

Bridging the Distance 2018

Celebrating the

LEARNING HUBS

Tuggerah



Woy Woy



Glenbrook



reaching out... connecting

SDEHS
Woolloomooloo



Ingleburn



Miranda



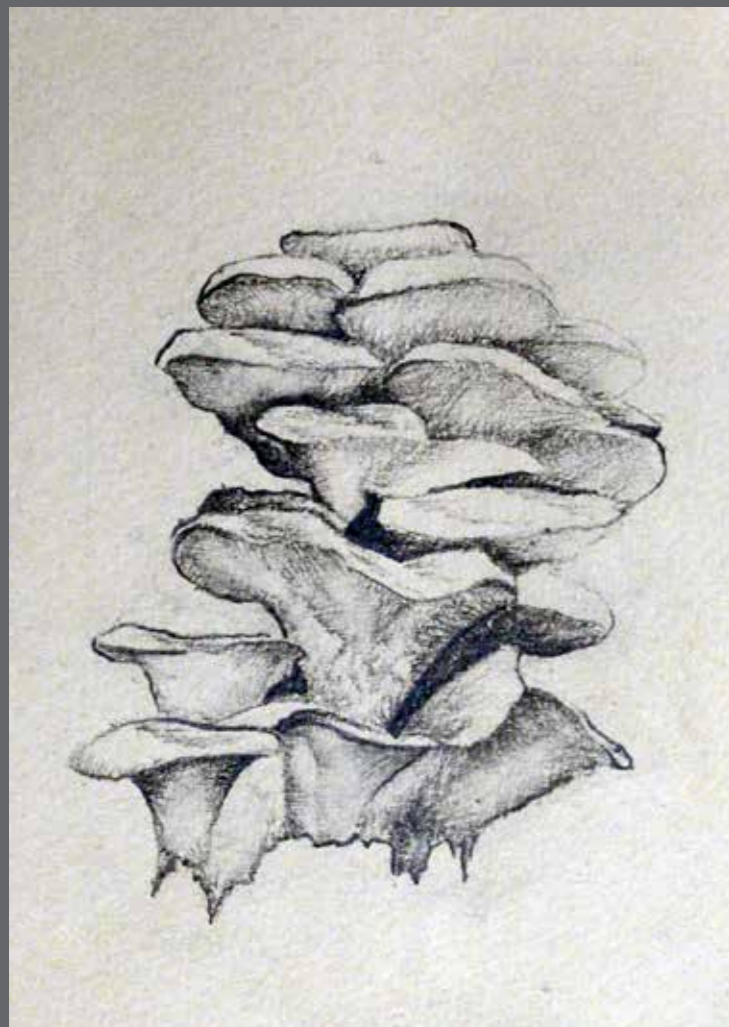
Sydney
Distance
Education
High
School



HSC Visual Arts Body of Work Isabella Aguilar



HSC Visual Arts Body of Work Celina Rasmussen



HSC Visual Arts Body of Work Eismaa Takhel



HSC Visual Arts Body of Work Elani Wild

Contents

- 05 Principals' profiles
- 06 School Staff
- 09 School Camp
- 10 Faculty Reports
- 24 Learning Hubs
- 26 SLG
- 27 Wellbeing Initiatives
- 28 Volunteering & Social Justice
- 29 Big Day In
- 30 Stages 4 and 5
- 40 Our School
- 50 Stage 6
- 70 Textiles & Design Projects
- 72 HSC Visual Arts Bodies of Work
- 74 Design & Technology Projects
- 75 Where are they now?
- 76 Our Stars
- 78 Writing Competition

Acknowledgements



Bridging the Distance 2018
The magazine of Sydney Distance Education High School

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the publication of our magazine.

Design and Layout

Yvonne Lin
Elmira Shapovalova

Editorial Committee

Julie Barel, Jill Berryman, Lynn Connolly, Irene Conomos, Rina Dumer, Alicia Gilmore, Natalie Hilton, Michael Marusic, Wayne Proctor, Patricia Raptis, Trent Swaysland

Contact

Telephone 02 9383 0200
Fax 02 9383 0222
Email sydneyh-d.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Website www.sydneyh-d.school.nsw.gov.au

We show our respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land the Cadigal People of Eora Nation

CELEBRATING 102 YEARS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
Since 1916

Principals' profiles



During 2018 we worked together as Co Principals, sharing leadership of our wonderful school community. We have always loved the school magazine HSC Student Profiles so this year we're joining in the fun!

Lisa Keating

Memorable moments?

Visiting the Miranda, Woy Woy and Ingleburn Hubs to meet students. Choir Project sessions, culminating in performances at Big Day In and the Distance Education Symposium.

School Days?

I enjoyed participating in the choir, drama productions and musicals. I really appreciated my friends and the great teachers who were so encouraging.

Interests? Reading, singing in a community choir, playing guitar and ukulele. Keeping fit – going to the gym, walking and swimming.



David Tracy

Memorable moments?

Working with students on the use of technology and social media from a student's perspective. Also, working with our amazing staff to make so many positive things happen, especially around 'real-time' teaching.

School Days?

We travelled around Australia for years. I went to dozens of different schools – mostly in the outback. I learnt how to read and do my times tables in the back of a 4-wheel drive! If only I had known about distance education way back then ...

Interests?

Anything constructive that involves a Saturday morning trip to the hardware store.



Mark Piddington

Memorable moments?

Talking with student Hugh McDonald, Youth at The Zoo worker, about his extraordinary understanding of animals, especially Przewalski's horses. Farewelling DP Daniel Rattigan when he became Foundation Principal, Finigan School of Distance Education.

School Days?

I loved debating, public speaking and playing hockey. At school, I always wanted to be a barrister. At university, I was inspired to be a teacher ... and now we have student baristas!

Interests?

As ông nội, playing with my grandson in our beautiful garden ... and riding my bicycle!



School camp

The 2018 three day school camp at Morisset, NSW saw a group of young enthusiastic students participate in a range of outdoor activities. They pushed themselves physically and mentally, to battle their fear of heights, work together as a team and get covered in mud and water. The camp was great fun and students got to build and solidify some wonderful friendships.



**Camp
Morisset
29-31
October**



Creative & Performing Arts

2018 has been another action packed year for the Creative and Performing Arts Faculty. Students have been exposed to a variety of stimulating and enriching creative opportunities at school and out in art and music institutions both nationally and internationally.

Our Visual Arts students have visited a number of blockbuster exhibitions with excursions to Sculpture by the Sea, Brett Whiteley Studio, Artexpress and the Archibald Prize. Our regular art workshops have allowed students to experience art making and photographic techniques and explore their creative potential. Once again we have submitted individual artworks for Operation Art and collaborative pieces for the Koori Art Expressions exhibition.

Congratulations to Danielle Guyot who had her amazing Body of Work *Artificial Life* selected for exhibition in Artexpress. Her Body of Work was exhibited at The Armory and is now part of the travelling Artexpress exhibition visiting regional galleries around the state.

'Art Week @ the Hubs' has been a great success with students taking part in a variety of art making workshops and creating some fantastic artworks.

We have made a new addition to the faculty with the purchase of a new kiln, allowing us to run ceramics workshops for both students and teachers.



Artificial Life Danielle Guyot

Our senior Music students have had the opportunity to further develop their composition skills through our regular Composers Day program with our composer in residence, Tristan Coelho.

Our talented Music students have continued to shine this year with the following students being nominated for the Encore performance (a showcase of exceptional musical talent): Tony Lu (piano), Ariel Volovelsky (cello), Rio Xiang (piano), Luca Warburton (composition), Mitzi Gardner (violin).

Luca Warburton was chosen to play his virtuosic Extension composition, entitled *Toccata*, written for solo on harpsichord, at the Encore Concert at the Opera House in March 2018.

Rio Xiang won an international piano competition (Arthur Dann Piano Competition) in the USA at the end of last year and in July he won a national competition, the Australian Classical Music Competition in Melbourne (prize was \$10,000 and a contract to play a concerto with a symphony orchestra in March 2019). He also won the Kawai Piano Scholarship and a number of other awards at the Sydney Eisteddfod.

Ariel Volovelsky and Mitzi Gardner both won scholarships to study music performance at acclaimed music institutions overseas (Juilliard and Eastman in the USA and the Royal Academy of Music in London).

Our Year 11 virtuoso violinist, Marcus Michelsen, was accepted into the prestigious Aspen Summer School in Colorado USA.

Emily Tenorio in Year 11 had solo roles singing with the Hunter Singers when they toured in Canada to participate in the Kathaumixw Festival, July 2018.

Congratulations to all of our talented and creative students who have achieved some wonderful successes and made such a valuable contribution to the school throughout the year.

English

Congratulations to our 2017 HSC students who achieved some very pleasing results at the end of last year. In particular, the 2 Unit Advanced cohort achieved a significant increase in the number of students in the Band 5–6 range compared to the previous year. Congratulations also to the Extension cohort, the majority of whom achieved good results. And special congratulations must also be extended to Lara Damelian, who achieved a Band 6 to top the English Standard Course. Well done Lara.

The English Faculty had an inspiring and challenging year. We have been consistently heartened by the quality of work produced by our students through all stages, as well their application and adaptability. It has been an exciting time implementing the new English Stage 6 syllabus.

A notable highlight in the faculty this year was inviting some talented young filmmakers from the Tropfest Junior finalists to the Big Day In, along with their award winning films. After viewing them, students learnt about the exciting opportunities available for young filmmakers in Australia. They were encouraged to actively participate in discussion and were enlightened that film can be a wonderful creative platform for exploring their own stories.

Throughout the year, English Faculty members and students regularly attended the learning hubs around Sydney. On these visits, the English Faculty aims to broaden our students' knowledge and understanding of English by encouraging wide reading through student reading initiatives. The English Faculty also welcomes every student's involvement in the School Magazine, with many of our students submitting excellent creative writing pieces in the SDEHS Writing Competition.

Our Stage 5 students continued transitioning onto the elearning format to complete their studies. They are to be commended for their adaptability and we have had some pleasing results. Congratulations also to the Year 10 students who have regularly attended the weekly web lessons for English. The results of their diligence are certainly showing!

It has been wonderful to see our students enriching their talents and striving towards personal success.



History

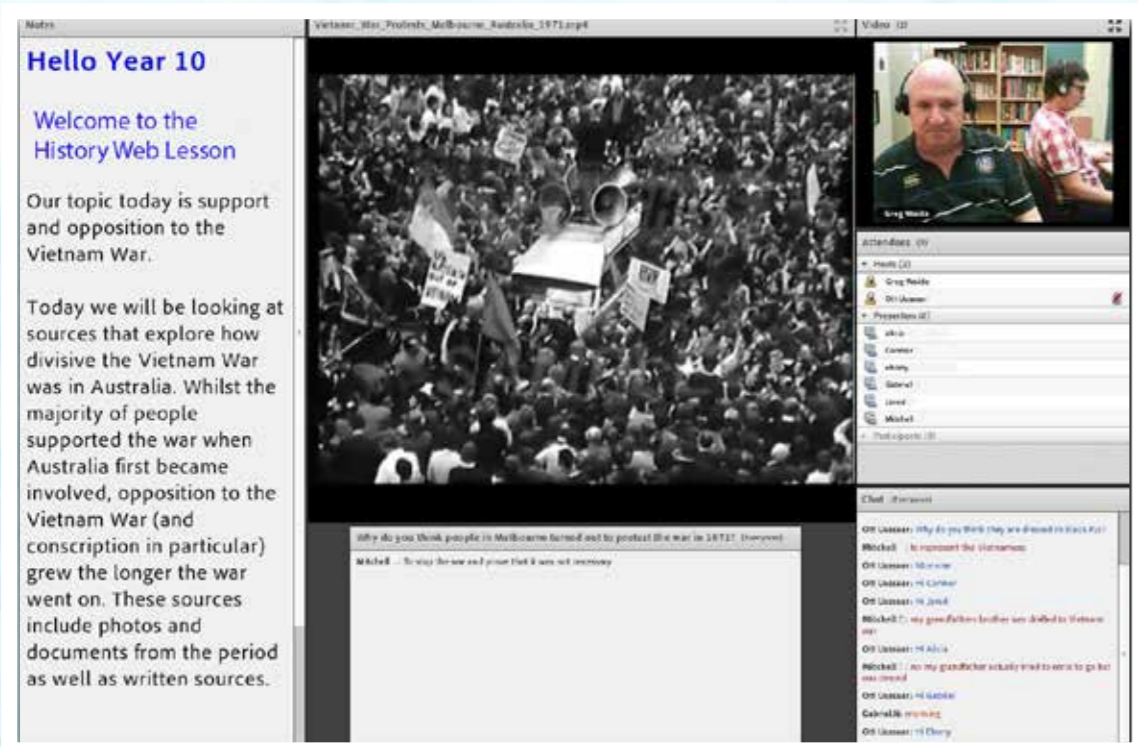
The History Faculty again provided the opening act at the Big Day In with Histrivia engaging a large number of students and supervisors. An enthusiastic and knowledgeable audience competed in two rounds of ten questions on the theme of Appreciation of Technology. In between rounds, as usual, games of heads and tails were entertaining and the winners enjoyed their prize of vouchers for the movies.

The 2017 HSC delivered probably best ever results for students in all History Faculty subjects. In Modern History, two Band 6 results were achieved by Lizzie Cyrill Curran and another student (a first at SDEHS) while in Ancient History, not to be outdone, three Band 6 results were achieved by Alex Heron, Rory Carter and once again Lizzie Cyrill Curran. Special mention should be made of Lizzie's performance as she also received a top band result in History Extension, something that has not been achieved in my time as Head Teacher of History at SDEHS. Not surprisingly and as we have come to expect, Society and Culture students performed very well, with eleven of fourteen candidates performing at above the state average. These fabulous results are very much down to the expertise of the History staff and their willingness to provide outstanding teaching and guidance in preparing this cohort.

We look forward to 2019 with anticipation as we prepare to deliver the Australian Curriculum to Year 12 students in Ancient and Modern History for the first time.

2018 has been yet another year of change and development in the History Faculty. Stage 5 students (Years 9 and 10) are now in their second year of being fully electronic and the online materials continue to be updated and improved. The Australian Curriculum for the senior years in the Modern and Ancient History courses (Year 11) began in earnest in 2018. The new Year 12 courses begin in Term 4 2018 and will be examined for the first time in 2019. Currently, new materials are being written across the state by distance education teachers in preparation for delivery from the first day of Term 4.

Once again, a good number of Year 11 Ancient History students visited the Nicholson Museum (University of Sydney) in May, where they were able to view and interact with wonderful exhibits from the ancient world. From all accounts, it was an excellent day and the students thoroughly enjoyed the knowledge and understanding they gained from what is one of the most prestigious and extensive displays of artefacts in Australasia.



History teachers, Greg Waide and Ott Uussaar, conducting a web lesson

Learning Support

2018 has been a very rewarding year in the Learning and Support Faculty.

Our annual Learning and Support Gold Award picnic day was successfully held at the Botanic Gardens with the generous support of the Ernst & Young Research and Development team. Our 2017 Gold Award students joined with staff from SDEHS and Ernst & Young to participate in a tour of the Calyx at the Botanic Gardens, and play a number of games, including a frisbee challenge and scavenger hunt, before celebrating with lunch and prizes.

The baby animal farm at the Big Day In was a success. Many students, parents, supervisors, staff and guests enjoyed the opportunity to relax with, pet and feed a number of farm animals, including the always hungry goats and alpaca.

Our students undertaking a Life Skills program of study engaged in their studies across all Key Learning Areas, including the new Stage 6 Life Skills courses that were introduced in 2018. The Learning and Support staff have been busy writing new materials to meet the needs of their students and have seen some incredible results.

The Learning and Support Faculty has devised Personalised Learning and Support Plans (PLSPs) and Strategy Sheets for over 160 students, attended case meetings, made home, centre and weekly learning hub visits, and worked in partnership with parents and supervisors to best support our students with additional and diverse learning and support needs.

Library

SDEHS library is a vibrant learning space well used by students and staff. It incorporates a shared learning space, study rooms, the Technology Learning Space and access to computers and a printer.

We support student learning by providing textbooks and curriculum resources. There is also a substantial range of literature, non-fiction and audio books available for loan, as well as access to World Book Online.

We offer students in Years 7–9 the opportunity to participate in the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge and library orientation activities are included in the New Student Orientation Day. These are designed to assist new students with information on literacy skills as well as demonstrating how to access the library

database through the Student Portal. We also support students in acquiring information skills through an elearning site, Using your school library.

During 2018, we have been expanding the collection to reflect student interests, support engagement with the Premier's Reading Challenge and to support new curriculum priorities.

Through literature, students can enrich their lives, explore the world and other cultures and learn about the experiences of others. Extensive research demonstrates the positive impact that reading has on language and literacy development.

We welcome students to use the library for study, research and reading for enjoyment. We encourage you to call in on your next school visit.

Mathematics

This year has been a busy and exciting time for the Mathematics Faculty at Sydney Distance Education High School. 2018 has seen the implementation of the new Standard Mathematics course in Year 11. Students were able to complete this course via the elearning site with course materials, learning resources, videos and the opportunity to upload their completed solutions.

Year 11 and 12 students attended study days held throughout the year. These provide students an opportunity to enhance their understanding and learning through the given lessons. Students meet their teachers and other students in a productive learning environment.

Mathematics staff have participated in professional learning this year to prepare for the new calculus-based courses due to start for students in Year 11 in 2019.

An extremely busy, productive and successful year.

Congratulations to all our students studying a Mathematics course.

Middle School

The Middle School Faculty provides personalised learning through a differentiated curriculum for Years 7-10.

This year we have seen many successes in helping students achieve their goals. We congratulate all of our Year 10 students who have attained their Record of School Achievement and everyone else who has worked hard this year towards achieving their own personal best.

- Our students produced many wonderful, creative pieces of work, some of which are showcased throughout this magazine.
- In Year 9 this year we ran weekly web lessons for small class groups. This enabled students to get to know and interact with their peers and teachers regularly. Each class had web lessons scheduled in several subjects, and students embraced their online learning and attended these lessons consistently. Both teachers and students really enjoyed the regular lessons as well as the relationships built in the group. Their learning has benefited and they developed skills in using digital tools such as Padlets, Google Drive, Wordclouds, and participated in online collaborative writing activities.

This is what some of the students have had to say about these lessons: Billy – “Web lessons are really good.” Ariel – “I like doing the work with other kids.” Abbey – “I really enjoy web lessons. It’s easier for me to learn this way.” Supervisors too have been supportive: “I really like what you are doing with those kids.” We would say that this approach to learning has been a great success!

Development of new materials for the recently implemented Australian Curriculum in Geography continued this year. Our online materials for Years 8 and 10 are extremely visual and interesting, highlighting digital skills and critical thinking. Students have received them well and they have produced some very insightful work on topics such as Liveability and Urbanisation.



Liveability and urbanisation graphic

- Due to its popularity last year, our Bike-n-Blend activity made a comeback for the 2018 Big Day In. Once again, students and staff loved it and got active to create yummy, healthy, pedal power smoothies.

We wish you all a wonderful and safe holiday!



PDHPE



In 2018 football, commonly referred to as soccer in Australia, was heavily discussed, watched and debated. The World Cup kept many people awake during the early hours of the morning, watching some of the best athletes in the world perform.

The women's soccer team, the Matildas, are a talented, dedicated, hardworking group of women who have given a generation of soccer players outstanding role models to look up to. In 2018 they had phenomenal success in their matches. They have beaten top teams like Brazil and drawn with the USA.

The Matildas have been described as an overnight sensation. Yet this description could not be further from the truth. Their battle for success has taken many years.

So it is established that success can be achieved through hard work and it is known that Australians love a winner. But there are other measures of success. Success can also be measured by the achievement of goals. In the PDHPE Faculty, teachers have set goals to develop effective relationships with their students and to improve student engagement. Strategies have been implemented to achieve those goals which have been fundamental to assisting in the achievement of varied academic goals. They can include the achievement of a Band 5 in a Stage 6 subject and/ or being able to effectively construct several sentences in response to a question.

In the PDHPE Faculty, success in improving student outcomes has been the driver behind teachers' undertaking several research projects. Teachers have diversified their classroom practices by including a range of literacy strategies in lessons, project based learning and a flipped classroom lesson. The improvement in student outcomes using the flipped classroom may be the catalyst for future flipped classrooms, and consequently for success in the future. All projects have opened up the door for diversification in teaching.

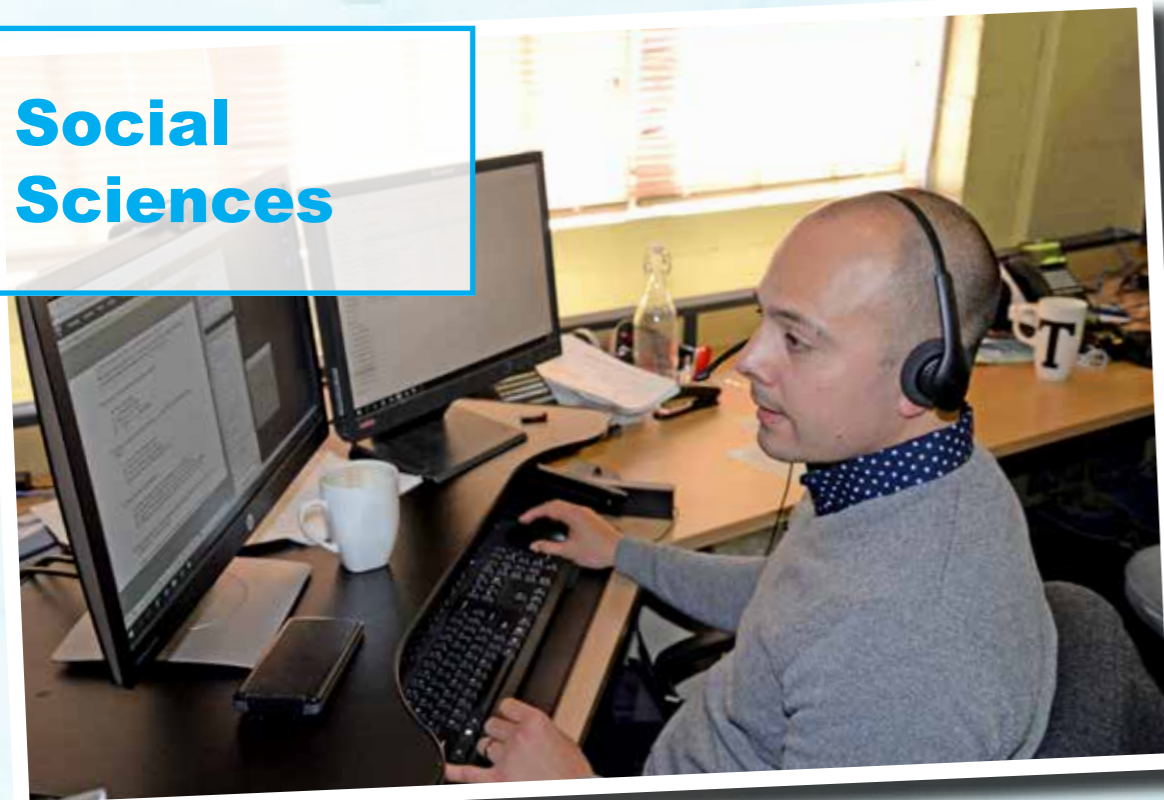
HSC performances in the PDHPE Faculty continue to be very impressive. In 2017 23% of students scored Band 6 or 5 in PDHPE. In CAFS the number of students achieving a Band 6 was 12.5% above state average. This result is because of consistent hard work over a 12 month period with consistent engagement in course work. Congratulations to all the students who achieved their personal best.

In 2019 the new PDHPE syllabus will be implemented for Years 7 and 9. Also in 2019, a new 25 hour course named Life Ready will be implemented for Year 11. In 2020 the new syllabus will be implemented for Years 8 and 10. This type of change is always embraced by the PDHPE Faculty because it presents more opportunities for the teachers to be current in their thinking and planning, and to facilitate the students being successful in achieving their goals.

Remember: *Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.* (Arthur Ashe)



Social Sciences



Legal Studies teacher Christian del Villar conducting a web lesson

Congratulations to all our students and teaching staff for another successful year.

In the 2017 Higher School Certificate Examination the faculty offered six subjects: Business Studies, Economics, Geography, Legal Studies, Studies of Religion 1 Unit and 2 Unit. In all subjects students performed exceptionally well.

The following students gained Band 6: Charlotte Paduch, Asleigh McAlpine, Aston Arenson (Legal Studies), Jonny Mikhael, Emily Symes (Studies of Religion 1 Unit), Ivan Koudashev (Geography) and in addition a student in Business Studies within the top 10% of the State.

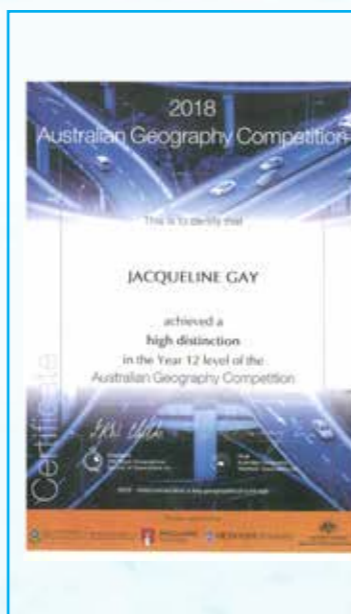
The Social Sciences Faculty involves a team of dedicated teachers working to encourage all our students to achieve their personal best in their chosen subjects. The dynamic nature of our subjects require our faculty to stay informed of contemporary issues and changes to the global and Australian economic, social, political, legal and business environments in order to teach such changes to students as they arise.

To this end, the faculty has used a variety of teaching strategies that has involved creating individual learning programs, phone lessons, study days, field visits and excursions together with an increasing use of technology such as online lessons material and web lessons. This year has seen the implementation online of the new Geography curriculum for Stages 4 and 5

and the introduction of Work Studies for Stage 6.

To support students and their learning Year 9 Geography has fortnightly web lessons using Adobe Connect and weekly lessons for Year 11 Economics. These have proved to be invaluable for the students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of course concepts and content.

To enhance students' investigative skills and first hand observation Stage 6 students undertook excursions and fieldwork activities in Pymont.



Jacqueline Gay, an HSC Geography student, competed in the Australian Geography Competition run by The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland in conjunction with the Australian Geography Teachers' Association. Jacqueline's effort was most commendable – she received a High Distinction in this national competition. Well done Jacqueline.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) & Careers



The VET/Careers Faculty sets out to assist students to gain qualifications in their particular vocational area. Practical skills are acquired through both the expertise of teachers and work placements. These skills are the result of the theory presented in the various frameworks of VET. Work placement has been a highlight in all cohorts of the faculty. Hospitality students have worked in 5 star restaurants, luxurious hotels and a range of beautiful function centres, with an exemplary placement performed by Lachlan See at Erina Leagues Club.

Business Services students gained real time experiences in legal firms, golf clubs and smash repairers. Antonino Saglimbeni's placement was of particular merit.

ICT work placement students really are at the pulse of business and need to improve and/or rectify any technological issues that may arise. Our students attended several venues including our own SDEHS technology team where they kept the wheels of industry rolling in their own school and all were highly praised for their input and knowledge.

Retail students were placed at a variety of outlets ranging from Myer to vegan supermarkets. They were on the frontline attending to sales, complaints and receiving stock. Lauren Busuttill, Katrina Braad and Elliot Harris were all praised for their acumen and professionalism.

Perhaps the highlight of the VET/Careers Team throughout the year has been the operation of the Coffee Shop every Friday at school. The Hospitality team produced delicious treats which were ably sold by Retail Services students who mastered the computerised cash register that enabled them to keep record of stock and manage the financial accounts of the shop.

The Careers Team offered a number of TAFE and AIE (Academy of Interactive Entertainment) workshops to Year 10, 11 and 12 students to get hands on industry experience. Careers resources to support students in their career paths and post school options are offered throughout the year for students and parents.



Technology and Applied Studies (TAS)

2018 has been a fantastic year for the Technology and Applied Studies Faculty. Our students have enthusiastically embraced so many of the different experiences offered in the faculty.

Congratulations to our 2017 HSC students who worked hard throughout the year and achieved pleasing results overall. A good proportion of our Agriculture HSC students achieved Bands 5 and 6, with one of the students being placed on the Distinguished Achievers list. The Design and Technology students had solid results in both practical work and written examinations. Students undertaking Engineering, Food Technology and Textiles and Design also did well with results well above the state average. Students who undertook studies in Information Processes and Technology and Industrial Technology Multimedia also did well.

The senior Textile and Design students participated in study days throughout the year. On two of these days, designers from the fashion industry came in to share their knowledge, passion and ideas. The conversations and inspiration have helped in the creation of high quality textile projects.

The Year 11 and Year 12 Design and Technology students attended a series of lectures run by the Powerhouse Museum. These lectures provided the necessary encouragement to assist students with their major design projects.

To continue to enhance the learning and engagement of our students, the TAS Faculty has further developed web lesson delivery. This year saw the introduction of web lessons for senior Engineering Studies providing high level detail on specific technical drawing techniques.

Year 9 and 10 Food Technology students continue to participate in web lessons and more and more students are having individual web lessons with their teachers.

Study days continue to be a highlight of the various Year 9 and 10 TAS subjects.

Information and Software Technology study days have complemented the web lessons and the elearning course work. Students have been heavily involved in website development, using HTML and CSS to build their own websites. They have also learnt about artificial intelligence and made their own spreadsheet simulator.

Textile Technology students have developed various techniques and practical skills which are then applied to students' projects.

Students undertaking the Technology Mandatory course in Years 7 and 8 have continued to produce outstanding solutions to design briefs. The high standard of work has been evident in both the course and project work.

Once again the TAS Faculty was heavily involved in the Big Day In. Students had opportunities to make 'salad in a jar', create a solar powered mini racing car and recycle t-shirts. Students also explored artificial intelligence, virtual reality and augmented reality as well as robotics and coding.

Congratulations to all our students for their hard work and dedication this year.

Agriculture Excursions



In what has become a pleasant and productive annual event, Year 12 Agriculture students went on an excursion to a dairy in March and Year 11 students went on the same excursion in June. The excursion helps to support the students' Farm Case Study.

Our meeting place is at Camden Park Environmental Education Centre on the property of the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute at Menangle near Camden. Brian Trench, Agriculture teacher and manager of the centre, takes us through activities such as land capability and soil assessments.

This year, No 9 Dairy, the dairy enterprise that was onsite and which we formerly visited, has closed down, so this was the first year we have needed to relocate our excursion to an alternative farm. We visited a small family owned dairy farm called Country Valley located in a remote valley near Picton, a 30-minute drive from Menangle. This is owned and run by the Fairley family, who produce an award-winning range of milk,



"Technology; seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought."

*Dr Albert Szent-Gyorgyi
(First to isolate Vitamin C)*



cream and yoghurt for local retailers and up-market food outlets in Sydney. Here Brian took us through pasture production, cropping, farm technologies and herd management and students had some hands-on experience with calf feeding and milking.

Students observed the manufacture of dairy products and heard about the marketing process. The Fairley's claim that you can "Taste the difference!" (achieved by minimal processing) is readily proven to us through tastings which are always enthusiastically received.

The students finished the day at the new commercial scale robotic rotary dairy at the Sydney University 'Corstorphine' farm near Camden. The visit to the robotic rotary dairy is useful in supporting the syllabus section relating to innovative technology in agriculture. Access to this cutting edge technology was available thanks to Brian Trench's calm commitment and local connections. We are extremely grateful to him.



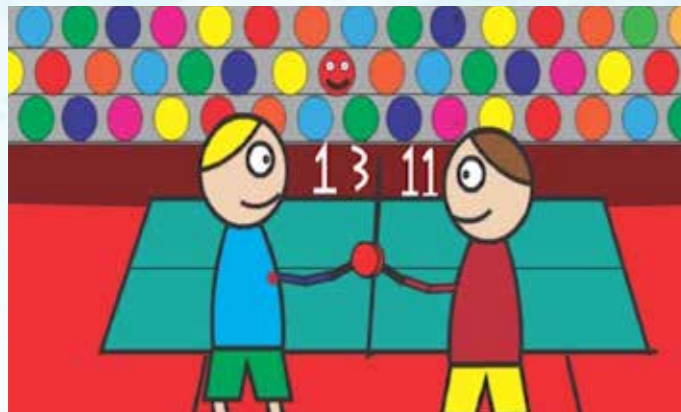
Technology and Applied Studies (TAS)

Industrial Technology Multimedia

Congratulations to all our students for their hard work and engagement throughout the year. A particular mention should be made of our Year 12 students who completed their Industrial Technology Multimedia Major Projects and Folios. The Industrial Technology Multimedia course is now in its sixth year and once again our students have created some stunning and inspiring digital works. Our talented group of Year 11 students produced exceptional animations and videos this year, and we look forward to continued success for them as they move into Year 12. A big thank you to those students who participated in study days and school lessons this year.



Alexander Chorley



Aiden Swindail



Joseph Vyner



Joseph McGaffin



Milla Jones



Kathleen Notohamiprodjo



Jessie Van Niekerk

Web Lessons and Videos

At SDEHS we are deeply committed to providing innovative, engaging and connected modes of lesson delivery and learning content. As a result we have been developing our own video resources in house under the direction of the video editing team with the use of such technology as the learning board and the green screen. The videos present opportunities for students to learn, interact and engage with the curriculum in their own time.

The learning board enables teachers to explain and demonstrate concepts and problems much as they would in a classroom with a whiteboard. The clear perspex board and luminescent pens enable the students to view and follow lessons step by step. Mathematical equations can be simplified and chunks of text can be broken down and annotated visually.

Using the green screen teachers and students are no longer limited to the typical classroom environment. Lessons can be transported back to ancient Greece, concepts can be explained on top of a mountain and parts of Biology can be revealed from within a nucleus.

With the generation of our own video resources we present further opportunities for our students to connect with staff and the school. These videos allow students to easily recognise their teachers, breaking down the initial barriers of anxiety that often face students on their first visit to the school.

Keep an eye out for these resources across the school's elearning site.



Learning Hubs



Tuggerah



The SDEHS learning hubs give students opportunities to regularly meet with their teachers and peers and offer safe learning environments for students to complete their school work, attend workshops and engage with other students.

In 2018 our learning hub program has expanded and continued to thrive. Students have embraced two new learning hubs at Miranda and Tuggerah.

Student attendance has steadily grown at our learning hubs across Greater Sydney and the Central Coast. It has been fantastic to see so many students, teachers and parents attending the hubs on a regular basis and so many new faces attending for the first time this year.

This year saw the opening of the Miranda Learning Hub in the Sutherland Shire and the Tuggerah Learning Hub, at the north end of the Central Coast. The Miranda Hub operates on a Monday, the Tuggerah Hub operates on a Tuesday and both hubs have been a hive of activity for students and teachers. The Woolloomooloo Learning Hub now operates on a Wednesday as well as Friday, due to popular demand.

The Learning Hub Team works tirelessly every week to make the hubs vibrant and dynamic places where everyone feels welcome. We encourage you to visit your local learning hub and discover the opportunities that the hubs have to offer.



Woy Woy



Glenbrook



SDEHS Woolloomooloo



Ingleburn



Miranda



Student Leadership Group (SLG)



Known in another life as the SRC ...

The SDEHS Student Leadership Group has been busy during 2018 with many ventures and a new name!

Leadership should be for all students, not just those elected to specific positions, and therefore we have used a less formal framework to facilitate and explore students' ideas about leadership and to work collaboratively as a team with shared responsibilities.

The SLG focused on building individual leadership styles through a series of workshops exploring different aspects of leadership. In this way the SLG hoped to lay the foundation for the emergence and development of leadership qualities in all its members.

In 2018 the SLG:

- Increased membership from 13 students to 20 students.
- Took up the Federal Government's Anti-bullying Campaign Challenge held in March and made an anti-bullying video guided by James Dickman and Pippa Jokhan. The video is entitled, "Laughing Heart, Anti Bullying".
- Worked closely with Deputy Principal David Tracy to help develop a user friendly Mobile Phone and Social Media Policy and to understand a number of issues around their use in a school setting.
- Participated in a Student Leadership Workshop, led by Deputy Principal Lisa Keating, exploring different student leadership styles and skills and focusing on planning a SLG Vision.

- Conducted seven SLG meetings throughout the year and in doing so developed a dialogue with a number of staff and executive members about issues that are particular to students attending a distance education school.
- Organised and participated in a Social Media Detox 24 Hour Challenge in September.
- Organised and ran activities for Harmony Day and Diversity Day.
- Supported the Big Day In organisers in various roles on the day.
- Initiated a program of raising awareness of Social Media by placing posters "Think before You Post" in prominent positions throughout the school and learning hubs.
- Raised funds for the State Cancer Council by participating in Australia's Biggest Morning Tea in May working collaboratively with VET Hospitality and Retail, and the Coffee Club.
- Organised four SLG members to attend The National Young Leaders Day in November at the Convention Centre in Darling Harbour.

The SLG is supported by the following teachers: Rachel Angus, Jinsy Jacob, Catherine Soper, David Moss and Reena Nazareth. It is also widely supported by executive members and other staff as well as the Supervisors of Boys and Girls.

Wellbeing Initiatives

The Student Wellbeing Team has worked tirelessly this year to engage students in their learning and support their wellbeing.

The mentoring program is still running successfully. A number of our students have developed good rapport with their teachers where they can seek support, get advice and set goals for their future. We hope to continue this program and increase student participation.

Another ongoing successful program is our transition program, which has supported a large number of students to gain a good knowledge of school processes and a better understanding of studying via distance.

The Head Teachers Welfare and the Year Advisers have been busy reviewing students, ensuring they are fully supported and on track with their learning. This year has seen a significant increase in the number of coordinated support meetings, where we can all work together to support our students to achieve their personal best.

Another continuing program which has offered immense support to our families is our wellbeing program through Mind Plasticity. Students needing more intense medical intervention are referred to Mind Plasticity, a group of medical personnel who visit them at home.

The school has endeavoured to provide students with opportunities to come into school, meet other students and participate in excursions and extracurricular activities. These include movie days and an excursion to the zoo organised by the Boys' and Girls' Supervisors, who work tirelessly to further engage our students with their school.

Our merit system has seen many students rewarded with certificates for their ongoing hard work and commitment to their studies.

At the end of this year we will hold our semi-formal again for all students who complete their Year 12 studies. This is a great opportunity for students to celebrate this achievement.



Lisa Keating, our Deputy Principal has successfully initiated a school choir project comprising students and staff. Our school choir meets every fortnight and they have performed not only on special school occasions but also at the Distance Education Symposium. Congratulations to our choir.





Volunteering & Social Justice

It has been a very exciting year for students who have been involved in social justice and volunteering at SDEHS. The Student Leadership Group (SLG) has been a key part in organising the social justice days at our school. Students say they feel a sense of achievement and community when organising and participating in extracurricular activities. To foster a sense of community on Harmony Day and Diversity Day students collectively prepared their own meals on the days. This, along with diverse activities such as Japanese drumming, henna tattooing, student caricatures, cookie decorating, soccer, meditation and Irish dancing, made a fabulous day for all involved including the parents and staff. One parent said, "I'm so grateful as the quality of activities and time taken to organise is simply outstanding." Another said, "More students and supervisors should come to these days as it fosters community and belonging and helps students meet people and learn about differences and similarities that unite us all."

This year the volunteering program has gone from strength to strength with 33 students participating, up 10% from last year. The volunteering activities were varied and included volunteering time at the zoo, working with firefighters, doing various jobs at the surf club, at a community dance class, helping elderly neighbours with chores, dog walking, blood donation and various other activities within students' communities. Hugh McDonald, one of our seasoned volunteers, says volunteering is a win-win. His work at the zoo helps him get closer to his dream of being a zoo keeper and feeds his love for animals. Students also participated in the Coffee Club initiative at our school, learning to make coffee by volunteering their time. Having completed their barista experience some now supervise other students in their coffee making for the school community. What a gorgeous bunch of students! We feel immense pride when we see so many of our students growing in empathy and kindness by spending time and effort to help others.



Big Day In 2018



Year Advisers' Report

Stages 4 and 5

2018 has been an eventful year for Stages 4 and 5. Years 7 and 9 students participated in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Year 10 worked towards achieving their Record of School Achievement (RoSA).

This year has held many great opportunities for students in Years 7 to 10 to get to know each other better and experience new things. Students have embraced learning hubs across Sydney and the Central Coast, attended Orientation Day and the Big Day In, and have participated in Girls' and Boys' Days.

2018 has been a big year of student achievements – those that are measured and acknowledged and those that are perhaps more personal and less widely acknowledged. Whether you excelled academically, shone in extracurricular endeavours or rediscovered a love for learning and challenged yourself to step out of your comfort zone – congratulations!

Thank you to students and supervisors for your wonderful commitment to SDEHS this year. We look forward to another brilliant year in 2019!

Zoe Ticehurst

Julianna Chan

Rachael Corkin



Stage 4 students' work

A fresh start

My issue: War Creating Refugees

Before I had the chance to leave my country, I thought I was going to die.

Throughout the whole day all I did was cry.

All of a sudden I was high in the sky and I felt myself flying.

If I said I wasn't terrified I'd certainly be lying.

Then I decided to close my eyes tight.

When I opened them, I was shocked by the sight.

Strolling the peaceful streets of this unfamiliar town makes me wonder, how in my old area all I used to hear were loud explosions that sounded like thunder.

Inhaling the fresh air makes me develop goose bumps all over my skin.

That tingling sensation I haven't felt in a while forces me to grin.

Although the strong heat is making me sweat, I've been through worse, a lot worse I bet.

Looking around I see a lot more greenery than before.

I don't have to gaze at dark, damaged places anymore.

There are many locations to explore and inspect.

None of them are old, ugly or wrecked.

The sight of individuals laughing and smiling is definitely a change.

I used to see people crying, so you'd understand why it's quite strange.

I realised this area accepts anyone when I spotted so many unique faces.

Blondes and brunettes wearing glasses and braces,

Indian, French, Mexican and Chinese,

Believe it or not, I even spotted a Maltese.

Being in this new town is a dream come true,

The beautiful environment is a breath-taking view.

"I like this place," I'm beginning to say.

I enjoy waking up and looking forward to starting the day,

I don't have to cuddle my teddy bear anymore before I go to sleep.

I don't have to sing a song or count any sheep.

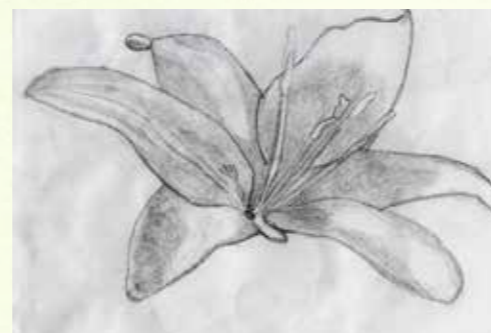
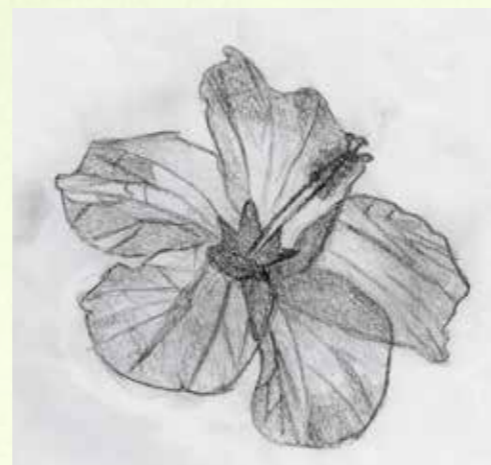
No more living with big scary fears,

No more sadness and no more tears.

I'm glad I had the chance to move away from my nightmares

To a place where they treat you with very good care.

Hagar Felah



Zahra Elammar



Alexis Dickson



Spice rack collage Aaron Batkin



Sarah Roumieh

Bud

There was a black pug named Bud

Who fell in a heap of mud.

When he jumped out,

he gave a big shout:

I now feel like a dud!

Jack Whalan



Dakota Maddocks



Natasha Moore

Stage 4 students' work



Sun safety poster Ashton Chipi



Kobi Clements with hydroponic plant



Board game design project Ella Perry



Lucy Button



Bailey Bajic



Ashlynn Rick



Elizabeth Challinor



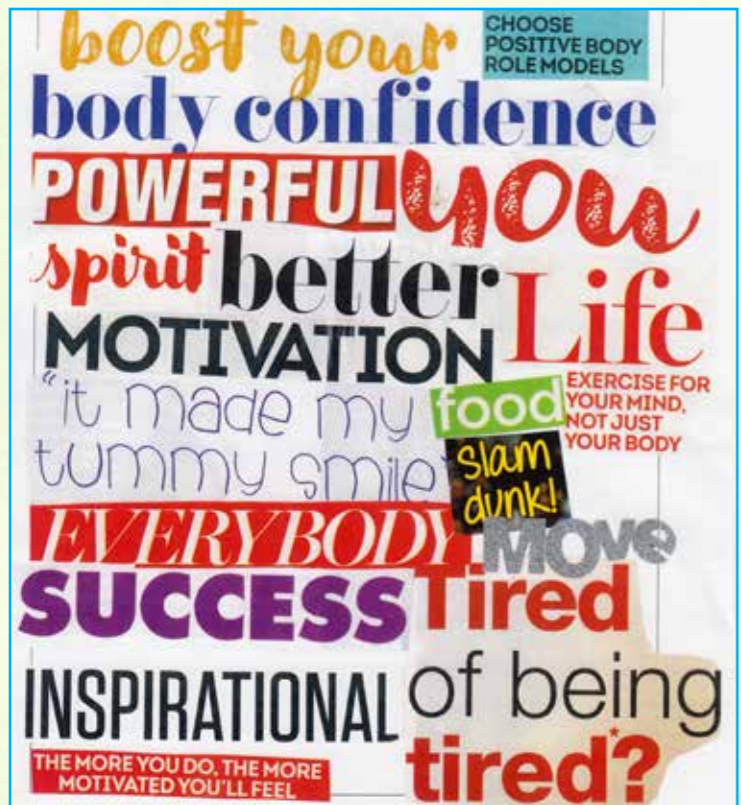
Matthew Blakeney



Compost bin Jack Lambert



Clock design project Blake Leftly
Bridging the Distance 2018



Macey Hosking

Celebrities vs role models

A role model in my collage is Corey Taylor, the lead singer of Stone Sour. He has had such a rough time in his challenging upbringing. He deals with his saddening past by making music about it. I can relate to the music very well and it connects with me on an emotional level, which helps me to not feel alone and like I'm the only one going through a lot of these things. Whereas Marilyn Manson is not a role model but a celebrity. He does a lot of things to shock his audience. Therefore, he is a celebrity unlike a role model such as Corey Taylor.

I chose these images because I love music and especially nu metal and heavy metal. I chose these photos as well because these types of bands are usually perceived as horrible people who scream and swear all the time and like all of this horrible music. Corey Taylor, who is the lead singer of Stone Sour, is also the lead singer for Slipknot, the most loved and hated band. Their content is usually perceived as derogatory and obscene, but their music has so much more meaning than modern pop music and it's not all about sex and money but actual real life problems.



James Skinner



Lauren Dobbie



Jordan Carter

Gothic Poem

*When Genevieve was very small, the frightening tower seemed very tall
Now that Genevieve had grown, she still felt fear for the dark grey stone.*

She entered the house and then looked around
She lit the gold candelabra left on the ground
She walked through the space, such enormous rooms
She held her breath, scared of the gloom
She entered the ballroom where she was never allowed
The mirrors showed dancing and the music was loud
The velvet curtains were still soft and rich
The tapestries shone with their silvery stitch.

*When Genevieve was very small, she longed to dance in this wondrous hall
Now that Genevieve had grown, she whirled and twirled and spun on her own.*

As she danced she breathed hard and her heartbeat raced
She felt a hand on her hand and a hand on her waist
Her ghostly partner led her in a dance
She was lost in his world without a chance
She felt transfixed like amber in stone
And yet she felt glad and no longer alone
Who danced with her now and why was he here
And was this man really someone to fear.

*When Genevieve was very small, all she wanted was to go to the ball,
Now that Genevieve had grown, she wished she had never come here alone.*

Her partner danced her around as the violins played
Then he spoke to her saying he needed her aid
I need you to go to the drawing room where
You'll see a painting of children there
My sisters, my dog and then there's me
I lived here when young but longed to be free
I ran away to the Far East but then I passed
I'm your uncle so recall me so I can last.

When Genevieve was very small, she admired that portrait on the wall

Now that Genevieve had grown, she wanted to make her relative known.

She cried for her uncle, lost and alone
She cried for his sisters, left in this grey stone
She couldn't remember his name or his heart
For much is lost when families part
She worried if she could not recall his name
He would be lost to love's sweet flame
And then it came to her, her lost Uncle Percy
Lost to this house, to this family and country.

*When Genevieve was very small, she didn't believe in love at all
Now that Genevieve had grown, she worried for everyone left on their own.*

She understood her uncle's plight
When she was young she planned her flight
Away from this house and family too
That suffocated and stuck like glue
She had made her fortune and filled her purse
But she missed the love of a family close
She also had left and now came back
To find the family ties she lacked.

*When Genevieve was very small, she wanted to leave and forget them all
Now that Genevieve had grown, she wanted to forgive them and just come home.*



She packs up the portrait, so it won't be sold
Along with the house as an antique of old
She will cherish the painting for all of her life
And free her uncle from his lonely strife
He would not be lost to the forgotten place
Because she would remember his name and his face
Two peas in a pod, two black sheep that did roam,
Now the two of them together will make a home.

*When Genevieve was very small, around her heart she made a wall
Now that Genevieve had grown, she opened her heart and is no more alone.*

Maya Walsh-McLeod

Stage 5 students' work



Haley Prince

Composed text from bombed survivor in Japan on the Conflict unit

Today was the third day I had waded through the seemingly endless stretch of rubble.

I clutch my baby boy's little hands, terrified of losing him amidst the confusion ... We don't have a home anymore: nobody does. Everything was destroyed. We were the target of a sick attack.

I see nothing resembling a human form around me. I see nothing but rocks, rubble and ruin. What had previously been the homes to young families, and peace for the growing elderly, have been reduced to rocks and dust. I truly believed it was the end of the war. I am sure that many others believed so too. It was so loud, yet I can't hear anything but deafening silence of destruction.

Hiroshima was a large city. We had quite a population: men, women, families and children, but they are gone now. I wonder if anybody else is left or if it is just my son and I.

It has been so long since we have eaten: we were already struggling due to the World War, now a war of survival. I wish to see the gorgeous homes of Hiroshima again. I wish to see my child's father, but everything is silent and there is nobody to be seen.

So we must keep travelling in the hope of finding something: food or water, human life, anything.

We are unsure of how we will eat next. We must remain on the lookout for any source of nutrition.

It all happened so quickly: we had just had breakfast and my husband had already left for work.

I may never find him. My child will be fatherless. Overwhelmed I am, but I must remain calm, for my child. He is looking very thin. He tells me he is hungry and I know he is. I try to assure him, but deep in my heart I am conflicted, as I am unsure of what the future holds.

It hurts now, because I know we may not make it.

Amarah Raad

An unspoken terror

I slammed the car door shut as I clipped the seatbelt into place. Julia tugged on my shirt with her small hands as our father revved up the car and sped us off to no place at all. As the yellow glow from the passing street lights clawed their way over us I thought back over the chilling week in that farmhouse.

When I walked up to the pearl white porch I was dreaming of the adventures I would go on. The slow screaming of the rusty grey windmill made the still hills feel eerie. I shrugged it off then. Julia was dragging her feet and her blindingly pink suitcase behind me on the gravel road.

"I don't like it," she mumbled as she passed me. I didn't think she would. Six year olds don't want to stay on a creepy old farm for a week. They want to play with friends and watch TV.

"Too bad," I grumbled, looking past her at the inviting glow from the windows. Mother was already inside.

Over the next two days we all had fun. We had rented three four wheelers to ride over the barren hills.

But that night I heard Julia creep into my room. I was preoccupied texting my group of friends. The odd thing was that she didn't speak to me. She stood there and whimpered till I spoke.

"Can't sleep?"

"The granny won't let me," she whispered.

"Tell granny to leave you be or get Mum." I sighed. I had no time for Julia's imaginary friends.

She scampered out of the small dusty room and down the hall. I heard her frantically knock on our parents' room. A few seconds later she was let in I believe.

Over the next four nights everyone but me was on edge. An unspoken terror in the little house. I don't know what made them so terrified. They never told me. But on night seven, while we were all playing Cluedo for the hundredth time, I saw it. I couldn't move for a while, but I looked around at everyone else to see if they saw it too. I'm sure they did. Julia screamed and mother took us and ran outside, dragging us at her heels. Father ran past the other hallway and got our bags.

I looked at my father's still face as we stopped in a motel parking lot. He looked calm. Like nothing happened. But his eyes, they told a different story. Wide with fear and confusion. Its image seared in them.

We'll never go back.

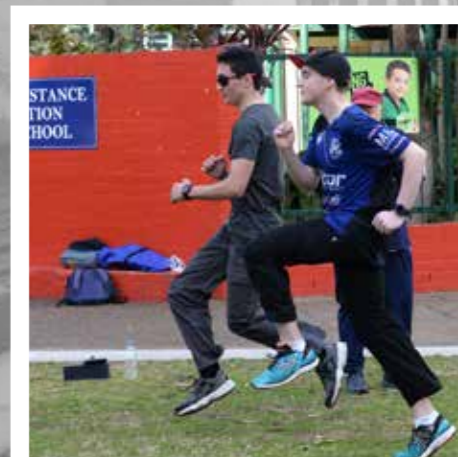
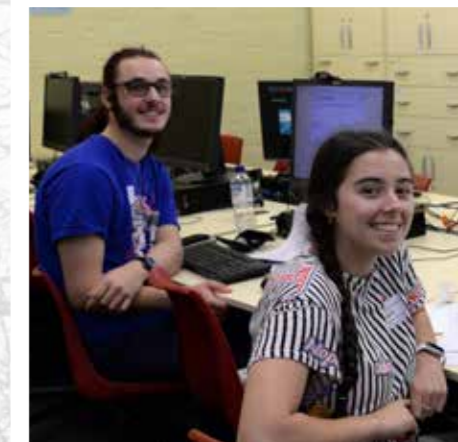
Lauren Stanbury



Alanna Ross



Ebony Pressnell





Zachary Hannelly

The Castle

By the light of the moon, through the misty haze, the castle is only just visible. Pointed towers and spires can be seen peeking over the trees, watching the forest. While the sounds of the owls' hoots and bats' wings encircle your ear drums, the castle finally emerges in front of you. It rests on a magnificently large rock, teetering on the edge at every corner. The only light source comes from a turret, on the top of the tallest tower. Crossing the rickety wooden bridge, it opens to a great courtyard. Unlit torches hang from the tops of the open corridors, all leading to a massive entryway. The mahogany door is grand and old, and furnished with two brass handles. Patterns carved into the wood tell of mystery and magic. Above swings a massive pendulum that has reached complete stillness, covered by the glass window on the clock tower. Beautiful lancet windows frame the building, dotted everywhere creating a picture perfect piece of architecture. Your hand rests on the rightmost brass handle. It is piercingly cold, which makes your blood turn to ice. With all your might you manage to force the door open. The creaking echoes through the castle and into the abyss below. You're desperate for help, this is your only option. Hesitantly, you enter.

The wind tickled my neck like a breath,
And the forest smelled strongly of grief and death,
No longer I roam, as I approach my old home.
The thunder rumbled like a deep growl,
And hooting on a branch, a nearby owl.
I felt all but completely alone.

I remind myself as I approach the great monster,
That this is a hurdle that I must conquer,
My shaky hand grips the handle.
The door screams loudly as it swings open,
I am greeted by a scene that is completely broken
Lit only by a singular candle.

I instantly feel my blood freeze,
I begin shaking, and fall to my knees.
I feel that someone is watching.
There is a sound at my old bedroom door,
I hastily leap up from the floor.
Someone is knocking.

I approach with the greatest caution,
as my vision creates a distortion.
There is someone here.
The owl hoots once more
Louder than before,
I can feel them near.

Phoebe Anderssen



Natalie Sorensen



Andrea Pordage

The mission plan

On planet Earth, Thomas Manish answered his mobile in a hushed voice as his wife was asleep in the bed next to him. "It's 4 am. Who is this?" he asked, hesitantly. The voice that replied was a gravelly, familiar one. "We need you, Tom. It's a new mission. Planet Xeron is our last chance of survival and you're the last piece in our puzzle." "Commander, with all respect, I'm not ready for something like this," Tom replied. His voice was no longer a dull whisper. His wife stirred in the blankets beside him.

Thomas stood at the entryway to the glass office. The door was closed but he could see the new faces that he was about to be introduced to from outside. Sharp footsteps striding down the hallway told him that the Commander was on his way. Tom swiped his brown hair to the side, scared. Once the Commander and Tom walked through the door, there'd be no turning back.

I could just walk away, he thought. He hadn't even met his team yet. The Commander was talking, but Tom wasn't listening, his face written with insecurity. They were getting closer and closer, he could hear people talking. He took a deep breath standing in the doorway thinking, "There's no way I can walk back now."

"Thomas Manish, this is your team. Rae, Tobias, Ryan and Minh. Thomas Manish is the last piece to the mission: he is going to lead us all the way," said the Commander confidently. As the Commander spoke, Thomas' eyes widened and his skin grew pale as a white sheet. The Commander walked up to the front of the room, turned his computer on and the smart board behind lit up. The briefing had begun.

The Commander said, "This is the mission plan, you are going to follow everything." The team looked at the screen in front of them as their roles were being explained. Thomas opened his paperwork and the first thing that caught his eye was "mission leader". Thomas didn't know what to think. The Commander finished the briefing with a firm voice. "It's now in your hands," he said and walked out of the room. His footsteps echoed through the hallway again as he left them to debrief on the information he'd just left them with.

The terrain was too rocky for human skin to ever walk on in bare feet. The rocks were sharp, like black shards of dull glass. As each of the crew members stepped out of the ship, they looked around hesitantly. The sky was a deep orange, tinged with red. The black of the ground met the orange glow at a distant horizon. It was an unsettling palette of colours for a landscape, when greens and blues were the usual sight.

The team didn't know what was ahead of them: they were on unfamiliar territory. The valley that they had been walking through all morning was bathed in heavy rays of sunlight that made them all sweat under their protective suits. The mountain to the right of them towered into the orange sky like a black skyscraper. It was nothing they'd ever be able to climb. They wanted to see what was on either side of the mountains. They needed to see if all there was around them was a black ocean of rocks.

After a week, the team had grown used to the colours but something else had been unsettling them, the far-distant, unimaginable future had mysteriously become the present ...

Emma Herford

Stage 5 students' work

The house on the hill

Mist clung to the grass like a child gripping his mother as a young man walked by, one step after another, his head held low as he walked through the yard.

Passing the old, tired trees that stood in the shadows he moved quickly and quietly to avoid being exposed. He opened the door, crept inside and waited for the door's closure which was slammed shut hard.

He moved slowly and calmly past the clock tower. Each room he passed smelt damp and sour. He headed to the hall where he could sit and eat and when he entered the candles flickered. He turned with fright as a shadow was formed and it snickered and snickered, and he fell to the floor and bowed at its feet.

"My lord," he pleaded, "please don't kill me. I'm just a nobody, old farrier guy." There was nothing else said between the two, and he rose from his feet and took a book from the case. As he struggled back to the shadow at a marvellous pace, he placed the book on the floor and the shadow grew and grew.

"Spells," he offered. "Many indeed." "I don't need spells you repulsive weed." The sound echoed through the place, and the man shook with fright. What was this shadow doing here on this gloomy night? And the shadow vanished without a trace.

The man looked confused and sat there a while, when the shadow returned with an unpleasant smile. "My grandmother, you see, she is dead, all thanks to you and your ancestors." "I'm confused, I don't understand." "You don't understand, they chopped off her head."

The man, pale as a sheet, sat and stared, when the shadow rose and became prepared. "I've been looking for you, James Headbow." The man stopped and looked, and stared at the shadow like his brain had been cooked. "You will pay for what you did." And it disappeared to the sound of a crow.

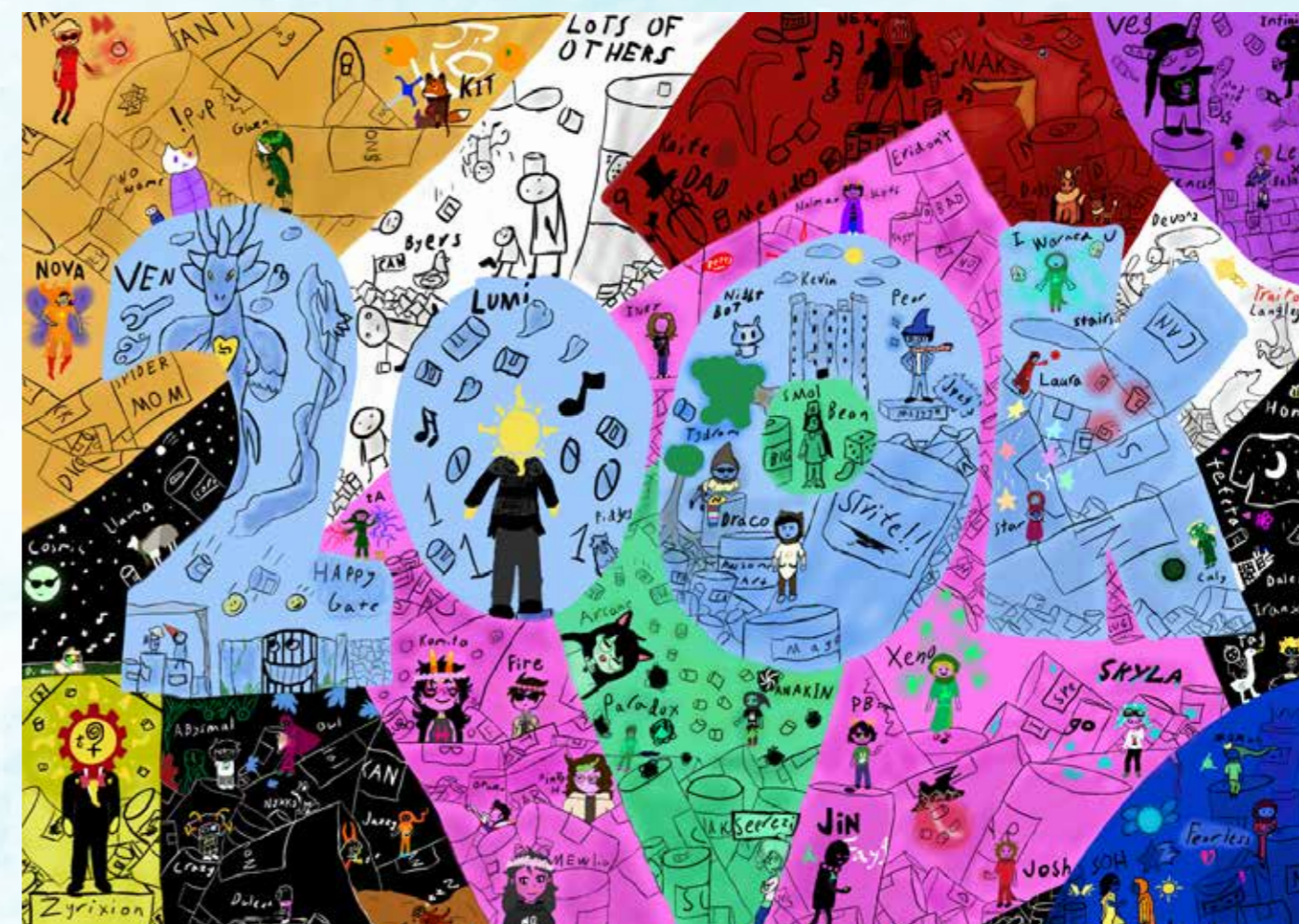
Rose Noble-Booth



Belle costume Chloe Murray



Samantha Allen



Connor Carbone

Leadership and *Whale Rider*

There are no set rules for a role model. However, the strength of a role model is likely to depend on experience and knowledge, communication skills, including listening and the ability to build rapport.

A role model has the ability to shape the views, ideals, and actions of a person.

Having younger siblings places me in a role of responsibility. They tend to pick up and learn behaviours and attitudes pretty fast from their elder sister, who is their role model.

Ways I can instil values in them is lead by example, and teach them right from wrong, honesty and respect for others.

Teaching respectful behaviour to my siblings, I too need a role model and that is my mother.

Parents who are able to keep the lines of communication open between them and their children help to create in their children a good well-rounded set of values that motivate children to understand and learn from their parents.

Paikea met many barriers on her journey to become leader.

Koro's masculine ideal for his people disregards females by automatically excluding them from the scope of leadership and other positions of power within the community.

On the night of Pai's speech contest at school, Pai gives her speech in honour of Koro and the love she has for him.

Pai says she knows she is not the leader her grandfather was expecting, but she hopes that knowledge can be shared with everyone, instead of just a select few, so all of her people can be strong together.

The speech that Pai gave has qualities of a leader and role model.

Kayla Beetson

Stage 5 students' work

My cosy window

Looking out my window it is blue as far as my eyes can see.

People are walking by but the view is calm and quiet. All day the old lighthouse watches over all, keeping people safe. Waves come up and crash against the sand banks. The grasses swish effortlessly in the wind creating a smooth ocean atmosphere not unlike what is heard inside a shell.

I rest for hours in a gentle daze as I watch the blue sky come down to meet the ocean. The clouds drift by, making subtle shapes and images as they go past. The footprints disappear in the wind as time passes. Far out in the ocean I can glimpse dolphins and whales playing gloriously, living free.

Waves foam up on the shore from the depths. Here I sit observing all from my cosy window just revelling in the unfolding serenity.

Thomas Smith

Everyone Has A Right To Food And Shelter

Human Rights

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has a right to food and shelter. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and of their family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control.

In many circumstances people are forced to live in poverty and do not have access to food or shelter. Hundreds of people die each year due to the lack of food, water and shelter. This is a violation of their human rights.



Emily Brodie



Christian Carlo-Stella

The palm tree

Warm summer night: the pristine blue water calmly lapped the shore of the peaceful, sandy beach as the tropical birds returned to their treetop nests, singing charming songs to one another. The overhanging palm tree, swaying lightly in the gentle sea breeze, cast its evening shadows onto the deserted sand below. Out on the horizon the orange sunset like a glowing orb sank slowly into the abyss, leaving no trace other than a fading peachy warmth.

Raining winter night: The harsh rain lashed the deserted beach like a thousand tiny knives falling from the grey heavens as the enraged sky commanded the ocean to send wave after wave hurtling down onto the sodden waterfront. Every tremendous gust of frigid, bitter wind threatened to tear the already weatherbeaten palm right out of the drenched ground as the other trees thrashed about like a drowning creature.

Saskia Blake

Party Animals (The day I learnt to talk to animals)

The giraffe cried Moo Maa Bleat, I've got lots of great snacks to eat.

The elephant called Trumpet Honk Pawoo, Here's the birthday cake with candles too.

The rhino grumbled Groan Snort Stomp, My DJ playlist is ready to romp.

The zebras wailed Whoop Whoop Whuffle, We're ready to dance, pop and shuffle.

The hippo groaned Bellow Burp Grunt, Time to check the guest list out front.

The chimps babbled Gibber Gawk Screech, Who is going to give the main speech?

The meerkats shouted Chuckle Chatter Squeak, Our balloons and streamers need a tweak.

The wildebeest bleated Baa Hum Snee, Yes it's fancy dress for you and me.

The leopard sighed Purr Hiss Scoff, Cool the coloured lights flash on and off.

The vulture sang Cah Caw Squawk, That spinning mirror ball is to gawk.

The hyenas shrieked Bark Cackle Squeal, Hey this bash is the real deal.

The cheetah warned Chirp Meow Yowl, Careful the police are on the prowl.

The lion voiced Growl Snarl Roar, Ok I'll be the bouncer at the door.

The gorilla yelled Ugg Boom Pow, Lets get this party started right now!

Hugh McDonald



Chloe Osborn



Tara Chamberlain

Stage 5 students' work

The day virtual reality became real

I awaken. The breath that I so longingly want to catch is unheard and only slightly felt in my chest. I can feel my stomach inflating then falling back into the body that I no longer have. I find myself taking dagger-like inhalations. Short, quick and sharp, hard to grasp any of the "oxygen" around me. My eyes open to a world of pure whitewashed walls, floors and a high ceiling, almost impossible to gauge where it starts or finishes.

All of a sudden an irritating drone starts to ring. It wraps around my ear drums, pulling and beating on the fragile tissue and cartilage that lie so delicately inside. Blood feels as if it is going to seep out of my ears and leave a huge puddle on the ground. After what feels like years, the ringing metamorphoses into some sort of recognisable sounds.

First it is only gibberish, like dialogue from a foreign time and land but at the same time strangely familiar. I feel physically challenged to capture the words and process them meticulously in my own ocean of a mind. "Warning, warning, error in cell 233, warning."

My breath shortens nearly to the point of passing out, as I bend over trying to inhale the fast flowing air like after running a marathon. Looking around frantically I find little black numbers that I so desperately didn't want to. 233. That's my cell. Something has gone wrong.

I hear a strange clicking that is echoed through the empty white space but instead of being comforting, it fills me with even more dread. Something has entered the room.

Slick-backed dark, magenta coloured hair. Eyes, unusually wide and strangely coloured blue, but very beautiful, all three of them!

She has dark olive skin that glistens as pure as glass and slim brown arms and tentacle like legs.

She walks like smooth melting chocolate and places herself directly in front of me. Looking up and down she examines my ghostly figure and is writing down comments on a glass like tablet. Her speech is like silk. The words slipping out from her plump pink lips, like water trickling down a mountain. Although this isn't anything like English, it is soothing. I mean, after having your ears nearly exploded this is a pleasant surprise.

She seems to be signalling and having a very formal conversation with the wall. At this point in time all I do is laugh. It is that or cry. I know something has gone terribly wrong.

Through my confusion I catch glimpses of figures sitting at a desk about three metres in front of me. Four white squiggly, jellyfish creatures sit and are also examining me and talking to the colourful lady. Are they friends or enemies? I still did not know.

Abruptly the space goes black. I look up and urge myself not to cry, but it is like the night sky I would stay up late to see every night. But better. Stars and planets shine like glass slippers. Colours, neon and glitter all glare at me from the beautiful elements that laze in the sky.

We are gliding through space effortlessly, touring the night sky, experiencing everything that I have ever dreamed of. Swiftly we come to a jolt. I can now understand clearly.

They say, "100 years ago Earth became toxic. You were put in an underwater capsule to preserve your body. You can now see 'Pitoria' on your left. This is your new home." I cup my hands to my mouth and fall to the floor.

How long have I been in a preserved state of being? Was any of my previous life even real? It dawns on me then that this is no longer a game, this is the day virtual reality became real.

Isabella Lopes De Oliveira



Skate board design Matthew Parker

Descriptive paragraph in assessment task Hole

The sky is bright blue with not a single cloud, the sun is shining bright and it is boiling hot. The grey wolf runs past yucca plants and cactuses to chase after a big-horned sheep. He jumps onto a large rock but loses balance because his paws are getting burned from the hot surface of the rock. He jumps off and continues his chase on the crumbly dry ground which is starting to crack because there is no water or rain. The wolf quickly catches the prey as he is faster than the sheep and enjoys his meal after dragging it to his den.

Leonie Thorn



Jace Bayas



Samara Brender



Graffiti creator Mikayla Powers



Tishanie Ratnappuly

My Friend Ben

Today was the day

I learn to talk to animals

The weird thing was

They only understood capitals

Everything I said

I had to yell at them

Except for my favourite

A dog named Ben

He was a special animal

He understood me

He even knew

How to spell tree

Ben will forever

be my best friend

We will be together

Till the very end.

Kaitlyn Tavoletti

Year Advisers' Report Stage 6

The role of Stage 6 Year Advisers is a forever changing and unpredictable one. It has been a privilege for Shona Blinco, Louisa Bailey and Yolanda Passadore to work with and support our senior students as they grow and ultimately move on to be positive members of society.

The highlights have been seeing so many of our students actively engaged in whole school events such as Big Day in, Harmony Day and the school choir. Our Stage 6 students have led the way in school leadership projects such as the Student Leadership Group (SLG) and have regularly attended the school learning hubs.

It is no surprise that Years 11 and 12 are often described by students as both the best times of their schooling life and their most stressful times!

The best of times, because you have finally reached the last of your schooling years, studying subjects that you are passionate about. Additionally, you now receive the respect and responsibility of a senior student. The possibilities are endless and the excitement of the world after school and independence beckon.

The most stressful of times because of being constantly bombarded with the seemingly endless assessment tasks, sets of work and rigour of the senior years. It is important to remember that all this will pass, for you to emerge into the world confident in the knowledge that you have done your best.

To our Year 11 students, we look forward to nurturing your growth and enabling you to reach your true potential in the HSC year. We want to thank the parents and supervisors of students for their cooperation to support our students and encourage them to strive for their very best.

For all our Year 12 students we proudly congratulate you on your hard earned achievements and wish you every success in your future endeavours. We trust your time with Sydney Distance Education High School in retrospect will be considered as one of the best of times!



Stage 6 students' work

Our planet's future

(Verse 1)

Yeah, Global warming is an issue that needs to be addressed,
So stop with the carbon emissions, just give it a rest!

I can't even believe that our icebergs are melting,
Too bad our sun just keeps on heavily smelting.

I understand everyone's concern for our planet's future,
But what's the point if we just keep staring at our computer?

We need to take action and prevent this catastrophe,
But people also need to understand that this is no travesty.

(Chorus)

Yeah ...
And all I know is the sun is shining,
Yet we fight on through the night,
While the bergs are melting and the sea is rising,
I don't know so I ask them why.

(Verse 2)

Why are they refusing to listen,
Why can't we make a decision.

To just prevent all of this from simply making a collision,
Why can't we just take some time and just give it some revision.

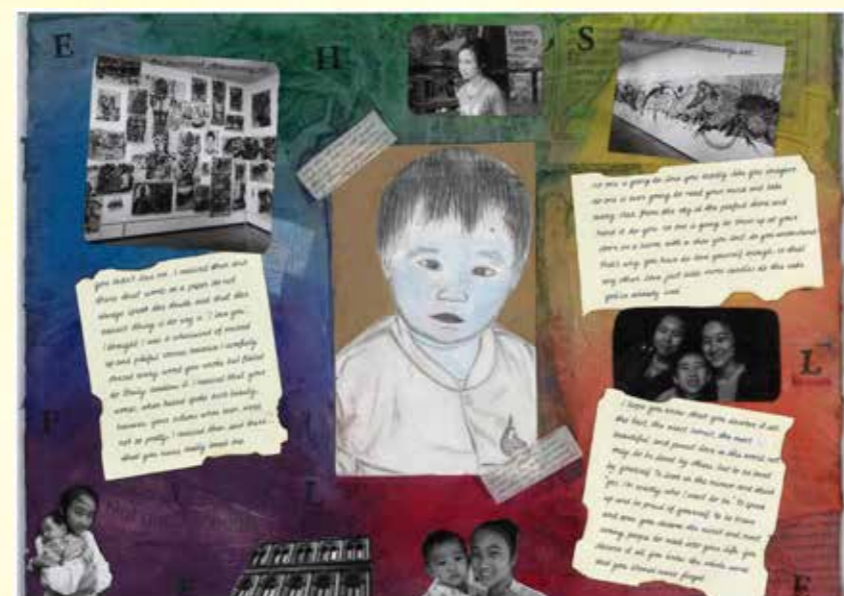
We all need to make a difference on our planet, that would be drastic,
To stop all emissions and all of this plastic.

I am only one person and I know I'm just brainstorming,
But every individual can make a change on global warming.

Kyle Fentie



Angelina Meany



Emily Tir

Aboriginal Studies – Major Design Project

For her Year 12 Aboriginal Studies major project Bianca designed and created a sports jersey that can be used for her school's sporting teams (Blacktown Girls) and for the students and staff to wear for special school occasions. She wanted to produce a jersey that demonstrated a sense of heritage and identity for the students and something that promoted Aboriginal history and culture in the school and community. The design for the jersey is original in its composition and the figure on the back represents the life of Maria Lock.

Maria was one of the first Aboriginal women to be educated at the Blacktown Native Institution and later used that education to successfully regain some of her family's traditional land by petitioning Governor Darling in 1831, an almost unheard of achievement for an Aboriginal woman of the time. Bianca's jersey certainly does the memory of Maria proud as well as earning her full marks for her Major project!



Bianca Barton



Ella Callan



Lucy Lakeman



Kathryn Fung

Kristen Chirgwin



Thomas Elliott



Jordan Vasquez



Hugo Poulet



Toby Mansell

Joy Luck Club essay

To what extent have the characters of *The Joy Luck Club* been influenced by their connections to significant people and places?

The heart-warming series of short stories in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* shares the lives and relationships between four Chinese women and their daughters. This compelling text reveals the importance of the connections these women have made with people and places through Tan's clever use of storytelling, illustrating how the women have grown and learnt about themselves. The journey that these four women experience as they survive hardships and terrible sacrifice to establish a new life in America while still valuing their Chinese culture and heritage, shapes who they are and in turn influences and shapes the personalities and morals of their daughters. Specifically, the short stories 'The Joy Luck Club' and 'The Red Candle' explore how major life experiences shape the character of a person. Both stories present a unique perspective on surviving horrific circumstances, demonstrating how powerful one's connection with their past can be in shaping their future.

Tan's short story 'The Joy Luck Club' explores the complex relationship Suyuan has with her past, and is used as a platform to try and improve the connection between herself and her daughter Jing-Mei. Suyuan's connection to her past and her ultimate sacrifice, to leave her babies in an attempt to keep them safe, provides some clarity to Jing-Mei, helping her better understand and connect with her mother. Tan enlightens the reader to this: "My mother and I never really understood one another." Jing-Mei has always felt unloved and unappreciated, constantly misunderstanding why Suyuan is so tough on her. This story helps her to realise that Suyuan pushes her hard because she loves her and wants her to appreciate and make the most of her opportunities. Suyuan questions Jing-Mei: "Why do you think you are missing something you never had." The use of a connection to the past allows Jing-Mei to better understand the sacrifices her mother made for her to be in a position of safety, freedom, good health and prosperity, and thus helps improve her connection with her mother allowing her to grow.

In 'The Red Candle' Lindo Jong shows how her survival of extreme circumstance shapes her to become the woman she is today. Her strong connections to her family ensure that she survives being separated from her family at a young age and slavery, until she is able to find a way out, without losing dignity or shaming her family. "I once sacrificed my life to keep my parents'

promise. This means nothing to you, because to you promises mean nothing."

Lindo's situation allowed her to discover her own inner strength and self-worth: "I looked in the mirror. I was wearing a beautiful red dress, but what I saw was even more valuable. I was strong. I was pure. I had genuine thoughts inside that no one could see, that no one could ever take away from me. I was like the wind." Her connection to this time in her life, and the strong influence of her family are very important to her: "It's too late to change you, but I'm telling you this because I am worried about your baby." Tan demonstrates how important family values and connections are through Lindo's concern that the messages behind her story will be lost, as she is worried her granddaughter will forget her promise, and forget she had a grandmother.

Amy Tan's short stories 'The Joy Luck Club' and 'The Red Candle' demonstrate how strong connections with past experiences, people and places can contribute in shaping the characters and connections that one forms in later life. Through Tan's exploration of the characters' connections to their past, it becomes clear that the characters of *The Joy Luck Club* have been significantly influenced by their connections to people and places, allowing them to understand each other and grow.

Amy Cottrell



Hana Brinkworth

Stage 6 students' work

Aboriginal Studies – Major Design Project

In my major project, I wanted to focus on the history of Aboriginal surfing and the relationship Aboriginal people have with the water dating back to the Dreaming.

In my report, I looked at the physical, social and emotional health benefits of surfing through interviews with various Aboriginal people from the Yuin Nation on the South Coast of NSW, detailing their spiritual relationship to surfing as a means of being connected to country and their ancestors in a contemporary society. For the final section of my report, I focused on the Indigenous Surfing Titles held at Bells Beach annually promoting Aboriginal heritage and identity, especially to a young audience. I made a conclusion detailing the importance of the surfing community as a refuge for young Aboriginal people as they hold similar land and water values as a traditional Aboriginal community.

The surfboard is painted in Aboriginal symbols and represents all the great beach breaks in the Yuin Nation. The back of the surfboard has a brief description and a key so anyone who picked up my surfboard could understand the concept of the art.

Holly Caddy



Important memory – A perfect day

It was a Saturday morning in September. I had to get up early and get dressed into a tuxedo with my brother and his best man. Yes that's right, it was my brother's wedding day. We were all really excited, he's finally tying the knot and on such a perfect spring day as well. I remember not being in a rush when getting ready, in fact we had plenty of time to do whatever we wanted, we just had to make sure we didn't get our shirts dirty, so we decided to go for a drive and get something to eat. After carefully eating our food, we decided to head off to the wedding venue. It was a very beautiful Japanese style garden, that had a stunning pond and cherry blossom trees. After the priest made everything official, it was off to the reception. We travelled there by a limo which was an awesome experience. Once we got there we found our seats. I got to sit with the bridal party in front of everyone else. I felt like a king sitting up there in front of all those people. After that all the adults partied on. Watching them stumble around was quite funny and entertaining. Watching them try to dance was hilarious. Just after that we went home and I collapsed into my bed, passing out almost instantly.

Nathan Thornton



Olivia Winestock



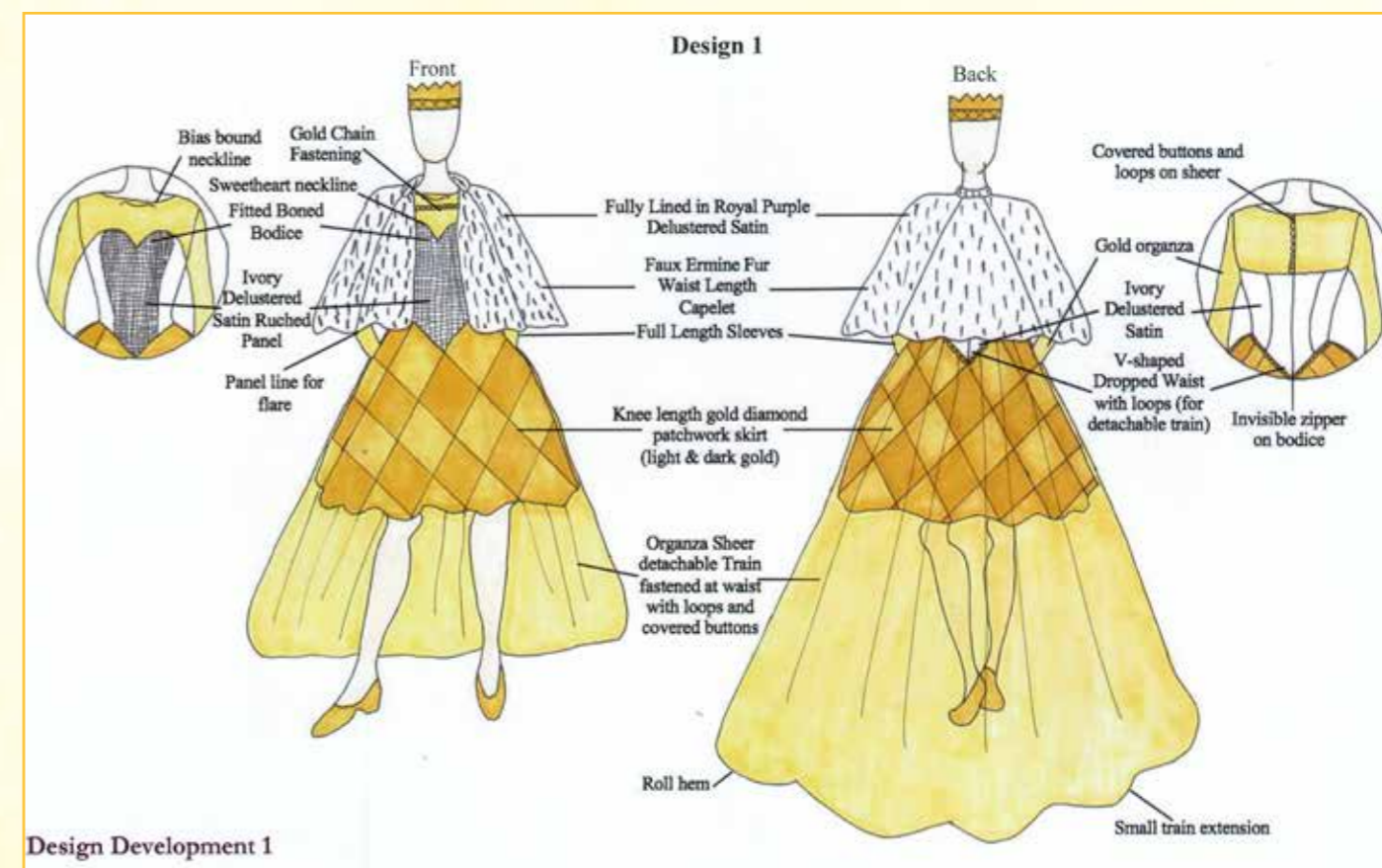
Nastasia Stewart



Alyssa Cogle



Caitlin Stamoudis



Design Development 1

Olivia Okely

Stage 6 students' work

Aboriginal Studies – Major Design Project

Hassan's project consists of an artwork in which Islam and Aboriginality are, in his own words, compared and illustrated. The artwork is a clever blend of both Islamic and Aboriginal imagery. Hassan composed an original project that reflects recognisable aspects of both cultures and the fusion created makes for a thought provoking piece of work. Hassan is to be congratulated on his vision that clearly represents the multicultural society we live in today.



Hassan Saab



Lily-Rose Griffioen



Rachael Rodrigues

Mae's version of Alan Moore's classic, Swamp Thing

Hitachi's shoes got stuck in a dense area of the riverbed. He bent down and tried to retrieve his Nike Air Monarch shoes with his hands when his efforts of retracting his legs towards the surface weren't enough to free himself. When he lifted his arms from the murky water beneath, a stretch of moss managed to catch itself onto his fingers, so he flicked it away. He looked down at his watch. Although the GPS relied on satellite pin-pointing he had somehow ended up off the radar. With no shoes and a broken digital watch, he proceeded forward into no man's land.

When he thought he could no longer walk, the shallow water became harder to penetrate and the acrid smell of the swamp burnt his chest. He wanted to take a break and throughout his trek kept a vigilant eye on any elevated dry land he could find. When he finally saw dry land in the distance, he felt alleviated. He walked in that direction and his feelings of hope disappeared when it was just a mound of less dense soil and leaves and branches. Feeling disappointed, he swayed his arm against the green with the little energy he had left. The mound abruptly rose from the water. The tired explorer raised his head high as the figure towered above his tiny frame. "Why have you disturbed the Swamp Thing?" the creature opened its mouth with a deafening voice that silenced the nature around it.

Moss layered its entire body. Its limbs looked like twigs and bark. Vines looking like veins entangled its body, adding to the giant physique. Dragonflies wove through layers of its green moss and a water spider would occasionally peek from the reeds hanging from its shoulders. The monster had a commensal relationship with these animals. Leaves and flowers grew on the parts of the body exposed to the sun, photosynthesising and providing life to the thing it created, something that Hitachi thought should've been against the laws of nature. He also asked himself whether it was wrong to call the Swamp Thing a monster.

Hitachi realised the attention he could receive as a discoverer of this nature phenomenon. Blinded by greed, he attempted to befriend the Swamp Thing but it saw through him and told him to go away and if he came back, it wouldn't be as merciful. Hitachi didn't like this but he valued his life so he turned in the opposite direction and adopted a new objective, and that was finding home.

Eismaa Takhel



Kartini Marques



Claudia Sluiter

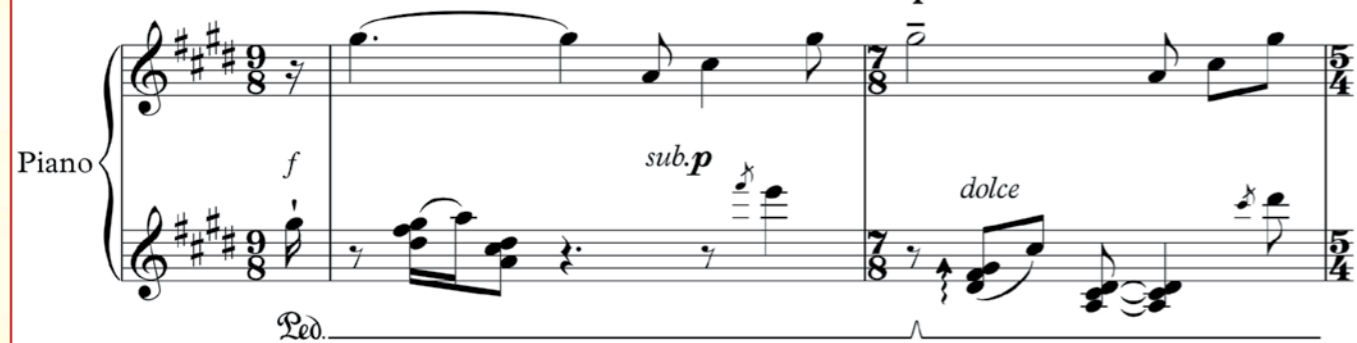


Lela Johnson

Wind Chimes

Whimsical, slowly, molto rubato

poco rit.



HSC Music composition Cheryl Tsui

Score is in C

Phrygian Mood

A Adagio doloroso ed espressivo ♩=57

Trumpet in C
Horn in F
Trombone
Bass Trombone

HSC Music composition Emma Russel

The first day at the sea

The air shimmered in the heat: It was like looking at the world through Glad Wrap. The grass was brown with dust willy willies wafting through the paddocks. Even the dams were so low we couldn't swim in them to relieve the stifling heat. Big red roos lying panting under meagre tree shelter; the few cattle we had left, nosing at dry hay my dad had forked out for them near the water trough. We'd been in drought for so long now I couldn't imagine seeing a whole ocean of water, yet Mum and I were going to stay with my aunt at Pearl Beach; my first time leaving the station, a real journey of discovery for me. It was sad to leave Dad, but someone had to mend the fences, feed the cattle, and fill the drinking troughs, whilst the sun continued to burn up our land.

As we drove through the red land, a smoke trail of dust swirling behind our wheels like dragon breath, minutes turned to hours and we didn't seem to be getting anywhere. How big is this place, how far do we have to go? I knew Australia was big, but the reality of enormous space was starting to hit me. How big was the whole continent?

There were small changes, as some rocky outcrops lined with low scrub started to break the never ending horizon. I wished we could stop and see the view, but Mum said we had a long way to go and I was starting to understand what that actually meant as she drove on and on through the dust, thankful for the long range fuel tanks that meant we didn't have to worry about finding a servo for fuel too often.

We had pies at a small pub, where the dunny was festooned with spider webs and where the smell made your guts heave. Their bore water tasted like drinking rocks. There were so many minerals, not thirst quenching at all, but the pies were amazing – huge, juicy, mouth-watering meat, with the best flaky pastry and a heart of ketchup on top.

After the pub the world started to change: there were patches of trees and hills and as we reached the Great Dividing Range I saw miles and miles of bush – a sea of trees, waving and shimmering their blue haze in the sunshine. Is this what the sea will look like? And the cliffs of sandstone, I'd never seen anything so tall, so majestic. Our home was pasture and sky as far as the eye could see, but these stone giants soaring out of hidden creeks far below were taking my breath away. Seeing things on the TV doesn't give you the sense of perspective of little me in a vast background. It doesn't give you the smells of eucalyptus or calls of currawongs ringing in your ears.

And still we drove: through busy roads, so many cars, houses, so much noise, so many people. The senses were battered from all sides, overwhelmed even with new impressions. I wasn't sure if it was exciting or scary: so different from the wide space stillness at home, so much to take in. Where did all these people come from and what are they all so busy about?

Then suddenly from the top of a hill I see a ribbon of grey, under grey clouds stretching to the horizon. We are nearly at journey's end. I'm so excited. What'll it really be like to be up close? We drive down the hill, around a bend, and there it is, white sand and silver sea. Mum parks the car and we rush down to the water's edge. It moves, swirls in silver spray, and the wind blows the sea salt smell at our faces. It's amazingly cool this wind, and I watch the sea heave and roar and foam at our feet. And I'm really here, it is all I imagined but so much more. Discovering for myself the constant sound of the sea, never a moment's silence, the roar and shush of the waves, the feel of the salt wind on my face, the sand under our feet as Mum and I dabble our toes in the cold crisping curl of foam. Mum and I laugh and giggle and point out the gulls skimming wave crests with such grace and ease.

The sea, how can I describe the sea? I've discovered a world that is ever changing, that plays with light and sound, that scares and entrances with its ferocity and beauty, a place to play, to dream, to swim, to bury yourself in soft warm sand. A whole new enchanting world has unfolded before me, as Mum and I run from the chasing waves that first day at the sea.

Elani Wild



Jane



Kailee Roberts



Kirsty Barton

Blue Mud Bay

2.5"
 2.1.25
 Hit 01

♩ = 108 **breathy, vib**

Flute: Senza misura, ad lib. (with 'x' marks for notes), ad lib. (with 'x' marks for notes), *p*, **breathy, vib**

Violoncello: 'seagull' harmonics on A string, freely, *p*, *p*

Piano: *p*, 6, 6, *p*, *ped.*

HSC Music composition Genevieve Brown

The birthday present

Emily was celebrating her 26th birthday. So far everything had gone well. She liked to just relax with a couple of friends and watch a movie or play a fun game. That day changed when she received a call from her mother. She got a lot more than just a birthday congratulations when her mother said that her father had contacted her and wanted to talk to his daughter.

Emily's father had left when she was six. She didn't have many memories of him. It was hard on her not growing up with a father and it took her a while to accept and part way with it.

When she heard he wanted to meet she didn't know what to say, so many feelings passed through her – anger, sadness and confusion on why he wanted to talk now.

Most of it was anger on how he just left and why he wanted to come back now when she had settled in life and was happy with the way everything was. She said that she needed time to think about it. She kept thinking why he wanted to talk: does he want something from them or does he want to be a family again?

No matter what she thought she kept going back to asking how he could just leave her and her mother. She decided to sleep on it and get some fresh thoughts on it tomorrow.

The next day she got another call saying that he would be at the hotel two blocks away in room 126, he was leaving tomorrow and really wanted to talk. Emily was put in a tough situation, should she go to talk to him, listen and let out her anger on how he left, or move on? After a long discussion with her mother she decided it would be best to go.

When she was standing at the door she was having second thoughts but then the door opened, there he was. Emily was looking at her father the first time in around twenty years, they just stood there for 30 seconds until he invited Emily in. Emily kept asking how someone could just leave their family and taking out her anger while her father got there and understood that she was angry and then he said that nothing he could do would make up for what he did. But he did explain how he was struggling with mental health issues and addictions and had to go away to try and deal with it. He said he couldn't bring himself to let her see him like that but thought she should know and wanted to meet her. They kept talking for a few hours and she was willing to let him try and make it up.

Joshua Lloyd-Jones

The Letter

Since I was little I had always written letters. I wrote them and burnt them, it was my way to deal with life. As I grew older the letters became longer and every inky drop was filled with flaming raw emotion. I don't remember how many letters I wrote over the years but one I received will forever be etched into my memory. It made me realise who I wanted to be. It happened while I was studying. The storm outside rumbled and lightning split the sky with sickening cracks. I had recognised the smell of burning paper and looked around to see if anything was on fire. Seconds later a fireball flew across my room, narrowly missing my head before landing on my bed. I did the only logical thing I could think of, I screamed and took evasive measures. (I hid under my desk).

Once I felt no more flaming objects were going to be launched at me I dashed across the floor and flung myself onto the bed. A small scrunched up piece of paper sat just below my pillow. I grabbed the paper and scowled at it, there was no trace of fire, no burnt edges, not even a whiff of smoke. I blinked a few times and rubbed my temples. Maybe I was having an episode of some sort? What if I'd finally lost it? Oh no ... what if I'd turned into Gran? I stopped thinking and opened the letter. I'd deal with my aging issues later. The paper had a slight blue hue to it, reminding me of the sky on a warm spring morning. The writing was beautiful, each letter had the perfect tilt and curve. Then my brain actually focused on the words, the sentences and soon enough I was reading this bizarre letter.

Dear Miss,

I have had the pleasure of reading your letters over the course of your life. This may seem strange but I believe I can offer you some advice ...

Even though I have never had to deal with the things you have, I do know your story. Many people will never see or understand the struggles and the pain you're going through. It's ok, in the end it's those people who miss out on incredible people like you. Some people will put you down, but it will only make you stronger. Sometimes family isn't all it should be. Remember that just because they're blood doesn't mean they're family. You are so much stronger than those weak, narrow-minded people. If they are going to hurt you, then they don't deserve you.

What I'm trying to say is, use the strength your life has given you – be amazing.

Your friend,

Martin

P.S Did the letter reach you as a fireball? The first one you ever sent to me came hurtling towards my face! (No hard feelings.)

That letter changed my life, and my friend – well they're pretty cool. I mean what's cooler than having a friend from Mars?

Jennifer Cockley



Emily Wood

Friends forever

As we started towards the opulent building I felt the butterflies begin to dance in my stomach. The air was as cold as snow and left us briskly opening and heading into the building. We were ready! Our ballet buns tight, our ribbons tied and we had each other.

It was Annabelle and I against the world. We always had each other, we went together like horse and carriage. Today was the day things might change. We were auditioning for one of the biggest ballet companies in the world, The American Ballet Theatre. We were both very eager to be accepted but they only had one spot left. Deep inside I knew Annabelle was better than me but I never thought that would tear us apart.

Things changed as time passed. I was still living in Oklahoma and Annabelle was in New York working in my dream job. I was extremely lonely and she was making new friends. Our friendship was growing evanescent.

Maybe it is me? Maybe I have to make a change. Be more independent. It was no longer Monique and Annabelle, it was just Monique now. It was time for me to come out of my cocoon and make my own friends.

I decided to call Annabelle and tell her how I was feeling. She felt the same way, which was abnormal because I thought she had forgotten all about me. She reassured me that I will always be her best friend no matter the distance. As long as we look at the same sky, moon, stars and breathe the same air we are together.

Charlotte Sutton



Tandia Olsen

The other side: the future everyone will eventually arrive at

On a dark, dull and dreary day in 1981, Ellensvale New York, a mother was sitting in a café eating a cream cheese bagel while ever so slightly glancing at the news on the television set until an advertisement appeared. "Want to go back to your past? Here's your chance." This normally wouldn't mean much to Greta but today was the 10th anniversary of her daughter Camilla's tragic death. Ten years ago, a devastating accident occurred on the 13th night of July 1971. A 13-year-old girl was murdered after a home invasion in a small apartment on the south side of New York after her mother ran a red light and was involved in a car collision on her way home from work. That young girl had no protection, no one there to help her, no one to cry out for. That young girl was Camilla and her mother had been living with the guilt ever since.

After hearing the advertisement on the television set about going back to the past, Greta made her way to the building address provided. She met with a man by the name of Dr Wright, a doctor known for experiments that can either make or break your life. His message was simple, "I can take you back ten years and one day in time but you will never be able to return to present time." She didn't even think twice about it, she had already accepted that the present would now become the future and the past would become the present. It was simple: enter this machine, travel through time, you will know the future – but would she be able to change it?

It was warm, early and cosy. Greta didn't know where she was until she heard her. "Mum, come on! You're going to be late for work if you don't move!" She woke immediately, ran to her and wouldn't let her go, unbeknownst to her daughter she hadn't felt her warmth for ten whole years. Greta wanted life to go back to normal so she accepted the coffee from her early risen daughter, got ready for her job as a property manager and waved her daughter off to the bus. It was an old, almost nostalgic feeling for her to walk around the office full of energy and not feel everyone's pitiful eyes fall on her as she walked past their desk. Everything felt as if it was normal but Greta could feel that dark, gloomy cloud fall over her thoughts: would the future be able to be changed from its previous course of destruction on hers and Camilla's life, or would it unfold all over again?

That night was spent laughing, talking and cherishing each other's presence. Camilla didn't know what happened in the future the next day and her mother was driven to not let the future repeat itself. The day started off the exact same as the previous except today Camilla

wouldn't catch the bus home, she would be picked up by her mother and they would go out for dinner and shopping. Greta was watching the clock and counting down the minutes and seconds that the future had given for her daughter to live, until it was finally time. Camilla was surprised when in the middle of the mall her mother hugged her tight and whispered, "I love you." Camilla went along and said, "I love you too." Her mother was relieved as the minute ticked over, she then prayed for just one more minute to spend with her daughter each time the clock ticked over. After another few hours Greta was smiling from ear to ear just excited to have been able to extend her time in her daughter's life and have avoided the tragic accident in the future time.

As they were travelling home, the car was full of laughter, singing and love until Greta glanced over towards her daughter to take a split second to appreciate her daughter's laughter that she had been so dearly missing in her life. She wasn't in control anymore, the future was. Camilla looked over and smiled at her.

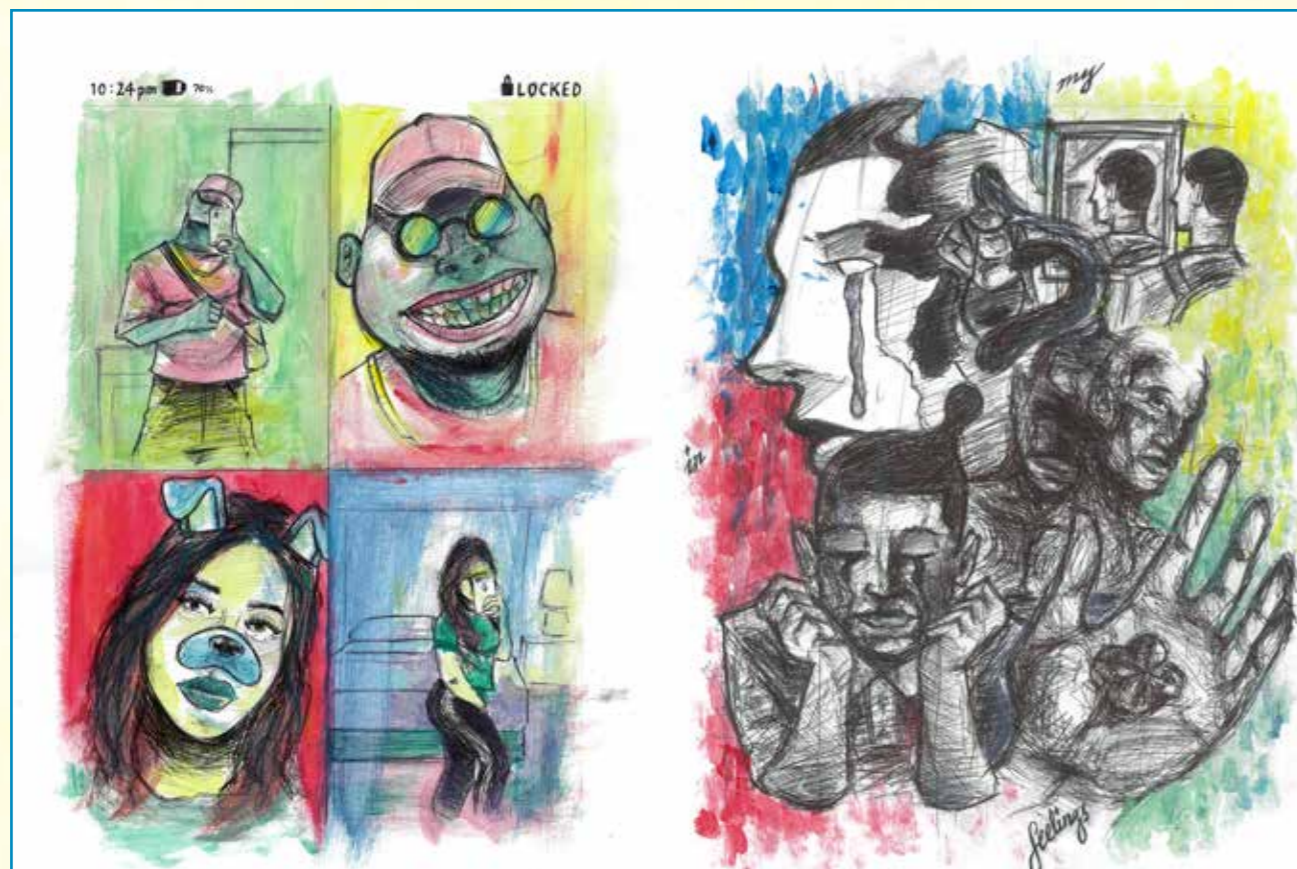
Pain was the first thing Greta felt when she had woke up, replaced by tears and sadness as she looked over at Camilla's lifeless body. Her eyes opened as she croaked out, "Thank you for coming back for me, even though it was only for another day." Greta was in complete shock. "How did you know?" "I've always been looking over you from the other side, I sent this chance to you so I could tell you that it wasn't your fault and so we could say goodbye." Tears rolled down their cheeks as they held each other and they said their goodbyes for the last time. "Goodbye, Camilla."

Three days later.

After returning home from the hospital Greta opened Camilla's door and found a note on her bed. It read "Mum, when you are reading this I will have passed back to the other side but I wanted to give you this letter to explain this experience. When you heard that advertisement in the café, I sent it so I could come back to you from the other side; life after death; the future that everyone will eventually arrive at, and say goodbye like we should have been able to. In these next years, you spent them grieving and missing out on almost ten years of your life; you lost your job, your house, you lost yourself. You can't change the past but as you've just learnt you can alter the future. We've said goodbye now and left each other peacefully, now go live your life. Love Camilla."

In the next few years Greta changed her own future, she quit her job and followed her dream of becoming a chef, opened her own catering business and even got engaged to Dr Wright. Greta learned that even though Camilla isn't with her physically, she is right there on the other side, watching her future.

Mickayla Haigh



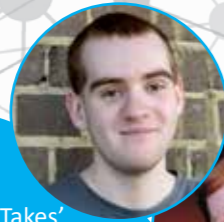
Jeneum Kepu

HSC Student Profile

- Q1. Your favourite song, book, movie or magazine.
- Q2. In my spare time I ...
- Q3. Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
- Q4. What is the most memorable thing you learnt?
- Q5. Any advice to younger SDEHS students?

Aaron Mearns

1. Song: 'Whatever It Takes', Imagine Dragons. Book: *Thravn: Alliances*, Timothy Zahn. Movie: All Marvel movies.
2. PC gaming, read articles on upcoming technology.
3. Working in networking and data servers.
4. Not giving up after so many years at school – it's all worth it in the end.
5. Go to as many learning hubs as you can. They changed my life and they can change yours for the better. The teachers that run them are some of the nicest and most caring teachers I have ever met. They go out of their way to help you.



Denali Blunden

1. Song: 'Lay Me Down', Sam Smith
2. Sing, record and edit covers for YouTube.
3. Working and doing something that I love.
4. Time Management.
5. If you put your mind to something then the sky's the limit.



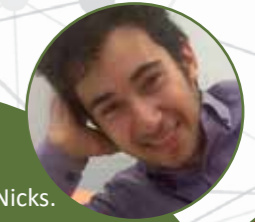
Amy Campion

1. Movie: *Finding Nemo*. Song: 'Infinite's Theme', Sonic Forces.
2. Play videogames, play with my cats, cook, make clay models, volunteer at the RFS and at a cat shelter.
3. I'm not really sure what I want to do, maybe be either a chef or a firefighter.
4. I liked learning about food tech and science. Playing soccer at the hub was always fun and memorable.
5. Being stuck at home all the time can get a bit boring and lonely so try to get involved in school activities like the hubs, Big Day In, the camp and stuff.



Benjamin Narooz McGrory

1. 'Edge of Seventeen', Stevie Nicks.
2. Actively debating and advocating issues facing youth such as homelessness, mental health on the Blue Mountains Youth Council, collecting vintage records, visiting family and friends.
3. Life isn't about our destination but our journey in which we are exposed to new people, cultures and the world. A long way from the boy who couldn't write a sentence or sit an exam. Like a shooting star, I aim to represent those without strength or a voice.
4. When I first arrived at SDEHS, I didn't believe in myself. However, supportive teachers like Catherine and Ray taught me to never give up and that anything is achievable. Thank you to all the teachers at SDEHS.
5. Don't be afraid of reaching out to your teachers for support. The only way to overcome your barriers is to have guidance. Hubs and study days are valuable as well as feedback on assignments and past papers.



Shane Monaghan

1. Loves music of all eras.
2. Gaming with my friends.
3. Working in an automotive apprenticeship.
4. Sydney Distance Education High School is a great school.
5. Listen and talk to your teachers. Do your work and enjoy your time at SDEHS.



Amber Whant

1. Book: *A Court of Thorns and Roses*, Sarah J. Maas. Movie: Marvel movies.
2. Read, watch movies, Youtube.
3. Working in web design.
4. Trust yourself.
5. Keep on top of your work.



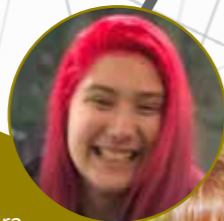
Eve Cullinane

1. Book: *84K*, Claire North
2. Read and listen to music.
3. Studying for graduate studies for biomedical science in university while enjoying life with my friends and family.
4. Change is not static! As we experience life our decisions are able to evolve to better suit our personal needs and wants. Change your subjects, see all your options and don't be afraid to take a leap of faith.
5. Take a moment when you're stressed to acknowledge your own limits. If something isn't working change it up and find another approach.



Aiyana Diamond-Coorey

1. Any book by Cassandra Clare.
2. Spend time with my animals, read books and watch Netflix.
3. Working with native or endangered animals, or/ and travelling.
4. The colour of coral is actually bacteria. That is why it is important to wash out any wound from coral – Marine Studies.
5. Don't stress about getting high grades and being perfect at all of your subjects. In two years' time it's not going to matter what results you got in your HSC ... Just be a kid, and enjoy it!



HSC Student Profile




Hannah Minnis

1. Too many favourites, I can't pick.
2. Play with my kitten, read and go for walks.
3. With a job that I enjoy.
4. How to be self-disciplined and work well on my own.
5. Put your health before the schoolwork.



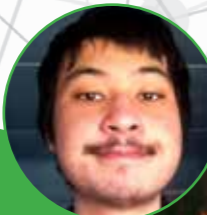
Tru Starling

1. Book: *Still Me*, Christopher Reeve. Movie: *Fast and Furious*.
2. Read books, go for a run or walk my dog.
3. Competing with the best female surfers in the world.
4. To be proud of who you are and the person you want to be, don't just try to become like the people around. Be the pop of colour amongst the sea of grey.
5. Keep smiling.




John Lee

1. Too many books to mention but in terms of magazines I enjoy *Australian Geographic*.
2. Read many different types of books – fiction and non-fiction.
3. Having completed university and having found an enjoyable career to pursue.
4. Lessons on perseverance and pacing oneself that I feel will greatly assist me in the future.
5. Pace yourself, do what you can, and by persevering you will be able to do your best.



Anthony Redwood

1. Song: 'Viva La Vida', Cold Play. Book: *1984*, George Orwell. Movie: *12 Years a Slave*. Magazine: *New Scientist*.
2. Play games on my computer and console, hang out with friends, watch TV or Netflix.
3. Travelling overseas, making the world a better place, building my success.
4. Be yourself no matter what others say about you, treat others how you want to be treated, cooperate towards a common goal.
5. Impossible is only a mindset and with the aid of will power, determination and sacrifice, there are no barriers in achieving your goals.



Emelia Watson

1. Book: *The City of Ember*, Jeanne DuPrau. Movie: *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.
2. Draw, read, play games and spend time with my family and friends.
3. In a job involving art or animation.
4. Painting techniques and how planets are formed.
5. Pursue topics that interest you.



Rachel Prestwidge

1. *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* and *The Motorcycle Diaries*, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. I have a love for the classics.
2. Spend time with the ones I love, take in and enjoy the beauty of nature and the world around me, read, dance, write and go on spontaneous adventures.
3. I see myself furthering my education by going to university and leading a happy, fulfilling and successful life. Ultimately repaying my teachers' investments in my life by making them proud.
4. School can be a fun, safe and uplifting place where you are loved and valued. I have also learnt that I am capable of so much more academically than I previously thought.
5. Do not despise your education, it's a gift that many people simply do not have. Also, if you're struggling, let your teachers know and ask them for help. They're only a phone call or email away and love taking the time to help you flourish and grow and break down what you don't understand. They're not that scary and they would love to hear from you and get to know you. SDEHS is the best and I hope you get to see that too!



Joshua Van Niekerk

1. I've always enjoyed the Transformers movies as well as anything starring Will Ferrell.
2. Spend hours playing guitar, running, training and surfing.
3. Five years from now I hope to have spent a year in the army, have finished my bachelor's degree in Sustainable Business and be competing in the World Qualifying Series – out of the US.
4. Your trajectory in life is determined by what you do, or do not do, today.
5. Buckle up and relax.



Thomas Eady

1. *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.
2. Spend time with my friends, enjoy gaming, reading and watching TV shows.
3. Finishing university and starting my career. After I've finished with uni I'll take a year to travel around the world.
4. Since coming down with ill health I've learnt a lot about people and myself.
5. Keep putting one foot in front of the other and no matter what you will get to the end.

Textiles & Design Projects



Katelyn McGrath



Jordan Vasquez



Melody Suranyi



Angelina Meany



Olivia Okely



Caitlin Harding



Chelsea Whittaker



Chloe Mitchell



Elizabeth Page



Katharine Hill



Isabelle Robertson



Theresa Haley



Niamh Carter



Katie Samphier



Sarah Cupitt



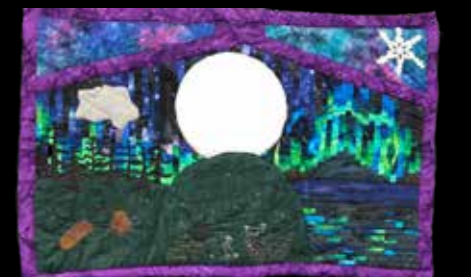
Jay Marshall



Brodie Bilotta



Sheridan Howell



Olivia Cupitt

HSC Visual Arts

Bodies of Work



Isabella Aguilar



Charmaine Kwok



Imogen Albany



Imogen Huntley



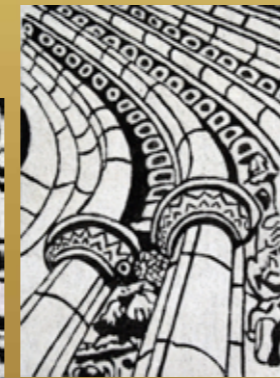
Abigail Paduch



Eva Kwok



Celina Rasmussen



Janavee Gurnathan



Casey Stewart



Kian Ehsani



Luzibo Boy



Elani Wild



Emelia Watson



Shanarra Babic



Eismaa Takhel



Jake Williams



Jordan Collins

Design & Technology Projects



Multi use axe Lawrence Merhi



Computer monitor adjustable stand Sam Kay



Adjustable hospital table with tilting arm Luka Bratkovic



Prosthetic weightlifting aid Peter Nassif



Bedside storage device Gemma O'Grady



String design Georgia Bull



Samantha Judd is making a bedside storage shelf to keep phone devices to stop affecting sleep and protecting from EMF radiation



Bench seat Jennifer Cockley



Safety hat with LED lights George Badaoui



Quad bike trailer Elias Elias



LED light + powerpack built into the table Bryce Grech



Mobile surfboard Christopher Kidall Park

Jordan Thompson 2011

Jordan aged 24 is a professional tennis player who attended SDEHS in 2011. As a junior, Jordan reached the



boys' doubles final at the 2012 US Open. Currently ranked 98 in singles and 102 in doubles, Jordan achieved a career high of 63 in singles in February 2017. In 2016 he represented Australia in mens' singles at the Rio Olympics and reached the semi-final of the Davis Cup in Glasgow. In the 2017 Davis Cup quarterfinals in Brisbane he scored a win over the highly ranked US player Jack Sock. In January 2017, he teamed up with Thanasi Kokkinakis to win the mens' doubles at the Brisbane International. A memorable moment for Jordan also occurred in June 2017 when he beat the world No 1 Andy Murray in the first round of the Queen's Club Championships in the UK.

Aminah Thipayawat 2008–2013



After completing my Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical) degree at the University of Sydney at the end of last year,

I decided to pursue a higher degree by research and enrol in a Master of Philosophy (Engineering and IT) degree. I am currently conducting research on the use of Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) to reduce muscle spasticity in people with cerebral palsy as an alternative to Botox. Pain and discomfort due to the constant muscle contractions may be relieved by RFA as it involves heating the target nerves to temporarily inhibit their function. To help with my research, I am collaborating with Serene Medical, who have developed RFA devices for cosmetic purposes, and with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. I am thankful to my

teachers at SDEHS for helping me complete my HSC. I wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't had that support.

Where are they now?

Josephine Chung 2014



Josephine is currently studying her Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, USA. Since completing her studies at

Sydney Distance Education High School in 2014, she completed her HSC at Pymble Ladies' College in 2016. The same year, she was the recipient of the Dorcas McClean Travelling Scholarship, Australia's richest violin competition, following her solo performance with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 2017, she attended the Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne, where she continued studying with Dr Robin Wilson, and was a finalist in the ANAM Concerto Competition. Josephine has participated in several international music festivals this year, including Yellow Barn's Young Artists Program in Vermont, USA and the Keshet Eilon Summer Mastercourse in Israel.

Angela Shi 2013–2015



I graduated from SDEHS in 2015. What a long time ago it seems! I started university straight away in 2016, studying Bachelor of Nutrition Science in University of Wollongong. I am in my third and final year now and will be graduating at the end of this spring semester – mid November.

In recent weeks I have been busy with a new job at Sydney Airport working with niche fragrances at a beauty studio. Fragrances are a huge passion of mine so it is only natural I chose this job. Besides that, I have volunteered at my local high school as a student mentor, as well as having accepted the opportunity to be a research assistant in university. Right now I am focused on completing my undergraduate degree and looking forward to starting my Master's degree next year. It will be a Master of Nutrition and Dietetics, to ultimately become an Accredited Practising Dietitian!

Our Stars

Dylan Donnini

Dylan Year 8 has a passion for skateboarding that began at age 2. He has been competing from age 7. He has competed nationally and internationally in divisions from under 12s to Opens and although many of his competitors have been years older than him, he has achieved many wins and podium positions. Dylan was identified and chosen to attend the High Performance Olympic Training Camps for skateboarding. The camps are for potential Australian Olympic Squad members for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 where skateboarding will make its debut and are for a few selected skaters only. With his sights set on one day competing in the Olympics and the X-Games, he has gained insights and key information around being a successful athlete and skateboarder. In 2016 and 2017, Dylan was ranked #1 in Australia for the Australian Skateboarding Federation Junior Bowl Rankings – 16 & under. His sponsors include Globe, 187 Killer Pads, Bones Wheels, Bones Bearings, STM Skate Shop, Hardcore, Dwindle Distribution and iSkate Australia.



Danielle Gebser



Danielle Year 10 is an elite figure ice skater who has been skating since age 7. In early 2017 she passed her junior ladies division test. 2018 has been mainly spent on development and working towards a Junior Grand Prix next season. She has participated in the annual Hollins Trophy held in Sydney, with competitors from all over Australia and New Zealand. Danielle placed 2nd in the short program and 3rd overall. Other notable achievements include placing 1st at the 2017 NSW State Championships and placing 4th at the 2017 Australian Figure Skating Nationals. These achievements in 2017 were great as it was Danielle's first year in the junior ladies division. In the future Danielle hopes to participate in the ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series as well as the ISU Junior World Championships.

Shannon Farrell



Shannon Year 12 is an elite gymnast, who began kindy gym at age 3 and began competing at the age 6 in the NSW State Championships where she came 2nd overall and medalled on all apparatuses including vault, bars, beam and floor.

She progressed through the levels in the Women's International Elite Development Program where she was ranked as a high achiever placing within the top three in the country for her age.

She first represented NSW in the Australian National Championships in 2011 in Perth and has competed each year since. She debuted in Senior International level (Olympic level) qualifying for Nationals in 2017 where she made finals for beam and won a silver medal and a bronze for the NSW team.

She trains at Manly Warringah Gymnastics Club 35 hours a week. Her dream is to compete in the 2020 Olympic Games and the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Aphra O'Brien-Slade

Aphra Year 11 began competition gymnastics at 9 years of age. She went on to compete at a state and national level and has been awarded the NSW State Champion and National Champion.



Her best moments have been competing for Australia in New Zealand where she was the all round champion and receiving a NSW Blues Sport Award.

After completing the highest national level 10 she moved into the International Level Program. In this level Aphra has more opportunities to attend training camps and to qualify for overseas competitions.

Her goal is to gain a college scholarship in America at the end of Year 12, where she can continue gymnastics at an even higher level and complete a degree, possibly in Physiotherapy.

Damon Kelly



Damon Year 12 is a water polo player. He has been playing since he was 10, initially in the Under 14s team for Parramatta where he learnt the joy of playing the game. He has made NSW trials as an Under 14 player two years consecutively, for Under 16s and most recently as an Under 18 for the Under 20s team. Last summer he played in state and national championships with the Hunter Hurricanes in the Australian National Water Polo League age teams playing as a wing. Damon's last game for Parramatta was at the Under 16s national where he was switched in as the goalie for a tie breaking penalty shoot-out. Damon saved 4 five-metre penalties to help Parramatta finish the tournament with a win and its highest national

Marcus Michelsen



Marcus Year 10 is accelerated in Music and currently completing the Year 11 course. He is an accomplished violinist who has achieved much this year. He is a participant in the Rising Stars program at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and is the concertmaster for the Sydney Youth Orchestra.

He recently won the Bach Award at the Melbourne Recital Centre Bach Competition, and was invited to participate in the prestigious Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, USA.

Eliza Wenham



Eliza Year 9 started ballet lessons at age 4. In Year 6 at school she successfully auditioned for The Australian Ballet School Interstate Program and has been an interstate student of The Australian Ballet School for three years. She was invited to attend Final Audition in Melbourne.

Eliza has also successfully auditioned to attend summer intensives at The Paris Opera Ballet School and The Royal Ballet School in London. Ballet is definitely her passion and she enjoys the mix of dancing all day and then sitting down at night to do academic studies. Eliza performed in *Giselle* (Act 2) and *Paquita* (Act 1) in September at the Concourse Theatre as part of the Sydney City Youth Ballet.

Tru Starling



Tru Year 12 is a surfer and believes that you need to be in the water constantly. The more time in the water the better you get. One of her goals for 2018 has been to spend five hours in the water every day. So far, this goal has led her to be ranked 7th in Australia on the Qualifying Series. She has qualified for both the Open Australian Titles and the Junior Australian Titles. Next year, she plans to travel across Europe to compete in the World Qualifying Series in the hope of competing against the best surfers in the world as well as going to university to study Sports Psychology.

Writing Competition Winners

This year the theme of our School Magazine writing competition was *Reaching out ... connecting*.

Congratulations to Joshua Holland, Sarah Cupitt and Beth Challinor. They have been awarded book vouchers for \$100, \$75 and \$50 respectively.

When VR first became real

I remember the first instance of virtual reality, or at least my first interaction with it. It was August 16th 1995, my dad had promised to camp overnight outside our local shopping centre as a birthday present, so I could be one of the first kids to own and play a "Virtual Boy".

Video games had been a huge thing for me, even though it was still such a new concept to the world when I was born back in 1985.

August 16th was the day I exited reluctantly into the world, somewhat similarly to the virtual boy only ten years later. The first things I saw were, well, nurses' faces and blinding lights, although I'm sure the virtual boy saw something different, probably in red. I remember seeing a NES hooked up to the TV in the hospital when I was born. Apparently my dad decided to leave the hospital halfway through my 26 hour birth to get it from home so he wasn't so bored. Mom didn't approve but I guess she couldn't exactly stop him, could she?

When I was older my dad bought an SNES and let me play it almost every day after school. Our family was very laid back with me being an only child, and my dad having a high wage job; there wasn't much to worry about. But back to virtual reality, or at least my definition of it.

Virtual reality is probably different for everyone. I think of it literally, like looking into the VR headset, while others may look at the main square of New York and consider that virtual reality, everything connected to power, showing an image or emitting a sound.

I think most people think of the headset when they hear VR or Virtual Reality. Although the Virtual Boy was a revolution in technology at the time, it was a commercial failure and a failure in every other way possible, but it did show a clear representation of what to expect from the future.

My doorbell rings a tune, familiar, also lost in my mind. It always had one meaning though: food. I rush to the door and slam my nose into it for the third time this day, increasing the mark on the door and decreasing the property value ever so slightly. I open the door to reveal the unstartled delivery guy just standing there. Once he wakes up from sleeping on the spot, he hands me my pizza, and I call him an idiot and he smiles. I pay him and close the door rushing back to my fake VR headset.

That's what I loved about virtual reality, I could relive these memories as an old man and exactly as they happened, but I could say anything I wanted, great for relieving stress and whatnot. The worst part? Taking it off when I hear the ring of my actual doorbell and going back into my actual life.

Joshua Holland



The poison tree

You lift the control and flick the switch,
we are all whom we pretend to be.
You choose your game and enter my world,
will you destroy it or set me free?

I spotted you near my poison tree,
merely searching for forbidden fruit.
I witnessed you shake its heavy limbs,
assaulting its hidden whitethorn root.

Its frail leaves were wreaths of withered hate,
Its branches contorted in violence,
Its trunk knew nought of beauty and bliss,
only to hide behind tears of silence.

You seemed to be from another realm,
your actions savage and full of blame.
Its defence of poison was useless,
against a heart filled with lust and shame.

You swiftly climbed its slippery bark,
worn thin and feeble from brutal pain.
You stripped its boughs of buds and blossoms,
slain by hostile winds and tainted rain.

You reached out to grasp its sacred fruit.
Its voice was timid and low and weak,
A trickle of blood seeped from its mouth,
disturbingly scarlet against its pale cheek.

You traced the tell-tale scar of its wounds
across the stretched canvas of its frame.
You plucked with red its last piece of fruit
because to you, it's only a game.

Sarah Cupitt



The space cat-astrophe

It was a Friday afternoon, just like any other. Olivia was sitting on the bus trying to figure out how little she could spend on dinner.

"Hmmm. Maybe I'll stop by Cassy's on the way home," she thought to herself. As she showed the driver her pass and stepped off the bus, she heard a rustling in the trees. "Just the wind." Olivia ignored it and continued walking.

"AHA! I'VE GOT YOU NOW, YOU FILTHY THIEF!"

Olivia screamed and flung her hands around, frantically trying to pry the screaming creature off her head. It was trying to eat her hair. She managed to get it off and out of her tangled locks.

It was a cat. A very dirty and fat one. Before she could process what had just happened, she shouted, "Who said that!? What just happened!?"

"It was me! Here!"

Olivia screamed again.

"Aaah! What? You're not really talking, I'm going insane. Too many all-nighters, too much caffeine."

"Oh, yeah, that's right. Earth cats don't talk. Meow!" said the feline.

"What are you? Where did you come from? What!?"

"I'm Max, I'm from Titan and my only way back was stolen by a possum. I saw you walking and I thought that thing on your head was the thief that stole my box, so I took my chance."

"I'm talking to an alien," Olivia thought. "Or I'm going nuts."

"That's my hair, like your fur, but on my head. I couldn't find my hairbrush this morning because my room's such a mess. Let's get you home and cleaned up."

"Why are you on Earth?" Olivia asked Max.

"I'm not supposed to be here. I accidentally typed in the wrong coordinates on my box. I should be on Neptune right now, on holiday."

"What does this box do?" Olivia asked.

"It's basically a wormhole machine. It transports me straight home like a portal. I really need it back so I can get home. I only have 30 days of leave, then I've got to be back on Titan."

"Let's get you home. It's getting late."

Olivia walks Max home and makes him a bed.

"First thing tomorrow we can look for your box. Where do you think the possum took it?"

"Near where we met, just in the park. I had it in my paws and then out of nowhere the possum came and stole it!"

"What a crazy animal!" Olivia said.

Olivia woke up startled. Max was lying on her stomach. She wasn't used to that.

"Max, time to wake up. We have to find your box."

"Oh, yeah! Let's go."

They hurried to the park, and sure enough, sleeping in a tree was the possum, snuggled up to the box.

The thing was flashing and changing colours.

"At last! Thank you so much for helping me!" Max exclaimed.

"Any time!" Olivia answered.

"You humans are so nice!"

Max powered up the portal machine and stepped through it.

"Goodbye, my friend! I will never forget you!"

"See ya later, alligator!"

And with a flash, he was gone.

Beth Challinor



Ella Perry Year 7



Lara Clarke Year 11



Nora Bushi Year 10



Harriet Aitken Year 9



Aaron Batkin Year 8