

# The Arcadian

THE MAGAZINE OF **NORTHHOLM GRAMMAR**  
EDITION 55 | SPRING 2024



**Challenging** minds.  
**Creating** futures.

**Northholm**  
Grammar

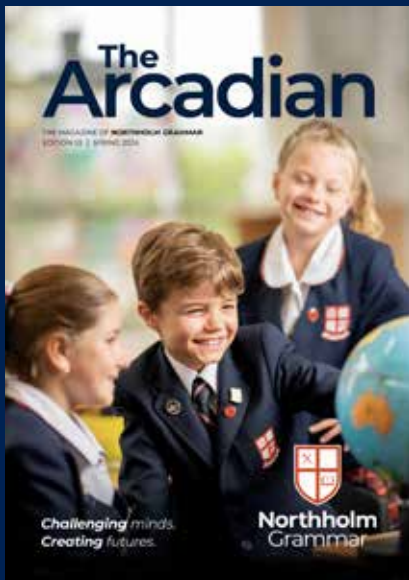
# The Arcadian

Edition 55 | Spring 2024

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# From the Principal

**Welcome to the second edition of *The Arcadian* for 2024. On a personal note, it is with much sadness that this will be my final report as my time as Principal at Northholm Grammar School comes to an end at the conclusion of the year. My regrets are tempered however in the conviction that I leave Northholm Grammar at a time when there is great spirit within our community.**

It has been my joy and privilege to preside over an educational community committed to scholarship, pastoral care and a robust co-curricular program animated by caring and professional staff and rooted in reality by a friendly and common-sense body of young men and women.

My hope as Principal has been for every member of our School community to have experienced three fundamentals in life: meaningful relationships, challenging human endeavours and joyful celebration.

At our recent Year 12 Valedictory Service, I commented that when I thought about Northholm Grammar and the Class of 2024, my initial thought was one of excellence. We are drawn to stories of individuals who not only embody the pursuit of excellence, but also have humility. Think of the American gymnast Simone Biles, who worked through mental health issues that kept her mostly sidelined at the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics and went on to win three Olympic gold medals at the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics.

Perhaps the most iconic image from these Olympic Games occurred after one of the few gymnastics events

she did not completely dominate – the individual floor competition. At the awards ceremony, Biles, who earned silver, and her teammate Jordan Chiles, who took bronze, bowed to show respect to the gold medal winner, Rebeca Andrade of Brazil.

Or perhaps your attention was captured by the American sprinter Noah Lyles, who earned the title of world's fastest man by winning gold in the 100-metre dash. Shortly after, he wrote in a social media message to fans: "I have asthma, allergies, dyslexia, ADD, anxiety and depression. But I will tell you that what you have does not define what you can become. Why not you?"

Excellence is not perfection or winning at all costs. It is a deeply satisfying process of becoming the best performer and person you can be. You pursue goals that challenge you, put forth an honest effort, endure highs, lows and everything in between, and gain respect for yourself and others.

This sort of excellence isn't just for world-class athletes; it is for all of us. We can certainly find it in sports, but also in the creative and performing arts, medicine, teaching, coaching, science and more.

Understanding that excellence lies in the pursuit of a lofty goal as much as in the achievement of that goal allows us to expand our definition of success. Excellence is a process. That process can, and must, be renewed every day. The real reward for excellence is not the medal or the promotion, but the person you become and the relationships you forge along the way.

In 2007, psychologist Tal Ben-Shahar coined the term 'arrival fallacy' to describe the trap of thinking that reaching a goal will bring lasting contentment or fulfilment. Anyone who has ever thought, "If I achieve such-and-such goal, then I'll be happy," understands this.

In some instances, excellence also calls for competing, a word derived from the Latin words 'com' which means 'together', and 'petere' which means 'to strive'. The best competitors strive together. It's why, following their 800-metre freestyle race, the first thing the American swimmer Katie Ledecky and the Australian Ariarne Titmus did was reach across their lanes to embrace. It's why Simone Biles said of competing alongside Rebeca Andrade, "It brought out the best athlete in myself, so I'm excited and proud to compete with her."

Excellence means striving well and finding fulfilment in the process. When you find a pursuit or activity you care about and give it your all, you learn to value focus, consistency, care, discipline and compassion. You learn about the importance of hard work and rest, but also how to graciously accept defeat, and learn from it.

Pursuing excellence is, at its core, retaining respect, compassion and empathy for others even in pursuit of being your best, and, sometimes, winning. Yes, you must be driven and fierce and at times try so hard that people may think you are crazy, but it is precisely because of this determined commitment and the recognition of how hard it can be that you gain immense empathy and respect for others in the arena.

*"Excellence is not perfection or winning at all costs. It is a deeply satisfying process of becoming the best performer and person you can be."*

When you look at the elite performers in this world, including athletes, scientists, artists, physicians, educators and business people, I have found that the top indicators of people's lasting success and satisfaction often comes down to how they answered these five questions:

- Did they give their pursuit their all?
- Did they live in alignment with their values?
- Were they patient and present?
- Did they embrace their own vulnerability?
- And did they build meaningful and mutually respectful relationships along the way?

To my surprise, no idea has resonated more with Olympic medallists than groundedness. And here is the magic: That you can be a good person and reach great heights.

The Olympics may be an example of excellence and achievement at a pinnacle few of us can imagine, but they do offer us a moment to reflect on our own versions of excellence.

- How should I spend the time I have?
- How do I summon the focus to pursue my interests with care?
- What does this say about the values I hold and my desire to practise them?

At a time of disconnect and alienation, the pursuit of excellence offers a powerful and necessary path to intimacy with ourselves, our work and our communities. It is, at its root, what it means to be the best humans we can be.

In short, I am immensely proud to claim that Northholm Grammar has been faithful in its mission to educate the whole person. And I am equally proud to say that most students have availed themselves of a plethora of educational opportunities available to achieve their personal excellence.

Thank you for your warmth, support and encouragement during my six years. It has been an enormous privilege to be your Principal.

**Christopher Bradbury**  
Principal





# Welcoming Mr Atkinson

**In September, we were delighted to name Mr Nate Atkinson as the next Principal of Northholm Grammar School, commencing January 2025. The announcement was made to the community by the School Council Chair, Mr Tony Parle, on behalf of the School Council which is confident that Nate's vision, experience and passion for education will lead the School into an exciting new chapter of growth and excellence.**

The appointment came after an extensive national and international search undertaken in partnership with Hutton Consulting Australia. Mr Atkinson joins Northholm from his role as Principal and CEO of Summerland Christian College and Hinterland Christian College, where he has successfully led the development of academic, pastoral and wellbeing programs. His leadership has driven significant achievements, including enrolment growth,

academic improvement, and a deep commitment to fostering a thriving school community.

An educator at heart, Mr Atkinson holds a master's degree in Educational Leadership (Change Management), undergraduate degrees in Teaching and Theology, and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in K-12 Educational Leadership. His professional journey is further enriched by a Graduate Certificate in Positive Education, a Certificate in K-12 School Management from Harvard University, and completion of a suite of leadership courses, including the prestigious Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) Program.

"Nate's commitment to excellence in education aligns perfectly with the values and ethos of Northholm Grammar," Mr Parle said. "He brings with him a clear vision to cultivate students' resourcefulness and reflective habits, preparing them to be lifelong learners in a rapidly evolving

world. His educational philosophy is centred on creating a future-focused school, where students are encouraged to develop critical thinking, creativity and character."

Throughout his career, Mr Atkinson has demonstrated a deep belief in the power of community. He is dedicated to fostering collaborative relationships with staff, students, parents and the broader School community. As a visible and present leader, the School Council believes he will actively engage with all stakeholders to ensure the continued success and wellbeing of Northholm Grammar.

We are excited to welcome Nate to the Northholm community and look forward to the positive impact his leadership will bring to our School. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Nate and his family as they become part of our community.



# Aligning home and school

## CHARACTER EDUCATION

**The development of our Character Education Program over the past two years has seen significant change and tangible growth of our students.**

In 2024, our bespoke Stage-based program, in particular, has seen a far richer and more targeted program implemented for Years 7 to 12, which caters to the age-specific developmental needs from a physical, mental, emotional and social standpoint.

In our aim to continuously support our students in their understanding of themselves, their peers and the wider world, our Character Education Program introduced a parent forum and seminar series that aligned with the narrative of Character Education. An alignment of home and school is imperative in ensuring our students are receiving the same messaging and support as they traverse the natural path of growing from young people to men and women of outstanding character. Additionally, our teaching staff have learned from our guest

speakers in related areas, supporting them in their work with students in a pastoral manner.

This year, we have hosted three parent seminars. Our guest presenters included:

- Prue Salter – Study Skills
- Jocelyn Brewer – Untangling Teens and Tweens from Technology
- Dr Judith Locke – Helping your teen/tween become confident and capable in their school years and beyond.

In our Kindergarten to Year 6 Character Education Program, our students continue to be engaged in The Resilience Project. This highly successful program has shown tangible growth in our students' personal development, with annual

data demonstrating the success in improved relationships, behaviour, and student personal resilience and capacity greatly improved since the program's implementation. As we move towards 2025, we are excited about the inclusion of elements of The Resilience Project in our Stage 4 Character Education Program.

The design of our Character Education Framework and Teaching Program at Northholm Grammar continues to focus on the current personal development needs of our students and is reviewed annually to reflect any changes in these needs.

**Andrea van den Bol**  
Deputy Principal

*"...support our students in their understanding of themselves, their peers and the wider world..."*



# Class of 2024

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

**On Wednesday 25 September, Northholm Grammar formally farewelled the Class of 2024. The Valedictory Service recognises the significant contribution Year 12 have made to our school, allowing the community to reflect on the highlights of their journey.**

Speaking at the Service, Principal Christopher Bradbury praised the students for their commitment to excellence and their dedication to upholding the values of Northholm. "The class of 2024 has been an exceptional cohort," he declared. "I gratefully acknowledge the support and generosity of so many who have collaborated in giving expression to The Northholm Way, thereby maintaining the School as the centre of a happy and lifegiving community."

"It's a privilege to stand alongside you all today as we close off the final six weeks of our schooling journey,"

said School Captain Kai Strickland. He encouraged his peers to maintain the lifelong love of learning Northholm had instilled in them. "Although your time as high school students is up, continue to be the learners you are. In the words of Albert Einstein, the important thing is to not stop questioning. Remain curious, engage with the world around you and refuse to settle for the norm. You will now take on your passions so dream big, dare to fail and trust in your ability to leave your mark on this world."

School Captain Sophie Hamilton-James asserted her belief that the Class of 2024 would go on to be exceptional members of the community: "It is strange to think that today is our final day in our high school journey. Today we will all move on different paths, yet I can say for certain that each and every one of us will find success. The strength, resilience, determination and growth we have

all displayed is a testament to the loving support of our families, teachers, School community and peers."

"You have now received your education," said Mr Bradbury as he concluded his speech. "As you begin your next journey, you are strengthened by the memories of Northholm Grammar and each other, which will remain in your hearts and will ultimately live on forever. Be strong, Be Traist, be excellent."

Prior to the Valedictory Service, the day started with House Farewells and a morning tea with family and friends which was a wonderful opportunity to reminisce and celebrate Year 12 students' time together. Following the Service, staff and students formed a guard of honour to say thank you and goodbye. We wish the graduating Class of 2024 every success as they complete their HSC and prepare for life beyond Northholm.



# Empowering future leaders

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP

**Student Leadership plays a vitally important role in the development of our students, as well as ensuring student voice is considered and present across Kindergarten to Year 12.**

In 2024, we have been fortunate to have a very strong Student Leadership Team from our Senior Captains and Prefects to our House Captains, Peer Support Leaders and Student Representative Council, down to our Primary Years Captains and House Captains.

A strong education in leadership is built into our Character Education Program and our Primary Years Resilience Project Program. Students of all ages are engaged in classes, workshops and seminars that speak to the different stages and levels of leadership not only within Northholm Grammar, but in the outside community.

We drive a strong focus on 'Leading Self' with the firm messaging that to lead others, you must first be able to lead yourself. Additionally, we drive the concept of 'Servant Leadership' whereby we encourage our students to aspire to lead through example, through service to individuals, groups and the wider community, and look beyond the label of leadership to emulate the qualities of a young man or woman of character who leads in the service of others.

There are four key dimensions to student leadership at Northholm:

- Leading Academically
- Leading Self
- Leading with Others
- Changing Your World.

Leaders at different levels in any school environment face different challenges. To best prepare our students for leadership at any level, the following leadership and growth arenas are a focus for the School.

### Self-awareness

To understand your behaviour's impact on school outcomes, an effective leader must understand their strengths and weaknesses.

### Communication

To effectively communicate goals and inspire trust, an effective leader must communicate information and ideas with clarity, assist in leading others, employ participative management and build and mend relationships.

### Influence

To be comfortable persuading, promoting and delegating, an effective leader helps to communicate the vision and goals, align the efforts of others and build commitment from people at all levels including students, staff, parents and the community.

### Learning agility

To know when to change course and to help others do so, an effective leader has the desire to learn from mistakes, ask insightful questions and be open to feedback. This involves learning new skills, taking opportunities to learn and responding to new and difficult situations. Great leaders create a culture of learning.

Our 2024 Student Leaders, led capably by Sophie Hamilton-James



and Kai Strickland and supported by Sofia Attia, Mia Lawton, Amelia Gartner, Emelie Gartner, Taine Cassar and Olivia Knight demonstrated a strong commitment to the student body and the wider Northholm community.

The legacy they leave behind, through their desire to build a more unified student body has tangibly been achieved by the creation of the Annual House Day which is an event celebrating the skills and talents of all

## Looking forward to 2025

In September, we held the Leadership Investiture to welcome our 2025 School Captains, Prefect Body and House Captains.

### 2025 Leaders

#### *School Captains*

Isabelle Henderson  
Matthew Schiller

#### *Senior Prefect (Community)*

Dylan Abbott

#### *Senior Prefect (Character)*

Ashleigh Sinclair

#### *School Prefects*

Xanthia Hughes  
Banjo Lorenz  
Taylor Millett  
Evie Morrison

#### *Capell/Plüss House Captains*

Katie Bowrey  
Alicja Wysocka

#### *Lincoln House Captains*

Isaac Dunlop  
Molly Street

#### *Patteson/Archdale House Captains*

Zali Fletcher  
Giorgia Speranza

#### *Rowland House Captains*

Emma Chisholm  
Saisha Suri



our students from Kindergarten to Year 12 across Sport, Performing Arts, and general knowledge, and has created stronger House spirit and camaraderie amongst our students both within and outside their Houses.

**Andrea van den Bol**  
Deputy Principal

**Front row.** Evie Morrison, Emma Chisholm, Giorgia Speranza, Matthew Schiller, Xanthia Hughes, Saisha Suri, Zali Fletcher, Alicja Wysocka, Katie Bowrey, Molly Street

**Back Row.** Isaac Dunlop, Dylan Abbott, Isabelle Henderson, Ashleigh Sinclair, Taylor Millett, Banjo Lorenz

# Pioneering Patrons

## HOUSE SPIRIT

**Northholm Grammar School is proud to announce that we will be renaming two of our Houses, Patteson and Capell, to Archdale and Plüss in honour of School Council Founding Member Miss Betty Archdale and foundation teacher and current Head of Operations, Mrs Jenny Plüss. Effective from the beginning of 2025 onwards, this decision was made to acknowledge their legacy as powerful role models for students, as embodiments of 'The Northholm Way' and the 'Our School Values'.**

This process began earlier in the year, when we undertook a review of our House Patrons with Heads of Houses, Tutors and Senior Student Leaders to evaluate if the Patrons still truly reflected the context, history and traditions of our School.

When the announcement was made to staff and students, it was greeted with great enthusiasm. The House System plays an important role in Northholm Grammar's approach to pastoral care, character education and building a culture of belonging and connection for our students.

## Miss Helen Elizabeth (Betty) Archdale

Miss Betty Archdale was a pioneer of education and critical to the founding of Northholm Grammar. Born in London, she was a talented sportswoman and served as captain for the very first English women's national cricket team. She attended university in Montreal, Canada, to study economic and political science, before returning to London to study law, being called to the Bar in 1938 as one of only 50 women at the time. In the Second World War, she served in the Women's Royal Naval Service and was awarded an Order of the British Empire for her deeds.

Miss Archdale was a staunch advocate for empowering and educating women and girls. She moved to Australia and took up Principalship at The Women's College at The University of Sydney in 1948, before being appointed Headmistress of Abbotsleigh. Her academic principles included providing a first-rate education for young people in an atmosphere of freedom, self-discipline and thoughtfulness.

In 1980, while living in Galston, she became a founding member of the Northholm Grammar School Council. Her ongoing advocacy as a member on the Council through Foundation and until her retirement from the Council in 1987 was vital to the School's success in its early years.

Archdale House focuses on the values of respect, self-discipline and personal growth, through the power of participation. The lion on the House crest highlights the importance of personal strength.



## Mrs Jenny Plüss

When preparing for the opening of Northholm Grammar, founding Headmaster Ron Chambers was seeking to combine the goals of high academic standards delivered alongside individualised care in one school. One of the teachers who brought this vision to life then, as she continues to do now, is Mrs Jenny Plüss. In our foundation year, Mrs Plüss (Miss Emery) taught English, History and Years 6 and 7 Mathematics. In 1984, she was appointed Head of House for Capell and Year 7 Coordinator. In 1995, she was promoted to Director of Co-Curricular Activities, and then in 2011 to Director of Student Development. In recent times, she has continued to play a significant role on the Senior Leadership Team as Head of Students and Head of Operations, as well as returning to House leadership of Lincoln.

Mrs Plüss is an exceptional teacher and leader, embodying everything positive about Northholm Grammar with a strong pastoral heart and a commitment to a holistic educational experience. Loyal, committed, driven and caring, Mrs Plüss is an outstanding role model for our students, staff and community.

Plüss House focuses on the values of determination, tenacity and wisdom, through the power of positive relationships. The dragon on the House crest highlights the importance of courage and resilience.



## The House System

**The House System was established in 1983 with three Houses – Capell, Patteson and Rowland. Lincoln was added in 1984. Each student is assigned to a House and a Tutorial group, with teachers appointed as Tutors within the House System to give care to students, overseeing their academic and social development.**

Within the Houses, students of all years are brought together in a range of activities. House activities facilitate the building of friendships, understanding of different values and challenges, and mentoring opportunities across the year levels.

Lincoln House (Green) is named after the founding Chairman of the School Council, His Honour Dr John F Lincoln AM. Dr Lincoln's distinguished appointments during his career include Deputy Chancellor of Macquarie University, Chancellor of the Diocese of Newcastle, Mayor of North Sydney and Secretary of the Order of Australia.

Rowland House (Blue) is named after former Governor of New South Wales (1981-1989), His Excellency Air Marshall Sir James Anthony Rowland, who formally opened the School in July 1983. Sir Rowland was Chief of Air Staff from 1975 to 1979, the most senior position in the RAAF, and had a distinguished war service record in World War II.

*“...building a culture of belonging and connection for our students.”*

# A community of learning

## PRIMARY YEARS

**Book Week is an annual celebration that brings the world of literature to life for students, educators and families alike. This vibrant event focuses on the joy of reading and the importance of books in shaping young minds. The 2024 Book Week theme 'Reading is Magic' invited students to experience the spellbinding power of books.**

From fantastical adventures to heartwarming tales, books have the ability to transport readers to magical realms and ignite their imagination. Throughout Book Week, Northholm Grammar was buzzing with events designed to celebrate this incredible power, not only within the classroom, but with families and friends as well.

Book Week is a dedicated period where schools, libraries and communities come together to celebrate literature and promote their love of reading. It features a variety of activities designed to engage students with books and authors, including author visits, book fairs, reading challenges and themed events. At Northholm Grammar, this momentous event is always a highlight on the School calendar.

Book Week is an opportunity to ignite a passion for reading in young minds. By participating in Book Week, we help students develop a lifelong love of books, recognise the creativity of authors and illustrators and build a community united by a shared appreciation for the written word. During this dedicated week and throughout the year, students are encouraged to read, join the festivities and share the magic of reading.

Students showcased their creative abilities by completing a colouring-in competition, attending the Book Fair, dressing up for the Book Parade, sharing their learning with their families and friends and, finally, enjoying a morning tea. A highlight on the Book Week calendar is always the Book Parade. The costumes never cease to amaze our judges, and the vast assortment of characters represented emphasises the breadth of reading across genres in which our Primary Years students engage. From crowd favourites, such as *Harry Potter*, *Elsa* and *Cat in the Hat* to some new additions like *The Rainbow Serpent*, *Runt* and *The Great Glass Elevator*, every genre of book was represented with creative flair.

*"...where students beam with pride as they play games, show their work and explain their learning to their families and special guests."*



Following the Parade, families and friends were invited to witness the outstanding learning that has been taking place in the classroom from Kindergarten to Year 6. Sharing our Learning days are always a precious experience, where students beam with pride as they play games, show their work and explain their learning to their families and special guests. It was delightful to witness generations of families move through the Primary Years classrooms and to see students who are immensely proud to hear praises of growth and achievement from their loved ones.

To continue the community feel and engagement, a morning tea was held to bring families and students together. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the 2024 Book Week immensely successful. We cannot wait to see what 2025 has in store!

**Erin Werner**

Primary Years Curriculum Coordinator



# Student achievements



## Xanthia Hughes

**Throughout this year, Xanthia Hughes (Year 11) has demonstrated the Northholm values of Learning through Scholarship and Caring for Others and Self by contributing to the community through several exceptional achievements.**

Xanthia has been part of a service initiative to provide sports shoes and equipment to teams in Papua New Guinea (PNG). She has communicated with various sports clubs and generous individuals and has coordinated over 100kg of netball and rugby equipment to be delivered to PNG – including over 120 pairs of shoes. This is a remarkable

feat, making a real difference to those in need of the supplies.

Xanthia has also been exceptionally busy in both academic and sports competitions. In May, she represented Northholm Grammar at the Plain Speaking Competition, an award that provides New South Wales senior students with the opportunity to improve their confidence and develop their speech-writing and public speaking skills. She was selected to compete at the Regional Finals. In addition, Xanthia is also a committed and talented member of our award-winning Aerobics team (see page 27).



## Trivia Night

**A huge congratulations goes out to Year 11 students Isabelle Henderson, Anjali Raman and Taylor Millett for organising this year's Annual Trivia Night, supported by the Year 11 Leadership Team and Year 10 volunteers. Held in the Lincoln Centre in August, attendees were encouraged to dress up to the theme of 'Decades' for a fun night of friendly competition in support of the Children's Cancer Institute.**

Over 200 members of the Northholm community attended the outstanding event which raised \$6,500 for the charity to develop new and better forms of cancer treatment and increase support for children and their families. Thank you to everyone who attended and gave, and to the Northholm students who made this community event such a success.

# Entrepreneurial spirit

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**This year, two Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Programs ran parallel to the Stage 5 Curriculum at Northholm Grammar School. For Year 9, the theme is 'What's your problem?', with a focus around developing enterprising behaviour and skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, risk-taking and teamwork. Year 10's theme, 'Learn, Live and Thrive', aims to equip students with the mindset and skills required to navigate an uncertain environment outside the confines of the School.**

I would like to thank students for their active engagement in these programs, as well as the support of Principal Mr Christopher Bradbury and the rest of the Northholm staff for their encouragement. Special thanks to Ms Plüss and Ms Walker, who have been vital in helping facilitate the Program.



Left to right. Dylan Nguyen with Alex Kazzi and Blake Billingsley (Year 9) presenting at the public speaking workshop.

### Year 9

The Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Program began in March, with two sessions across the day. Dominic from MoneyVest provided practical advice around making money, financial goal setting and budgeting. The second session was facilitated by Head of Student Futures, Ms Hughes, delivering practical information on job applications and interview skills. In May, Dylan Nguyen visited the School to present a workshop on Public Speaking. It was incredibly encouraging to see students who normally struggle to present in front of their peers, implement some simple strategies and successfully present a speech with confidence.

With Generation Entrepreneur ceasing operation, Northholm became the last National Champion for their School of the Year Program. In August, the team, led by Gaby Parker from Australian School of Entrepreneurship, presented their 'ideation' workshop. In teams, students attended workshops, hustle sessions, production and finance workshops, and 'pitched' their idea to a panel of judges.

In November, students will participate in BOP Industries' Innovators Program. Over two days, they will be asked to select a business they have a connection or interest in, then they will be offered a problem they are passionate about solving. They will partner with like-minded students, engage in team-building activities, research possible solutions, liaise with experts from various industries, create a market for solving the problem, and ultimately be judged on their efforts.

### Year 10

March marked the official start of Year 10's involvement in the Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Program, with a session on financial literacy and being 'ready for work'. It was presented by Dominic from MoneyVest who provided practical advice around significant financial decisions, realigning financial goals and practical aspects of buying a car. Ms Hughes also delivered comprehensive career aptitude testing, as well as a practical workshop on job applications and interview skills.

In September, students gained three useful qualifications: First Aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and basic emergency life support. Surf Life Saving NSW provided the Year 10 group with the confidence to recognise an emergency, assess casualties, apply emergency action principles and exercise CPR and AED techniques. To help students build upon their knowledge gained on decision making, Melissa McGuinness from You Choose shared her impactful story, with students commenting on how her words have made a lasting impression on all the decisions they make, not just behind the wheel.

In December, Scott Millar and BOP Industries will host a three-day Career Innovators Program. Students will team up to find solutions to issues they currently face, focusing on the pillars of entrepreneurship, innovation and STEM.

#### Joshua Toth

Coordinator of the Enterprise & Entrepreneurship Education Program

# Decathlon victory

## STEM

**Participating in the da Vinci Decathlon at Knox Grammar School was an exhilarating experience that showcased the best of Northholm Grammar's academic prowess and team spirit. From the moment we arrived, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement and anticipation as we prepared to tackle challenges across ten diverse disciplines.**

Throughout the day, our team of Year 7 and Year 8 students demonstrated exceptional problem-solving skills and creativity across a range of subjects, from code-breaking to engineering. Despite facing stiff competition from top-performing schools such as James Ruse Agricultural High School and other selective schools from across the State, our students rose to the occasion, showcasing determination and resilience in every task.

What stood out the most was the strong sense of camaraderie and teamwork among our students. Regardless of the pressure, they supported each other with unwavering encouragement and collaboration, embodying the values of 'The Northholm Way'. This unity and cohesion not only fuelled our performance, but also reaffirms the blue bond within our School community.

I am incredibly proud of the outstanding achievements of our Year 7 team, particularly their remarkable success in the engineering component, where they secured the top spot in the State. This accomplishment is a testament to their hard work, dedication and innovative thinking.

As we reflect on this memorable day, it is evident that the da Vinci Decathlon not only provided a platform for academic excellence, but also fostered invaluable qualities such as teamwork, leadership and resilience. Our students' accomplishments are truly impressive, and I have every

confidence that they will continue to excel in their future endeavors, both academically and beyond.

### Christopher Steel

Science Teacher

## Future engineers shine in solar car challenge

**Year 7 and Year 8 students diligently prepared their solar cars for the UNSW SunSpring Model Solar Challenge, where they competed against schools across New South Wales at UNSW Sydney in October this year.**

Throughout this process, students actively engaged in the scientific method and honed their engineering skills by blending theory with practice, particularly in constructing circuits to power their solar cars. They began by testing the functionality of these circuits using batteries, ensuring everything was in working order before integrating solar panels. Additionally, students thoughtfully designed their cars to minimise air resistance, demonstrating their understanding of key engineering principles as they strived for optimal performance on race day.

The UNSW SunSpring Model Solar Challenge offers students a dynamic, hands-on educational experience in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Focusing on design, engineering and renewable energy, this event invites students to apply their creativity and problem-solving skills to build a functioning solar-powered vehicle. Through this process, students gain a deeper

understanding of engineering principles and the critical role renewable energy plays in ensuring a sustainable future.

The challenge emphasises teamwork and effective communication, as students collaborate to bring their ideas from initial sketches to finely tuned engineering achievements. The Challenge is designed to ensure students take full ownership of their projects, experiencing the entire engineering process from concept to completion.

### Christopher Steel

Science Teacher



**Year 8 students, Aventine Nguyen and Annan Zhao working on their solar cars.**

## Creating Futures Evening 2024

# Passport to possibility

### STUDENT FUTURES

**At the conclusion of Term 1, we held our annual Creating Futures Evening, an event that continues to be a highlight in our School calendar. The theme, 'Creating Futures – Making Connections, Exploring Possibilities,' once again brought together our vibrant community to support our Year 10, 11 and 12 students as they navigate their future career paths.**

The evening commenced in the Lincoln Centre with a keynote address by Susan Catania, a current parent and the Business Executive Officer (General Manager) of Nestlé Oceania's Foods Business. Susan shared her invaluable insights on leadership and the evolving landscape of the business world, leaving the audience inspired and motivated.

Following the keynote, a panel discussion was hosted by our Principal, Mr Christopher Bradbury. The panel featured distinguished professionals, including Matthew Knight, Co-founder of Valour Sports and parent of Olivia Knight, a Year 12 student and Prefect, esteemed alumnus Ben Dessen, Director at Hills Wildlife Sanctuary and Gabrielle Mfula, Lawyer at The Office of the eSafety Commissioner (eSafety). The discussion covered crucial topics such as the changing job market, the skills needed for future success and the importance of education in shaping lifelong habits.

The latter part of the evening allowed students and their families to engage directly with professionals and representatives from various universities, colleges, trades and organisations. This interactive session enabled students to explore and

discuss potential future education and career pathways. Institutions such as the Master Builders Association, Education USA, Whitehouse Institute of Design, as well as the Australian Catholic University, University of Sydney, Macquarie University and many more were present, providing a wealth of information and guidance.

Students were equipped with a Creating Futures Passport and Program, encouraging them to converse with Education Ambassadors and learn about the diverse career backgrounds of the attending professionals. This initiative fostered meaningful interactions and helped students gain a clearer understanding of their potential career trajectories.

The event was a testament to the strong and connected Northholm community. We are immensely grateful to our current and past parents, staff, alumni and local community members who dedicated their time and expertise to support our students. The presence of Year 11 leaders, who assisted in hosting and guiding guests, was particularly commendable.

The Creating Futures Evening not only provided students with practical advice and inspiration but also reinforced the importance of community and connection in their educational journey. We are confident that the knowledge and experiences gained from this event will serve our students well as they prepare for their futures.

**Suzy Hughes**  
Head of Student Futures



# A Night of Excellence

## CAPA

**The HSC Major Works Night of Excellence, held annually in August, marks a pivotal moment for students in their final year of schooling as they present their Major Work projects. This event is a celebration of the relentless pursuit of academic and cultural excellence, showcasing the hard work, determination and perseverance that students pour into their remarkable creations.**

This Showcase not only highlights the dedication and enthusiasm of our students and draws a diverse audience from the Northholm community, it also celebrates the students' achievements and underscores the strong relationships fostered throughout the learning process. It emphasises the collaborative partnership between students and teachers, which is at the heart of every Major Work journey.

Completing a Major Work project requires sustained and reflective practice, encouraging students to fully engage in the ideation and problem-solving stages of their chosen subjects. At Northholm, students undertake Major Work projects in various disciplines, including Design and Technology, Drama, Music and Visual Arts.

In Design and Technology, students captivated the audience with innovative products and systems designed to address real-world issues. Their Design Folios meticulously documented the design process, from analysing the current trends in the market, investigating a range of areas that will contribute to their product to evaluating their own designs. Some standout projects this year included sustainable home designs, recycled and repurposed furniture and an aquaponics system.

In Drama, all seven students presented their own highly individual and complex monologues. They also collaborated in group performance pieces including *Alice in Visceraland* and *The Humanity, Ethics, Loyalty and Life Saving Society*. These creative journeys involved extensive brainstorming, improvisation and iteration, resulting in two standout group performances that evolved from countless hours of development.

In the realm of Music, all three students demonstrated an exceptional level of sophistication in their performances. Their dedication to mastering both the technical and musical aspects of their pieces was truly inspiring. The students also benefited

Above. Danny Reay delivering a solo performance on the guitar.

Below. Sustainable and Affordable Housing Estate, by Annaliese Nahirny.





*“... students undertake Major Work projects in various disciplines, including Design and Technology, Drama, Music and Visual Arts.”*

**The Drama Group Performance featuring Year 12 students Gemma Oaklands, Matt Eggers, Ed Williams and Noah Brown.**



from external professional musicians, who provided invaluable support in honing their musical delivery and deepening their understanding of performance nuances.

In Visual Arts, students created an exhibition that showcased their immense creativity, technical prowess and conceptual depth across various expressive forms. This year's works reflected a strong focus on both traditional and contemporary material practices, as well as an exploration of alternative mediums. Students demonstrated their talents through a range of media and processes that extended them as practitioners and stretched their audience to reconsider the themes they represent through each lens on the world we inhabit.

We applaud the efforts of all the students who participated in the HSC Major Works Night of Excellence. Their hard work and commitment have paid off, resulting in an exhibition that was both impressive and inspiring. We look forward to seeing what these talented individuals will achieve in the future.

**Lesley Furney**  
Visual Arts Coordinator



# A symphony of success

## CAPA

**One of the highlights on the Music Department's calendar was our 18th Annual Music Showcase, which was held on Monday 3 June at Hornsby RSL Club. It was a highly successful event encompassing performances from over 120 students across Years 3 to 12.**

Each year, the Showcase provides a great opportunity for our young musicians to experience performing in a professional environment in front of family and friends. The process of working as a part of a musical group helps our students develop strong team building skills and learn the important role each member plays within that team, along with personal growth experienced by performing in public, a challenge which some students experience for the very first time.

The Showroom at Hornsby RSL Club gives our students a real taste for what it is like to rehearse and perform in a fully professional environment.

The Music Department presented a wide range of musical styles from our 12 co-curricular Ensembles. Students were given the opportunity to explore a broad choice of repertoire – from classical works by composers including Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Mendelssohn and Chopin, through to hits from popular movies such as *The Greatest Showman*, as well as rock/pop hits from composers including Lieber and Stoller, Chuck Berry and Brian Wilson.

The large Ensembles included Senior and Primary Years Choirs, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Concert Band and Stage Band. Our many and varied small Ensembles included Guitar, Percussion, Flute, Clarinet, Brass,

Saxophone and String Ensembles. Also performing were the Year 5 and Year 6 Class Bands plus the Combined Year 5 and 6 String Ensemble.

There were special performances presented by three Year 12 HSC Music 1 students – Robert Reay (piano), who played *Fantasia Impromptu* by Frederic Chopin, Arin Lenc (tuba) who played *Love of Three Apples* by Brendan Collins and Danny Reay (guitar) who played *Hotel California* by The Eagles. These are items from repertoires they played for their HSC performance exams in September.

The evening was a hit, with the Showroom packed with family and friends enjoying a celebration of the students' achievements.

### David Stratton

Coordinator of Co-Curricular Music



# Back to the 80's Musical

## CAPA

***Back to the 80's* takes us back to a decade filled with colourful fashion, iconic music and unforgettable moments. Amidst the neon lights and rhythmic beats lies a profound message that resonates deeply with our human experience and emotions. It was heartwarming to watch our students untangle and share this hidden message with our broader School community.**

The characters in *Back to the 80's* start with various insecurities, dreams and misconceptions about what high school and life will bring. By the end, they have grown in unexpected ways, achieving goals they never thought possible. This transformation underscores the importance of resilience, adaptability and the understanding that personal growth is a continuous journey. Students might start with a specific goal in mind, but their journey can lead to different, sometimes more fulfilling outcomes. Our hope is that they place their confidence in God, trusting that He has everything covered, as declared in Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

With over 50 cast and crew members, the story captures the social dynamics of teenage life and various archetypal characters that are commonly found within a high school setting. The narrative begins with Corey Palmer, now an adult, played by Xavier Combes (Year 10), reflecting on his years at William Ocean High School. Young Corey Palmer, played by Zane Stolee (Year 11) is introduced as the protagonist. We witness as he and his friends navigate the trials

and tribulations of school life, love, friendship and rivalry. Corey, a typical teenager, struggles with identity and unrequited love as his infatuation with Tiffany Houston, played by Kirralee Bray (Year 11), the most popular girl in school, grew daily. Unfortunately for him, Tiffany is dating Michael Feldman, played by Lochie Arkle (Year 10). Michael symbolises the school jock, a confident and often arrogant sports star. He is the classic example of a student who excels in athletics and enjoys a high social status because of it. Contrastingly, Corey's character represents the average student who is trying to find his place in the social hierarchy.

Equally, there were supporting characters that resonated with the audience. While Cyndi Gibson, played by Anisha Anandh (Year 11) represents the class of students who thrive in social interaction and brings energy to





the school, Eileen Reagan played by Alicja Wysocka (Year 10) typifies the intelligent but often overlooked student who eventually comes into their own. Then came Isaac Dunlop's (Year 11) stellar depiction of Feargal's McFerrin III that captivated the audience as he portrayed an archetypical high school 'nerd'. The character highlights the challenges and eventual triumphs of those who don't fit into conventional social moulds. His journey shows the value of individuality and the importance of acceptance.

The Show's overarching message is particularly relevant to our students who are navigating their own paths to adulthood today. The characters' ability to overcome challenges and achieve unforeseen successes teaches students the importance of resilience and perseverance. In a world where they might face academic pressures, social issues and personal challenges, this message is particularly empowering. By reflecting on these themes, students can find inspiration and reassurance that their journey, though uncertain and challenging, is full of potential and opportunities for growth.

Throughout the Show, the characters experience a series of humorous and heartfelt moments that capture the essence of the 80's, highlighted by iconic songs from the era such as *Footloose*, *Girls Just Want to Have Fun* and *Total Eclipse of the Heart*. Remarkably, our talented cast and crew showed incredible camaraderie and solidarity amongst themselves throughout the rehearsal process. Despite the challenges we faced, from learning complex choreography to mastering intricate harmonies and blockings, our students rallied together, offering encouragement, guidance and friendship every step of the way. They poured their hearts into this show, and their dedication is a testament to its quality.

We look forward to building on the solid foundation of *Back to the 80's* as Northholm recommences its biannual musical tradition. Bring on 2026 – stay tuned!

**Dr Sylvia Morris**  
Head of Performing Arts

# WOH





# Unstoppable spirit

## SPORT

**Northholm Grammar continues its sporting success with outstanding results in Aerobics, the Hills Zone Sports Association (HZSA) Cross Country and the HZSA Athletics Carnival. Students excelled in both the Primary and Secondary HZSA Cross Country with the Primary School awarded Best Performed School for 2024. Morgan Dagg (Year 4), Alexa Garcia (Year 6), Katie Storey (Year 6) and Isaiah Rizkallah (Year 4) all representing Northholm as part of the HZSA Team at the Combined Independent Schools (CIS) Competition.**

Morgan Dagg ran a fabulous race and finished first at CIS, qualifying for NSW Primary School Sports Association (NSWPSSA) where he finished fifth. Morgan went on to represent NSW at the National Cross Country Championships in Hobart where he finished sixth in Australia and was part of the state gold medal relay team. Christopher Whiteley (Year 8) placed ninth in the U14 Boys in the Association of Independent Co-Educational Schools (AICES) competition and nineteenth at CIS. Ashleigh Mansell (Year 7) placed third at AICES in U12 Girls and fourth in NSW All Schools. Tyler Watkin (Year 7) placed third in U12 Boys at AICES.

The Northholm Athletics Carnival was, as always, filled with colour and House spirit with great participation

from all students. Rowland House once again claimed victory as the overall winner for 2024, for the second consecutive year.

Our Northholm athletes made up a large team to compete at HZSA Athletics Carnival with Primary achieving Best Performed School and Morgan Dagg breaking both the 1500m and 800m records for U10 Boys and was named Runner Up Age Champion. Congratulations to Morgan Dagg (800m and 1500m), Connor Ryan (Shot Put) (Year 6) and Olivia Fawbert (100m) (Year 2) for qualifying for CIS as part of the HZSA Athletics Team.

The Secondary Team had 21 students qualify for the HZSA Team to compete at AICES with Northholm placing third overall Best School in the secondary rankings. Well done to Age Champions, Justin Billingsley (Year 10) and Tyler Watkin, and Runner Up Age Champions, Ashleigh Mansell, Christopher Whiteley and Will Caffyn (Year 7). In exceptional displays of talent, records were broken by Ashleigh Mansell in the 800m and 1500m and Lila Oliver (Year 7) in the 200m.

Northholm entered teams in the HZSA Athletics Carnival's Semester 2 competition. This included Primary Girls Netball, Primary Boys and Girls Basketball, Primary Boys and Girls Football, Senior Girls Basketball, Junior Boys Futsal, Junior Girls Football and Junior Cricket. Teams will finish this competition in Term 4 with a finals series to wrap up the season.

**Above. Primary HZSA Athletics Team with the Best Performed School award.**

**Below. Indie Leon-Searle with her gold medal at the National Schools Diving Championships.**



## CHARACTER



Justin Billingsley at the Oceania Athletics Championships.



Yuvaan Anand competing in Badminton at the YONEX U15 Badminton National Championships.



Max Zollinger at the National Judo Championships.

### Recent individual achievements include:

- Justin Billingsley competed at the Oceania Athletics Championships in Suva, vying for Olympic representation in Paris 2024. He finished eighth in U18 Hammer Throw and fourteenth in Javelin.
- Ashleigh Mansell was awarded a gold medal as State Champion in the Girls U12 1500m Race Walk at the NSW State Athletics Championships and placed eighth at Nationals in the U14 Girls 3km Race Walk achieving a personal best time.
- Lila Oliver competed at the State Athletics Championships and was awarded a bronze medal in the U13 Girls 80m Hurdles. Lila placed 10th at Nationals in the U14 Girls 80m hurdles.
- Sylvia Dagg (Year 7) competed in the Auscycling Cyclo-Cross National Championships and claimed U15 Women's National Champion.
- Max Zollinger (Year 11) competed at the National Judo Championships winning his Age Group and the Age Group above, also placing second

in the Open Division. These results earned Max a place in the Australian Cadet Team which competed in the World Championships in Peru.

- Jasper Cook (Year 6) was selected in the Primary CIS Rugby League Team.
- Thomas Rosevear (Year 6) was selected in the Primary CIS Softball Team.
- Indie Leon-Searle (Year 6) competed in the 10-12 Years Platform National Schools Diving Championships winning the silver Medal and gold in Syncro with her partner.
- Tiana Roberts (Year 8) represented Australia in the Commonwealth Junior and Cadet Fencing Championships in New Zealand.
- Ben Norris (Year 8) has been selected in the NSW U17 Mixed Netball Team to compete at the National Championships next year.
- Yuvaan Anand (Year 7) was selected to represent NSW in the YONEX U15 Badminton National Championships in Perth.

### Mrs Jamie Stimson

Head of Sport and Coaching



Tiana Roberts competing in Fencing at the Commonwealth Junior and Cadet Fencing Championships.



Northholm students showing House spirit at the Athletics Carnival.



The Secondary Aerobics Team.

## Amazing Aerobics

**With a successful State Championship Campaign in Term 2, Northholm's Aerobics Team qualified for the National Championships in Adelaide in August. The Primary Team won a bronze medal at the National Championships with the Secondary Stage 1 Team also taking home a bronze medal.**

Kirralee Bray (Year 11) won the bronze medal in Senior Aerobics Auditions and Xanthia Hughes (Year 11) was the National Champion in this section. Jasmine O'Riordian (Year 7) won the silver medal in Improvisation with Harper Lorenz (Year 8) taking bronze in the Junior category. Xanthia Hughes won the silver medal in Improvisation in Lyrical Auditions. Kirralee Bray and Bianca Irwin (Year 9) placed fourth in the Pairs/Trio Division with a fantastic routine. These outstanding results are a credit to the girls' commitment to training and the guidance of their coaches, Sarah Walker, Tyler Old and Audrey Pfeiffer.

This year was the most successful Nationals for Northholm Grammar to date and we look forward to what 2025 will bring. We thank Principal, Mr Christopher Bradbury for joining the teams for this prestigious competition.



Kirralee Bray and Bianca Irwin mid routine.



Xanthia Hughes' Lyrical Audition.



The Primary Aerobics Team.

# Equestrian

**SPORT**

**Northholm Grammar School's Equestrian Team continues to grow due to the School's ongoing support in developing the Equestrian community and the commitment from our students to represent at competitions. This year has been a great success, with a developing Equestrian module and competition schedule to cater for all levels and abilities.**

Northholm's Equestrian Team is always looking for new and exciting events to attend. Held across three days in July, Orange Anglican Grammar School's K-12 Equestrian Interschools Competition at Cudal Showgrounds was the perfect addition to the Equestrian calendar. This year marked our second year competing and it did not disappoint. The country charm provided the perfect backdrop for our riders and parents to travel and support each other.

Each year, Northholm provides a dressage clinic and a showjumping clinic for Northholm riders who are working towards or currently representing the School. Both clinics are aimed at teaching and developing the skills and knowledge required to compete in the upcoming disciplines at each event. Last year, the showjumping clinic was hosted by Northholm alumna Gemma Tinney who is currently overseas pursuing her riding career in eventing. The clinic was held at Gemma's family's home in Maraylya and was a great success, providing riders with valuable techniques and critique for horse and rider alike to improve their showjumping.

This year's showjumping clinic is targeting cross country training with Christine Bates at Hawkesbury Riding Club. Riders will have the opportunity for a two-hour lesson with Christine over a range of cross country obstacles including ditches, brushes, banks, water jumps and more.

State Interschools are held each year at Sydney International Equestrian Centre and coordinated by Equestrian

New South Wales. This event is the gateway to qualify for the Nationals competition held later in the year, a prestigious event with the best riders from each state competing against each other in many disciplines. This year, Northholm Grammar was represented by Minnie Pembroke-Birss (Year 5), Amelia Foster (Year 5), Alexa Garcia (Year 6), Grace Ward (Year 7), Marcus Hope (Year 8), Eric Hope (Year 10), Kayla Ghalloub (Year 10) and Jessica Callus (Year 12). Alexa, Grace and Jessica qualified for the National competition, the 2024 Marcus Oldham Australian Interschool Championships, in Tamworth in September. They brought home a number of excellent results and placings, including Jessica winning the Show Rider Trophy with the highest point score, making her the top performing Interschool Show Rider in the country.

Northholm Grammar was represented by Grace Ward (Year 7) at the North West Equestrian Expo, held in Coonabarabran in late May. Grace achieved excellent results across Dressage, Combined Training and Show Riding, resulting in her receiving the Overall 12 Years Reserve Champion.

The Arndell Interschools Equestrian Carnival is where interschools for equestrians all started some 20 years ago. This event always brings a large number of competitors due to the excellent program catering for all levels of ability. The 2024 Arndell Interschools Equestrian Carnival event was attended by Minnie Pembroke-Birss, Amelia Foster, Jessica Ball and Emma Chisholm, who all placed consistently well in their classes. Special mention is made to Emma Chisholm (Year 10) for being awarded Supreme Champion Senior Rider and her horse, Willinga Park Impressive Siren, who was awarded the title of Champion Senior Show Horse.

**Stephanie Murphy**  
Team Manager



Minnie Pembroke-Birss, Amelia Foster, Jessica Ball, Grace Ward and Arabella Izzard at Orange Anglican Grammar School's K-12 Equestrian Interschools Competition.



Alexa Garcia competing in a showjumping event prior to State Interschools.



Northholm Alumna, Gemma Tinney, Principal, Mr Christopher Bradbury and riders from the Northholm Equestrian Team attending the Gemma Tinney Clinic.



Emma Chisholm winning Supreme Champion Senior Rider at the 2024 Arndell Interschools Equestrian Carnival.



Grace Ward winning her combined training event at the North West Equestrian Expo.



# Public Speaking success celebrated

## HUMANITIES

**Northholm Grammar students continued to enjoy success in the Public Speaking domain in 2024, with notable achievements in competitions against a range of Independent and State Government schools.**

In Term 2, two Year 11 students – Xanthia Hughes and Anisha Anandh – competed in the Plain English Speaking Award. Xanthia and Anisha competed against 15 other students, where they had to deliver an eight-minute prepared speech, followed by a three-minute impromptu speech on a subject chosen by the adjudicator, with only three minutes of preparation time permitted.

Both students performed well, with Xanthia making it through to the North Sydney Regional Finals in May – only one of four students selected from Round One. At the Regional Finals, Xanthia competed against 12 other students and despite performing exceptionally well in both the prepared and impromptu sections, did not progress through to the Semi-Finals.

Early in Term 3, Hannah Kok (Year 9) and Aventine Nguyen (Year 8) both represented Northholm Grammar at the Junior Secondary Speaking Award, delivering five-minute prepared and two-minute impromptu speeches against an impressive range of other competitors. As she had also done in 2023, Hannah progressed through to the North Sydney Regional Finals,

competing against 10 other speakers. While Hannah didn't progress to the State Finals, she performed extremely well on the day. This was a tremendous effort from all students involved, with particular congratulations to Xanthia and Hannah for their progression through to the Regional Finals.

**Nick Heydon**

Assistant Head of Humanities

**Left to right. Hannah Kok (Year 9) and Aventine Nguyen (Year 8) at the Junior Secondary Speaking Award.**

# HICES Debating

## HUMANITIES

**Northholm Grammar Secondary students had an exceptional 2024 HICES Debating season, marked by several wins across Age Categories which saw continued development of oratory and teamwork skills in what was a challenging competition.**

Due to the large volume of interest during the Debating Trials, Northholm was able to enter two Middles Teams, comprised of students in Years 7 and 8, one Senior Team with students from Years 9 and 10, and an Opens Team with Year 11 and 12 students.

One of Northholm's Middles Teams (Year 7), and the Opens Team progressed as far as the Quarter Finals – just two wins away from participating in a Grand Final Round. Unfortunately, despite excellent arguments from the Year 7 Middles Team – arguing in the negative 'that high schools should eliminate standardised testing in favour of alternative assessment methods', they were not able to defeat very strong opposition in Emmanuel Anglican College.

The Opens Team also debated against Emmanuel Anglican College in the Quarter Finals, arguing against the proposition 'that we should introduce a tax against fast fashion', but also suffered a very narrow loss in a highly competitive debate. The Middles and Opens Teams are each commended for their progression through the season and their dedication to continued improvement.

It was particularly pleasing to see the development and commitment of all debating teams across the season. Competing against a range of schools from across the State in virtual debates helped to build planning, teamwork and argumentative skills, and all students benefited from valuable feedback from adjudicators throughout the competition.



We look forward to growing Debating at Northholm Grammar in 2025 and to continued success for our Secondary teams.

**Nick Heydon**  
Assistant Head of Humanities

**Top. Left to right. HICES Opens Debating Team members Anisha Anandh, Sofia Attia, Xanthia Hughes and Saisha Suri.**

**Above. Left to right. Year 7 HICES Debating Team. Left to Right. Advitya Jain, Kihara Dissanayake, Sylvia Dagg, Pranshi Shah, Ally Park and Christopher Zhang.**

*“...which saw continued development of oratory and teamwork skills in what was a challenging competition.”*



Northholm  
Grammar

Challenging minds. Creating futures.

# Steering towards achievement

## AGRICULTURE/TAS

The Cattle Show Team built upon the learnings and success from the Castle Hill Show and competed in the Junior Judging Competition at the 2024 Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association Show in April against local school students, as well as many external entrants.

This opportunity was invaluable at further preparing the team in both judging experience, ring craft and skill development for the remainder of the year's competitions.

Against competition from over 60 participants across two Age Divisions, five of Northholm students were selected in the top 10 for their respective Age Division based on their skilled visual assessment of a group of steers and a second group of heifers.

Top. Northholm's cattle resting at Wingham Beef Week. Left to right. Thrasher, Trent, Toby, Tim and Topdeck.



Cattle Show Team students at the 2024 Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association Show.

**Under 15 years**

- Jess Ball (Year 8) – First place and Champion Junior Judge across all entrants Under 15
- Mia Banovic (Year 9) - Fifth place
- Sophie Smart (Year 8) - Fourth place

**15 to 17 years**

- Luke Leschev (Year 9) - Third place
- Ally Maclaine (Year 10) - Fifth place and Highly Commended

Upon returning in Term 2, attention was narrowed on both student and stock preparation for Wingham Beef Week in May. Once on ground at this event, students expertly demonstrated the qualities and attributes that set a Northholm student apart from their peers, through courtesy, diligence and their pursuit of personal best in all they do. Presenting five head of cattle for the team meant they had their work cut out for them with early mornings, which led into long days.

Our students stepped up to the challenge, giving their all in one of the most competitive cattle competitions in New South Wales, with over 400 students entered. They skilfully showed their cattle (Tim, Trent, Topdeck, Toby and Thrasher), with Northholm born and bred Tim placing fifth in his led class. Additionally, students' involvement in the Junior Parading, Junior Judging and Meat and Carcase Judging competitions saw them place highly against such tough competition from across the State.

The majority of the Cattle Show Team students are still in their first year of cattle showing and they returned from Wingham Beef Week with a determination to grow and improve on their sound achievements for the Greater Sydney Schools Cattle Competition in August. In this competition, they won the Champion Show Carcase for the third year in a row.

We look forward to their continued growth and success for the 2025 show season ahead!

**Ian Fawbert**

Head of Agriculture/TAS

Top right. Ally Maclaine (Year 10) and Trent at Wingham Beef Week.

Bottom right. Alex Tebbet (Year 10) and Toby at Wingham Beef Week.



# Wonders of Greece

## EXCURSIONS

**“Travel is a force for good: it broadens our mind, develops cultural empathy and gives us a better understanding of the world,” claimed Imogen Hall, a writer for the travel guidebook publisher Lonely Planet. In April, Northholm Grammar invited students from Years 8 to 11 to embrace this philosophy during the 2024 cultural tour, an ancient history filled journey across Greece for 10 days, exploring centuries of civilisation across spectacular landscapes.**

The group commenced their trip in Athens – the capital of Greece and what was once the heart of Ancient Greece. Awestruck, they visited some of the most important locations of ancient Athenian democracy and culture including the Acropolis, the Ancient Agora and Syntagma Square (Parliament House). Students enjoyed the lively cobblestone streets of the Plaka and a boat trip across the beautiful waters to the island of Aegina.

Leaving the city and heading north, everyone was wowed by the remarkable landscape and amazing architecture of Meteora. Byzantine monasteries, perched on rocky hilltops, were filled with intricate wall paintings and priceless artifacts. In all, the group visited six monasteries and one nunnery in the area.

At Delphi, they felt the significance of this sacred city that was once dedicated to the power of the Greek god Apollo. They could imagine the Delphic oracle delivering prophecies sent by Apollo, in the shadows of Mount Parnassus, as they wandered across the World Heritage site.

The great adventures of the heroes of Greek mythology were brought to life as the tour went on to the Peloponnese region, a peninsula in Southern Greece. Staying in the picturesque town of Nafplio, with views of beautiful beaches, the group visited the archaeological ruins of Epidaurus, Corinth and Mycenae.

The final leg of the tour took the group to the historical site of Olympia. With the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics just around the corner at the time, it was an amazing opportunity to experience the birthplace of the most famous and important sporting event in the ancient world. To conclude the trip, they returned to Athens to see the Olympic Stadium where the modern Olympic Games began in 1896, reviving the ancient tradition. Seeing the Changing of the Guard at the Presidential Mansion and saying goodbye to their wonderful tour guide Marissa marked the end of the sensational experience.

The tour was a transformative learning opportunity for students to expand their capacity for global citizenship, self-awareness and complex comprehension of the past. The cultural tour is the pinnacle of Northholm’s dedication to offering students broad and enriching experiences to challenge them, build in them awareness of the world and develop personal skills such as resilience, leadership and confidence.

*“The tour was a transformative learning opportunity for students to expand their capacity for global citizenship, self-awareness and complex comprehension of the past.”*





# Camp adventures

## CAMPS

**Northholm Grammar's Camp Program supports the personal growth of each student by challenging them in new environments away from the classroom. Building a sense of community with their peers through problem-solving and relationship-building activities, while also developing skills in independence and self-reliance supports the development of the whole person.**

Adventures undertaken by Northholm students in Term 2 included the Year 8 Camp in Jervis Bay, the Year 9 Urban Challenge and the Leadership Camp for Year 10 students.

The Year 8 Camp program is designed to build resilience and an appreciation for the natural environment. Rain didn't dampen the spirits of students who engaged in activities over the course of three days that included sea kayaking, surfing at Caves Beach, snorkelling, mountain biking and beach games. They learned to be self-sufficient in setting up their own tents and cooking their own meals. Students were shown Indigenous Aboriginal survival methods and how to make bush tucker by an Indigenous Elder and enjoyed a traditional Indigenous Aboriginal dance ceremony, known as a Corroboree.

The Urban Challenge for Year 9 students is always a fun and stimulating three-day exploration through the streets of Sydney. Students navigated their way through the city in teams, solving clues that led them on their journey. Organising all their meals motivated the students to work together, as they learned leadership, team responsibility and collaboration skills.

For Year 10 students, the Southern Highlands provided the picturesque background for the Leadership Camp in May. This annual event is an important part of our Character Education Program, as student participate in team building challenges and games that refine their ability to lead effectively. Following three days at the Fitzroy Falls Conference and Adventure Centre, students developed many personal and interpersonal skills to prepare them as leaders ready to contribute to the community.

*"...supports the personal growth of each student by challenging them in new environments away from the classroom."*







# Making memories with mum

## NORTHHOLM ASSOCIATION

The Northholm Association hosted its annual Mother's Day Breakfast, a cherished event that brought together mothers and their children for a special morning before school. This year's gathering was a resounding success, filled with warmth, laughter and an abundance of delicious treats.

Held on a crisp morning on campus in the Lincoln Centre, the event welcomed a large turnout of mothers, eager to spend quality time with their children. The atmosphere was vibrant, with students and their mums enjoying a delightful breakfast spread that included fresh pastries, fruits and a selection of other delectable treats. A few highlights from the event included the Secondary Years students operating the coffee cart and the photobooth where everyone got to have a photo with their mother. We also held a raffle, with the winning mum receiving a Magnum of Moët, a voucher for a facial treatment and some sweet treats.

The Mother's Day Breakfast once again proved to be a meaningful and memorable tradition at Northholm Grammar, strengthening the bonds between families and the Northholm community. The event left everyone looking forward to next year's celebration, where they can once again gather to honour and appreciate the special women in their lives.

The success of all the events held by the Northholm Association is thanks to the many volunteers who contribute their time and to the School administration for all their support.

**Katie Melides**

Northholm Association President



# Subjects in the spo



## David Stratton

Coordinator of Co-Curricular Music

### The magic and mystery of music

**My role as the Coordinator of Co-Curricular Music involves managing our Ensembles, Bands and Choirs, our highly experienced Music Tutors and all private Music lessons. I also coordinate the performances, events and competitions our Music groups are involved in, and the School's ceremonial events and large events including the annual Music Camp and Music Showcase.**

I originally trained as a secondary school Music teacher in the late 70s/early 80s in Adelaide, teaching in a specialist music department in a public high school, before relocating to Sydney to study at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, completing an Associate Diploma in Jazz Studies. I subsequently pursued a dual career in education and professional music performance and event management for over 40 years, which is ongoing. I was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2000 to investigate the structure, content and operation of Contemporary Music courses in the United States and the United Kingdom, which was a fascinating educational opportunity. I gained a Master of Arts (Honours) degree from Western Sydney University, whilst holding the position of Head of Contemporary Performance at the Australian Institute of Music (2000—2006) before taking up my role at Northholm in 2009.

As a child, I was fortunate to have great mentors in some of my teachers and band conductors who encouraged and supported my passion for music. I identified how important these people were, and realised what a critical role they played in my life and determined teaching was a most worthwhile career aim. I wanted to share my many

positive experiences, giving back to young people through music education. Music is still a joy and mystery to me; I continue to learn new things every single day. I consider myself extremely fortunate I can immerse myself in such an expressive art form and share my passion for music with young people.

The role of Coordinator of Co-Curricular Music at Northholm was such an attractive opportunity for me to utilise my experience in education, professional music performance and event coordination and management. It was a perfect fit!

The four key pillars of Northholm's approach to education – Learning through Scholarship, Caring for Others and Self, Living a Faithful Life and Contributing to the Community, have provided clarity for both staff and students, and are the cornerstone for how I engage with our students – not just on campus, but also when our young musicians are representing the School in the many external events through the year. The mantra *academic intentionality with pastoral attentiveness* is a critical core belief in the Music Department and an integral part of our success.

In my free time, I pursue a professional performing career. I am currently engaged in playing electric bass and double bass in the production of *Sister Act* at the Capitol Theatre and in 2025 I will play in the orchestra for *The Book of Mormon*. I have been fortunate to play in over 40 professional music theatre productions. Perhaps the biggest highlight was my role as Assistant Music Director for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. It is my privilege to draw on my palette of experiences when working with our students and staff and Northholm Grammar.

*“The mantra ‘academic intentionality with pastoral attentiveness’ is a critical core belief in the Music Department and an integral part of our success...”*

# Spotlight

Nandhini Raj

Director of Professional Practice

## The light bulb moments

**My role as the Director of Professional Practice focuses on building capacity in new and existing Northholm staff to identify personal and professional goals to deliver high-quality practices for continuous improvement to meet the educational needs of our students and to align with the broader goals of Northholm Grammar.**

I lead staff best practices, professional reading forums for academic and pastoral leadership teams and supervise teachers in their accreditation process. I also teach Engineering, Software Design and Design and Technology at the School.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering with a major in electronics and telecommunication from India.

I realised my passion for teaching after completing a Masters of Teaching (Secondary) in Technology and Applied Studies and got accredited to teach Engineering, Information Software Technology, Software Design and Design and Technology. I have been teaching for almost two decades in both selective and comprehensive schools.

I was always passionate about teaching, having been inspired by some exceptional teachers as role models in my life. I wanted to use my education and industry experience to make a difference in the lives of children and to see them grow to be successful in their careers, help them rise up to a challenge and be caring and compassionate human beings. I believe as an educator I have a moral responsibility to be a part of that change.

The most exciting part about teaching these subjects is working with the latest tech tools like software programs, laser cutters and 3D printers. Technology subjects give students an

authentic learning experience – one that's hands on and interdisciplinary. I enjoy the light bulb moments when students get creative and make new connections in their learning. Sowing the seeds of curiosity and finding new ways to spark students' interests in technology and inspiring them to become engineers and software developers is the best part of teaching these subjects. I enjoyed the various STEM/Engineering and Robotics competitions we have won over the years. It's an incredibly exciting experience to be in that critical and creative thinking zone surrounded by busy hands and busy minds.

The future looks bright and promising for the 21st century learners of Engineering Studies and Software Design. With the current and emerging technological developments like AI, our students have a huge part to play in this innovative space in the next decade.

A strong believer of value-based education, I was attracted to Northholm's educational approach and strategy, particularly its holistic education, and the beautiful semi-rural environment was an added bonus. I wanted to be part of a teaching and learning culture that fosters and models high expectations and excellence in academics and co-curricular programs. I was particularly attracted to the caring, inclusive and collegial staff, respectful students and supportive executives; we are like one big family always looking out for each other.

The four key pillars of Northholm education perfectly align with my teaching philosophy. I set high expectations for all my students and want them to excel and achieve their personal best. Balancing care and candour in teaching is crucial for creating a positive and effective learning environment. Active learning



*“Balancing care and candour in teaching is crucial...”*

happens in a classroom when there is a strong partnership built on trust, appreciation and respect between the student and the teacher.

I enjoy spending time with my family in my free time. I also like reading about different cultures and their influence on human behaviour. Culturally responsive teaching is an area I would like to do my PhD in. Being multilingual in four languages comes in handy when meeting new Northholm families.

# Country Fair

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**It was a windy and wild day but that didn't keep the crowds from flocking to the Northholm Country Fair on Sunday 15 September. We had an amazing day of family fun, with fantastic live entertainment, delicious food, thrilling rides and more.**

The event highlighted the strength of our community through the great involvement of our students, staff, parents and carers. It would not have been possible without the vision, energy and execution of the President of the Northholm Association, Katie Melides, and the Northholm Association team, and we appreciate everyone's incredible contribution in making the day a success.





# Anything is possible

**FROM THE ARCHIVES**

After a hiatus of 15 years, Northholm Grammar was thrilled with the return of the Senior School Musical in June. The importance of Performing Arts experiences was further confirmed earlier this year when alumnus Jason Langley returned to Northholm Grammar as a guest speaker at Foundation Day. After graduating from Northholm in 1986, Jason followed his passion to become a professional actor and now an award-winning theatre director.

“I’ve had an incredibly fortunate career and achieved things I could only have dreamt of at Northholm. As an actor I performed in hundreds of plays, musicals and TV shows. I’ve sung on albums, in concerts and cabarets. I’ve been flown all around the country and overseas to direct shows. I’ve taught and directed shows at Australia’s top drama schools like NIDA, WAAPA and VCA. I’ve coached reality TV stars. I’ve met, worked and hung out with Broadway stars, film stars, pop stars. It all sounds so glamorous and yes, 5% of it is, however, the other 95% is solid hard work and sheer determination. But a whole world opened up to me, and it all started here at Northholm.

On that first day at Northholm, all those years ago, I made the decision to become the person I wanted to be, but in hindsight I realise that all along, it was really Northholm affording me the opportunity to become who I actually was. So, if you aspire to be something or to be someone, then you go for it, don’t let anyone stop you, not even a well-meaning Principal. It’s never too late to shift your destiny. And you may find, as I did, that *that* something or *that* someone you’ve always wanted to be has probably been somewhere within you all along.”

**Jason Langley**  
Class of 1986

“...in hindsight I realise that all along, it was really Northholm affording me the opportunity to become who I actually was.”

**My View of ‘Oliver’**

What a great musical I thought. Exciting storyline, good music, colourful, with excitement. After months of practice it was finally here.

Friday, 26th April, 1985 had arrived and the last practice was under way. As the cast as Oliver for Bradley Darch, who had come down with an attack of acute laryngitis, yet very sorry for Bradley who had worked so hard for so long, and now would be following a few rushed hours of script learning, the curtains were drawn back at “Oliver” was under way. I had a sudden thrill of excitement and a tinge of fear — I was throwing himself into it and the audience, appreciating it all, gave thunderous scenery looked great and the music and lighting were all going well.

However, soon Saturday night had come to an end and it was all over. All who had thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We were all thrilled that Bradley had been able to perform for the final performance — even though he was still unwell. Well done personally it had been a thrill to be part of it all. The excitement, the activity, the fun the last minute “fill in for Oliver”. My sincere thanks goes to everyone (students, and the audience) for their support and encouragement given to me in the real N gratefully to David Eller who assisted me all through the show, with what I should I felt that the same support was given and received by all who participated — whether including those who helped behind the scenes.

The participation, involvement, the laughter and tears, the excitement and thrill of another part of the great Northholm experience.

Well done everyone!



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**GENERAL ACTIVITIES**

**JOSEPH**

On the 20th and 21st of July Northholm Grammar School put on two incredible productions of “Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”. The performances proved to be completely captivating and very entertaining for the audience.

Dreams of producing an entertaining musical began in earnest. Under the careful guidance of the staff and dedicated parents the dreams developed into a reality.

The cast spent many painstaking hours during school and many afternoons rehearsing their roles. It was very pleasing to see such an even cross-section of students from Year 6 to 12 taking part.

However, not to be outdone the unsung heroes of the backstage organisation spent an equal amount of arduous and strenuous hours of work to ensure that makeup, costumes, lighting, sound, and sets would be ready on time and successful.

The two performances were completely sensational, amazing and spectacular of which the school could be proud.

The school wishes to extend its sincere thanks to all involved in making Joseph such an achievement. Our special thanks go to all parents who spent much of their precious time helping with the production and to all parents who drove their children to and from school at odd and inconvenient times.

Craig Farini

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**“JOSEPH AND HIS AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT”**

Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber

The cast looked exultant. They had done it. They’d put on a superb show and the thunderous applause was their reward.

People had worked hard for ‘Joseph’. The lead singers had to learn their parts; the chorus had great difficulty memorising the many colours of Joseph’s coat, the brothers had to find a left and a right foot for the dress. The sets had to be built; the wood ordered and re-ordered, the pieces cut out and painted, the backdrop painted and sewn together.

The costumes had to be designed, fitted, sewn, used for rehearsal. The props needed making and the dancers had to work out their dances and co-ordinate them to the music of the chorus.

On the two nights of the show excitement filled the air. There is nothing as exciting as donning costumes, being made up and trooping on tip toe up the stairs, eyes shining, talking in hushed voices because the audience was waiting with bated breath to see you on stage under bright lights. For many this was a new experience and the blinding lights, the hushed atmosphere, the expectant air from many waiting strangers was awesome. Even though we had moved through the actions many times and sung the songs many more times, it felt like a first.

Every noise we made was magnified through the microphones. One wrong move could throw everything out of sequence. With gentle prods the timid and overawed were pushed into place and as the scene became more familiar they moved into what were now customary positions and sang with gay abandon.

Mr. O’Donnell had warned the cast that they would never have the same opportunity again, that if they didn’t go on stage to enjoy themselves they would be sorry tomorrow as they would never be able to regain this experience. The cast knew better than to doubt his word. They enjoyed themselves.

The overture was over, the trumpeters’ last note had died away. Kristy was ready to begin, the guitars and Duncan on the keyboard opened the first number, the curtains went up and there we were in all our glory ready to tell the story that happened “way, way back many centuries ago in the land of Canaan”.

Jason Langley, as Joseph, arrogantly told of his dreams which the brothers scoffed at arms akimbo, faces set in sarcastic grins. They knew how to deal with him. With the help of Gavin the goat they tricked poor old Craig who played an elderly Jacob into believing Joseph was dead. It was difficult to remember to clear the stage of the bones and blood and to bring the blooded coat at precisely the right moment ... but we did it.

# Reunions

10 Year Reunion (Year 12 Class of 2014).

plenty of action. Everyone was  
 moment, I was asked to stand in  
 I felt overwhelmed and excited,  
 probably miss out.  
 and the Northholm production of  
 which soon faded away. Everyone  
 ous applause. The costumes and

participated and all who watched  
 le to come back and take the part  
 e Bradley.

h, the togetherness and especially  
 teachers, Mr Kench, my parents  
 Northholm spirit. I am especially  
 id say or do next.

her in major or minor roles, even  
 of our Oliver production was yet

Colin Mitchell  
Year 7



Mr Bennett and his team of builders constructed the sets while Mrs Pattison and her artists worked overtime creating the wonderful scenery. Mrs McLean came up with the hundreds of period costumes. Mrs Talts pooled together the props from waiters and handkerchiefs in tables and chairs. Mrs DeBickas and Mrs Bennett gathered together a group of make-up girls and showed them the ropes. Mr Holan and his enthusiastic lighting crew spent hours setting up. Just right. Mrs McMurry who made sure the sound was rehearsed an orchestra while all the staff of Northholm in one way or another supported the show.

The last week of rehearsals became hectic and the pace quickened to an uncontrollable chaotic state. Tempers flared up everywhere, rehearsing seemed to be going nowhere fast and, as in any show, everyone was about ready to give up. It looked as though it just wasn't going to make it. However, on the very last dress rehearsal the culmination of all efforts seemed to have reached an anti-climax, until our young 'Oliver' Bradley fell sick.

Panic broke loose, until Colin Mitchell of Year 7 saved the day. He went home and with only a few hours, learnt the part of Oliver with nerves all round, stepped to a full house, and all involved presented a magnificent performance of Oliver. Bradley's audacious yet timid portrayal of Oliver. Bradley was a towering success for him with his determination did not go to waste although the show always spectacular closing night. Bradley's performance to the delight of many.

er became one of Northholm's biggest successes in 1985 and the tradition of a musical each year will continue.

hope all goes well for next year's production of Mikado.

Jason Langley  
Year 11



## THE CAST Principal Roles

Oliver	Bradley Darch
Artful Dodger	David Eller
Fagin	Jason Langley
Nancy	Rebecca Gale
Bill Sykes	Anthony Ducasoulas
Mrs Corney	Bronwyn Davis
Mr Bumble	Matthew Mucha
Bet	Kirsty Edmonds
Mr Sowerberry	Sean Smith
Mrs Sowerberry	Michelle Finlay
Charlotte	Kylie Gibson
Noah Claypole	Andrew Nymann
Mr Brownlow	Grant Charlesworth
Mrs Bedwin	Natalie Burdus
Old Sally	Sarah Heaton





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