodacre (rugby union), Chris Habib (soccer), Abbey Walker (hockey) and Patrick Field (swimming) were all winners of Ku-ring-gai Zone Blues.

The following students were selected to represent Sydney North Region: Dela Amirikia (volleyball), Talisa Cattini (volleyball), Olivia Buley (netball), Jake de Marigne (soccer), Tom Day (basketball), Hannah Taylor (soccer) and Abbey Walker (hockey). Dela Amirikia and Talisa Cattini were selected in the NSWCHS All Schools team for volleyball.

Tristan Sassen was Sportsman of the Year, and Hannah Taylor was Sportswoman of the Year. Tristan Sassen was our Male AWD Athlete of the Year, and Natalia Antelmi our Female AWD Athlete. Olivia Buley was the school’s recipient of the NSWCHS Premier’s Sporting Challenge Medal, and Hannah Taylor was presented with the prestigious Pierre de Coubertin Award. Athletes of the Year were Caitlin Job and Nicholas Thomson. Cross Country Runners of the Year were Hannah Taylor and Sean Brown. Swimmer of the Year was Patrick Field.

**NSW RoboCup Championships**

Three teams entered the Rescue Competition in the 2014 NSW RoboCup Championships held at the University of NSW, with ‘Team Hazardous’, comprising Alexander Hodges, Adam Pam, Rowan Zionzee and Justin Shuen, completing five perfect rounds to win the NSW State Championship. Two teams were also entered in the Rescue Competition in the 2014 National Robocup Championships held at the University of Queensland. In the Open Competition our NSW State Championship team finished fourth. In the Secondary Competition, the Pennant Hills High School team finished 19th.

**Science and Engineering Challenge**

A team competed in the Science and Engineering Challenge, organised by the University of Newcastle. The students participated in a range of exciting hands-on activities designed to demonstrate the varied and practical elements of a career in the disciplines of science and engineering. Students were tested on their ability to work in teams, solve unfamiliar problems and design and build models. Our students placed first against fierce competition from a large group of local schools.

**Debating**

The school entered five teams into the Arts Unit competitions, with continuing success. Our Year 10 team progressed to the Regional quarter finals, where they were defeated, in a close debate, by the eventual regional winners. The Year 8 team enjoyed success, becoming Zone champions and progressing to the elimination rounds.
Significant Programs and Initiatives—Policy and Equity Funding

Aboriginal Education

Pennant Hills High School values its location, traversing the historic homelands of the Guringai and Dharug tribes. Teaching strategies support improved learning opportunities for Aboriginal students and promote knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history, culture and experience to the school community.

The learning and support team worked with Indigenous students, their families and Aboriginal education consultants to develop personalised learning plans. Units of work in Stages 4 and 5 in English, HSIE and Creative and Performing Arts focus on Aboriginal experience and culture, and perspectives are embedded in faculty programs. The history of Aboriginal sport and case studies which focus on leading Aboriginal sportspeople are components of the Stage 4 physical activity and sports studies (PASS) elective offered by the PDHPE faculty.

Year 7 students visited the Muogamarra Nature Reserve, where they learnt about Aboriginal occupation and land use and composed literary texts reflecting their enhanced understanding of Aboriginal experience. Art, film, musical and dance performance, and drama activities throughout the year facilitated greater understanding for Stage 4 and 5 students.

The school’s intake of international students increased significantly this year. The international students coordinator and the ESL teacher provide assistance to students from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE) and help them to reach their academic potential.

Multicultural Education and Anti-Racism

The school promotes an understanding of the multicultural nature of Australian society and boosts harmony within the local community. It ensures that all students have access to inclusive teaching and learning experiences, enabling them to successfully take part in a rapidly changing world where cross-cultural understanding and intercultural communication skills are essential.

Students participated in Harmony Day celebrations, which involved activities highlighting the challenges and opportunities relating to integration. Students and staff celebrated our school’s diversity and harmony with a highly successful Multicultural Day as part of Spirit Week in Term 3.

The processes and structures the school has established ensure it has strong, collaborative relationships with community representatives and carers. Staff members are building their capacity to engage with families and the community to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Pennant Hill High School. Planning is under way to expand the work of the school’s Aboriginal education team in 2015.

The school has continued its engagement with Dare to Lead Professional Services with a view to promoting equity and best practice in Aboriginal learning.

The anti-racism contact officer (ARCO) continues to play a significant role in assisting students to understand the differences in cultural beliefs that people may have and how we can all contribute to understanding and celebrating these differences.
English Language Proficiency

The school employs one ESL teacher who is also English trained, supporting targeted English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) students in their respective English classes in a team teaching context (Years 7–10), and teaching the Stage 6 ESL English course.

The ESL teacher collaborates with other classroom teachers by working with ESL students in their English class to assist with their comprehension of new terms and scaffolding tasks, or by withdrawing the ESL cohort and providing more individual language support. Liaison with the Northern Sydney Region ESL Network has ensured that students have access to the most recent resources and advice to guide them through the HSC.

The intake of most of the EAL/D students comes through Intensive English Centres (IECs), at Marsden, Chatswood and Cleveland Street, as well as directly from overseas as international students, primarily from China. The students participate in a high school transition program for three days prior to officially enrolling at our school. Exit reports from the IECs, detailing the students’ levels of progress regarding their language proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking, enable the ESL teacher to focus on individual language needs. There is continuing communication between the IECs, parents and ESL teacher to ensure a positive transition to the school.

In order to increase EAL/D language proficiency, a wide reading program for students in Stages 4 and 5, grammar workbooks and specific activities designed to enhance and improve students’ speaking, listening and reading skills have been implemented. Lunchtime tutorials are available to assist mainly senior students with their writing. For the Year 10 cohort, the focus is to ensure that they build a solid language foundation to cope with the demands of HSC studies.

An evaluation of student progress is documented in regular reports, and specific issues are identified and communicated with parents as the need arises. Other teachers are supported through the provision of ESL strategies to implement in their teaching programs, particularly in devising assessment tasks. EAL/D pedagogy and strategies are modelled and incorporated into classroom practice.

The ESL teacher also co-ordinates the enrolment of international students, identifying key welfare, language and other needs to assist with their learning outcomes.

Significant Programs and Initiatives

Positive Behaviours Engaging Learners

Positive Behaviours Engaging Learners (PBEL) is one of our major school wide initiatives. Based on international evidence, it looks at behaviour and learning from a whole-school and an individual student perspective. It provides a positive focus to create teaching and learning environments that maximise student success. A set of positively stated, universal expectations for behaviour have been established for all students in all locations of the school. These expectations promote our core values of responsibility, integrity and achievement.

Through an external evaluation, Phase 2 of the program was approved for implementation. Our staff team participated in a full day training workshop and developed a comprehensive action plan to guide the progressive implementation of PBEL in classroom settings. The whole staff participated in workshops to establish an agreed set of classroom expectations. Student and parent focus groups also provided feedback. This year our team welcomed a new facilitator, Miss De Carli and team member, Mrs Tubb.

Student Leadership—Prefects

A Leadership Day was held to enable the prefects to formulate the vision for the year ahead, to build team skills and to establish ways for students to participate and contribute to their school community. Key goals established on this day included enhancing ‘school spirit’ and reinvigorating the house points system.

The prefects represented and supported the school community through organising events such as the Year 7 Welcome Barbecue and Dance, Open Night and Parent–Teacher Night. Strong networks were created with prefects in other local high schools to share ideas and improve communication.

Larger, end-of-term prefect assemblies were established, often with festive themes, featuring films and performances produced by students. Skits were used at weekly assemblies to promote support for campaigns such as ‘Get it in the Bin’ which targeted littering, and to foster school spirit.

The prefect body raised funds in support of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the Salvation Army Christmas Can Appeal, the Heart Foundation and specific school projects.
GPs in Schools Program

This program has run at Pennant Hills High School since 1996 and involves local doctors and medical students meeting with small groups of Year 11 students to discuss adolescent health issues and contacts available to young people. Approximately 28 local doctors and medical students were involved in this year’s program. It has been a very beneficial way of disseminating information and, at the same time, allows senior students to meet with medical practitioners in an informal way to help boost their confidence and independence in dealing with personal issues.

Social Inc.

Social Inc., a program introduced by the Cerebral Palsy Alliance to increase social inclusion and connections amongst all students including students with a disability, continued to be an important support program within the school. Social Inc. strengthened its activities through liaising with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance; the active involvement of two community volunteers; increased teacher and student participation; and leadership training and planning days. Highlights of the program included a family picnic day and the introduction of ‘Say Hi Week’ in Term 4 which encouraged social connections between all students within the school.

SES Cadet Program 2014

The State Emergency Service (SES) Cadet Program has now been running for six years at Pennant Hills High School. This year’s group of cadets comprised 23 students from Years 9 and 10.

Held during the winter social sport timeslot, the program includes group discussions and activities, which provide students with the opportunity to develop skills in the areas of effective and safe work practice, communication, teamwork and leadership. Cadets gain an insight into the roles and responsibilities of emergency services, including a more in-depth look at the NSW SES.

Over a ten-week period, SES cadet activities included visits to Hornsby Police Station and Hornsby SES Local Headquarters. Commencing just after dawn on a late July morning, an end-of-course activity day held at Crosslands Reserve, Hornsby Heights, and facilitated by highly qualified SES volunteers from across the state, provided our cadets with hands-on activities including a missing person search, radio use and flood re-supply exercises utilising SES flood rescue boats.

The cadets’ participation in the program was recognised at a graduation ceremony held during a full-school assembly in August, which was also attended by family members and a number of senior SES officials who presented the cadets with their awards.

Girls’ Breakfast 2014

Groups of Year 8 girls, with a Year 10 mentor, met before school to prepare a hot breakfast as part of the Girls’ Breakfast Club. The program ran three times in blocks of four weeks for groups of 16–20 girls, supplementing the school welfare program. Its aims were to improve communication skills; to learn to work and cooperate with others; to develop new friendships; and to demonstrate responsibility. The girls enjoyed the program and believed that information gained from the older girls about school-related and social subjects was highly beneficial.

Year 10 Mock Interview Day

On the final day of the Year 10 Crossroads program, Pennant Hills High School invited members of the Rotary Clubs of Pennant Hills and Beecroft and the local community to participate in some mock interview scenarios with Year 10 students.

The students prepared for these interviews by researching job advertisements on the internet, creating a résumé and cover letter to apply for their chosen job advertisement, and building a portfolio of work, to enhance their chances of getting the mock job.

The experience provided an opportunity for the students to develop their interview skills in a relaxed environment, and they were commended by the Rotarians for their professionalism and level of knowledge about the job for which they had applied. Constructive feedback on their performance was provided by the volunteer interviewers to enable students to further improve their confidence in preparing for the job market.
YMCA NSW Youth Parliament

The YMCA NSW Youth Parliament program gives young people a voice in the administration of NSW. Jack Townend of Year 10 was selected as one of 150 successful applicants. Assigned a portfolio as Minister for Housing, Jack and his six-member committee developed a bill focusing on intergenerational dependence on public housing. Jack also launched a petition calling on the government to provide more facilities for young people with mental health issues.

Run by young people, for young people, the program aims to promote youth-led advocacy, active community leadership and legal and parliamentary education. The program ran for six months, with training and residential camps which included four sitting days in the NSW Parliament.

Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Program

Penrannet Hills High School is proud to be an Award Unit for the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Program, which encourages personal development through expeditions, volunteering and acquiring new skills.

Gold awards were presented by the NSW Governor to four senior students—Joshua Cooper, Mikaila Sparkes, Carissa Burbage and Zoren Liu. Declan O’Sullivan completed Silver level and commenced working towards Gold. The program also extended and challenged 16 Year 9 students who participated at the Bronze level.

Leadership in the Middle School

The Leadership in the Middle School (LIMS) Program involved a large number of Year 8 and Year 9 students who demonstrated their leadership skills and willingness to make an active contribution to the school community through their voluntary involvement in numerous whole-school activities.

Y20 Summit

As one of six students chosen from NSW schools, Maddison Sparkes was given the opportunity to attend and observe the final day of the 2014 G20 Youth Summit, where 120 young delegates aged 18–30 from 25 countries represented world youth, communicating with influential world leaders about issues which are important to youth in societies globally. Over the four days of the Y20 Summit, these delegates worked towards developing a communiqué on issues such as job creation, global citizenship and sustainable development, to be presented at the G20 Summit later in the year. These Y20 delegates’ main goal, in representing billions of young people worldwide, was to influence the present and to shape the future. As a participant on the final day, Maddison worked with the Australian delegation as global teams discussed what plans they would put into practice to try to have the communiqué recognised and implemented in their countries in the future. Attendance at the Y20 Summit provided a valuable insight into the mindset of young people on a global level and affirmed the value of working together to make an impact individually and collectively.

Student Environment Group

The student environment group represented the school in the Youth Environmental Forum held at Taronga Zoo. The environment group raised awareness about the minerals used in mobile phones and the effect of this on biodiversity, especially on the four great apes—chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans and bonobos. Students had an opportunity to meet and listen to world-renowned naturalist, Jane Goodall. They collected approximately 60 mobile phones to support wildlife preservation.

In conjunction with Field of Mars, Stage 4 students participated in the Climate Clever Energy Savers (CCES) program. They conducted an energy audit and proposed various strategies to conserve energy. The students were able to procure a grant of $2600 for installation of solar panels at the school.

National Young Leaders Day

A large group of students from the SRC attended the National Young Leaders Day at Sydney Convention Centre. They attended lectures from well-known people such as Marcus Zusak, author of The Book Thief; Sarah Wilson, journalist, television host and blogger; and Lieutenant General David Morrison, Chief of Army. Each speaker shared their story and gave personal insights into effective leadership. Our students came away from this experience with a new outlook on the meaning of leadership, as well as useful skills in achieving goals and working as a member of a team.
Supporting our Students

Links Café
This highly effective program provides students with the opportunity to develop their leadership and communication skills, self-confidence and effective teamwork. Professionally trained student baristas prepare and serve coffee, light breakfasts and cakes to staff and senior students in the café three times a week. With the support of supervising teachers, the more experienced senior students also take on roles in the management, training and supervision of younger participants.

Year 7 Orientation Camp
Year 7 students participated in a two-day orientation camp at Vision Valley as part of the Pennant Hills High School welfare program focused on improving the transition from Year 6 into high school. The camp encouraged the formation of friendships between students from various partner primary schools to help reduce anxiety, increase confidence and build resilience.

Transition to High School
The Transition to High School Program provided a positive transition for selected partner primary school students. The program familiarised these students with the high school environment and the staff members who would provide any necessary assistance. Year 8 ‘buddies’ guided students through a series of activities designed to address any concerns they may have had as part of the transition process, becoming a point of contact and providing a support network. This was supported by the Touching Base system in Term 1, when the students met with their ‘buddies’ before school to gain assistance and build confidence. The outcomes for the participants have been encouraging and the program has received positive feedback from their parents.

Peer Support Program
The Peer Support Program provides an opportunity for Year 7 students to transition into high school under the leadership and mentoring of Year 11 students. Peer support leaders ran seven sessions for the Year 7 groups during Term 1, covering topics including: getting to know you, settling in to high school, self-esteem, values and attitudes, and addressing bullying issues.

The Year 7 groups found the sessions beneficial in their transition to high school and the Year 11 peer support leaders developed and utilised their leadership skills to build a supportive network for the Year 7 students.

‘10% on Top’ Program
Year 12 students benefited from informal mentoring provided voluntarily by 30 members of the teaching staff. The purpose of the program is to provide support and an array of appropriate strategies to senior students, enabling them to reach their academic potential and increase their learning outcomes by at least 10%. Key areas of focus include confidence building, organisational skills and stress management.

Crossroads—U Turn the Wheel
Year 11 students completed the RYDA—U Turn the Wheel Program at the HART Driver Centre in St Ives. The program specifically targets 16–17 year olds with the aim of reducing death and injury on the road, and forms part of the Pennant Hills High School mandatory Crossroads component. Students participated in a range of activities including hazard perception, fatigue, safe celebrating, influences on stopping distances and the costs of owning and maintaining a car. It was an extremely valuable and confronting day which provided new insights into the responsibilities of driving.

The PARTY Program
The Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (PARTY) Program is a dynamic, interactive injury prevention and health promotion program designed for senior high school students. It provides first-hand exposure to some of the tragic consequences of risk-taking behaviour and the choices young people can make to avoid trauma and injury.
On two separate occasions, 60 Pennant Hills High School students spent a full day with various services at Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) and met with people who care for trauma patients: paramedics, nurses, doctors and allied health professionals. They attended presentations, interviews with patients and families, and simulated clinical scenarios, exposing them to both the physical and psychological journey of a trauma patient. They learnt about traumatic injuries, had a hands-on experience with some of the equipment used in trauma care and rehabilitation, and met with a survivor of major injury.

**At the Crossroads: My Life, My Future**

Year 10 students participated in a five-day conference specifically developed to address some of the personal and social issues facing young people today, and to assist them with the transition into the senior school. The first three days included presentations from Brent Sanders, a former police officer who spoke about protective behaviours and life skills; Norm Spalding, a highly experienced paramedic, who encouraged students to consider their personal safety and risk-taking behaviours; and Glen Gerreyn who motivated students to reflect on their future direction and to take action to achieve their goals.

The remaining two days of the conference included seminars on successful essay writing, effective note taking and study techniques, and developing a portfolio for practical courses. Students were able to complete the Senior First Aid and White Card courses, and members of the Rotary Clubs of Pennant Hills and Beecroft volunteered their time to conduct sessions on interview skills as part of preparation for joining the workforce.

**Merit Award System**

The Merit Award System was evaluated and upgraded to align it with PBEL values through consultation with the learning and support team, other members of staff, P&C, the prefect body and SRC. Systems, such as regular newsletter bulletins and public recognition at assemblies, acknowledged and encouraged high-achieving award recipients. Year advisers recognised students who achieved outstanding reports, both academically and socially, with special certificates and a morning tea with the school principal. Students’ merit progression was monitored through the school’s student tracking and notification system (STaN).

**ADHC Transition to Work Program**

Pennant Hills High School was a trial school implementing the NSW Government Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Transition to Work Program to support students with a diagnosed disability in Years 9 and 10. Eight students with a diagnosed disability from Years 9, 10 and 11 were supported by an individual case worker who liaised with students, parents, hearing and vision support staff members, and key members of the learning and support team to develop each student’s social and academic readiness for their transition to work. The program will continue until each one of these students leaves high school.

**Supporting Anxious Students**

Staff training was provided by the school counsellor and a private clinical psychologist, Valerie Ling, on how to identify and support the needs of anxious students. Adjustments to classroom practice and assessment procedures were implemented, reviewed and refined to address individual student needs and assist them in moving through their anxieties. Support was further provided for families through consultation with members of the learning and support team to assist students struggling with anxiety related issues.

**Literacy Support**

Literacy Support was provided through the introduction of an online Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) literacy test for Year 7 and 8 students and analysis of Year 8 NAPLAN results from last year. Students requiring remedial support were identified and assistance was provided by increasing teacher capacity to adjust classroom activities. Students and classes identified as requiring extra literacy support were further targeted for support from the school learning support officers (SLSOs).

Explicit teaching of skills in writing was implemented for Year 7 and 8 students during Science classes and further support was provided through the development of resources with a focus on literacy for the Year 7 National Science Curriculum and Year 8 Science classroom activities.
Dealing with the Stress of the HSC
A group of Year 10 students developed HSC survival kits that were sponsored by the local community. Containing tips for general wellbeing and stress management, information on counselling services and healthy food and drink, the kits were presented to Year 12 students at the beginning of Term 1.

Following the completion of Preliminary courses, Year 12 students and families attended an inaugural Surviving the HSC evening. Presentations were given by a clinical psychologist on dealing with stress, and by a family and a past student on how they successfully coped with the challenges of the HSC. Assessment strategies, BOSTES requirements and support processes such as disability provisions and the Educational Access Scheme (EAS) were also addressed, as well as alternative pathways to university entry.

Study Skills Seminar
A study skills seminar was presented to Year 8, 9 and 10 students, covering simple techniques and strategies to help students with memorisation and recall of information. It showed the problems associated with an ineffective study environment and introduced ways to deal with distractions and unproductive work times.

Learning 2 Learn Program
The Learning 2 Learn thinking skills program was run for all Year 7 students. This six-session program is designed to equip incoming Year 7 students with important skills required in all Key Learning Areas (KLAs). It aims to foster:

- a smoother transition to high school;
- effective independent learners;
- student empowerment;
- awareness of important rules;
- responsible digital citizens;
- strong student–teacher relationships through the use of teachers as facilitators.

Transition to Senior School Study
Interviews were organised with individual Year 10 students and an executive staff member to counsel and advise the students prior to them undertaking the important process of selecting courses of study for their HSC. Advice was provided on course combinations, units of study and possible post-school destinations.

Youth Insearch Program
Youth Insearch, a community organisation that focuses on resolving adolescent issues at a peer level, provided support for students through liaising with staff members and organising weekend camps for students and ongoing after-school support groups and mentors. The objectives of the program were to: enhance young people’s self-esteem, enabling them to take control of their lives and build a positive future for themselves; to increase school retention; to reduce alcohol and drug abuse; and to break the cycle of family breakdown by giving young people skills to establish caring families. Participating students were assisted financially by the Rotary Club of Pennant Hills.

‘Good Friends, Good Learners’
Good Friends, Good Learners is a school-based program teaching students to study and play together harmoniously. It is based on the premise that good relationships require social skills, and these skills can be learnt in a blame-free setting. The aim is to optimise students’ learning by removing the distraction of conflicts with peers.

Students were provided with positive strategies for conflict resolution and parents were advised on how to support their children in resolving issues. Cyber-safety and the prevention and reporting of cyber-bullying were also addressed. Police youth liaison officers addressed Year 8 classes on the legal issues surrounding bullying and harassment using computer technology. Anti-bullying programs presented to Year 7 and 8 students explored cyber-bullying and the appropriate use of digital media.

A peer relationship seminar was developed, which successfully engaged students in forming positive relationships with their peers.

Incidents of bullying were acted on immediately and addressed by the school counsellor and members of the welfare team using conflict resolution methods.
Learning and Support Team

Our learning and support team worked in a proactive manner to embrace DEC Every Student Every School reforms by developing systems and procedures to recognise and support student needs and increase teacher capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate classroom adjustments.

A central focus was to increase communication to all staff members regarding student learning needs and improving parental consultation when students were referred to the team. A learning and support teacher was employed an extra two days per week and there was enhanced liaison with schools within the region. Teacher capacity to support the needs of students was improved through: observation of classroom lessons; provision and sharing of strategies; peer mentoring and team teaching with members of the learning and support team; and staff development explaining classroom adjustment techniques.

Anaphylaxis Procedures

Anaphylaxis procedures continued to be reviewed and refined. Procedures were developed to monitor expiry dates of school and student EpiPens and asthma puffers; to increase the number of school EpiPens; and to enable students to carry individual EpiPens in sturdy, identifiable containers complete with health care plans.

Links to Learning and TAFE Outreach Programs

The Links to Learning program and TAFE outreach programs were implemented by the careers adviser to establish an alternative educational path for disengaged students. This year saw a number of students successfully completing the courses.

Mission Australia

Mission Australia completed its support for students at risk of disengaging from school during Term 3. The youth case worker ran weekly individual and group sessions to enable students to maximise their opportunities for educational success.

These sessions involved workshops which addressed any current issues the students were experiencing, assisting students to create resumes and providing connections to gain part time employment where appropriate.

Differentiated Programming and Curriculum Accompanied by Inclusive Adjusted Classroom Practices

There was an increase in the number of students transitioning into mainstream classes who were accessing life skill outcomes and required adjusted curriculum. The learning and support team provided funding and support for individual faculties to incorporate differentiation and life skills outcomes in faculty programs.

Inclusive classroom practices for students with a disability were developed through consultation with parents and carers, classroom teachers, the learning and support teacher, SLSOs and members of the learning and support team. Adjustments were made to lesson plans, resources, assessment and reporting procedures to meet the needs of individual students. Practices put into place were monitored, and adjustments and learning and support profiles were evaluated and refined, to continue to meet the ongoing needs of these individuals. Life skills programs and use of TAFE access courses and work experience were provided as required in Stages 5 and 6.

Supporting our Community

Open Night

A key event in Term 1 was Open Night, which showcased the wide range of programs on offer at our school. The well-attended evening was presented by more than 500 students, staff and parents who displayed performing arts, sport, practical, academic and leadership activities to prospective students and their families. It also provided an opportunity for positive interaction between the school and the local community.

The Great Penno Reno III

With the aim of enhancing the learning and teaching environment, a large group of current and former students, parents and staff, supported by members of the local community, volunteered their time and expertise over a weekend to rejuvenate the school gardens and facilities. This was the third Great Penno Reno and it highlighted the strong sense of community which exists at our school.
Seniors Concert

Year 12 students produced and performed a most entertaining concert in September for senior citizens from our local community. This initiative, which began in 2008, has been enthusiastically continued since, providing our students with an opportunity to give something back to local senior citizens in recognition of their contribution to our community.

The concert, held in our school MPC, was attended by more than 60 senior citizens and their carers who also enjoyed a morning tea prepared and served by our students. The variety and depth of talent on display was only matched by the tremendous community spirit shown by our students.

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 include review teams following a structured evaluation process, surveys, gathering and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, and the determining of future directions.

Curriculum: Evaluation of HSC Data

Background

The school uses a wide range of tools and data to evaluate performance in the Higher School Certificate and to determine directions and strategies which would enhance our students’ performance. Two major sources used for analysis of the HSC are NAPLAN and the Board of Studies Teaching Educational Standards (BOSTES) data for individual students and courses.

Using the RAP, a review of HSC performance was conducted by all staff to evaluate the teaching and learning practices of Year 12 and their teachers. RAP is a powerful tool in analysing student results to assist in evaluating practice. Teachers engaged in professional conversations designed to encourage critical thought and observations about the performance and delivery of the HSC and identify areas to focus on as part of the school’s continual improvement program.

Findings and Conclusions

The school’s overwhelming strength is reflected in our Z scores, which is a method of reporting performance outcomes in relation to the state mean. A Z score of zero indicates a score is the same as the mean. A Z score can also be positive or negative, indicating whether it is above or below the mean and by how many standard deviations. Pennant Hills High School’s Z scores are one standard deviation better than the state in the TAS and visual arts courses—an outstanding result. The Z scores in most other subjects show that Pennant Hills High School does better than the state average. For the past five years, the Z scores have been static, indicating a consistently successful approach that may be open to review to drive improvement in the future.
Most teachers reported that the percentage of students in bands has been static, with some small yearly variations. The percentage of students in the higher two bands was above the state average, while the percentage of students in the lower two bands was less than the state average.

RAP data analysis by the staff indicated that school assessment scores are often less than the HSC examination mark or overall HSC. However, the rank of students in the school assessments reflects the HSC exam results in terms of the rank gained by the student.

Comparison of HSC results with NAPLAN results showed that, as a cohort, students coming to Pennant Hills High School in Year 7 performed very well in NAPLAN in their primary school years, and maintained this standard when reported on in Year 9.

Future Directions

The analysis indicates that Pennant Hills High School performs above state average in most courses. However, there is some room for improvement in terms of shifting the Band 5 results into Band 6 in English, Mathematics, HSIE and the Sciences. Strategies to be implemented to assist in this include:

- Implementing a What is a Band 6? program, with guest markers of HSC to clearly define what the higher bands require and to mentor students and teachers.
- Reviewing and improving the 10% on Top mentor program by providing students with appropriate strategies to assist improvement in learning outcomes and to provide ongoing support.
- Reviewing and auditing senior programs to ensure higher order tasks are embedded to challenge students to go beyond their current levels of performance.

Pedagogical Practice: Evaluation of Programs, Lesson Delivery and Assessment Tasks

Background

Pedagogical research has long shown that people learn in different ways and that they also exhibit their abilities and understandings in different ways. The implications of this are that if teaching and assessing is always done the same way, the learning needs of a number of students will not be effectively met. To obtain a better understanding of their teaching and assessment practices, staff audited their programs, lessons and assessments using a Gardner/Bloom matrix.

The purpose was to identify areas not covered by their teaching practice and to develop awareness of the need to cater to all students to give them the best chance of reaching their academic potential and to instil a love of learning. To that end, the awareness built up will lead to changes in programming and lesson delivery and importantly, assessment tasks that involve deeper learning and alternatives to exam style tasks. It was also envisaged that this would promote professional dialogue between teachers and further develop a model of collegial support and critical evaluation of practice.

Teaching staff, both at a faculty and course level, then mapped out the style of learning and level of intellectual difficulty of their course delivery. Using a matrix that combines Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences and Bloom’s Taxonomy of higher and lower order level as a diagnostic tool, staff were able to track the style and intellectual level of programs, lessons and assessment tasks. The task focused on developing awareness of the teachers’ lessons and assessment and the variety of students they teach, all needing varying styles of learning and opportunities to engage and succeed.

Findings and Conclusions

On the school development day at the beginning of Term 3, all staff participated in the analysis of their programming, lessons and assessment tasks in preparation for review and modification for the following year. Results from the mapping exercise indicated a good spread of intellectual difficulty across most faculties for the programs they chose. However, almost all faculties reported that the teaching delivery and assessment tasks did not use intelligences that included musical, kinesthetic, intrapersonal and interpersonal.

In many programs across all faculties, the older the student cohort, the more the programs focused on higher order tasks and student-centred learning techniques. Some identified needs were:

- professional learning for teachers to enable them to develop a range of teaching strategies and implement differentiation in the classroom, expanding the style and type of assessment task;
• ensuring consistency of the use of explicit marking criteria across the school and for all year groups;
• implementation of team teaching and a whole-staff coaching model to support a culture of learning and high expectations in a supportive and collegial context;
• making connections between school and relevance to post-school life for disengaged students; and
• monitoring the distribution of rewards in class, as a means of ensuring students are acknowledged for achievement in areas other than tests and examinations.

Future Directions

Changing the style of lesson delivery and assessment tasks is a challenge for both the teachers and the community, many of whom have a traditional view on what a classroom and a test should look and feel like. Further developing programs aimed at using the Learning Hub for project learning and presenting ICT-based assessment tasks will enhance and allow for different learning styles, to showcase students’ ability. Team teaching with a coaching emphasis using a model by Growth Coaching International is being introduced, with 13 teachers given the initial training to further coach interested staff. Two major long-term aims are to: further embed team teaching which incorporates student-centred tasks; and to consolidate the GROWTH coaching model as a way of staff improving student outcomes through their own critical reflection and professional dialogue.

Parent/Caregiver, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Year 12 Exit Survey

The 2014 Year 12 cohort responded to a student satisfaction survey at the completion of their studies.

Students indicated that they were satisfied with the range of courses offered at the school.

They appreciated that the school provided a high level of personal safety.

Students were also encouraged by staff to accept responsibility for their own learning and success.

They felt that more extensive use of technology could occur in many classes.

Some students indicated that set homework was not marked and discussed with students.

Parent/Caregiver Feedback

Many parents and caregivers are in regular contact with the school, providing ongoing feedback on most aspects of the school’s operation. This feedback contributes to discussion at monthly P&C meetings, where further parental opinion is canvassed and addressed.

‘Focus on Learning’ Teacher Survey

A new Focus on Learning survey was conducted. This is a self-evaluation tool for teachers and schools, designed to gather reliable insight and an authentic teacher voice, to help provide a deeper understanding of the school context and guide future school planning. This planning tool assesses the traditional aspects of classroom and school effectiveness (listed below) which research has shown to have greatest impact on improving student achievement:

• leadership;
• collaboration;
• learning culture;
• data informing practice;
• teaching strategies;
• technology;
• inclusive school; and
• community involvement.

The information gained from this survey has informed our School Strategic Plan for 2015–2017. There will be a focus on developing leadership capacity to support teachers in identifying appropriate professional learning to meet the needs of students. Providing quality feedback and the use of technology to support student learning were also prioritised by teachers. These initiatives will require a schoolwide framework to provide time for teachers and students to work with, and learn from, each other. In 2015, our school will also participate in the student and parent Tell Them from Me surveys to collect valuable data for evaluating our school plan.

School teaching and support staff have ongoing opportunities through various forums to provide feedback about the school and to suggest ways of improving organisation, management and the learning environment.
School Planning 2012–2014:
Progress in 2014

The school planning team developed the school plan for 2014 as part of the strategic directions for 2012–2014. The plan identified a number of priorities, intended outcomes and future targets for the school that were consistent with the NSW State Plan and the priorities of the NSW DEC. The school’s strategic priorities for 2012–2014 were:

- to improve the literacy skills of all students;
- to improve the numeracy skills of all students;
- to assist all students to reach their academic potential and to ensure engagement across all areas of the curriculum;
- to continue to build on the positive links between the school, its partner schools and other community networks that provide support for student learning; and
- to provide a high-quality environment for all students and a professional working environment for all staff.

Within these priority areas, the school has identified a number of specific annual targets. Progress on the achievement of these targets is provided below. It should be noted that a new plan for 2015–2017 will be developed for the school under new planning guidelines introduced by NSW DEC.

School Priority 1: Outcomes from 2012–2014

Continued improvement in the literacy skills of students.

Evidence of Achievement of Outcomes in 2014

- NAPLAN Year 7 writing: 10.1% of students were in the highest band (9). This represented a 7.0% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 29%, compared to state at 19%. This represented a 6% improvement for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

- NAPLAN Year 7 reading: 19.9% of students were in the highest band (9). This represented a 2.6% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 50%, compared to state at 31%. This represented an 8% improvement for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

- NAPLAN Year 7 spelling: 19.3% of students were in the highest band (9). This represented a 2.6% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 47%, compared to state at 38%. This represented a 1% improvement for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

- NAPLAN Year 7 grammar and punctuation: 26.7% of students were in the highest band (9). This represented an 11.3% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 54%, compared to state at 34%. This represented a 15% improvement for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

- NAPLAN Year 9 writing: 11.1% of students were in the highest band (10). This represented a 0.1% decrease for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 22%, compared to state at 16%. This represented a 6% decline for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

- NAPLAN Year 9 reading: 13.2% of students were in the highest band (10). This represented a 6.1% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 38%, compared to state at 27%. This represented a 2% decline for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

- NAPLAN Year 9 spelling: 19.0% of students were in the highest band (10). This represented a 9.0% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 42%, compared to state at 27%. This represented a 3% improvement for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

- NAPLAN Year 9 grammar and punctuation: 11.8% of students were in the highest band (10). This represented a 2.9% decrease for our students on 2013 results. 24.2% achieved results in the second highest band, compared with the state average of 16.7%.
The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 36%, compared to state at 24%. This was the same level of achievement for our students in relation to the 2013 cohort.

**Strategies to Achieve these Outcomes in 2014**

- All teachers explicitly teaching relevant literacy from the literacy strategies.
- All staff engaging in professional learning to improve their own ability to explicitly teach literacy skills.
- Explicit teaching of writing skills in the Year 7 Learning 2 Learn program and consolidation of skills learnt by students.
- Analysis of NAPLAN results to identify areas for Improvement.
- Teachers emphasising the importance of literacy in all classes and teaching skills through an explicit and consistent approach.
- All faculties presenting a consistent approach to assessment, task design and marking criteria.
- Weekly Literacy ‘blitzes’ published through a variety of school communication systems to enhance teacher/student promotion of the importance of literacy and to encourage further development of students’ interest and skills.
- All executive members taking a leadership role in literacy by promoting its importance, with faculty teachers incorporating literacy strategies in teaching and learning programs and monitoring assessment tasks.
- All classroom teachers providing regular formative feedback to students on student literacy level and areas for development.
- Promoting use of dictionaries and thesauruses, with students using them in classes as appropriate.
- Teachers acknowledging student best-practice samples through the merit award scheme.
- Incorporating metalanguage as a regular feature in homework and assignment tasks.
- Further development of lesson strategies incorporating ICT and associated English literacy skills software.
- All teaching and learning programs incorporating appropriate and challenging ICT strategies to enhance literacy levels, student engagement and develop student ICT skills.
- ICT links to other schools sharing strategies for best practice literacy programs.

**School Priority 2: Outcomes from 2012–2014**

Continued improvement in the numeracy skills of all students.

**Evidence of Progress towards Outcomes in 2014**

- NAPLAN Year 7 numeracy: 26.8% of students were in the highest band (9). This represented a 2.6% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 56%, compared to state at 31%. This represented a 13% improvement for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.
- NAPLAN Year 9 numeracy: 26.5% of students were in the highest band (10). This represented a 2.6% increase for our students on 2013 results. The percentage of our students at the level of ‘Proficiency’ (top two bands) of the National Minimum Standards was 46%, compared to state at 31%. This represented a 1% improvement for our students in relation to the achievement of the 2013 cohort.

**Strategies to Achieve these Outcomes in 2014**:

- All teachers explicitly teaching relevant content from the school numeracy plan as well as developing effective strategies for the delivery of numeracy in course work.
- All teachers showing a knowledge and understanding of the numeracy plan by explicitly teaching relevant content and effective strategies for the delivery of numeracy.
- All staff undertaking professional learning in numeracy consistent with course work being delivered.
- Analysis of NAPLAN results to identify deficits in student numeracy.
- Teachers emphasising the importance of numeracy in all course work and explicitly teaching numeracy skills.
- All faculties presenting a consistent approach to assessment task design and implementation of marking criteria that incorporate appropriate levels of numeracy for students in all courses.
- Publishing weekly numeracy rules through a variety of school communication systems to enhance teacher/student promotion of the importance of numeracy and to encourage further development of students’ interest in numeracy skills.
• Teachers being supported with professional learning in numeracy and developing their own skills and knowledge of the numeracy plan and associated implementation strategies.
• All executive members taking a leadership role in numeracy by promoting its importance with faculty teachers.
• All classroom teachers providing regular formative feedback to students on student numeracy level and areas for development.
• Student pride in numeracy acknowledged by staff with student best-practice samples recognised (e.g. merit certificates).
• Ensuring metalanguage is a regular feature of homework and assignment tasks.
• Increasing student participation in external numeracy competitions.
• Incorporating appropriate technology in teaching and learning to enhance numeracy skill.
• Further developing lesson strategies that use Smartboards and mathematical software.
• Developing teaching and learning strategies for numeracy that incorporate the use of technology for Stage 5.
• Incorporating the Mathletics software program into teaching programs, which are appropriate for students in Stages 4, 5 and 6, with the aim of providing extension activities for students in Mathematics courses.
• ICT links to other schools—sharing solutions and best practice in numeracy programs.


Increased focus on students reaching their academic potential through greater engagement across all areas of the curriculum.

Evidence of Progress towards Outcomes in 2014
• Increased number of successful post compulsory school age transition plans for students at risk.
• Continued reduction in the number of notifications of student disengagement across the school.
• A 3% increase in the number of Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranks above 90.
• A 13% increase in the number of HSC courses with means higher than the state mean.
• A 14% decrease in the number of HSC courses with means below the state mean.

Strategies to Achieve these Outcomes in 2014
• Greater emphasis on the development and implementation of individual learning plans for identified students, case managed by the learning and support team.
• Improved analysis of data from the BOSTES RAP and DEC School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) to inform teaching in all KLAs.
• Expansion of the Year 6 to 7 transition to high school strategy via consolidation of the home room concept for Year 7 students.
• Refinement of planning and implementation of strategies for the academically selected class in Year 7.
• Expansion of the Learning 2 Learn Program for Year 7 students.
• Increased adjustment of teaching programs to better cater for individual learning differences of students.
• Implementation of Stage 2 (classroom focus) of the PBEL program.
• Implementation and monitoring of the school attendance plan accompanied by increased liaison with the DEC home school liaison officer by the deputy principals.
• Continuation of the 10% on Top mentoring program for Stage 6 students.
• Expansion of the My Life, My Future program to facilitate transition to work and to the HSC for Year 10 students.

School Priority 4: Outcomes from 2012–2014

Consolidation of links between Pennant Hills High School and its partner schools and the wider community.

Evidence of Progress towards Outcomes in 2014
• Introduction of the Social Inc. program to support students with a disability.
• Regular meetings and liaison with personnel from partner schools and external organisations to plan, implement and modify existing programs.

Strategies to Achieve these Outcomes in 2014
• Continued implementation of linkage programs across the curriculum.
• Enhanced links with external support providers, such as NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers.
• More widely publicised invitations to students to participate in the Social Inc. program and development of activities to support students with a disability.

• Increased involvement of students from partner primary schools in school musicals, band programs and a range of other activities.

• Further development of the transition to high school program through visits by students enrolling in the following year.

School Priority 5: Outcomes from 2012–2014
Provision of a high quality learning environment for all students and a professional work environment for staff.

Evidence of Progress towards Outcomes in 2014
• Improvements to learning spaces and the school environment through The Great Penno Reno school and community event.

• Expanded school-based, teacher professional learning program and activities.

• Increased emphasis on curriculum differentiation and strategies to enhance student engagement.

• Expansion of ICT facilities and resources.

Strategies to Achieve these Outcomes in 2014
• Review of ICT resourcing across the school and planning for the introduction of a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program.

• Teachers performing higher duties in order to improve leadership capacity.

• Conducting a school planning forum involving students, staff and parents to develop the next strategic plan for the school.

• Encouraging students to seek recognition through the school merit award scheme.

• Consistent application of school welfare and discipline policies and procedures by all staff.

• Refinement of school welfare and discipline policies and procedures to ensure consistency with PBEL.

• Formation and training of a school team in leadership coaching to facilitate improved student learning and TPL.

Future Directions: 2015–2017 School Plan
NSW DEC is implementing a new school planning process for 2015–2017. The new plan will be published on the school’s website.

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.

Geoff Wing Principal
Brendan O’Byrne Deputy Principal
Amanda De Carli Deputy Principal
Fiona Ackerman Acting Head Teacher (Chair)
Mark Tyler Head Teacher
Bernadette Jebbink Teacher Representative
Lee Lowe School Administrative Officer
Marnie Finch Parent Representative
Jaime O’Connor Student Representative
Jack Townend Student Representative

School Contact Information
Pennant Hills High School
Laurence Street, Pennant Hills NSW 2120
Ph: +61 2 9473 5000
Fax: +61 2 9473 5099
Email: pennanthil-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.pennanthil-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 8438

Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at: