



The Towers

Penrith High School 2005



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Cover design
by
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Year 12

Principal Matters



2005 was the year when two Australian researchers, Robin Warren and Barry Marshall, were awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine. While we cannot say that our students have quite reached this pinnacle of achievement, we nevertheless are very proud of their achievements and their efforts this year, and who knows what the future could hold for our graduates, as they strive for the highest in their endeavours.

As I review the year, there have been many highlights – Alicia Back travelling to Canberra to receive her first in NSW Simpson Prize, Keiran Glazier travelling to Melbourne to receive his first in NSW and second in Australia Rio Tinto Big Science Competition Award, Ivy Tseng achieving first in the Year 9 division of the Australasian School English Competition and Camelia Mowbray winning the national first place in the Optus/Bell Shakespeare *Make a Scene* Competition. Meghan Stacey is the first of our students to be invited to perform as a vocal soloist at the Schools Spectacular and Alexis Routley is our first student to be selected for the Australian Youth Orchestra. In the sporting arena, Celia Sullohern achieved second place in the Under 13s National Cross Country Championship.

This year, 38 Year 12 students were awarded the most prestigious award in NSW Public Schools – the Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement – and we were thrilled that two of them were Penrith High School students, Glen Pink and Amelia Walkley.

And these are just a few examples of a very exciting year's successes. This edition of *The Towers* remembers many, many more impressive achievements.

There have been many more memorable school events – School Spirit Week, Open Night, Harmony Day, Penrith in Performance, our annual Walkathon and Variety Night. Are all very successful and exciting school experiences, and their success is very much due to the enthusiasm of our students and our staff. Many more co-curricular experiences are provided for our students to experience and enjoy – the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, drama, music, dance and debating competitions, mock trial, swimming school, annual tree day, the environment group, blood bank, chess, and the list of activities goes on and on. We greatly appreciate the outstanding contribution of so many of our staff who teach with enthusiasm but also provide a rich smorgasbord of enrichment experiences for our students.

It is with great sadness that we say farewell this year to several very special, longstanding members of staff. Senior Administration Manager Mrs Zwegers (with us since 1992) and School Administration Officer Mrs Howarth (since 1994) are retiring this year after many years of devoted service to the school. They will be greatly missed for their sincere interest in the well-being of our students and for their humour. I think the photo included later in this publication probably says it all.

The influence of Deputy Principal, Mr Wingett, (appointed to Penrith High School in 1989) has been inestimable. An educationalist of vision, humanity, intellect and humour, Mr Wingett is greatly respected by students and staff for his depth and breadth of knowledge, and his enthusiastic pursuit of a wide range of educational and other challenges. I have heard many, many students over the years speak in awe of Mr Wingett's knowledge in the realms of Science. Mr Wingett's influence and impact on the school, both as Deputy Principal and as a valued member of the science faculty has been and will be long-lasting. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

A final thank you to Ms Silk and the editorial team of *The Towers* 2005, for their dedication to this important school publication. Congratulations on this fine edition.

Mrs W. DePaoli
Principal

Parents and Citizens

Penrith High P&C continues to foster interaction between parents and the school through the canteen, working bees, fund raising activities and as a monthly forum to receive information from and to ask questions of the school executive.

Over the past year we have continued to be involved in the campaign for additional government funding to significantly upgrade the school's buildings and facilities. While the School Executive has pushed the program through departmental channels, our role has been to directly seek the support of our elected representatives at both a State and Federal level. While both approaches have made considerable headway, we are still some way from getting the right signature on the dotted line. Hopefully, with the support we have gathered from all the key people so far, the next 12 months will see us achieve our goals of a new library, performing arts centre, expanded science facilities and upgraded administration area.

Particularly pleasing outcomes from the past year have been:

- The growing support for Penrith High families as seen through their response to the General Contribution and Technology Levy
- The opportunity to underwrite the extension of the shade cloth area
- The donation of an shield for the annual debating prize
- The application to the Federal Department of Education for funds to upgrade the school hall, extend air-conditioning and for a new grand piano, as part of the Investing in Schools program
- The allocation of \$12000 to provide additional resources to Visual Arts, Music, Library, English, Maths, Food Technology and Science.

So much of this is made possible by the efforts of the Canteen Committee and their dedication to providing a wonderful service for the betterment of the school.

Finally I'd like to thank the hardy band of parents who regularly attend the P&C meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, for their efforts and support for the school, and invite every family at Penrith High to join us whenever you have the opportunity.

Warwick Fuller (President)

School Council

This past year, the major issue occupying Council has been *Buildings and Facilities Plan*. This has been a long-fought battle (and it is not over yet) to convince the powers-that-be that it is the time for Penrith High - as a 'lighthouse' public school in the western metropolitan area - to benefit from a major capital expenditure. In matters like this, Council is able to take on important tasks such as writing to and meeting with politicians. Substantial progress has been made, and we are hopeful that one day soon Penrith High will have a new Library Information Resource Centre, a new Performing Arts area, additional Science facilities and an upgraded Administration block.

In 2004-2005, Council also continued to pursue its objective of developing a sense of 'school community' - putting in place strategies to enhance an appreciation in the school community about what happens and what is achieved at PHS, about who makes it happen and about how it happens. Council sees this 'sense of community' as valuable in its own right. However it also sees it as one practical way to encourage parents to participate in and contribute to the life of the school where they can, by, for example, attendance at School Working Bees and P&C meetings, Canteen duty and payment of the general contribution and technology levy. These are all critical to the ongoing ability of public schools to provide the best educational and social experiences for their students, and Penrith High is no different in this.

The School Council itself provides a terrific opportunity to make a contribution to the life of Penrith High. Any membership changes take place at the June AGM, so there is generally an opportunity at this time for new representatives to come on board. Advertisements for parent positions go out in the School Newsletter in May-June each year.

Kristine McLean (President)

Canteen Committee

There have been many changes in the canteen this year. In implementing the Healthy Canteen Strategy we have had some interesting times. In first term the SRC taste tested a huge variety of drinks and hot food. We can no longer sell non-diet soft-drinks, so we have introduced things like *Frizz* and diet Golden Circle Drinks. Lite pies, sausage rolls, pastries, breast chicken crackles and tender bites were added to the menu. Some foods were deleted though most of our foods did fit into the amber category.

After our school survey last year it was evident the students wanted sushi and as a result we now offer it on Tuesday. It has gone well so far and the students and staff are enjoying it. We still have the challenge of looking at our "junk" snacks and providing healthier, exciting, tasty alternatives. Also by the end of the year we will overhaul our variety of rolls.

Thanks must go to our canteen committee for all their hard work and to Mrs De Paoli for keeping us on track and giving us support. We look forward to another year of fun, food and challenges.

Marie Ward (Canteen Manager) & Pauline Want (Assistant Manager)

community of p.h.s.

BLAXLAND HOUSE

What a year it has been. We came CLOSE to being the best house in the swimming carnival. We came CLOSE to winning the cross country. We even came CLOSE to triumphing in athletics. But it just wasn't our year. One area that NO house came close to us in however was house spirit.

Every carnival was speckled with smiling faces plastered with yellow zinc, girls AND boys modeling fashionable yellow shirts, wigs and who could forget the brilliant, bright, Blaxland Bee Badge!?

These badges were designed by the house captains this year and manufactured through the Young Achievers; a great house initiative and popular throughout the school.

Our world vision sponsorship continued to be supported and money collected during Friday role call going towards sponsoring a child through this program.

School Spirit week saw the start of a new era: "The Blaxland BBQ". We had a lot of fun!



*Chris Boothroyd &
Tracy Gardiner*

LAWSON HOUSE

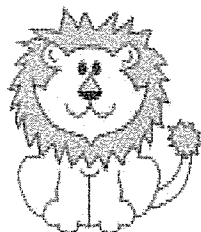
Well we may not have won ANY carnivals, but we did win the house banner! Lawson wins when it comes to house spirit. We came second at Athletics again this year, and I'm hoping that next year a wave of young athletes will enter Lawson house!! We participated in School Spirit Week, and helped every other house with their special food days. ...and we got the most profit back too. We have successfully raised funds each Friday to support our sponsor child and have now began to sponsor another child as well. THANKS EVERYONE!

Ms Le Marquand has been a great house patron and has really brought house spirit back. Her giggles and snorts at house meetings made them so much more enjoyable. As she has gone overseas at the moment, Ms Le Clerc has filled in as temporary house patron and should lead us into victory at the Walk-a-thon Tug of War competition!

We would like to thank everyone for their help and support at each of the carnivals in coordinating relays and organising house initiatives, without YOU it would not have been as successful. Thanks also to Melinda and Rick who have been GREAT vice captains and have done a fantastic job at helping out with house endeavours. We welcome on the new House captains and Vice captains and we have faith that they will continue this wonderful house's spirit and great nature to "have a go".

Lawson won the novelties at the swimming Carnival and this is a great example of how well we work together as a team. We have had a fantastic time watching this

AWESOME house grow. Keep up the wild red outfits, red face paints and crazy red wigs... oh and continue to run with the lion, that's a classic!



*Michelle Howes &
Matthew Hilton*

MITCHELL HOUSE

What a Year, What a House! What can I say. We dominate. We own. We are ridiculously good. We are mighty fine. Over the past year, Mitchell House has managed to win every sports carnival Penrith High has to offer. Swimming, Cross country, and Athletics Mitchell flogged 'em (and usually by a huge margin). We now have only the prestigious Walk-a-thon tug-o-war to come, and, based on our past record, Mitchell is looking at a clean sweep. GO MITCHELL!

I have had an awesome time leading Mitchell House through the past two years along with co-captain Avalon Moonen and vice captains Lloyd Nichol and Melanie Lang. It has been a challenging and sometimes stressful experience-for instance when we managed to either burn or undercook all the toffees we were selling for School Spirit Week- but it was a rewarding experience none the less. The captaincy position has also given me the opportunity to participate in SRC and help lead our Mitchell Roll Rep meetings on Tuesday mornings. At Roll Reps we made many important decisions, one being the initiative to change our house mascot to the 'Mitchell Marlin'.

Besides being sporting jocks, Mitchell is also a very generous house. Lloyd and Melanie have taken up large collections every week which will be donated to our house charity Penrith Soup Kitchens, which provides free meals to the homeless and needy. Congratulations Mitchell on a very successful year. Good luck to the new house captains, I'm sure you'll do a great job. Massive thankyou to Ms West you've been an awesome house patron; we couldn't have done it without you.

Rowan Olsson



WENTWORTH HOUSE

An exhilarating and exultant year 2005 has brought immense pride to Wentworth house, an already victorious team as we are. The most prestigious yet humble runners-up of the annual PHS swimming carnival, and the ONLY house with a formulated cheerleading squad for the athletics carnival, the Wentworth team of 2005 has undoubtedly left its mark.

As house captains we have felt it vital that we communicate efficiently and effectively to our crew, and this has been obtained through a 'Wentworth Press Release' at the end of every term. Regular donations of money have been made to the 'Youth off the Streets' and 'Deaf and Dumb School in Africa' charities, a most rewarding initiative which has enabled all Wentworth Warriors to become involved in their local and global communities. We have also raised money with various fundraising initiatives, including the famous and critically acclaimed "Wentworth Ice-cream Day", with the proceeds being put back into the school by purchasing items to benefit the students.

Best of luck to next year's House Captains and Vice Captains, Becki, Brian, Emma and Mitch who we are sure will do a great job and continue to develop the pride of Wentworth House. Go team!

Kane Piper & Cecelia Tuaileva

