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The Towers

Penrith High School Yearbook 2003



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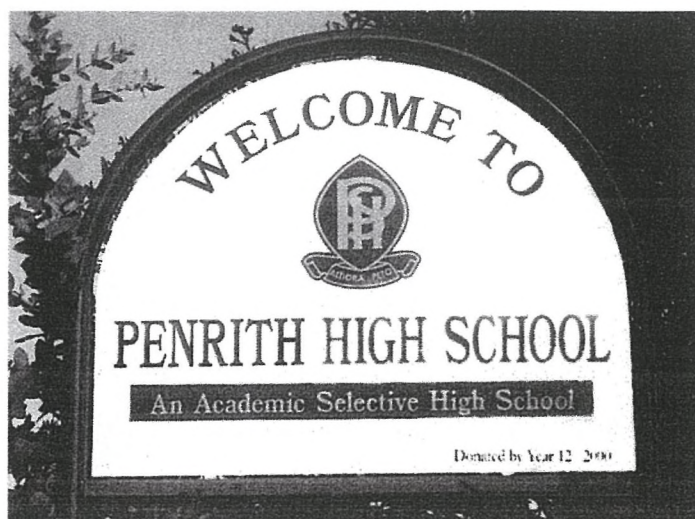
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Theme:
International Year of Fresh water



As you step into *The Towers* for 2003, the final word on all that happened within Penrith High School this past year, something is bound to leap out at you. Hopefully you'll see the same as I gleaned whilst reflecting on this great publication, and the year that seemingly flew by. But more than what was in these pages, it was the staff and students with whom I worked that brought home this epiphany of mine.

It became blindingly obvious to me when I saw the trouble Mrs Battistella went to in eeking positive comments out of exam-weary and school sceptic Year 12 students to reflect on their time at PHS (see our centre section for the results!). And out of every disillusioned soul she managed to find something positive to put in our yearbook. It was then that I realised the lesson teachers have probably been trying to impress upon me while I stared off at the Golden Gates across the road; **there is a time and place for everything.**

In the following pages you will, no doubt, discover that Penrith High School is a place for fulfilling potentials, pursuing dreams, forging lifetime friendships (cue inspirational music) and learning invaluable lessons. It is an exceptional place for self-expression and vital feedback from gifted and interested students, not to mention dedicated teachers who are willing to go well beyond expectations and their job description to help us out.

The Towers is tangible evidence that our six years in high school is the time to get involved and make the most of this positively-charged environment to express and develop ourselves in. As one about to disappear into the nonentity of the 'real world', I can appreciate how important it is to celebrate the achievements of our peers who have combined with extra-curricular activities, especially excelling to the extent they have, keeping up the core subjects and pursuit of knowledge.

There is a time and place for everything, and Penrith High School is the place for striving for the highest. This time is going to remain with you as the best years of your life, no matter how much you get hit in the head by stray footballs or miss out on a good mark for an assignment. It isn't the place for negativity, for pulling others down or for hiding away. If we are going to continue to stuff *The Towers'* pages with more and more fantastic achievements, the commendable ethics of the current staff and students is to be continued. Put in that extra effort in all that you do, try something new, never be afraid of foreign experiences, and if you wear a smile, it's all the easier. Now is the time, and here is the place, give it your best and *The Towers* will be more important than pictures of other people to you.

Jenna Daroczy

Principal Matters

The year 2003 has been another wonderful year for Penrith High School. The work of so many students and staff has been outstanding, and we continue to be encouraged and very well supported by our parent community and their representative groups within the school.

This year the work of our school's Amnesty International group has been particularly resonant, as we as a global community have faced many challenges to our thinking about world harmony and understanding, and how those goals can best be achieved. The students involved in Amnesty have worked with particular vigour this year, presenting a memorable Harmony Day celebration of our school's multicultural identity, creating a wonderful banner and a visual feast of posters and origami expressing harmony and togetherness interwoven with diversity, inviting inspirational guest speaker Ricardo Andino, a refugee from El Salvador, to address the school to mark Refugee Week, as well as several students entering the Voices of Hope competition. Amnesty's regular letter writing campaign has resulted in answering letters from the Prime Minister responding to issues of international concern. Our recent Talk Like a Ninja Day of Silence was also very well supported by students. The dedication, enthusiasm and drive to make a positive difference that we have seen in this group of students are typical of our students' work and attitudes in so many other dimensions of school life.



An exciting area of growth this year has been in the number of Student Leader positions available in the school. In addition to the traditional roles of school captains, house captains, SRC representatives and Peer Support leaders, a large number of nominated student leader positions have been introduced in many areas of school life – in curricular and co-curricular programs – with great success. We look further to more impressive contributions in these roles in the future. The Houses have worked hard this year once again to strengthen their impact in school life. The strengthened role of the House Captains in recent times has been recognized in the purchase of the House Captains Honour Board that is to be placed in the School Hall.

This year saw the retirement of our distinguished History Head Teacher, Mr Ian Keese. Students over the years have responded to Mr Keese's genuine interest in their learning and in them as people, and so have his colleagues. He has been a wonderful source of knowledge, but also a reminder of the fundamental importance of strong principles and ethics in guiding us as a school and as a learning community. When asked what Mr Keese meant to the students of Penrith High School, one student answered with this wonderful tribute:

For the students of Penrith High, Mr Keese was our very own Professor Dumbledore: compassionate, friendly, dedicated to his subject and students, approachable, wise, intelligent, inspiring and with a great sense of humour. We will never forget him.

This year's edition of *The Towers* chronicles many exciting and successful times – high drama; high excitement; high achievement. It gathers together for your enjoyment many memories of a great year at Penrith High School. Congratulations and warmest thanks to editor Jenna Daroczy, co-ordinator Ms Silk, and all the many students and staff who have worked so very hard to produce this very important annual publication.

Mrs Wendy De Paoli