

2015

Towers



PENRITH
ACADEMIC SELECTIVE
HIGH SCHOOL

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



Kristine MacPhail

2015 was a year of firsts for Penrith High School.

It was the first year we:

- Had over 100 students gain an ATAR over 90
- Trained ALL PHS teachers in the most current research and pedagogy for gifted and talented students using lecturers from UNSW School of Education GERRIC programs
- All students in Years 10 and 11 were involved in enhanced transition programs with our university partners (USYD, UNSW, MACQ, WSU, UTS)
- Had two state front bench politicians (Pru Goward and Stuart Ayres) launch a significant government initiative at our school – The PDHPE tool kit for the Prevention of Domestic Violence during national White Ribbon week
- Have over 80% of our students from a language background other than English
- Ran parent forums to support your parents navigate the issues of having a child in selective high school (dealing with stress, depression and anxiety; applying to study overseas; living in a cyber world – the influence of gaming and social media)
- Introduced benchmarks for the study of Science courses in Year 11 & 12. Chemistry, Physics and Biology join our extension courses in requiring outstanding year 10 performances for admission
- Electronically monitored student attendance in class EVERY PERIOD
- Created a student and parent portal to improve real time communication between teachers, students and parent
- Had over 100 students support Penrith's Relay for Life community fundraiser for cancer
- Invited Penrith Primary school to our magnificent Multicultural Day festivities
- Supported student study by having teachers in the library after school until 5 pm four days a week
- Launched FEMpower, an educational collaboration with Sydney University's Women's Collective on creating an inclusive culture for all members in our society

As you can see, the majority of our year was extremely positive. Students and teachers relished the opportunity to move our school forward to better reflect our place in modern Western Sydney, to engage strongly with our parents, community and academic partners, and to really harness our role as a regional centre of excellence in gifted education.

During the year, we said goodbye to some long standing teachers as they transitioned to well-earned retirement. All of the staff and students joined me in wishing Mr Prior (HT CAPA), Mr Mills (HT Science), Mrs Vines (English), Mr McLellan (English), Mr Tob (Science) a very happy and healthy retirement. For many students these teachers were pivotal in their academic journey and will be fondly remembered for their skills and commitment to the school. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the fine work of the student leadership team in 2015 – they really embodied 'leading from the front'. Simone Ferreira, Philaretos Stylianides, Tithi Roy, Ilhamulhaq Hatami and Lachlan Penninkilampi set the standard for designing a plan for improvement and delivering it systematically during the year. They were responsible for leading 80 students leaders to contribute effectively to the School Management Plan 2015-17, a new improved Political Summit, Multicultural Day, Dyson hand dryers in the student bathrooms, student survey of Quality Teaching at PHS and investigating a school app (to be delivered in 2016). They have been excellent role models for all future leaders of PHS.

Each year we need to pause and reflect on the enormous contribution the school staff make to the fantastic learning opportunities available to every student at Penrith. They are the backbone of the 'can do' and inclusive culture of the school and I thank them for their sterling efforts again this year.

At the centre of our school are our fantastic students, who are keen to be involved in their academic program, the myriad of extracurricular opportunities and the experiences they seek out for themselves.