

# Principal's Report

INTERNATIONAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

2018



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GRAMMAR SCHOOL



## Embracing high standards and strong foundations

### A successful year of growth and achievement

In the following pages, we honour the achievements of our students, thank our dedicated staff, farewell Year 12, and celebrate the warm and wonderful IGS community as we mark the end of 2018, another happy and successful year.

### The idea of IGS as 'home'

The words of our Year 12 Class of 2018 during their leaving week have stayed with me. They described their school as home. Indeed the idea of home infused all of the conversations we had in that final week.

To many, IGS has a feeling of home. The November jacarandas and their spectacular purple rain, that hot pink wall, Patti's muffins baking in the canteen's oven and cheese toasties wafting on the breeze, children's laughter, prams and bicycles at the entrance, the bustle as parents bring their children to school. The bake sales, the lemonade stalls and piles of uniforms when the PTF transforms the street into Rue Kelly. Teachers chat in front of the little free libraries and Mr Galea watches over everybody on the footpath. And over on Mountain Street the Year 12 study space springs to life like a scene from *Friends*, and then back on Kelly Street, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* signals the start of another school day as students hurry to their lockers and classrooms to be greeted by their teachers, ready to share the gift of learning. Little wonder that IGS is imprinted on our collective psyche like home.

American poet Maya Angelou puts it like this: "The ache for home lives in all of us. It's the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned." I pondered Angelou's words as I thought about IGS. If home is a state of mind, then our students feel that they belong here, safe in the knowledge that we want them to be just who they are.

### Gifts to the fore

This is our School's highest calling, to find the unique gifts of each child and bring them to the fore through exceptional teaching that takes students further than they thought they could go. It's what I call the spirit of academic freedom. Our teachers hold the key.

John Steinbeck wrote that "school is not so easy, but then, if you are very lucky, you may find a teacher". Steinbeck believed that three great teachers in a lifetime amounted to "the very best of luck":

I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts ... since the medium is the human mind and spirit.

My three had these things in common. They all loved what they were doing. They did not tell – rather they catalysed a burning desire to know.

And under their influence, the horizons sprang wide and fear went away and the unknown became knowable. But most important of all, the truth, that dangerous stuff, became beautiful and precious.

What a perfect description for the impact of a great teacher. At IGS, we are grateful to have more than our share of great teachers, and our teachers are aided superbly well by our colleagues in the support and operational team.



Year 10's *Writing the Island* expanded to Tasmania's west coast.

### SAGE fosters limitless learning

Limitless learning as a strategic aspiration continues to inspire us to push the boundaries and to scale up new ideas in what we see as a blue ocean of possibility.

The SAGE Program is now four years old. Year 10 is the first year group to complete the full cycle of this four year program. SAGE builds our students' global competence and their love of learning. During SAGE week, our High School was transformed into:

- A Shakespeare Bootcamp in Year 7
- The Rocks Quest in Year 8
- Opera on Kelly Street in Year 9
- And Tasmania, Writing the Island in Year 10.

I joined Year 10 as we expanded the project to Tasmania's west coast. Arriving at the picturesque village of Strahan on the historic edge of Macquarie Harbour and the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, we felt so far from home.

Ancient. Rare. Irreplaceable. Magnificent. The Gordon River is a natural wonder. It provides an awe-inspiring way to explore the Tasmanian wilderness.

Aboard the Spirit of the Wild we sailed through the wide expanse of Macquarie Harbour, then slipped through Hells Gates, and out into the Southern Ocean. It was pure exhilaration.

We then glided through the world heritage rainforest. The silence - save for the bird call - and the grandeur and sheer beauty of this pristine corner of the world added to an experience of the sublime that I will never forget.

Our students in their formative years will all share these moments of awe in our vast land and will continue to have the opportunity each year to embody and express these new experiences out in the field, poetically, artistically and aesthetically.

The more we use the elements of SAGE - student choice, authentic learning experiences, globally relevant activities and exhibitions of learning - the more they shape the academic culture of the School.

When we introduced SAGE, we said that we'd go further and we have.

### Innovation continues

Philosophy in the High School is one example. DI High is another. Digital Innovation High School is the brainchild of Director of ICT and Digital Innovation, Mr Graham Clarkson. It embeds students from Years 7 to 11 with interests in STEAM and design thinking into industry in our exciting technology precinct. There, our students share their passions with academics and industry experts, and develop a vision of an intrepid digital future.

At the Michael Crouch Innovation Centre, students designed toys for Rohingya refugee children; with JAR Aerospace, they constructed and piloted drones; at Academy Xi, they undertook lessons on user interface design, immersed in virtual reality environments.

Limitless learning on the pioneering edge.

Back on campus, the first Year 12 class to undertake Aboriginal Studies has just completed their HSC examination. We have also introduced Investigating Science, Textiles and Design and Legal Studies, and students will present for the first time in 2019 for the HSC in these courses.



Another year of exciting opportunities for Kindergarten and for all our students, from Preschool to Year 12

From the classroom to the theatre, Head of Year 12 Mr Ned Manning staged a beautiful production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* up on the roof – an IGS first.

Mr Noel Nassar staged Morris Gleitzman's *Boy Overboard* in the drama studio. This was a moving portrayal of a refugee story and was performed with subtlety and power by Year 10.

These large-scale performance opportunities are now on offer each year at IGS.

Next year, Broadway director and choreographer Peter Mussared and our own Musical Director Mr Nik Glass will stage a major production of *Grease* that will transform the School Hall into Rydell High 1959. Opening night promises to be a spectacular moment in IGS history.

### **Global education expands to encompass Oxford**

Further afield, new entries to our global education program in 2018 included Summer School at Oxford University.

The Queen's College in the heart of this historic university town became home to our students who sampled life as undergraduates.

"It was beyond anything I could have imagined," Abby Mahemoff said. "I studied experimental psychology, philosophy and global issues. The backdrop of Queen's College only made the experience more amazing.

"One of the nights I will never forget was Graduation. We graduated in the chapel, had a formal dinner and strolled to a party at St Catherine's College.

"That night we had one last chance to meet with our international friends, which was incredibly sad, because the friendships we made in Oxford, we'll never forget.

"The experience gave us unique opportunities to expand our educational knowledge and also our independence in the world."

Students like Abby would not be able to stride out with such confidence *into the world* without the firm foundations given to them in primary school.

### **Joyful learning and creative collaboration**

The IGS primary school is an extraordinary place. Bilingualism, language immersion camps, assembly performances in all of the languages, projects like Dream Green Home where Year 4 students work with academics and architects to model sustainable homes, the Eminence Project, the Independent Research Task (IRT), and our incisive focus on literacy and numeracy, and more. We embrace high standards, strong foundations and joyful new experiences.

Who could forget *Lights off Torches On*, a creative collaboration between parents and staff? Fairy lights transformed the library into a magical place and students, teachers, parents and Australian writers arrived in their pyjamas to settle into the darkness to read their favourite books by torch light. It was a celebration of reading – pure enchantment.

We thank our primary parents, staff and students for another great year with such productive partnerships forged.



Concept designs for the new Biblioth que which will be constructed in 2019

### Deeper learning builds tenacity

In 2018, IGS joined the global conversation about deeper learning. We put a whole school focus on effort, to build the academic mindset of our students and reinforce the fact that we can all try hard and work to improve.

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On a scale from 1 to 5, teachers made professional judgments about each student's effort each semester. These were captured on students' academic reports. Students whose effort is assessed as exemplary and who attain a Grade 1 from all of their teachers are now presented twice a year with a Principal's Outstanding Effort Award. And at our 2018 Speech Night, for the first time, the Principal's Outstanding Effort Prizes were awarded.

The new grades give parents, caregivers and students information that cuts through, to build confidence and tenacity. We know that effort and academic growth are strongly aligned and so we will track both, during each child's journey from commencement to graduation, to provide us with a new narrative and another way of supporting our students on their learning path through school.

### Global connections to benefit staff and students

And for our teachers, global learning opportunities are being expanded. Director of Art and Design Mr Craig Malyon is our inaugural Travelling Fellow to the British International School in New York. In just a few weeks,

Craig will team-teach and collaborate with art and design educators in New York, liaise with the director of the 9/11 Memorial Museum and curate a new exhibition of art works by our students and their New York counterparts, giving them all an experience of the global collaborations in which they are likely to be engaged when they leave school.

And for the first time, a team of teachers from Early Learning, Primary and High School will attend the Deeper Learning Conference at San Diego's High Tech High. Upon their return, they will stage our own Deeper Learning Conference at IGS in July. We'll open invitations to our colleagues in surrounding government and independent schools.

High Tech High is a world leader in project-based learning and in the new deeper learning framework. We stand to benefit in promising new ways from this venture.

### Reimagining and redesigning an 'enchanted' campus

In 2016 when we launched *Into the World*, our school's strategic plan, we said we would reimagine and redesign our campus. We engaged BVN architects and got to work. The Global Learning Centre for the Teaching and Learning of Languages in the Kerrie Murphy Building opens in January.

I'm delighted to unveil our concept designs for the Biblioth que. This library will be built over two levels in the heart of our school. It will have an amphitheatre, a research centre, outdoor balcony, video wall, conservatory, reading pond, reading cave, learning spaces and study booths. It will be a warm, comfortable, enchanting place that supports the journey of children from Preschool through to Year 12.



Our students joined thousands of students across Australia to express their strongly held views on the urgent need to address climate change

Connected to the Bibliothèque will be the Colleagues' Lounge, a comfortable and flexible place for our staff to meet and collaborate. Construction begins mid 2019, for completion by the end of next year.

We have also developed a concept design for a new Centre for the Dramatic Arts which will be built in 2020 in the Wright Building. It will feature a new theatre, design studio and playbuilding studios, giving the Drama Department, facilities to build upon phenomenal long term success in this important area of arts education.

Next year we will be calling upon the ideas of the IGS community to design a new entry to the school, a new playground or piazza, and an early learning centre as the third landmark project of the IGS Master Plan.

We have much to look forward to.

### Global Scholar's Prize touches on human rights

This year, our students' intellectual curiosity was provoked by the Me Too Movement. Students took up the challenge to go deeper, to research and write about the global ramifications of this movement for this year's Global Scholar's Prize. Congratulations to Allegra Welsh of Year 10 for her prize-winning essay which considers #MeToo and human rights. Her work springs from a lively and courageous intellect, and I invite you to read it and see what our students can do when extended in the global scholarship space.

Globally focused, altruistic, empowered, on Friday, Allegra was one of over 100 IGS students who continued a long-held tradition at our School of taking it to the streets for what you believe in. Our students joined thousands of students across Australia to express their strongly held views on the urgent need to address climate change... and we couldn't be more proud of them.

### Honouring the past

While we push into an exciting future, we continue to honour and cherish our past. In 2019, IGS turns 35 and as we approached this milestone it seemed fitting to commission a portrait of our founding Principal Professor Reg St Leon AOM. Artist Dave Thomas's portrait of Reg was unveiled during Speech Night 2018 by my IGS colleagues Director of Dramatic Arts Ms Rita Morabito and Out Of School Hours (OOSH) Care Coordinator Manuela Bachmann, who share a 35-year association with IGS. We thank them for their dedication to our School.

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**We thank them for their dedication to our School, from the day it opened and for every glorious year since.**

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We also extend our thanks to Reg, and to his wife Isabell and son Carl, who attended our Speech Night along with artist Dave Thomas, who captured our founder so beautifully - his warmth, his wisdom and his fine intellect. Reg's delight was the icing on our cake.

The portrait will grace the walls of the Bibliothèque and will remind our students and our school that we stand on the shoulders of giants and have much for which to be grateful.



Farewell to our Year 12 Class of 2018

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In 2018, the Year 12 student voice developed a new fire. Their work in the sustainability space was exceptional. They have left a legacy that is profound and far reaching.

I had the pleasure of working with them to develop the School's first sustainability framework which I will take to the IGS Board for adoption before the year is out.

The 2018 student body was led with passion and creativity by Head Boy Lukian Adams and Head Girl Mi-kaisha Masella, and we thank them for a fine job incredibly well done.

On behalf of our school community I wish Year 12 all the very best for their next steps. They will always be welcome at IGS. May IGS offer them a sense of belonging and home wherever they may travel, and they will travel far and wide.

As Sarah Dessen writes:

*Home wasn't a set house, or a single town on a map. It was wherever the people who loved you were, whenever you were together. Not a place, but a moment, and then another, building on each other like bricks to create a solid shelter that you take with you for your entire life, wherever you may go.*

As a gift to Year 12, at Speech Night 2018 we shared a short film about their final week at IGS.

### With thanks

I thank Board Chair Dr Marie Leech and the Board of IGS, the leadership team, the PTF committee, our parents and our fabulous students.

All have contributed their special brand of warmth, enthusiasm and energy to a remarkable 2018. I look forward to the journey ahead and to leading our extraordinary school into the future! Thank you!

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**From Principal Shauna Colnan's Speech Night Address  
at the State Theatre on 3 December 2018.**

# School-wide achievements

## Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

In 2018, 100 students in Year 10 were awarded the Record of School Achievement (RoSA) with 30 of these students accelerating in Preliminary Mathematics or their language study. One student from Year 10 successfully completed their HSC continuer language studies. 103 students were awarded their Preliminary Higher School Certificate with 17 of these students accelerating in HSC Mathematics or continuers languages. RoSA Grades for both Years 10 and 11 were well above State measures in all areas.

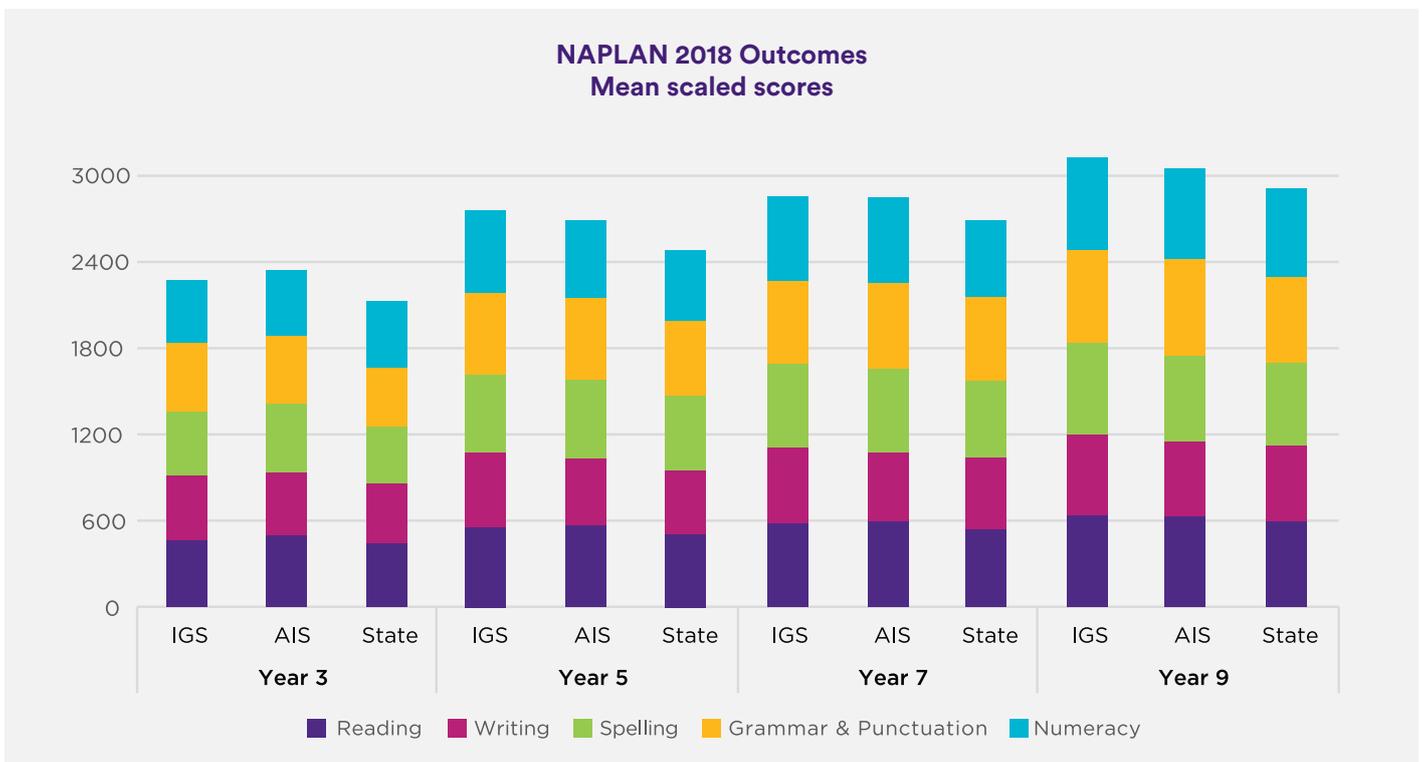
## NAPLAN 2018 Results

IGS students excelled in all areas of literacy and numeracy. In particular, IGS students' average scores for each of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are higher than state averages and higher than or equivalent to averages for Association of Independent Schools NSW (AIS) across all domains.

## Highlights include

- Year 3 students performed well above AIS averages on grammar and punctuation.
- Year 5 performance was the highest over a six year period, whereas State and AIS performance declined.
- Year 5 and Year 9 students performed well above AIS averages on reading, writing and numeracy.
- Year 7 performance and growth on writing was well above AIS averages.
- Year 5 growth in reading, spelling, writing and numeracy was well above AIS averages.
- Year 7 growth in writing and spelling was well above AIS averages.
- Year 9 growth in spelling, reading and numeracy was well above AIS averages.

**These outstanding results reaffirm our literacy and numeracy strategies and have informed further strategic planning for the year ahead.**



**We are very proud of our students and warmly congratulate all students and their teachers on these outstanding results.**

## Early HSC successes for our Year 12 Class of 2018

In early news of IGS HSC successes, a number of our students' works have been nominated for HSC showcases of exemplary works.

Four IGS Visual Arts students have had their works selected for inclusion in ARTEXPRESS: Davis Evans for *Drag Dictionary (Lavender Linguistics)*; Sapphire Goldberg for *Type 55 Youth*; Ruby Keeler-Milne for *Dead White Males*; and Hannah Kroeger for *My Second Home That Fades Away*.

In related news, a costume designed by Design and Technology student Gina Corridore for the musical production of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* and inspired by the Australian waratah has been nominated for inclusion in HSC showcase Shape.

We also congratulate IGS Head Girl and singer and songwriter Mi-kaisha Masella for being nominated for HSC Music Showcase ENCORE, and Hugo Johannsen, whose short film has been nominated as a reserve to appear in OnSCREEN.

We congratulate Individual Performance OnSTAGE nominees, IGS Drama students Javier Ardino (selected as reserve), Jimena Armstrong and Ginger Woods, as well as OnSTAGE Group Performance nominees Lukian Adams, Dexter Barker and Kyle Rampal for their presentation of *Summer of the Raelians*.

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**Every student who has made the most of their extraordinary opportunities this year must take a bow.**

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I look forward to sharing more exciting news about the achievements of our IGS Class of 2018 when HSC results are released on 13 December.

I wish every member of our wide IGS community a safe and wonderful festive season.



**Shauna Colnan**  
IGS Principal





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