

# MACQUARIE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## SPRING BLUEY NEWSLETTER

*"Truth and Virtue"*

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### **Message from the Board of Directors**

As we prepare to bid farewell to our esteemed Acting Principal, Mr. Aurelian Alexandru, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for his remarkable contributions and dedicated leadership. At the same time, we are delighted to announce the appointment of Ms. Ellena Papas as the new Principal, commencing in January 2025.

### ***Announcement – New Principal Joining Macquarie Grammar School***



*Ms. Ellena Papas  
MGS Principal*

Dear Parents and Students, Macquarie Grammar School Community,

We are delighted to announce that Ms. Ellena Papas will be joining Macquarie Grammar School as our new Principal, commencing in early January 2025.

Ms. Papas brings with her a wealth of experience as a dynamic educational leader, having successfully contributed to the growth and excellence of high-performing schools across Australia. Her strategic vision, coupled with a strong commitment to community engagement and student achievement, aligns perfectly with the values and aspirations of our school.

Ms. Papas has held several prestigious leadership roles throughout her career. She recently served as the College Director at Durack College, part of St Margaret's Anglican Girls School in Brisbane, where she oversaw strategic leadership and operational management within a tertiary residential context. Prior to that, she was the Executive Director at Canberra Girls Grammar School, where she led strategic initiatives in boarding, enrolment growth, and operational success. She also served as Dean of Co-Curriculum at Brisbane Girls Grammar School, where she enhanced educational programs and managed over 115 co-curricular activities.

Ms. Papas's professional experience includes a strong focus on strategic leadership, operational management, and fostering partnerships that enrich student experiences. Her expertise spans curriculum development, enrolment strategy, and compliance management. Additionally, she has an impressive track record of working collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to promote excellence in education.

In addition to her leadership experience, Ms. Papas has an outstanding academic background that reflects her passion for lifelong learning. She holds a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Queensland, where she was recognized as Valedictorian. She has also earned a Master of Leadership from Deakin University and is currently pursuing a Master of Creative Intelligence and Strategic Innovation. Ms. Papas is a member of prestigious organizations, including the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD), the Australian Council for Educational Leaders (MACEL), and the Australian Institute of Management (FAIM).

These qualifications and professional achievements have equipped Ms. Papas with the expertise to lead with insight, creativity, and innovation, ensuring that Macquarie Grammar School continues to excel as a leading educational institution.

Throughout her career, Ms. Papas has demonstrated outstanding leadership in fostering academic excellence, building community connections, and driving innovative approaches to education. Her expertise in both domestic and international student engagement, as well as her dedication to continuous improvement, will undoubtedly inspire our students and staff to achieve their fullest potential.

We are confident that under Ms. Papas's leadership, Macquarie Grammar School will continue to thrive as a centre of educational excellence, providing our students with the tools and opportunities they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Please join us in warmly welcoming Ms. Papas to our school community. We look forward to her vision and leadership contributing to the bright future of Macquarie Grammar School.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.



### ***A Farewell Message from the Acting Principal***



*Aurelian Alexandru  
Acting Principal*

Dear Students, Families and Staff,

As this school year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting two decades spent as part of this community—a place I have considered to be my second home since its inception. From the very first day, I have witnessed the transformation of a small, hopeful school into a hub of learning and growth, built on the collective spirit of our remarkable students, staff and families.

Deciding to step away from my role as your Acting Principal has been a difficult decision. Macquarie Grammar has been so much more than just a workplace to me—it has been a family, a community and a shared journey. The respect for my students and the pride I carry for the successes we have achieved together will stay with me as a significant part of my career.

Together, we have celebrated countless milestones, faced challenges head-on and supported one another in ways that exemplify the very essence of what it means to be a school community. Watching our students grow—not just academically, but as thoughtful, compassionate and resilient individuals—has been a privilege beyond measure.

To our students, you are the heart and soul of this school. Your curiosity, drive and character have inspired me every single day. I hope you continue to pursue your dreams with courage and determination, knowing that you are capable of achieving greatness.

To our past and current dedicated staff and supportive families, I am grateful for your partnership. Your unwavering commitment to our shared vision has made all the difference. I trust MGS will continue to thrive under the care of the current professional staff. As I move into the next chapter of my life, I carry with me a deep sense of gratitude for the memories, relationships and experiences that have shaped me during my time here. A piece of my heart will always remain within the school.

I wish each of you—students, staff and families—nothing but success, joy and fulfillment in the years ahead. I am confident that this school will continue to be a beacon of excellence and opportunity for generations to come. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your journey. It has been a great honour of my life.

With heartfelt gratitude and best wishes.

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## Messages from Mrs Sun

### Celebrating Achievements and Looking Ahead

As we approach the conclusion of Term 4, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey we have shared at Macquarie Grammar School this year. In my role as Acting Deputy Principal and Director of Welfare and Operations, it has been a privilege to witness the growth and accomplishments of our students, as well as the unwavering dedication of our teachers and staff.

This term, we celebrated the Graduation and Awards Assembly, a cornerstone event that highlights our students' milestones and achievements. Through a slideshow of memorable school events, we reflected on moments of joy, teamwork, and success. These images remind us of the vibrant and supportive environment we have cultivated together.

At the Awards Assembly, we were honoured to welcome a distinguished guest speaker, Mr Richard Clift. An accomplished leader and former parent at our school, Mr Clift has an extensive background spanning healthcare, business and academia. Currently, he is a health service director at a world-leading medical research institute and will soon embark on a PhD in Medicine. Mr Clift's insights and experiences left a lasting impression on our school community, and we are grateful for his time and words of encouragement.

This year, the school has continued to thrive under strong leadership and a shared commitment to excellence. I have worked diligently alongside our teachers and staff to ensure that every aspect of the school remains on track, meeting challenges with determination and fostering a culture of growth and achievement. Seeing our students reach their personal goals makes every effort worthwhile and underscores the resilience of our school community.

One of the highlights of this year was the school camp experience at Wombaroo, which provided students with opportunities for personal growth, team-building, and unforgettable memories. The camp fostered friendships challenged students to step out of their comfort zones and reinforced the importance of teamwork and collaboration. The energy and enthusiasm displayed by our students were remarkable, showcasing their resilience and commitment to supporting one another. The camp was a true testament to our students' spirit and willingness to engage in new experiences.

Additionally, the homestay visitation program was completed on 5 December 2024. This marks the second round of visits this year. Our teachers diligently conducted these visits to ensure our international students live in happy and supportive environments. Homestay hosts were deeply impressed by the care and dedication shown by our teachers in fostering students' wellbeing at school and home. These efforts reaffirm our commitment to creating a nurturing and holistic educational experience.

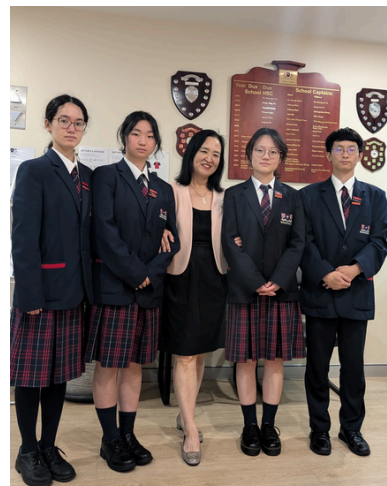
As we reflect on the past year, it is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to Mr Warren and Mr Diakis, who will leave us at the end of this term. Their contributions have been invaluable, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Reflecting on the year, I am reminded that collaboration and communication are the cornerstones of our success. These values have guided us through challenges and will continue to shape our journey as we strive for excellence in 2025. I extend my deepest gratitude to our teachers, guardians and students for their tireless efforts and contributions.

As we prepare for a new year, let us carry forward the spirit of teamwork and dedication that defines Macquarie Grammar School. Together, we will continue to nurture our students' potential and uphold our school's traditions of excellence.

Wishing everyone a joyful and restful holiday.

Best regards,  
Mrs Sun  
Acting Deputy Principal







## **Highlights from the School Camp at Wombaroo**

### **From the Director of Welfare and Operations**

From 20 to 22 November 2024, our students had the privilege of attending a thrilling and enriching school camp at Wombaroo. It was an unforgettable experience filled with teamwork, personal growth, and new adventures.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the camp instructors and supervision teachers, who went above and beyond to create engaging and meaningful activities for our students. Their passion and dedication ensured that every student felt encouraged to participate. Alongside the instructors, our teachers actively supported the students, supervising and joining in the activities to make this a truly collaborative experience.

The energy and enthusiasm displayed by our students were remarkable. They embraced every challenge with a positive attitude, worked well in their groups, and showed incredible teamwork throughout the camp. It was a joy to see students stepping out of their comfort zones, developing new skills, and creating memories they will cherish for years to come.

The highlight of the camp was undoubtedly the way our students demonstrated responsibility, respect, and a willingness to try new things. Whether it was participating in activities, maintaining the shared spaces, or helping one another, their behaviour was exemplary. Several students even shared how much they enjoyed the experience and wished the camp could have lasted longer.

Camps like these provide an invaluable opportunity for students to grow both socially and personally. They learn to work as a team, develop resilience, and discover new strengths within themselves. It was clear that our students gained a lot from this experience, and we couldn't be prouder of their efforts and achievements.

As we return to school life, we encourage all students to carry forward the same energy and focus on their studies, particularly with assessments underway. This is the time to strive for excellence and achieve the best possible outcomes.

Thank you to all the parents, staff, and students who contributed to making this camp a success. We look forward to more such enriching experiences in the future.

Mrs Sun  
Director of Welfare and Operations



And so it began...The final and- without doubt- busiest term of the year.

On Friday 29 November, Macquarie Grammar School hosted our Christmas snack sale fundraiser in which students and Teachers alike got to enjoy snacks brought by the SRC members during recess and lunch alongside our Giant Mr. Nutcracker.

The event was a success and enjoyed by all. I would like to thank our SRC members for their contributions towards the event as well as all the effort they put in to prepare all posters and snacks despite very busy schedules with end-of-year assessments. Thank you to all the students and staff for your support of this initiative. We hope you thoroughly enjoyed the treats and that Mr Nutcracker brought some Christmas cheer!

Our Year 12 group started HSC examinations and although they found them challenging, they are hopeful of great results and we wait with bated breath for 18 December 2024 when the HSC examination results are released. All the best to our Year 12s!

Our Stage 5 Mathematics Year 10s found their final Mathematics exam for their ROSA certificate grades tough, but they performed reasonably well and there were some usual outstanding achievers as well as the usual A-students who achieved brilliantly! I look forward to welcoming a large and diverse group of mathematics abilities to Mathematics Standard (and Biology) in Year 11.

Our Year 11 students have demonstrated outstanding effort in their first HSC tasks for Mathematics Standard 2 and Biology. Notably, Cam Phat Tran achieved an exceptional 100% in his Mathematics Standard Task 1, a challenging written exam.

Despite term 4 being short and busy, there were some amazing activities and excursions like Beach Day and Camp, of course which enabled students to enjoy the beach and also team building activities away from digital technology in the Australian Bush.

The year 11s were brilliant in assisting me with salad and bread roll preparation as well as serving at Beach Day in Coogee and group 4 not to mention that Alex Tran was an absolute master griller on the barbeque with Mr Sotiropoulos! At Camp, group 4 was absolutely outstanding and engaging in Team building exercises like " Chuck the Chicken" really made them think and work as a team.

Personally, I did my first ever zip-line, a daunting experience while climbing up the pole to get to the zipline rope at first but once I stepped off the platform, I really enjoyed the experience while taking in the amazing view with the safety of the rope and harness comforting me for an enjoyable zipline.

It is with this thought and experience that I close off 2024 and Term 4: " Its tough getting to the top when you are there you may feel scared. But once you step away from safety and overcome your fears, you'll find that you are always safe and might land up even enjoying the ride..."

Wishing all staff, students and their families a safe, blessed and restful Christmas period.

Thank you for another memorable year at MGS in 2024.  
I look forward to an even better and bigger 2025!

Kind Regards,

Mr. George Stavropoulos  
Stage 5 Mathematics  
Stage 6 Biology and Mathematics Standard Educator







## PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

What a fantastic year of opportunities and trying new things. The students were able to experience some non-mainstream activities such as Yogo, Boxing and Rock Climbing, in addition to Volleyball, Basketball, Football and Badminton. I commend the students for their excellent attitude at Sport each week and in particular, congratulate the students who represented the school at the ISD competitions.

In fact, the profound happiness I have from the way the students have conducted themselves throughout the year has been a feature of my time at MGS. From the weekly sport sessions to the competitions, carnivals, excursions and of course school camp have all made everyone's life at MGS a positive and rewarding experience. In case you have not realised yet, this is my last term at this amazing school and I will miss the community immensely. It has been an absolute privilege and pleasure to be a teacher and Sportsmaster, I would like to thank the staff, parents and students for all their support over the years. I wish everyone the best for 2025!

**Mr Diakis**  
Sportsmaster





## Year 11 Japanese Beginners Class Excursion to Yayoi Japanese Restaurant

In Week 7, Year 11 Japanese Beginners class went on an excursion to Yayoi Japanese restaurant, conveniently located in Town Hall. As the students just finished the unit of 'In a Restaurant', which is about how to order food or serve customers in a Japanese Restaurant, it was a great opportunity for them to be in an actual setting. Students read the menu written in both Japanese and English, and learnt names of some food in Japanese, and they all enjoyed having their favourite Japanese dishes. We had a wonderful time together, and it was certainly the best way to celebrate the completion of the Year 11 Preliminary Course.

**Mrs Yamashita**  
Japanese Teacher





## School Camp Year 9 and Year 10

Group 2 (Year 9 and 10 combined) had a wonderful educator/instructor, Ree, throughout the 2024 School Camp. They were friendly, fun-loving and resourceful and we all had a lot of fun with them. From Ree, we learnt a lot of things – about native plants, animals, insects, and an Aboriginal dreamtime story of the area. Many said that they liked the bushwalking most, but all activities are well-planned and engaging. It was certainly one of the best camps, and we are looking forward to going back again!





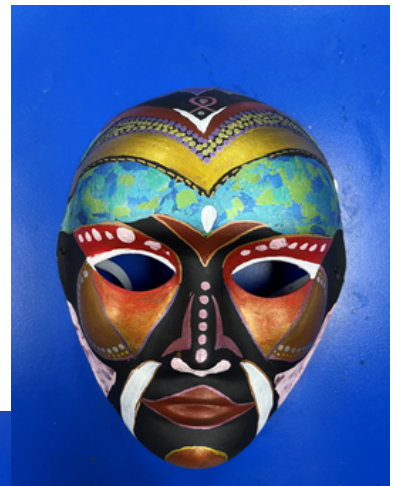




## Visual Arts 2024, Term 4

As the year 2024 came to a close and the festivities for the Summer Holiday break began, MGS students ended the year demonstrating their ideas about society, culture and the environment they live in through their colourful art making projects.

**Year 9** students learnt about Indigenous art making traditions. They developed their own understanding of these crafts and cultural traditions by designing their own take on Northern American Totems, Maori Ta Moko pattern making, and decorative African style Masks







Students in **Year 10** learnt about stencils and graphic design techniques through their Street artworks. They explored the history of the Street Art movement from the 1980s to present, and discovered key artists that have made this ground-breaking contemporary art movement what it is today.





Lastly, **Year 7- 8** art students studied how cities have been represented through prominent Modernist artists, Jeffrey Smart, Edward Hopper and Howard Arkley. They created vibrant cityscape paintings of their own landscape photographs.







It was a very busy year but definitely one to remember.  
Wishing everyone a safe and restful break!

**Ms Dechantel Green**  
Visual Arts Teacher



# Other Activities



Term 4 Assembly



Christmas Party



Parent-Teacher Interview Term 4





## Textbooks Order Link 2025

The 2025 Macquarie Grammar School Years 7-11 lists are now online for student ordering. Please find below the link which will take parents/students directly to the Campion website for ordering:

<https://order.campion.com.au?school-code=0D04948F>

If Parents order via the Campion website, the School Code is **D88D**.

Best Regards,  
Macquarie Grammar School