



2006

the towers

penrith high school



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Principal's Message

The year 2006 has been a very exciting year for our school on many fronts. We began the year with great excitement over our 2005 HSC results which were, once again, the best ever achieved by our students. Fifteen Penrith High School students achieved marks over 90 in all courses, resulting in those students receiving Premier's Awards. 88 students were recognised in the Distinguished Achievers list for achieving marks over 90 in one or more courses, in 259 individual listings. We were delighted that Nicola Love gained second place in the state in Italian Extension; Dora Hsieh achieved third place in Visual Arts; Amelia Walkley third in French Beginners and fourth in Italian Continuers; Rowan Olsson fourth in Design and Technology; Marigold Banta fifth in Visual Arts; Ishan Shrestha fifth in Cosmology and Hao Xiang fifth in Philosophy - and many more of our students achieved very highly as well.



Matt Cusack, Kirby Bryson (School Vice Captains), Mrs W. De Paoli (Principal), Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood (Director General, Dept of Education & Training), Dillon Anderiesz, Laura Harris (School Captains).

This year we have continued to strengthen our relationship with former students of the school and many have been enormously supportive of our current students, attending lunchtime meetings run by Mrs Read, our Careers Adviser, that provide excellent advice to students on University courses, cadetships, scholarship applications and other experiences in particular careers. Back to School Day 2006 was a very enjoyable day, where we met former students from several generations of school life and all provided interesting insights into what life was like at Penrith High School during their time, what they have been doing since and some wonderful advice for living as well.

After several years of energetic efforts by staff, students and parents, we were thrilled with the announcement that Penrith High School would have a major buildings upgrade, starting in 2007. We can soon look forward to a brand new Performing Arts Unit and significantly upgraded Library and Science laboratories. I am very appreciative of the time and effort that many staff members and parents have put into bringing this submission to fruition and it is just one example of how supportive our parents are of our school's endeavours. Parents have stood side by side with the school staff and students at important school events such as Open Night, Information Night, the Welcome Year 7 Barbecue and the School Working Bee, as well as being of enormous assistance as volunteer canteen workers and helping out with our many sporting teams when needed.

Warmest congratulations to our students on their efforts this year. As you can see from this year's edition of *The Towers*, many of our students have achieved great results academically and they have also immersed themselves in a wide range of co-curricular programs. We are very proud of their achievements, of their support for each other and their commitment to making our community a better place for all of us. We are very fortunate at Penrith High School to have a very experienced and dedicated staff, who make sure that our students have many wonderful opportunities to develop their leadership experiences and their special talents. We cannot thank them often enough for their enthusiasm and their commitment.

Finally, thank you to Ms Silk and the editorial committee for their work throughout the year. They have produced another high quality Penrith High School chronicle. I am sure you will enjoy reading the many articles included and treasure this magazine as a record of special memories for 2006.

*Mrs Wendy De Paoli
Principal*

School Council

The School Council is made up of a representative team of students, teachers, parents and community members which meets eight times a year. Its formal aim is to 'enable the school community to formally participate in the policy making and planning of the school's operation and to foster closer links between the school and its community'. In practice, it does whatever it can to work for the betterment of the school in collaboration with the School Executive. Because it reflects the whole school community, it also provides a useful forum for discussion and review of major school initiatives, policies and issues. It plays an important role in the school's decision-making process, especially in relation to the School Budget and the School Plan.

In 2005-2006, the council members were:

Parent reps: Lyndall Fitzgibbon, Debbie Grausam (Secretary 2005), Kara McKeown, Kristine McLean (President)

P&C President: Warwick Fuller, Ian Hatton (March 2006 onwards)

Student reps: Caroline Basaly and Tom Woods

Staff reps: Rae Clapshaw (Secretary 2006), Cheryl Screech, Marion Silk

School principal: Wendy De Paoli

Community reps: Dr Wayne Sawyer (UWS), Warwick Fuller (March 2006 onwards)

This past year, the major issue occupying Council has been the *Buildings and Facilities Plan*. On behalf of the school community we wrote letters and met on a number of occasions with the local state member, the Minister of Education and Training, and departmental staff. In May, just before Council wound up for the 2005-2006 year, the Minister of Education and Training visited the school to tell us personally that the state government had committed to a major capital expenditure at the school. So over the next two years the school will have a new Performing Arts area, and upgrades and refurbishments to the Library and Science facilities.

In 2005-2006, Council also continued to pursue its objective of developing a sense of 'school community' - putting in place further strategies to enhance an appreciation in the school community about what happens 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 attendance at School Working Bees and P&C meetings, canteen duty and payment of the voluntary contribution and technology levy. These are all critical to the ongoing ability of the school to provide the very best educational and social experiences for their students.

The School Council itself provides a terrific opportunity to make a contribution to the life of Penrith High. Advertisements for parent positions go out in the School Newsletter in May-June each year, and there is generally at least one position available for a new, enthusiastic person from the school community to come on board.

The PHS School Council is very fortunate to be able to work with a school of such great calibre and spirit as Penrith High. This makes the job very enjoyable and every achievement, small or large, extremely rewarding. We look forward to another great year of working with the school.

Kristine McLean, President

community of p.h.s.