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 Year 10



Dear Readers,

Greying hair. Wrinkles. Beer-guts. Sagging flesh. Viagra. Hot flushes. Our school's over 50. But unlike John Howard, we're determined to age gracefully. With plastic surgeons at hand, this edition of the yearbook is by no means frumpy. This year's yearbook has everything last year's had (minus the fattening history supplement): explicit photos, sporting and academic achievements, inspiring headings and the ever amateur Year 7 pages.

But don't get the wrong idea, we still love our yearbook and all of the delicious diversion it has provided. Equipped with many skills, those involved with the Towers will never forget how much snakes cost at Duffy's or what not to say to Mrs Bernays. Working for her can no doubt be scarier than working for Big Kerry or Rupert. And in this, her last year co-ordinating the yearbook, she has endeavoured to keep us wrinkle-free. Her departure will mark the end of an era, similar to the final episode of Big Brother. Mrs Bernays has left the house. What will the future bring?

In contemplating this question and in maintaining our youthful image, brown and yellow this year has been flushed down the toilet. And as effortless as a skin-tearing facelift, it was replaced by reginal blue. Semi-fitted elegance is in and shoulder padded blazers are all the rage.

So we hope that while wrestling with your tie, in your spiffy new blazer, you take a moment to enjoy this year's yearbook. And thank you to those who actually wrote it. Although you may feel sometimes that no one appreciates you, don't despair, we sometimes do. All of your hours of work may have seemed in vain but just think of the amount of fat it has burned

Stay young, and enjoy.

Kieran Colreavy
Angus McFarland

Principal Matters

In 1880, the Premier of NSW, Sir Henry Parkes, introduced the *Public Instruction Act*, which established the blueprint for our public school system and signaled the real start of the journey towards mass elementary education and the right of all children – wealthy and poor, in the city and in the country, no matter what their background – to an education.

In 2001 we have traveled far down the educational highway, as a state and as a nation. Of course 121 years later, we as a community are confronted with different priorities, different needs, different challenges, but in the year that celebrates the Centenary of Federation, it is timely to pause and reflect on how we as a school, as a state and as a nation are traveling and whether we are heading in the best direction possible.

Public Education in this state has a proud history – it has produced many outstanding students and has nurtured many inspirational teachers. Public schools have been the barometer of society's stresses and successes, and they have been the scenes of great debate and at times radical views. They have provided the opportunity for all children from all walks of life to achieve their goals and realize their dreams – and it is imperative for the health and growth of our society that public schools go from strength to strength. Our past students – in the years before Penrith became a selective high school – have included:

- Bede Morris: Foundation Professor of Immunology at the Australian Academy of Science
- Ian Coleman: Chief Judge of the Family Court at Parramatta
- Linda Burney: Director General of the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- David Henderson-Smart: Foundation Professor of Perinatal Medicine at the University of Sydney
- Tony Lauer: Former NSW Police Commissioner
- Penny Wensley: Ambassador for Australia to the United Nations.



Many more students and their stories are chronicled in our school's magazines, archives, honour boards and trophies. Every public school in NSW can produce a similarly impressive list and in this centenary year we should take time to remember this and reaffirm the great tradition that our public system of schooling has as its inheritance. Australian public schools have been the crossroads and the meeting places of students from all backgrounds who have been able to build strong personal relationships and friendships with people from all cultures, all countries, all backgrounds. These relationships have been based on connectedness, on collaboration, on listening, sharing and understanding differing points of view. These experiences have been the cornerstone of the very strong foundation of our

democratic system and our deeply held Australian belief in a fair go for all – freedom, justice, inclusion are the hallmarks of our unique Australian democracy and they are the pillars of a civil society. As such they are values to be treasured and fiercely protected. In 2001, our 51st year, it is a timely opportunity for all members of Penrith High School to consider how they can ensure that our school goes from strength to strength on its unique journey, just as we as Australians consider the future journey of our nation.

Even a quick glance through this year's edition of the *Towers* magazine reveals another year of outstanding activity, personal achievement and success in academic, sporting and cultural dimensions of school life. There has been much exuberance, commitment and energy evident in so many activities – as well as a lot of help, encouragement and real friendship in time of need shown along the way. Congratulations to all our achievers and award winners and particularly to all those students who have achieved their personal best this year. A sincere thank you as always to our wonderful staff whose dedication and extraordinary hard work make such a difference daily to the education of our students, and to the many parents who have given us their support and encouragement throughout the year.

Finally, a special thank you to the terrific *Towers* editorial team – a great job once again, striving for the highest!

Wendy De Paoli

School Council

The School Council could best be described as a cross between a board of directors and an advisory group. The Council has a constitution which ensures that everyone in the school community is represented. Two parents, three teachers and two students are elected by their respective member bodies and other people can be appointed by the Department of Education as community representatives. The only automatic member of the council is the school's Principal Mrs De Paoli.

The main task of the Council for this year is to advise the Principal on the school budget: where the money is coming from and how it should be spent, as well as deciding what the priorities are for next year. Other matters for consideration are the security fence and its implications for the school and the introduction of a 'double period' time table. As well, work will begin on listing resources needed by the various faculties to provide students with the best possible education.

John Derum

Learning is fun! No wait, please don't stop reading, we have more to say. In spite of the cliché, whether you believe it to be true or not, for us, Penrith High has created a learning environment that really is, well, fun.

But wait, let's reflect. How is it that learning is fun when all the back-to-school ads depict us moaning and groaning while our prancing parents throw folders into trolleys? Well, the logical answer is, when our parents jump for joy, they are not thinking, "Thank goodness they're going back", but are actually thrilled by the fact that we too can experience the divine satisfaction that education can bring to our lives.

We know a sound education is what we are all striving for, and no student of Penrith High can deny it. For every day we see you rushing to class, jamming the doorways and running up the stairs just to get to the room where your mind can be unlocked to the knowledge that never ceases to flow. You learn about Pythagorus's Theorem, and a whole new scope of possibility surges in at every angle. You read Shakespeare and suddenly an ancient language is revealed in its brilliance. Yes folks, we all know that

deep in our hearts there truly is a yearning to learn the mysteries of the world, and they are waiting.

To our teachers and mentors, don't come to class and think of us as a bunch of immature, rowdy adolescents, but remember the insight and hope you bring to us and how you are building our futures through education.

And to the students of Penrith High, make your high school lives fun, create a legacy of yourself for the school. Join the SRC, join the chess club or the dance group or the stockmarket game or, Amnesty International. Become a part of the activities, even if you just cook sausages during School Spirit Week, for it is all there waiting for you to enjoy.

And to the ex-Penrith High Schoolers, join the mentor scheme so that we innocents can realise the possibilities out there. The number of opportunities awaiting us is beyond comprehension.

So finally we say: have a go and don't be afraid, even if the whole school has to know how bad your singing is.

Vanessa and Jonathan